

Diffusion of CCTs from Latin America to Asia: the Philippine 4Ps case

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The purpose of this study is to understand the role of international and domestic actors, ideas and processes in the diffusion of public policies. It argues that existing studies on the subject do not provide an adequate explanation of the mechanisms through which diffusion takes place, nor do they sufficiently address the roles of actors affecting the policy transfer process. We address these shortcomings by studying the diffusion of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs from Brazil and Mexico to the Philippines over the past decade. We use the concept of an ‘instrument constituency’ to delineate and trace the various actors and channels involved in the diffusion of CCTs. The case study shows that these groups of actors dedicated to the articulation, adoption and expansion of particular policy instruments are central players in transnational diffusion of policies and offer a robust explanation of the phenomenon.

Keywords: policy diffusion; CCT; instrument constituency.

Difusão dos PTCs da América Latina para a Ásia: o caso do programa 4Ps nas Filipinas

O objetivo deste estudo é compreender o papel de atores, ideias e processos nacionais e internacionais no que diz respeito à difusão de políticas públicas. Observa-se que os estudos existentes sobre esse tema não oferecem uma explicação adequada sobre os mecanismos pelos quais essa difusão ocorre, bem como não abordam definitivamente os papéis dos atores envolvidos no processo de transferência de políticas. Em virtude desse quadro, este trabalho busca contribuir por meio do estudo do processo de difusão, ao longo da última década, de programas de transferência condicionada de renda (PTCs) do Brasil e do México para as Filipinas. Ainda, usamos o conceito de “grupo de defesa de instrumento de política pública” para delinear e compreender os diversos atores e canais envolvidos com a difusão dos PTCs. O estudo de caso mostra que esses grupos de atores dedicados a articulação, adoção e expansão de políticas específicas são centrais para sua difusão para outros países e para explicar esse fenômeno com maior propriedade.

Palavras-chave: difusão de políticas; PTC; grupo de defesa de instrumento de política pública.

Difusión de los PTC de América Latina en Asia: el caso del programa 4Ps en Filipinas

El objetivo de este estudio es comprender el papel de actores, ideas y procesos nacionales e internacionales en lo que respecta a la difusión de políticas públicas. Se observa que los estudios existentes sobre ese tema no ofrecen

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una explicación adecuada sobre los mecanismos por los cuales se da esa difusión; asimismo, no abordan definitivamente los papeles de los actores involucrados en el proceso de transferencia de políticas. En virtud de ese panorama, este trabajo se propone contribuir mediante el estudio del proceso de difusión — durante la última década — de los programas de transferencia monetaria condicionada (PTC) de Brasil y de México en las Filipinas. Además, usamos el concepto de “grupo de defensa de instrumento de política pública” para delinear y comprender los diversos actores y canales involucrados en la difusión de los PTC. El estudio de caso muestra que esos grupos de actores dedicados a la articulación, adopción y expansión de políticas específicas son centrales para su difusión en otros países y para explicar ese fenómeno con más propiedad.

Palabras clave: difusión de políticas; PTC; grupo de defensa de instrumento de política pública.

1. INTRODUCTION

Transnational policy diffusion — or the transfer of policies from one national jurisdiction to another — is a widespread phenomenon which has been noted by scholars from diverse disciplines, particularly comparative public policy. The typologies being offered in the existing literature beg the question of exactly how, by whom, and in what ways, policies transfer across nations. Policy transfer is an interplay of individual agency and structure that shapes inter-jurisdictional learning, which can be voluntary, coercive or negotiated (Evans, 2009; Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, 2000). Comparative public policy studies have shown that the formation of cross-national alliances and employment of multiple channels of influence, when in pursuit of some common interests or ideas – including preferences for particular policy tools and programs – are key to many diffusion processes (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Stone and Ladi, 2015; Orenstein, 2008).

The literature on policy diffusion, while thriving, has been criticized for failing to provide an overall explanation of policy development (James and Lodge, 2003), particularly because each case of policy transfer appears unique in terms of the primary factor that motivates and shapes the actor engagement in transfer activities. Moreover, recent scholarship on policy transfer has not moved beyond the actors identified earlier by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000). Indeed, recent work continues to dwell on existing views on the extent and degree of possible policy transfer (Dussauge-Laguna, 2012). Research on how policy transfer occurs in developing countries remain scant, challenging the validity of the policy transfer framework to extend beyond developed economies (Nedley, 2004). Those that examine policy transfer in developing countries (Lana and Evans, 2004; Porto de Oliveira, 2017; Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018) have revealed a pluralized diffusion process where individual actors legitimize the policies being transferred and the transfer process itself, but our understanding of the details of the process remains limited.

The purpose of the article is to shed light on these neglected aspects, both of agency in transnational policy transfer, as well as mechanisms of transnational policy transfer, by examining the details of the diffusion of a specific program — Conditional Cash Transfer, or CCT, programs — across Latin America and Asia in recent years. The international diffusion of CCTs offers an excellent opportunity for developing a comprehensive and empirically testable explanation of the precise mechanisms through which policy diffusion takes place as these programs have diffused in a two-step process: first within a specific region — Latin America — and then beyond.

Based on archival research and semi-structured interviews, the case study sets out the details of these processes and the agents and mechanisms active in the diffusion of CCT programs from Brazil and Mexico to the Philippines, paying particular attention to the nature and roles of international and domestic actors promoting the spread and adoption of the policy. All three are middle income countries facing similar economic and social development challenges, which makes policy diffusion across them ideal for study.

A relatively new concept, ‘instrument constituency’, borrowed from comparative public policy studies, is introduced as a useful analytical tool for delineating and tracing the role of various actors and channels in the diffusion of CCTs (Voß and Simons, 2014). This article situates instrument constituency within the framework of policy transfer. Groups of actors dedicated to the articulation and expansion of particular kinds of policy instruments (Voß and Simons, 2014), assemble a set of stories and knowledge about the success of these instruments based on the first step of the transfer process, particularly in the form of knowledge products and through learning platforms. The diffusion of CCTs from Latin America to the Philippines is then explored to show how the same instrument constituencies, in fact in many cases the same individuals, were responsible for the spread of a social policy such as CCT. Such program is an assembly of policy elements derived from a variety of antecedent programs implemented in different countries that is then marketed to receptive politicians and governments. The article concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and policy implications of this research as well as potential avenues for further study of the diffusion phenomena using the constituency concept.

2. OPENING THE BLACK BOX OF POLICY DIFFUSION: THE CONCEPT OF INSTRUMENT CONSTITUENCY

The literature on policy diffusion has been thriving since the 1990s, moving away from the initial debates about agency and structure and adopting policies and programs across various political contexts. The understanding about who diffuses policy, what is diffused, and the factors that promote or constrain the diffusion process have expanded with the growing theoretical and empirical work in comparative public policy (Benson and Jordan, 2011). For instance, forms of policy transfer have included hybridization where program elements are combined “to develop a policy that is culturally sensitive to the needs of the recipient” (Evans, 2009:246). In contrast with coercive learning, such negotiated transfer occurs as a result of coalition-building and ideational persuasion, and on this basis Mitchell Orenstein (2008), has argued that international organizations typically collaborate with domestic actors to promote their policy proposals.

Understanding how these ‘transfer agents’ (Stone, 2000) operate and navigate through transnational networks and political jurisdictions can help to unveil the transfer process in which they are engaged, considering that this process’ structure can determine what and how knowledge is shared (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2012). As Orenstein notes, as well as International Organizations (IOs) and governments, other non-state actors, primarily think tanks, consultants, and researchers are actively involved in policy diffusion. As “carriers, exporters and inducers of policy ideas”, these non-state actors operate as “transnational advocacy coalitions” (Orenstein, 2008) who work through markets and networks

rather than state hierarchies to transfer the intellectual and ideational bases of policy from one jurisdiction to another. This can occur, for example, through the dissemination of scientific knowledge and information, in support of desired policy means or tools (Stone, 2001). Furthermore, as Weyland (2005, 2009) notes, policy diffusion is often a process driven by cognitive decision, where bounded rational policy adopters and decision-makers use heuristics or inferential shortcuts to assess and accept new policy ideas and models.

Such studies take a keen interest in diffusion processes across countries and focus on identifying patterns of diffusion over time in order to better identify what is transferred and what are their drivers (Walker, 1969; Berry and Berry, 2014). Policy transfer is viewed as a process by which “*knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting*” (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000:5), facilitating or contributing to policy diffusion. However, the production of this knowledge has traditionally been left out of the diffusion literature.

Too often, the dependent variable in these studies has been poorly defined to the extent that different elements of a policy are conflated (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000), failing to recognize that each element may involve a different transfer mechanism. The lack of attention to distinctions among the components of policy is in part an inadvertent consequence of the existing literature’s tendency to over-theorize but under-operationalize policy diffusion (Marsh and Sharman, 2009). Recent work on the subject have distinguished ‘hard’ elements such as policies, institutional arrangements and programs (Rose, 1993; Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996) from ‘soft’ elements, such as ideas and norms transmitted through ‘ideational channels’ (Stone, 2001, 2004, 2010).

However, it is useful to clarify the differences among policy elements based on the three categories: a) ideas (or high-level abstraction) about goals and about an instrument logic; b) program-level operationalization regarding specific policy objectives and mechanisms; and c) specific on-the-ground measures of general considerations and specific procedures in implementing the policy (Cashore and Howlett, 2007; Howlett and Cashore, 2009). Transfer agents are concerned not only with identifying ‘programs’ to be transferred but also with playing a crucial role as idea or norm breakers, influencing public opinion and policy agenda (Acharya, 2004).

The concept of “instrument constituencies”, developed in comparative policy studies is of particular interest to this study. The concept refers to a particular set of actors that play a crucial role in policy diffusion by focusing upon specific types of instruments and promoting their use in different policy areas and jurisdictions. Instrument constituencies are groups of protagonists who share a common belief in the efficacy and effectiveness of certain policy tools and advocate their deployment in different contexts around the world (Voß and Simons, 2014). Members of instrument constituencies are distinct and stay united by their common ‘fidelity’ to their advocacy of a particular instrument or a particular combination of instruments as a superior technique of public governance (Voß and Simons, 2014; Mann and Simons, 2014).

The notion of instrument constituencies has antecedents in Haas’ (1992) notion of ‘epistemic communities’ whose members share common conceptions of policy problems, and — in terms of

domestic policy — in Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) conception of 'advocacy coalitions' whose members share core political beliefs serving as key collective actors affecting policy development. For Haas, epistemic communities comprised distinguishable sets of actors who engaged almost exclusively in problem definition, separate from other sets of actors engaged in other activities such as political maneuvering or consideration of policy solutions. These communities are networks of "professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area" (Haas, 1992:3). The actors in these communities share common notions of validity — that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in their domain of expertise — and a common policy enterprise to which their professional competence is directed (Haas, 1992; Zito, 2001; Miller and Fox, 2001).

Similarly, for Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) the concept of competing advocacy coalitions was found useful to explain what actors from a variety of public and private institutions at all levels of government do while pursuing and implementing their preferred policy alternatives. The argument is that these actors share a set of basic beliefs about policy areas and form informal coalitions within subsystems in order to prevail over others in the political struggle to define core policy beliefs and preferences (Sabatier, 1988; Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1994).

Instrument constituencies can be seen as a third set or network of collective actors in policy-making. They are formed around a shared preference for a particular type or set of policy instruments and geared towards the articulation of this preference by defining instruments and influencing instruments choice in program design and delivery (Voß and Simons, 2014; Mukherjee and Howlett, 2015; Woo, 2016:44).

As Voß and Simons (2014:16) put it, they are "networks of heterogeneous actors": from academia, policy consulting, public policy and administration, business, and civil society. Connections between these (actors) evolve from interactions in articulating, developing, disseminating, and implementing a particular policy instrument. As they argue in the case of the development of European emissions trading systems:

as actors reflexively pursue the management of interdependencies emerging from their joint engagement with an instrument, they mutually enroll each other for the realization of particular versions of the instrument according to the specific expectations that they attach to it... Webs of interlocking practices [...] solidify during innovation processes, giving rise to new research fields and knowledge actors, specialized service industries, public agencies, policy networks, and other actors and institutions that form around instruments in the making.

Instrument constituencies are, therefore, unique groups of policy actors that, through their advocacy of preferred instruments, supply policy solutions in a 'pre-packaged' form that can often precede the very policy problems they purport to solve.¹ They do this by developing and

¹ Associated with the activities of International Corporations is the phenomenon of 'solutions chasing problems' (Voß and Simons, 2014; Béland and Howlett, 2016; Kingdon, 1984; Mukherjee and Howlett, 2015). Béland and Howlett, 2016; Kingdon, 1984; Mukherjee and Howlett, 2015).

producing “an instrument’s infrastructure, by which we mean the set of stories, knowledge, practice and tools needed to keep an instrument alive both as model and implemented practice” (Voß and Simons, 2014). Instrument constituencies assemble this set of stories and knowledge by producing information about the instruments and their performance, framing policy discourses, and providing resource support to potential adopters (Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018). Such information on the policies to be diffused is encapsulated in knowledge products in the forms of reports describing the idea, documenting the practices and demonstrating the effectiveness, which are typically disseminated in learning platforms like sponsored conferences, workshops and study visits that serve as a networking venue (Porto de Oliveira, 2017) for members of the instrument constituency. In this view, organizations and individuals gathered together in rival constituencies compete to promote their favored instruments in multiple possible contexts, and diffusion is a by-product of this activity both nationally and transnationally (Béland and Howlett, 2016). As Béland and Howlett’s study of social insurance and pension privatization have shown, “international organizations (such as the World Bank or the International Labour Organization) can belong to different and sometimes competing instruments constituencies struggling for power both within and outside of these organizations” (Béland and Howlett, 2016). International Organizations in the instrument constituency approach are often purveyors of a particular policy instrument, and target nation states and domestic policymakers advocating for their instruments.

3. DATA AND METHOD

In view of the foregoing, policy diffusion can be studied by looking at the processes by which domestic and international actors demonstrate their instrument preferences. This study adopts a case study approach to explore these processes because it allows a more nuanced analysis of a single phenomenon (adoption of conditional cash transfer program) in order to understand a larger class of construct (i.e., policy diffusion) without losing the context by which the phenomenon occurred (Gerring, 2004). The research chose a single-country case — the adoption of the CCT program in the Philippines — and used process tracing as a method to establish the intervening steps in the mechanism predicted by a hypothesis (George and Bennett, 2005). In this case the group of actors with strong affinity to a particular instrument facilitated the flow of CCT as a policy idea and solution. The process tracing examined the a) underlying processes employed by the instrument constituency in the policy diffusion; and b) resulting changes in the policy design of CCT as adopted in the Philippines.

Archival research was undertaken particularly to establish the articulation of instrument preferences in knowledge products of the instrument constituency. Administrative documents and news reports were also used to observe the beliefs and past activities organized by actors involved in the diffusion of CCT. The Philippines is an ideal case for policy diffusion analysis since it adopted CCT fairly early (in 2007) but the design is thought to be ‘second generation’ CCT because of the earlier documentation of diffusion within Latin America. Semi-structured interviews were also employed with key informants and elites knowledgeable of the launch of the CCT program in the Philippines. An important starting point was identifying the senior

government officials who have been publicly recognized as pioneers of the program. One of the co-authors interviewed key officials in the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Education (DepEd) as well as officials at the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and UNICEF in 2009. Similar interviews were conducted in June 2016 and July 2017 with current senior officials of the same agencies. This time, interviews were also conducted in the regions and provinces, including at the local and school district-levels.

4. THE CASE OF CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS: THE ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF A POLICY INSTRUMENT

The idea and practice of conditional cash transfers for social policy purposes originated in Latin America in the mid-1990s as part of the ongoing policy discourse and reforms emphasizing long-term investment in human capital (Jenson, 2010). CCT was intuitively appealing to the market-oriented policy reformers in countries such as Chile, as the focus of the program was on transferring cash “... to poor households, on the condition that those households make pre-specified investments in the human capital of their children regarding issues such as pre-natal care, vaccinations, and school attendance” (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009:1). What was attractive about the scheme, is that it offered enhancement of long-term human capital while providing only short-term government-provided income support, avoiding the lock-in of publicly provided social programs associated with earlier eras of thinking about poverty reduction and social assistance.

Mooted in Chile and the US on a conceptual level, the first and most widely emulated CCTs were developed in the area of education and emerged in Mexico and Brazil in the late 1990s. By 2007 similar programs encouraging school attendance and public health issues had been established in 14 Latin American countries (Jenson, 2010; Franzoni and Voorend, 2011). Mexico launched a CCT program in 2002, initially called *Progresas*, which was changed to *Oportunidades* in 2002 and *Prospera* in 2014. As Tracy Beck Fenwick (2015:5) puts it, “the Mexican CCT was the first national CCT that integrated health, education, and nutrition conditions into a single social program designed to alleviate poverty through human capital investments”. Very modest in scope at the time of its inception, the program now covers about 6.8 million poor families across the country. Created in 2003 following earlier experiences of CCT programs at the municipal-level, Brazil’s *Bolsa Família* program soon overshadowed the Mexican one and is now “increasingly considered the gold standard to emulate throughout the developing world.” (Fenwick, 2015:5). *Bolsa Família* now covers more than 14 million families and has cut poverty by 28 percent over a decade at a modest cost of 0.5% of GDP (The Economist, 2015).

The success of these early CCTs in Mexico and Brazil, coupled with the mobilization of both national and transnational actors supporting them, resulted in the creation of a strong transnational instrument constituency, triggering a diffusion process that has helped the various ideational underpinnings and program elements of CCT to spread to other continents. At the ideational level, the introduction of CCTs marked the shift towards the view of social protection as a right from contributory schemes that excluded those outside the formal labor market. Major differences lie between the older CCTs in Mexico, Brazil and Chile in the policy objectives they emphasized (Soares,

2011). *Bolsa Familia* was used primarily as a poverty alleviation scheme with a specific focus on social assistance. On the other hand, *Oportunidades* in Mexico is more of a social protection program placing heavy emphasis on conditionals that contribute to human capital investment. Moreover, *Bolsa Familia* was approached with heavy decentralization but strong central coordination where municipalities are responsible for registering families and ensuring their compliance and providing information to national ministries (Soares, 2011). Targeting the poor is performed using a single registry of self-reported income and is heavily reliant on municipal managers and social workers to identify households that can be registered in the program based on flexible quotas of beneficiaries per municipality. Other Latin American CCTs such as in Mexico and Colombia have employed proxy means testing used to target subsidies and CCTs since 1994 (Castañeda, 2005). The choice of a targeting scheme is critical in the transfer process since proxy means tests are typically used when income can be difficult to observe while self-targeting is common when public goods and services are typically availed by the poor or when conditionalities discourage the participation of non-poor household (Ravallion, 2016).

The mechanisms of diffusion of CCT in Latin America potentially led to the development of an instrument constituency led by international organizations and governments of the pioneer programs. The diffusion of CCTs started domestically in the early 1990s as policy emulation of *Bolsa Escola* within municipal and state governments in Brazil primarily as a result of political competition (Coêlho, 2012). The popularity of the municipal programs prompted a visit of the Mexican government in 1997 to examine their implementation, which eventually led to the launch of Mexico's own national program (Levy and Santiago, 2004). In Brazil, these municipal programs were eventually integrated into a federal *Bolsa Escola* program but upon discussion with the Mexican president about the success of *Progresas*, then President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva decided to integrate various programs including *Bolsa Escola* into *Bolsa Familia* (Lindert et al., 2007). The UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank, supported Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* both financially with loans and loan guarantees and with technical expertise (Leite, Pomeroy and Suyama, 2015). These institutions then worked with both Brazil and Mexico in order to generate information on the success of the programs and to transmit packaged information highlighting the program's effectiveness to many countries looking to strengthen their social protection programs at low cost. The Brazilian model eventually found its way to many countries including Ecuador (Lana and Evans, 2004) and Ghana (Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018). Such diffusion in Latin America has been attributed to the pressures made by international organizations through a platform 'learning with your neighbors', through establishing international professional norms, and financial incentives. In addition, the diffusion was also promoted by the tendency of domestic politicians to use heuristic shortcuts in their search for solutions (Sugiyama, 2011).

More important in this issue of mechanisms and agencies of diffusion, are specific individuals, in both the international and domestic arenas, who were convinced about the efficacy of CCT and played a central role as agents in their promotion and adoption. The section below explains that

while these international actors, (including policy consultants who have worked in other CCTs, and international financing institutions, like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Australian Aid (AusAid) have used their epistemic authority in the first stage of CCT diffusion within Latin America from Mexico and Brazil (Jenson, 2010; Sugiyama, 2011), they are equally involved in the diffusion of CCTs to Asia. Although most studies on CCT diffusion in the Philippines argue that a political context germane for cooperation of these international actors with domestic actors from the Philippine government, particularly DSWD, is the most important variable for policy transfer (Kim and Yoo, 2015; Debonneville and Diaz, 2013), we argue that the current Pantawid Program was largely a by-product of an instrument constituency transnationally advocating for the value of CCT in poverty reduction.

5. CCT IN THE PHILIPPINES

The impact of instrument constituencies can be found in the launch of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) in the Philippines. The Pantawid program was launched in 2007 as a pilot (initially known as *Ahon Pamilyang Pilipino*) covering 6,000 households. The program was expanded to cover 320,000 households nationwide in early 2008, and in 2009, even before evaluation of the pilot program was carried out, to 700,000, and then to 1 million in 2010. The expansion of the program accelerated even further after President Aquino came to office in 2010 and the program covered 4.3 million households by the time his term ended in 2016. Now covering about 21 percent of the population, 4Ps is the third largest CCT program in the world, after Brazil (covering 29 percent of the population) and Mexico (covering 27 percent of the population) (Acosta and Velarde, 2015).

The mere adoption of the 4Ps represent a transfer of ideas about goals and instrument logic from Latin America, particularly Brazil and Mexico to the Philippines. Prior to the 4Ps, the idea in place — as it was in most of the Latin American countries — was that economic growth represents the main strategy to reduce poverty, with little to no room for ‘activist’ social policies (Balisacan and Edillon, 2005; Tabuga and Reyes, 2012). Previous poverty alleviation programs in the Philippines were largely geared towards empowerment of the poor and were typically small, as evidenced by low investment on anti-poverty measures in the 1990s that averaged around 1.5% of the total government budget, including rice subsidies (Manasan, 2001). This is in stark contrast with the 4Ps budget which in 2014 had grown to USD1.5 billion, representing 0.5% of the country’s GDP and 2.8% of the national government’s budget (Acosta and Velarde, 2015). Such ideational change is more evident in the formal adoption of a social protection framework by the government in 2007, with the 4Ps clearly becoming the central program by 2012 when all other programs converged towards 4Ps.

The ideational shift is largely attributed to the effectiveness of similar programs in Latin America transmitted through learning platforms and knowledge products. The idea of a CCT program for education in the Philippines came during a discussion in early 2006 between the country’s Social Welfare Secretary, Dr. Esperanza Icasas-Cabral and World Bank official Mr. Jehan Arulpragasam who had worked on a CCT program in Indonesia. He encouraged Dr. Cabral to attend the conference

on CCTs convened by the World Bank in Istanbul in June 2006 (World Bank, 2008; Debonneville and Diaz, 2013). The Philippine delegation included officials from the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Finance and Department of Social Welfare and Development as well as two country representatives from the World Bank. Around 2007, World Bank publications on conditional cash transfer increased, probably owing to increased loan transactions. A simple word search of conditional cash transfer in the World Bank Open Knowledge Repository reveals 41 and 95 publications in 2000 and 2006, respectively, while 147 and 213 publications were published in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Official documents often refer to the success in Mexico and Brazil of CCT. The documents include loan agreements with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank as well as the administrative order that institutionalized the program in DSWD. In 2008, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo cited World Bank data about Brazil's CCT during her State of the Nation Address, as the reason for introducing the Pantawid Program. The International Organizations and the knowledge products they published played an important role not only in expanding the policy space for social protection but also in the identification of CCT as a viable instrument that can achieve such a goal.

The 4Ps is a quintessential CCT program that offers cash benefits subject to recipients adhering to specified health and education conditions. The objective of the program is to provide income support to poor households in the short term (social assistance) while encouraging them to invest in the education and health of their children so they can escape the cycle of poverty in the long term (social development) (DSWD; Philippines, 2009). It offers PhP500 (USD 10.72) per month in health grants. It offers a further PhP300 (USD 6.43) per month in education for each child in day care, kindergarten and elementary schools and PhP500 for students in high schools. The education grant is available for a maximum of three children per family each school year. The maximum benefit, including education and health, amounts to PhP 2,000 (USD 42.90) per household per month (monthly per capita income was USD 230 in 2016).

The policy objectives enshrined in program documents show that the Philippine CCT program uses Mexico's balance for social assistance and social development, chosen over Brazil's focus on redistribution and Chile's strong targeting of the extremely poor (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009). Thus, there is less country-to-country diffusion as was the case from Brazil to Ghana (Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018). Recipient governments like the Philippines may appear to have selected this set of objectives from a menu of documented cases from other countries; but it is vital to mention that alongside the conference, the Philippine delegation was briefed on the CCT by an international consultant, Mr. Tarcisio Castañeda, who had worked for the World Bank in Latin America, published articles on the experience of Colombia on poverty targeting, and was at the time based in Indonesia. He later became an in-house consultant in DSWD together with his wife Mrs. Luisa Castañeda who was an expert in proxy means testing (PMT). It becomes unsurprising to observe similar objectives in Indonesia's CCT (Hopeful Families Program or *Program Keluarga Harapan*) also introduced in 2007 (Kwon and Kim, 2015). Together with the Philippines, the Indonesian government attended the same learning platform in Turkey, thus being exposed to a similar diffusion mechanism. Policy consultants, in this case, may play a role in transmitting the case assembled by international organizations like the World Bank. For instance, despite the

diversity of policy emphasis of CCTs in Latin America, CCT is touted by the World Bank as going beyond the traditional social assistance problems by addressing “not only short-term consumption needs, but long-term poverty by fostering human capital investments in the complementary areas of nutrition, health and education” (De La Brière and Rawlings, 2006). This is echoed by Mr. Castañeda who says:

The CCT program’s safety net component aims to provide social assistance for short term poverty reduction but in the long run eradicates poverty by building the capacity of children of poor families to complete schooling and improve health conditions, which is considered a huge investment in human capita. [(Philippine Daily Inquirer, 24 November, 2010)]

To receive the benefit, households must be identified as “poor” — as determined by the national household targeting system (*Listahanan*) through proxy means test (PMT) — and must contain a pregnant woman or at least one child. Children 3-18 years of age must commit to 85 percent school attendance for the family to receive benefits. Similarly, pregnant women and children must receive prescribed health tests and immunization to access the benefits. A unique feature of the 4Ps program in the Philippines, compared to its Latin American predecessors and its Indonesian contemporary, is that it requires beneficiaries to attend Family Development Sessions (FDS) on parental, family, and community responsibilities.

The choice of PMT in targeting poor households allowed the Philippine government to adopt a more effective narrow targeting of the poor, which had previously been plagued by mistargeting and inefficiencies (Balisacan and Edillon, 2005; Reyes and Valencia, 2004). The selection of PMT has more similarities to Mexico and Colombia than to Brazil, which is an important policy choice since it is perceived to be more intrusive and costly compared to Brazil’s ‘lighter’ strategy of relying on self-declared income (Reid, 2016). In fact, to acquire insights into the design and operation of CCT, the DSWD management officials travelled to Bogota in May 2007 and later to Mexico City, another important learning platform sponsored by the World Bank. PMT has largely been promoted by the World Bank as result of heuristic formula such as this lesson: “Countries with large differences between rich and poor are better served by proxy means testing, while geographic targeting may be more efficient for largely homogenous populations” (Vermehren, 2003:2). These rules of thumb created by the instrument constituency became powerful as it largely determined how the poor are targeted in the second wave of CCTs in the Philippines and Indonesia.

At this point, it is important to highlight the context that allowed instrument constituency to play a huge role in the policy transfer of CCT in the Philippines. CCT emerged at an opportune time for DSWD which in the mid-2000s was struggling to find a new role for itself following decentralization of key social protection to local governments (Interview with Former Secretary of Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2016; Interview with Former Undersecretary of Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2016).

An increase in poverty rate, despite brisk economic growth, was attributed to the lack of an effective poverty-reduction program in the country. A national program such as 4Ps gave the Department a high-profile role while leaving implementation details to local governments. In addition, it already

had positive experience with other similarly de-centralized programs such as Kalahi-CIDSS (or Kapat Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services), a locally-implemented national program centered on community-driven projects enthusiastically supported by the World Bank.

Notwithstanding its experience as lead agency for social protection, DSWD lacked capacity for designing and implementing complex programs. The success of CCT is contingent upon accurate identification of the poor and close coordination with education and health ministries. These are challenging tasks in which DSWD had little experience (Interview with Former Secretary of Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2016). The financial and technical support for CCT offered by the World Bank was crucial for the agency to take on and implement the 4Ps.

The World Bank's support inspired confidence in the program and motivated the Asian Development Bank and other international agencies to come on board in support of the program. Notwithstanding the speed of its rapid expansion, however, the implementation of the 4Ps program went smoother than expected. The role of international agencies as instrument constituency in providing technical and financial assistance, contributed to the implementation of the program, particularly since there was no significant opposition from politically powerful groups like the Church (Kim and Yoo, 2015). The program design of bypassing local politicians through highly centralized implementation ensured that 4Ps was perceived to be largely politically neutral, and thus, less vulnerable to manipulation.

The establishment and expansion of 4Ps in the Philippines illustrates the confluence of international and domestic factors that drive policy diffusion. The case also highlights the importance of the international and domestic instrument constituency and their ideas and motivations in shaping the timing and substance of public policies. The World Bank not only played a key role in introducing policymakers to the idea of CCT, it also provided technical and financial support for the program (Arulpragasam, 2008; Fiszbein and Schady, 2009; IBRD, IFC and Miga, 2009). This included a loan of USD 404 million in 2008 and USD 450 million in 2015 for the 4Ps program (World Bank, 2008). Similarly, the Asian Development Bank also provided a loan of USD 400 million in 2010 and again in 2015 for the 4Ps (ADB, 2015, Proposed Loan for Additional Financing and Technical Assistance Grant, Project Number: 43407-014). Loan negotiations proved to be largely unremarkable as shown by the fact that the funds were easily made available a year after the program was launched in 2008 and that financing from the two international organizations formed nearly two-thirds of the program's expenditures in the initial years (Debonneville and Diaz, 2013). The only contention between DSWD and the World Bank was the inclusion of family development sessions, a competency DSWD thought they could bring into the program, but the World Bank officials thought was unnecessary. Ultimately, the World Bank conceded, and the family development component became a unique feature of the CCT in the Philippines.

The alignment of interests between the international and domestic counterparts of the instrument constituency proved pivotal in the continuation of the program. The initiation of the program enjoyed huge political support from President Arroyo's government and the expansion

of the beneficiaries became the center point of President Aquino's social protection policy. This was buttressed by knowledge products used to legitimize the continuation of the program. Interestingly, these studies have largely been conducted or commissioned by the World Bank and other international partners like AusAid. The findings of these studies, which generally paint a positive view of the program, have been used in congressional budget deliberations, the venue where the program is most regularly challenged. For instance, less than 40 members of the congress petitioned against the expansion of the program (some of them were members of the president's party) in the budget deliberations in 2010. But domestic actors are able to defend the policy using knowledge products already elaborated about the program. A DSWD senior official cited World Bank statements during a 2012 budget hearing: "I would like to quote Ms. Junko Onishi, the monitoring and evaluation specialist of the World [Bank]... that the Pantawid Pamilya is having strong and consistently positive impact on households in the program based on the key indicators used in the preliminary findings of the impact evaluation". This influence by the instrument constituency is acknowledged by the World Bank in a report: "the impact evaluations directly contributed to the sustainability of the program through the provision of rigorous evidence in support of its impact at, for example, the...budget hearings" (World Bank, 2016:12).

The learning platforms also proved to be critical. After returning from Istanbul, the delegates discussed the feasibility of establishing a CCT program in the Philippines. Subsequently, they convened an inter-agency conference focused on establishing a CCT which was attended by several representatives from international organizations and the government as well as Mr. Castañeda. The concept of CCT was enhanced during a high level technical assistance meeting organized by the Asian Development Bank and in November 2006, the World Bank Philippines approved funds to carry out the DSWD — National Sector Support for Social Welfare and Development Project — which included feasibility evaluation of CCT (Pablo, Sampang and Solloso, 2009). The preparatory work by DSWD and its international partners bore fruit in March 2007 when the Cabinet discussed and accepted the department's proposal to launch the program on a pilot basis in the fall of that year. The CCT program was formally launched in September 2007 under an administrative order. Just a few months after the implementation of the pilot, and before evaluating the pilot's performance, the president decided to expand the number of beneficiaries from 6,000 to 320,000 households. Then in July 2009, President Arroyo and an entourage of members of congress and DSWD officials visited Brazil to meet with President Lula da Silva and to learn about *Bolsa Familia*. The visit was fruitful and upon return, Arroyo decided to legalize the program. Then Senator Miriam Santiago, a member of the delegation, also introduced a bill to institutionalize a version of *Bolsa Familia* CCT to the Philippines, but the bill did not pass. In 2013, a high-level delegation including the DSWD Secretary and officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform also went to Brazil to study *Bolsa Familia*, a trip sponsored by the United Nations World Food Program.

The activities of the instrument constituency generated momentum for the survival of the program. It would be an exaggeration to characterize the program as unopposed and many of these oppositions have resulted in changes in how the program is run (Kim and Yoo, 2015). One

of the biggest resistances against the program was made by former Senator, Aquilino Pimentel and association members of village (*barangay*) chiefs, who argued the centralized program delivery violated the constitutional guarantee of delegation of social welfare to local governments. In 2012, however, the Supreme Court ruled that the program did not encroach on local autonomy. The ruling also endorsed the 4ps' design and the wisdom behind the conditional cash transfer as a poverty alleviation strategy. These events have by and large bolstered the *Pantawid* program in international policy transfer networks. Mr. Castañeda, who was eventually hired to conduct a review of the program's progress, said: "At this moment, the Philippines' program has advanced so much that it could provide some lessons to some countries" (Karen Liao and Rappler, 2013). By 2013, the Philippines hosted the meeting South-South Learning on CCTs funded by the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank as a platform to share lessons from experiences in Latin America, Caribbean and Asia-Pacific towards the development of 'second-generation' CCTs.

6. CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF INSTRUMENT CONSTITUENCIES IN CCT DIFFUSION

This article has addressed the issue of the lack of specification in how diffused knowledge is created and negotiated by applying the concept of instrument constituencies recently developed in the field of comparative public policy. The concept helps us better understand the transnational diffusion of programs, utilizing a case study of the second-generation diffusion of CCTs from Latin America to Asia. Specifically, the case study presented here shows how instrument constituencies involving both national and international actors shaped the policy elements of CCT that were diffused and adopted in the Philippines. In doing so, the article shows that policy diffusion is, in reality, a highly political and actor-centric process that involves both international organizations and domestic political actors interacting as collective agents promoting the adoption and directing the implementation of public policies. While the implemented program was perceived as shielded from domestic political interventions, the diffusion process can be characterized as a process of putting together and pulling apart the knowledge created around the preferred instrument, which in itself is a political process. International and domestic actors find congruence in the promotion of a preferred policy instrument (in this case, CCTs) and both form highly influential instrument constituencies in supporting their goals and the programs to achieve them. The article also highlights the role of consultants, learning platforms and knowledge products in the policy transfer process, an aspect largely ignored by existing literature.

In 2004, Anthony Nedley (2004) urged policy transfer literature to move beyond the geographic bias and heavy process-orientation of research to examining South-South learning and diffusion of program content. This article heeds this call to further advance the understanding of policy transfer by unravelling the experiences of developing countries and unbundling the 'policy' being transferred into its crucial elements. The article's contribution to literature can be situated in both the policy transfer framework and the concept of instrument constituencies. Instead of viewing policy transfer as a one-off, unidirectional process, it can be seen as a succession of drawing

lessons facilitated by policy consultants, learning platforms and knowledge products. Through the successive iteration of the transfer mechanism, instrument constituencies can assemble the knowledge base of policies that can be further ‘pushed’ to future recipients. This involves putting together various goals and instruments based on ‘success stories’ under a unifying idea. This is similar to the findings of Jong and Edelenbos (2007:690) who, based on participant observation, described policy transfer as a “process of absorbing appealing labels for policy solutions” based on comparisons with neighboring jurisdictions. In this case however, it is not the recipient or learner who distills the lessons, rather, the instrument constituency comes up with appealing labels that can serve as ‘focal points’ during negotiation of the transfer with the recipient. The resulting diffused policy or program can appear as a patchwork of successful elements of programs implemented by a variety of governments in a variety of contexts. As shown by the case study discussed above, the broader policy idea came from Brazil, but the policy instruments and on-the-ground measures were borrowed largely from Mexico and Colombia, owing in part to the policy consultant and active promotion by the World Bank. This observation reflects the case of Indonesia (Kwon and Kim, 2015) that equally benefitted from similar transfer mechanisms. However, it is not the case of countries that were directly influenced by the Brazilian model such as Ghana (Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018). Thus, instrument constituencies can be seen as critical in overcoming ‘learning problems’ such as translating practical experience into rules of thumb or decision-making heuristics (Casey and Gold, 2005).

Moreover, the concept of instrument constituency better captures the phenomenon of a pluralized set of actors involved in the transfer activities, going beyond the simple bilateral process documented in existing literature. Members of the instrument constituencies are seen to circulate around the world, as was the case with Mr. Castañeda, similar to what Porto de Oliveira (2017) observed about ‘ambassadors’ of participatory budgeting. Different from Porto de Oliveira, who considers these actors only as individuals, in our point of view they are part of a community united by the goal of promoting a favored instrument. Together with international organizations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, they coalesce around the instrument, with the motivation of establishing support and maintaining momentum (Simons and Voß, 2017). The transfer activities and mechanisms identified here, such as networking (Porto de Oliveira, 2017) and learning platforms (Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018), involve governments through formal state cooperation (as in this case in the Philippines), and the governments themselves become agents of policy transfer. When facing policy transfer as a process of successive learning facilitated by an instrument constituency, the transfer activities can be considered as a function of multidirectional, mutual learning (Constantine and Shankland, 2017; Foli, Béland and Fenwick, 2018).

Our case study revealed that the mixing and matching of policy elements can be successful, but it remains an empirical question whether such a process can also lead to failures. Viewed from a policy design perspective, developing a policy mix requires substantial capacity to avoid sub-optimal outcomes from inconsistent instruments and incoherent goals (Kern and Howlett, 2009; Rayner and Howlett, 2004), which can be an unintended consequence of the lesson drawing activities of instrument constituencies. More research is needed in understanding how these actors actually choose among the menu of policy examples to be identified as ‘lessons’ or ‘best practices’. It can be meaningful to examine

the knowledge products themselves to tease out the policy elements that instrument constituencies push, and how they arrived at recommending such elements.

This discussion shows that, while existing analysis ignore activities related to knowledge production or downplay ‘norm brokerage’, examining policy diffusion processes through the lens of the instrument constituency conception provides an alternative for understanding the processes underlying the cross-national transfer of CCT. Taking such an approach allows for a clearer and better understanding of the nature of the processes and actors’ activities involved in the transnational diffusion of a policy such as CCT. Although further research on the role of instrument constituencies in policy diffusion in other sectors and cases is needed, the case examined here reveals that the concept offers a great deal of potential in enhancing our understanding of this heretofore under-theorized and under-studied “black box”.

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