

Policy transfer: Definition

- Policy transfer can be understood as a process by which ‘knowledge about how policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas **in one political setting (past or present)** is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas **in another political setting**’
- Policy transfer studies were **originally developed in the USA** as a means by which to **explain the adoption of policy throughout the federal system.**

Dimensions of Policy Transfer: Place & Time

- The transfer of public policies **from one country or jurisdiction to another** has a long lineage.
 - Example: In the sixth century, representatives of the Japanese court visited China to examine its educational system, resulting in the establishment of the first national Japanese education system.
- Policy transfer can also **occur across time**, whereby policies which were ‘rejected at one period become feasible in another’.

Example: Open data portals

<https://seffaf.ankara.bel.tr/>

The screenshot displays the Seffaf Ankara open data portal. The browser address bar shows the URL seffaf.ankara.bel.tr. The page features a sidebar menu on the left with the following items:

- Modül Seçiniz
- Kazı Çalışma Noktaları
- Tarımsal Sulama Kanalları
- Sel Su Baskını Riskli Noktalar
- Nüfus ve Demografi
- Hava Durumu Raporu(30 Günlük)
- Cadde Sokak Yetki Sınırları
- Mor Haritam
- Ulaşım Biniş Verileri
- Başkent 153 Çağrı Merkezi
- Çalışma Noktaları
- Sosyal Yardım Alan Sayısı
- Wifi Alanları
- ASKİ (Sayaç-Pil) Başvuruları
- Kent Rehberi
- Bisiklet Yolları ve İstasyonları
- Doğa Yürüyüşü Güzergahları
- Belediye Önemli Noktalar
- Ankara Tek Yürek
- Mobil/Uzaktan Sayaç Okuma
- Baraj Doluluk Oranları

The main content area shows a satellite map of Ankara, Turkey, with numerous data points represented by blue and purple icons. A search bar is visible at the top right of the map area, and a "VERİ İNDİR" (Download Data) button is located in the top right corner. The map also includes a scale bar at the bottom left showing "Ölçek 1: 1564147" and a logo for "BİLGİ İŞLEM DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI" at the bottom right.

Why transfer policy?

- It is becoming increasingly untenable for policy-makers to operate **autarkically**, eschewing any ideas from outside and following a particular national 'way'.
- Policy actors can draw on **both positive and negative lessons** from other jurisdictions, when it comes to the **design of new policies** (and the **reform of old policies**).

Sources of policy transfer

- Policy-makers are not only looking to exploit traditional policy ‘mines’ (such as the USA, or the UK).
- They also examine new examples from countries which are adopting innovative approaches to policy problems, including **non-democracies** (such as China) and **rapidly developing countries** (such as India).

Example: Virtual senators in Chile



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `gobierno.uai.cl/investigacion/senador-virtual/`. The page header includes navigation links for 'Estudiantes', 'Alumni', 'Académicos', 'Internacional', 'Bibliotecas', 'UAI en 360°', and 'A un click'. A search bar is located on the right. The main navigation menu includes 'La Escuela', 'Postgrados', 'Educación Continua', 'Académicos e Investigación', 'Centros', 'Revista Economía y Política', and 'Noticias y Agenda'. The page title is 'Escuela de Gobierno' and the logo of 'UNIVERSIDAD ADOLFO IBÁÑEZ' is visible.

Senador Virtual

📌 Área de publicación	Política
📄 Tipo de publicación	Working Paper
📅 Fecha de publicación	2019
👤 Autores	- Mayra Feddersen, Luis Santana

16 años de Crowdlaw en el parlamento chileno

Chile posee desde el año 2003 una plataforma digital de participación ciudadana,

Reasons of policy transfer

1. Coercion
2. Policy learning, if there are similar problems facing policy-makers in different jurisdictions
 - Few problems occur in one country alone.
 - Comparative analysis can provide a **substitute for experimental approaches** to policy development

Example: Coercion in policy transfer

← → ↻ reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/argentina-announces-over-1-bln-credit-world-bank-



REUTERS®

World ▾

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Legal ▾

Breakingviews

Technology ▾

Inv

Sustainable Finance & Reporting

Argentina announces over \$1 billion in credit from World Bank, IDB

Reuters

June 29, 2023 3:28 AM GMT+3 · Updated 4 months ago

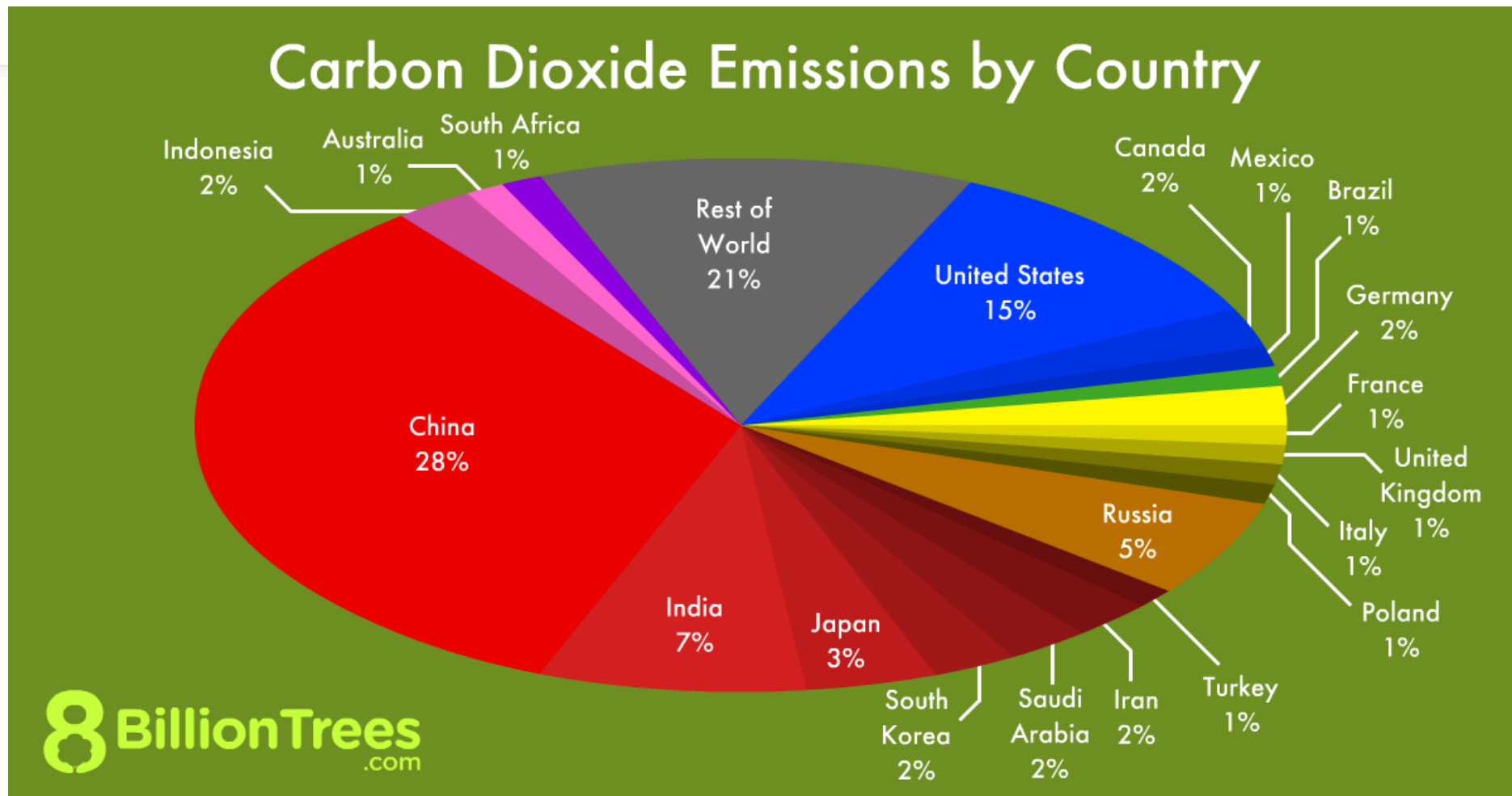


A participant stands near a logo of World Bank at the International Monetary Fund - World Bank Annual Meeting 2018 in Nusa Dua, Bali.

Reasons of policy transfer

- 3. Policies need to be transferred **where problems span jurisdictions** and **require a coordinated response**.
- Many contemporary ‘problems of national government are **intermestic**, combining both **international** and **domestic** influences’.
- Examples: Climate change, international crime

Example: Need for coordinated action for common problems



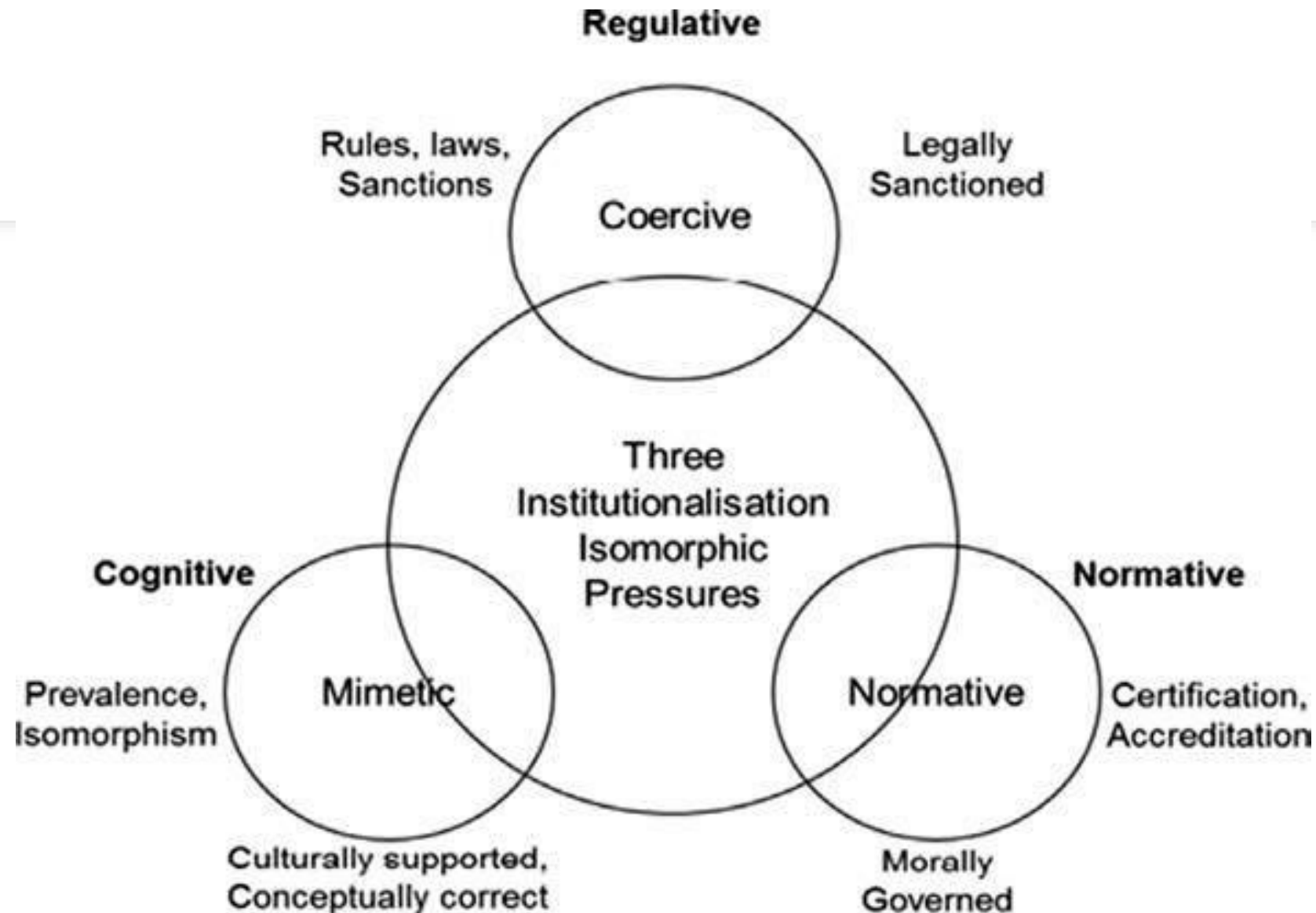
Types of policy transfer

- There are two types of policy transfer: **Coercive and non-coercive.**
- Coercive transfer refers to the adoption of a particular policy following **financial pressure** (either the possibility of extra funds, or the threat of removal of funds), or the threat of military, diplomatic or legal action.
- Examples: Imposition of policies **during colonial rule or occupation**, as well as situations where democratic nations are required to comply with the rules of institutions of which they are members such as the EU and the WTO.

Types of policy transfer

- Non-coercive transfer occurs where policies are introduced which are similar to those in other countries, but without any pressures to do so.
- This may be because of policy learning, or
- During periods of uncertainty when policy-makers are unsure about the appropriate model to adopt.
 - Example: COVID policies.

Policy transfer and isomorphism (eşbiçimlilik)



What is transferred?

- Many things:
 - Ideas
 - Processes
 - Laws and regulations
 - Personnel systems
 - Organizations/Institutions
 - Particular policy model/systems

Who transfers?

- Governments
 - Example: colonizer vs. colonized nations' governments
- International/supranational organizations
 - Example: Creation of a single market in the EU supporting policy transfer and convergence
- Think tanks
- Policy entrepreneurs
 - International consultants, academics, professional groups, such as international lawyers or economists
- Advocacy coalitions: Policy networks or communities

Policy learning: Definition

- A relatively **enduring alteration in behavior** that **results from experience**.
- Usually this alteration is conceptualized as a change in response made in reaction to some perceived stimulus.
- The **subspecies** of policy learning include **lesson-drawing, best practice and benchmarking**.

Example: Privatization of Prisons

theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jun/16/us-prisons-jail-private-healthcare-companies-profit

Welcome to Jail Inc: how private companies make money off US prisons

In a bid to cut costs, more state prisons and county jails are adding healthcare to the growing list of services that are outsourced to for-profit companies

Rupert Neate *in Austin, Texas*

@RupertNeate

Thu 16 Jun 2016 12:00 CEST



Private healthcare companies banking on US prison system Guardian

Getting locked up is unlikely to be good for your health but it's "terrific, terrific" business for the booming private industry supplying doctors and

Lesson-drawing

- Lesson-drawing enables policy-makers to move beyond **trial-and-error based learning** developed from their own experience and conjectures about what 'might' happen, towards the **direct observation of programs already in practice in other settings**.
- Lesson-drawing **similar to reverse engineering**.

Best practice and benchmarking

- Best practice and benchmarking depart from lesson-drawing by involving the **measurement of different countries' policies against each other** (rather than 'merely' dissecting and then copying these policies).
- In best practices, one specific policy approach is identified, operating in **one particular nation**, and promoted to others as the most effective.
- Benchmarking, on the other hand, enables the **comparison** of different policy approaches with each other, without necessarily normatively labelling any one approach as superior to all others.

Example of benchmarking: UN E-Government Survey

← → ↻ publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Region-Information



UN E-Government Knowledgebase

ABOUT

DATA

REPORTS

EVENTS

RESOURCES

FAQ

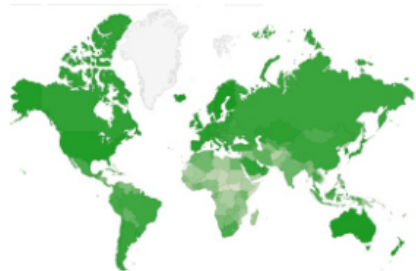
CONTACT

Country Selector

View Country Data

Select a country to view its data profile.

Select Country



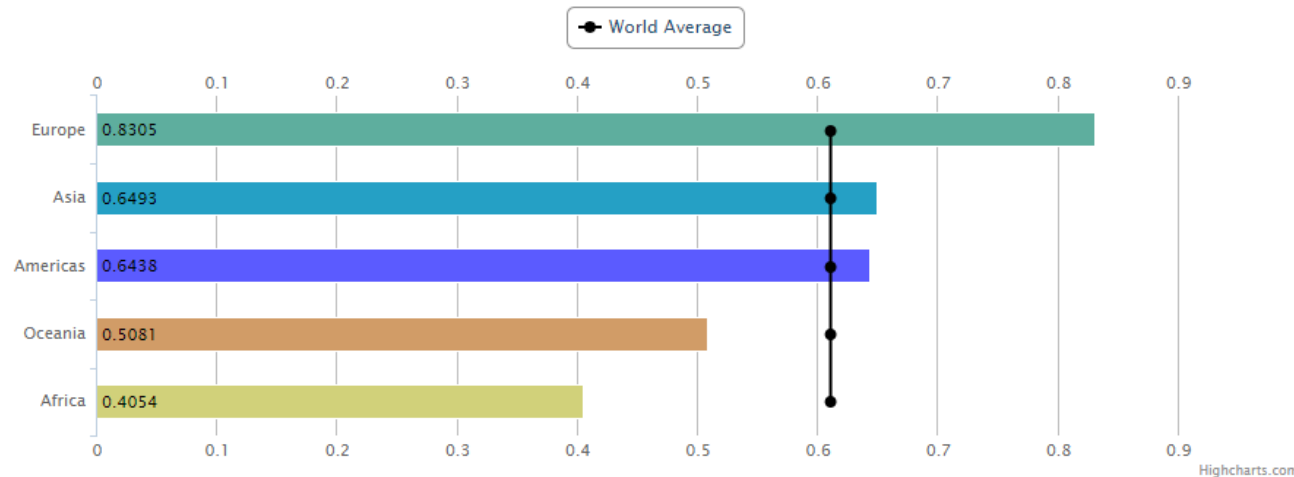
[Browse country data »](#)

Regional Data

Year: 2022 | Data: E-Government Development Index | Regions: 5 selected

Country Groups: Choose Country Groups | Update | Clear

2022 E-Government Development Index



[Download 2022 Data in Excel/CSV format](#)

What is learned?

- Policy means
 - Policy tools, strategies, tactics, etc.
- Policy goals or ends
 - Specific objectives
- **Does the learning change policy means or policy goals?**

What enables learning?

- Proximity
 - Transfer is more likely to occur, and to be successful, when countries are proximate, either 'geographically, ideologically or culturally/ language-wise
- Power
 - There may be little choice involved in the process of policy learning, if it is difficult to maintain an alternative system to a large or powerful neighbor.
- Competition
 - A desire to 'catch up' with the state being copied

Barriers to policy learning

1. Nature of the policy:

- Example: Policies that involve a **high degree of redistribution of resources** or policies that **involve large-scale changes** in policymakers' belief systems are seldom transplanted between jurisdictions.

2. Institutional Resistance

- Policy transfer is unlikely to occur when existing institutional structures resist against it.

Barriers to policy learning

3. Too many existing commitments

- The «wicked context» problem.

4. Financial constraints

5. Cultural and language differences

- This may inhibit the discovery of possible lessons but also lead to the inappropriate transfer of policies.

6. Lack of time and effort of the policy-makers

Partial/incomplete policy transfer and learning

- **Hybrid transfers** are more likely than pure transplants.
 - Under democratic conditions, a variety of domestic political, interest and bureaucratic groups try to alter any proposed policy before it is implemented.
- Only certain aspects of a policy (in particular, those most easily explained, or the most high-profile) may be transferred, missing out, potentially, on some of the conditions necessary for its operation.
 - Learning can therefore be **‘shallow’ or ‘tactical’, instead of a ‘deeper’ approach** required for successful policy change.

Policy learning and belief systems (Sabatier, 1987)

- The process of policy-making can be understood as **a competition between coalitions of causes**, each one being constituted of actors coming from a multitude of institutions (leaders of interest groups, administrative official agencies, legislators, researchers, and journalists) **which share a system of beliefs** linked to public action and who engage in a concerted effort to translate the elements of their system of beliefs into a public policy.
- Sabatier's pluralist approach suggests that different groups will share differing belief systems, and that the results of competition between them will affect policy change.

Policy learning and belief systems

Perceived cause–effect relationship between different concepts

- **Deep core beliefs** (critical **normative** beliefs)
 - Example: All people are equal.
- **Policy core beliefs** (fundamental **glue** of coalitions)
 - Example: Man-dominated institutions don't treat man & woman as equals.
- **Secondary beliefs**
 - Equal pay for equal work between man and woman



Example: Gun Control Beliefs

- Deep core beliefs (critical normative beliefs)
 - Freedom of choice
- Policy core beliefs (fundamental glue of coalitions)
 - Freedom to own a gun
- Secondary beliefs
 - Guns ensure personal and societal safety

Multiplicity of terms in policy transfer



Policy learning



Lesson-drawing



Best-practices



Benchmarking

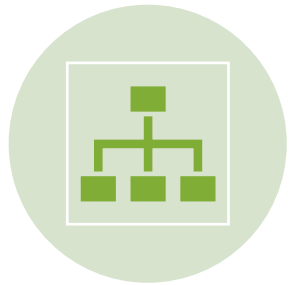


Policy diffusion



Policy
convergence

Policy learning vs. Policy transfer



Policy learning is analytically separate from policy transfer.



Not all policy transfer need involve learning



Not all learning need involve policy transfer.



This is for two reasons:

Reasons of policy learning \neq policy transfer

1. Policy transfer can be **coercive**, involving the imposition of different policy models on governments by other governments or international organizations.
 - As a result, it appears rather strange to describe clearly coerced policy transfer (such as the imposition of the Westminster model on British colonies) as a type of policy ‘learning’.
 - **Policy ‘learning’ is uncoerced adoption (or non-adoption)** of policy.
 - At the same time, however, it should be acknowledged that policy learning can be subject to many of the **power imbalances** that affect coercive policy
 - Policy examples tend to be ‘taught’ by well-resourced actors, and ‘learned’ by the less powerful – despite the potential for learning in a variety of directions.

Reasons of policy learning \neq policy transfer

2. Policy learning can involve decisions **not to adopt particular policies**, as well as to adopt them.

- This is because '**negative lessons**' can be discovered through learning, which lead to the abandonment of previous plans.
- It would be difficult to conceive of such 'non-adoption' as a type of 'policy transfer'.

Policy diffusion

- Both policy learning and transfer can be viewed as examples of ‘diffusion’.
- Policy diffusion encompasses any **following of or reaction to** another country’s policy resulting from coercion, competition, learning or emulation.
- Studies of diffusion may differentiate between **‘early’ and ‘late’ adopters**.

Policy diffusion and convergence

- Diffusion **may lead to convergence** but, equally, different countries' policies may converge in the absence of cross-national processes.
- Convergence can be separated into '**weak**' **convergence**, where one country adopts the policy of another country, or '**strong**' **convergence**, when two countries move towards a third policy model.