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# Governing global policy: what IPE can learn from public policy?

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## ABSTRACT



As the state has become more susceptible to global pathologies, public policy scholars have found increasingly common ground with their IPE cousins. The development of these relatively young fields of study – increasingly they are sub-disciplines – has been commensurate but rarely intersecting. Yet contemporary maelstroms of global politics, economics, health, and security, span borders with ease, and increasingly force us to recognise, reconsider, and reconceptualise the overlapping realms of the national and international. In so doing, we must overcome the disciplinary distinctions. In this article, we traverse the prominent in-built disciplinary imperatives and methodologies that have kept these two disciplines from concerted inter-operability or, at least, interchange of theories and concepts. To do so, we begin by presenting a brief overview of the conceptual pedigrees and trajectories of these disciplines, before drawing attention to the prominent prevailing overlaps, ‘trespasses’ and tensions as they specifically relate to policy convergence and diffusion, and policy transfer. We proceed to specify a reconciliation of these tensions through, in the third section, a brief study of the growth of global administrations, administrators, and administrative spaces. This, we contend, stands as a paradigm case of how reconciled IPE/public policy concepts can produce enhanced theoretical and substantive insights into the transnationalising political world.

## KEYWORDS

Transnationalism; public policy; IPE; interdisciplinary research; global policy

## Introduction

Traditionally, mainstream scholars of public policy and public administration have been inwardly focused on the state, and concerned largely with how the architects, the architecture and the personnel of the state affect the determination and delivery of public goods. As a field of scholarship, public policy has its roots early in the 20th century, some seeing it emerging out of the ‘policy sciences’ approach from the 1940s (DeLeon, 2006) in postwar United States. Its progenitor, Harold D. Lasswell (1950), anticipated the emergence of a ‘policy science of democracy’ that could safeguard against the ‘garrison-police state’ – such as those responsible for Europe’s devastation during the war. A professionalised cadre of public policy specialists, he hoped, would establish

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technocratic solutions to societal challenges while conforming to core liberal democratic norms. And so in its origins and ongoing practice, as well as its scholarship privileges, public policy scholarship has held fast to Westphalian versions of state sovereign authority within cartographic borders wherein the primary unit of analysis is *the state*. For some this represents a ‘Westphalian conceptual cage’ (Stone, 2008), yet this traditional model is slowly giving way to heterodox approaches that recognise policy-making as an activity that can occur *beyond* the myriad branches of the executive and beyond state-based venues: through quasi-autonomous agencies; law and regulation; funding priorities and practices; and, policy partnership with business and industry or other non-state actors. Yet this wave of influences on policy that exist outside and beyond remain largely marginal to public policy.

International Political Economy (IPE), by contrast, has been far less state-bound due to its later academic genesis in the 1970s that was in step with globalisation and growing economic interdependence (Broome, 2014). The state is still the primary unit of analysis in IPE. Nevertheless, public policy has treated the state as its unit of analysis for *intra*-state analysis or for comparative analysis whereas IPE has more successfully considered international dynamics between and above states. Some notable IPE scholars have also sought to incorporate intra-state processes in their inter-state theories. Robert Putnam’s Two-Level Game Theory (1988) is a prominent example of a model that views international negotiations between states as consisting of simultaneous negotiations at both the domestic and the international level. Fundamentally, however, the field of IPE is concerned with ‘the complex linkages between economic and political activity at the level of international affairs’ (Cohen, 2007, p. 197), even if from that start-point the field cleaves into two ‘schools’, one tending towards empiricism, the other critical and normative. Yet, for IPE literature, there are demands for change in the discipline’s focal points. Keohane, in a commentary on the IPE discipline in 2009, lamented that ‘it pays too little attention both to how interests are constructed and how policies are subject to processes of international diffusion’ (2009, p. 34). Others have argued that understanding the shifting structures of power in state policy-making processes – of no small complexity – has been a blindspot within IPE, and so more recently Broome and Seabrooke identify a need ‘to rethink how we have been trained to identify authority, and not to reify particular actors as permanent holders of it’ (2020, *firstview*).

Even if both fields of inquiry are very likely to be accommodated in the same Department of Governance or Politics or found within a School of Public and International Affairs, there are some important distinctions. First, each field has its own set of numerous journals where in each of the two fields, scholars have developed their own distinct language. Second, conference gatherings can be entirely separate scholarly silos. Third, the curriculum content of graduate degrees in public policy and IPE are quite different when it comes to reading lists, subject matter and questions. Fourth, recruitment procedures, composition of selection committees alongside tenure or promotion prospects can magnify and institutionally entrench these first three differences within colleges and universities in terms of how scholars identify and position themselves in professional interactions and co-author choices. Fifth, each field tends to be consumed by its own debates: There are significant differences between the North American and European IPE traditions. In public policy, the postwar development of the American ‘policy sciences’ is notably different

in formal analytic style from the older British empirical ‘policy studies’ approach and also the more eclectic continental European traditions infused by Law. Finally, as we discuss below, and notwithstanding exceptions that can be observed in both contexts, we posit that IPE is more structurally oriented towards macro-level developments, whereas public policy tends to be more process oriented on agency.

That there is a need and appetite for mutual introspection between IPE and public policy, we believe, is beyond doubt. However, the apparent disciplinary ‘divide’ between IPE and public policy presents us with concerns of both a disciplinary and methodological nature. It is a disciplinary concern insofar as the research priorities of public policy and IPE scholars converge on similar substantive research problems and thus might be better viewed as over-lapping fields of study. It will soon become not just useful but imperative to establish a common conceptual *lingua franca* to avoid replication and redundancy in programmes of research.

This paper seeks to provoke early thinking in pursuit of achieving some inter-disciplinary harmony. It is structured into three parts. First, a general discussion of the ‘policy sciences’ or ‘policy studies’ responses and articulations of globalisation and its impacts on public policy. Second, we discuss current ‘academic trespassing’ of the two fields in one area of their shared conceptual terrain. Within our space constraints, we focus on commonalities through the analytic lens of ‘policy convergence/diffusion/transfer’ albeit recognising other avenues for future research and engagement. Here our theoretical contribution to the Special Issue draws out how IPE and public policy research questions operate at different levels of analysis at the meso-, micro- and macro-levels. We suggest these analytical levels produce different sorts of explanations. IPE scholars are often disposed towards structural explanations, while public policy scholars tend towards agential explanations, the corollary of which is that IPE scholarship emphasizes outcomes while public policy scholars focus on agential motivations in decision-making. Third, we outline new conceptual developments with recent scholarship on ‘global public policy’, ‘transgovernmentalism’ and ‘transnational administration’ where there is fruitful prospects for interoperability between IPE and public policy. Here, we focus on the conceptual tools and analytic frameworks that Policy Studies has to offer in understanding ‘global policy’ and its governance, and what IPE might ‘learn’ from policy studies.

## 1. Public policy approaches in an era of economic globalisation

The study of Public Policy is dominated by methodological statism. Analysis has addressed either policy and administration inside the nation-state or it has compared policy between states. It is the case that *comparative* public policy has a strong scholarly basis with extensive comparative studies of European welfare states and OECD nations, the Anglosphere polities as well as comparisons of the policies of developing countries (Legrand, 2021). However, the mainstream approach has been to compare what happened inside states and to treat the ‘state’ as a sealed container with impervious walls and distinct interests, replicating the Cold War era notion of realists that cast states as ‘closed, impermeable’ billiard balls in a cause-and-effect world politics (Wolfers, 1962).

While recognising the lack of a consensus around definitions of public policy, many of the leading textbooks situate government as the key or determining actor in policy making. For instance, for Michael Howlett and M Ramesh: ‘Public policy is, at its most simple, a choice made by a government to undertake some course of action’ (2003, p. 3). Similarly, Thomas Dye specifies policy is ‘whatever governments choose to do or not do’ (our emphasis, Dye, 1972, p. 2). Thomas A. Birkland’s (2001) book *An Introduction to the Policy Process*, lists a number of definitions that tend to refer to public policy as the actions and intentions of government while Paul Cairney’s *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues* (2011, p. 23–25) also holds to a set of understandings that revolve around the intentions of government.

Notwithstanding this scholarly focus on the governments, well before the end of last century the concept of government exerting sovereign power consistently over nation-state policy processes was fraying. The uptick in transnational economic, political and social structural forces – conflated as globalization – has introduced a suite of challenges to the policy making autonomy of the state. Sometimes a constraint, at other times a facility, the gradual onset of ‘globalisation’ marks a distinctive break between modern public administration and that of thirty years ago. For some the transformation of perception and discourse of globalization (Hay & Rosamond, 2002) remains a chief referent of contemporary policy-making within and beyond the state. Yet, the response of policy scholars has been primarily to evaluate or weigh the impact of global pressures on the functioning of the state or on decision-making processes. Public policy has come under critique for its tardiness to address new venues of governance *beyond* the nation-state (*inter alia*, Coen & Pegram, 2015; Stone & Ladi, 2015).

By contrast, IPE has been at the centre of the debate and research surrounding globalization. IPE scholars are distinct in their attention to international trade, international development, international finance and global markets where power is understood to be simultaneously economic and political. Similar to other fields of inquiry, an area of contestation concerns how to define IPE. We do not enter this debate but draw on Andre Broome who describes IPE as an ‘evolving field’ and, with respect to the theme of this special issue, who notes that ‘until the global financial crisis in 2008–09 made a mockery of such disciplinary limits, issues related to housing finance systems were largely seen as peripheral “domestic” issues for IPE scholars’ (2014, p. 7). Correspondingly, IPE has also become more interested in ‘everyday’ politics and policy (Hobson & Seabrooke, 2007). Many public goods that have traditionally been of topical interest to public policy – education, health, pensions, water – have become attractive to a broader scholarly base as those public goods become commodified for international trade or become cross-border policy issues due to the movement of people, goods and technologies forcing the field of public policy to also evolve and explain the transgovernmental and transnational policy dynamics that result (e.g. Kaasch & Martens, 2015).

The academic boundaries of both IPE and public policy are porous and osmotic. Both are interdisciplinary fields of study, and both are concerned with the intersection of globalization and the state(s). They each draw upon the distinct academic fields of political science and economics and in varying degrees and combinations upon international relations (IR), sociology, law, geography and history. For some in these fields, academic trespassing is not simply a choice but an inability to do otherwise (Hirschman, 1981). There are many scholars with an academic foot in both public policy and IPE (or

IR). They include Frank Biermann (2009), Phil Cerny (2001), Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002), Tony Porter (2005), Karsten Ronit (2006), Grace Skogstad (2011), Xu and Weller (2009) amongst many others. Yet, they are part of a minority – although this is a minority growing in number and seniority. A constraining factor in building a career in the academy ‘requires immersion in a speciality with outputs (articles, books, talks) that win the approval of peers’ (Marer, 2016). For many, academic trespassing can be deleterious to promotion and tenure.

As the size of policy studies and policy sciences communities grew within the academy alongside undergraduate and graduate programmes in public policy and management, and especially further institutionalisation with Schools of public policy throughout first the US and then many other OECD countries, this field of scholarship cohered around its own journals, departments, conferences and professional associations. This may have created an institutional and intellectual ‘comfort zone’ around the core of public policy, precluding prospects for regular critical engagement with IPE, and towards questions of international public affairs. Nevertheless, there have been criticisms within public administration, public management and public policy scholarship to take greater interest in global governance (*inter alia*, Hou, Ni, Poocharoen, Yang, & Zhao, 2011; Kim, Ashley, & Lambright, 2014; Walker, 2011). Instead of focusing on individual scholars, or communities of researchers, who choose to traverse disciplinary boundaries (rather than oscillate around a disciplinary canon), our discussion takes a focus on certain concepts that travel and which are picked up and applied within specific fields of inquiry. Rather than noting academic trespassing by agents, this is recognising processes of cross-pollination between Public Policy and IPE, as well as other fields, where different permutations result. For instance, public policy has developed extensive intellectual capital in concepts of network governance, on the one hand, and considerable theoretical work on processes of policy transfer and diffusion, on the other, both of which have significant relevance and resonance in IPE.

## 2. The dialogues of IPE and public policy: convergence, diffusion and transfer

Theoretical ‘dialogue’ between IPE and public policy is not only possible, but in fact fruitful interchange has already commenced. For IPE, work concerning *policy convergence* and *diffusion* have cohered around the structural dimensions of the global spread of domestic policies, and the consequences of that spread for the international system. On the other hand, it is public *policy transfer* scholars that have pushed forward knowledge of how policies are adopted and shared between situated agents. Scholarly interchanges regarding policy convergence (and divergence), policy diffusion and policy transfer (and more recently, policy translation<sup>1</sup>) represent less of a ‘lacuna’ in the dialogue between public policy and IPE and more a ‘messy inter-disciplinarity’ already taking place, with IPE approaches more likely to be found utilising diffusion and convergence approaches (see, for example: Meseguer, 2005; Simmons & Elkins, 2004). Rather than itemising those

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<sup>1</sup>This cross-pollination has also taken root in political geography where the language is more about policy mobilities and flows (Peck & Theodore, 2010).

scholars who do so, and the cases they employ, we focus here on the different methodological ramifications of such approaches to suggest that IPE and public policy deviate not simply on levels of governance.

### ***Structural imperatives of national decision-making: convergence and diffusion***

The literature on policy convergence and diffusion operates as under-labourers for IPE work, providing a conceptual language for how, why and when structural political change occurs and policies spread. The focus of the policy convergence literature is to explain ‘the tendency of societies to grow more alike, to develop similarities in structures, processes and performance’ (Kerr, 1983, p. 3; see also Knill, 2005). This work originates from industrial-economic development studies in the 1960s but became mobilised more broadly on public policy by Inkeles (1980) and Inkeles & Sirowy (1983). Bennett describes the processes of structural convergence as four possible channels: policy emulation; elite networking and policy communities; policy harmonisation; and policy penetration (1991, p. 219).

Relatedly, policy diffusion is deployed to posit the patterns of economic and political decision-making; with respect to, for example, economic liberalization (Simmons & Elkins, 2004; See also Knill, 2005; Levi-Faur & Jordana, 2005). These scholars seek to explain how the patterns and processes of inter-state learning, competition, coercion, and emulation facilitate (or possibly hinder) the transit of policies across the world, which fall into the category of ‘innovation’ in this literature:

Diffusion of innovations refers to the spread of abstract ideas and concepts, technical information, and actual practices within a social system, where the spread denotes flow or movement from a source to an adopter, typically via communication and influence (Wejnert, 2002, p. 297; also Gilardi & Wasserfallen, 2019, p. 1245).

Conventional diffusion theorists focus upon three fundamental features of policy innovation: its internal determinants; regional diffusion; and national interaction (Berry, 1994). Internal determinants of innovation emerge from the impulses, imperatives or decision-making that occur separate to the international sphere; regional diffusion refers to the adoption of a policy innovation by inter-state proximity, while national interaction is, by contrast, a more proactive notion of diffusion, whereby the number of interactions between different national policy officials is seen to be proportional to the likelihood that one or more policies will be exchanged. Common to all strands of diffusion theory is ‘the existence of transnational communication channels’ (Tews, Busch, & Jörgens, 2003, 572), yet lacking across all is attention to the political foundations of ideas and their communication. As Gilardi and Wasserfallen observe of diffusion research: ‘the political side of diffusion is not clearly articulated and remains in the background’ (2019, p. 1246).

These two approaches have differing explanatory emphases: policy convergence analysis seeks to explain the trajectory of states’ decision-making, policy diffusion analysis seeks to explain how policy innovations become widely used as inputs to state decision-making. In addition, national convergence is understood to be a product of mechanisms of diffusion as well as non-diffusion mechanisms (e.g. policy learning, transfer and networks), while diffusion is also seen to be caused by those same policy processes. Notwithstanding these differences, the literature on policy convergence and policy

diffusion share important features. First, they each seek to explain how international macro-political structures transform domestic policy-making, and how; second, for both diffusion and convergence analysis, the processes of policy transfer and policy learning are regarded as possible contributors to convergence and diffusion, respectively.

### ***Policy transfer: beyond structural diffusionism***

For the policy studies literature, policy transfer analysts have been at the forefront of efforts to capture the transnational influences on domestic policy-making. This literature grew out of critiques of the ‘policy innovation diffusion’ and its attendant focus on institutional context as the key explanatory variable for the spread of innovative policy practices (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). These scholars were critical of diffusion studies because ‘[their] fascination is with process, not substance’ – a failure to open the ‘black box’ of policy-making to reveal who makes policies, under what conditions, with what information and authority and purpose. The early wave of policy transfer literature was thus stimulated via critique of the diffusion literature and its relative neglect of agency and intra-state politics.

The policy transfer framework put forward by Dolowitz and Marsh draws attention to (i) the constellation of different actors involved, which might be ‘elected officials, political parties; bureaucrats/civil servants; pressure groups;’ policy entrepreneurs; experts; and supra-national institutions’ (1996, p. 345) or ‘transfer agents’ (Stone, 1999); (ii) the content of policy transferred, which might include ‘policy goals, policy content, policy instruments, policy programs, institutions, ideologies, ideas and attitudes and negative lessons’ (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 12).; (iii) the extent of transfer, including copying, emulation, combinations of policies, and inspiration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 13).; (iv) the coercive or voluntaristic incentives of transfer; (v) its constituent mechanisms and processes; (vi) and whether the process is related to success or failure.

This model draws extensively from the lesson-drawing approach of Richard Rose. It holds policy officials as central to the process in which ‘*knowledge about* policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and ideas in another political system’ (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 5). Dolowitz and Marsh suggest policy transfer as less focused on patterns of transfer, which is the concern of policy diffusion analysis, and more applied towards decision-making agents whose agency pushes and pulls policy ideas from one jurisdiction to another: the ‘strategic decisions taken by actors inside and outside government’ (1996). Crucially, these agents are not understood as rational-actors, but as decision-makers acting “with limited information, within the confines of ‘bounded rationality’ (2000, p. 14). Moreover, the emphasis on agency does not dismiss the importance of institutional context in which these operate, which diffusion theorists do indeed account for, but instead allows us to better identify the different paths and processes by which policies ideas move, and to further understand how these interact with institutional imperatives to produce differential outcomes, which remain important mediators of transfer processes.

The popularity and fungibility of the policy transfer framework have been demonstrated through the wide range of scholars deploying the policy transfer framework to explain, or make sense of the innumerable cases of cross-national policy transfer including,



prominently, EU and OECD policy (Bomberg & Peterson, 2000; Radaelli, 2000; Legrand & Vas, 2014), and welfare policy in the 1990s and 2000s (Dolowitz, 2003; Peck & Theodore, 2010). Nevertheless, the policy transfer framework has evolved in its application over the past two decades – partly in response to its critics. More recent innovations in this space, such as that offered by McCann and Ward (2013, p. 8) recognizes ‘policies and governance practices are gatherings or relational assemblages of elements and resources fixed and mobile pieces of expertise, regulation, institutional capacities, etc., from close by and far away’. As such, in preference to *transfer* these scholars refer to policy *mobilities* which stresses: ‘fluidity, mobilisation and deterritorialisation, but, necessarily also about “moorings”, stabilities and territorialisations’ (p.9). Others have sought to deepen understanding of how *policy content* is transferred, resulting in directions such as *policy translation* (Stone, 2012) or *policy mutation* (Peck & Theodore, 2010). Rather than signaling its demise, moving the policy transfer framework away from its early roots is a sign of the rude health of the framework and the extant enthusiasm for its application to the ‘black box’ of policy-making.

### ***Policy diffusion & policy transfer (in IPE and public policy)***

As suggested above, the inter-field dialogue is already apparent between these literatures. Conveniently, because of the clear delineation of research focus and common conceptual lingua franca, the dialogue has already produced useful engagement. For example, diffusion theorists accommodate the role played by the policy transfer process. Tews et al. (2003) suggest that inter-state policy transfer opportunities emerge from ‘Economic, political and societal linkages’, and these ‘differ with regard to the dominant mechanism by which policy transfer occurs’ (Tews et al., 2003, p. 572). On this framing, policy transfer is presented as a *mechanism* of diffusion that might be triggered by exogenous stimulæ. On this view, ‘ideational competition’ drives states’ desire to be seen as progressive and as ‘up-to-date’ as their contemporaries (Tews et al., 2003, p. 575; Drezner, 2001). For example, we see the ideational approach to diffusion in IPE accounts of the IMF and World Bank in their promotion of ‘structural adjustment’ and the ‘Washington Consensus’ (Broome, 2014).

Turning to the role of agents within these processes, a clear point of departure between the diffusion and transfer literature emerges. For transfer theorists, policy officials are reflexive agents for whom the adoption (and transformation/adaptation) of policy ideas is central to understanding the transfer process. Diffusion theorists share a similar concern with the decision-making of policy officials – especially in respect of communication and shared interests. However, on the diffusion approach, these officials are assigned *rational* models of decision-making insofar as policies are understood to have greater diffusion potential where importing/exporting policy officials operate as utility-maximisers – aware of their options, have expert awareness of ‘problem issues’ and can therefore make informed or

‘rational’ decisions. Put another way, the diffusion of policy occurs as a function of the structural characteristics of the state (or internal determinants, to use the diffusionist term) and the regional context. March and Olsen summarise these contrasting visions of agency:

On the one side are those who see action as driven by a logic of anticipated consequences and prior preferences. On the other side are those who see action as driven by a logic of appropriateness and senses of identity (March & Olsen, 1998, p.949).

What are the implications of this digression into convergence, diffusion and transfer for IPE and public policy understandings of ‘global policy’? If it is the case, as we suggest, that IPE is coloured more by diffusionist approaches, whereas public policy has been more engaged by transfer approaches, do the different fields ‘talk past’ each other?

- First, IPE scholars are often methodologically disposed towards structural explanations; public policy scholars tend towards agential explanations, although there are frequent intersections of these approaches.
- Second, the corollary of these structure/agency perspectives is that IPE scholarship emphasizes explanation of outcomes; public policy scholars focus on motivations and process in decision-making.
- Third, IPE and public policy research questions operate at different levels of analysis: public policy is focused largely on meso-level processes and their connection to micro-level processes and mechanisms of transfer; IPE addresses macro-level structural considerations.

These are broad-brush distinctions (to which there are exceptions). Nevertheless, we seek to make explicit the different conceptual starting points that have lead IPE and public policy along different pathways.

### ***Operationalising the IPE-public policy dialogue: conceptual blends and intersections***

One area where IPE scholarship has been ahead of the curve in relation to public policy concerns the considerable degree of debate, among both scholarly and international policy communities, concerning Global Public Goods (GPGs). Bodies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other specialised UN agencies have become central in researching and articulating dimensions of ‘publicness’ in the global sphere and how international organisations and non-state actors create global public goods or seek to regulate the adverse effects of global public ‘bads’ (Kaul, 2005). It has been international economists (e.g. Cooper, 2001; Stiglitz, 1999) and international political economists (e.g. Long & Woolley, 2009) who have not only driven this research agenda but often, who have also sought to develop policy applications.

Additionally, public policy has a very rich and diverse literature on ‘knowledge utilisation’ (eg. Weiss, 1979), ‘evidence-based policy’ (e.g. Head, 2008) and the role of expertise in policy making (Fischer, 2000; Halfman & Hoppe, 2004). There are also now many applications of this conceptual armoury into transnational affairs (e.g. Stone, 2013). While there is a budding literature on the use of expertise inside international

organisation (e.g. Littoz-Monet, 2017) or in the manifestation of ‘science diplomacy’ (e.g. Davis & Patman, 2015), IPE contributions of this nature are quite disparate (*inter alia*, Seabrooke & Tsingou, 2016).

The sub-field of network governance and policy network analysis in particular have become subjects of major interest in policy studies. Analytical frameworks of ‘policy communities’, ‘policy networks’ and public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been ‘bread-and-butter’ frameworks for public policy for half a century. These concepts – such as ‘national elite policy networks’ (Jack Walker, 1969) – have been re-invented for transnational domains with new labels (re-invented in IR as much as IPE) like ‘transnational executive networks’, ‘transgovernmental networks’, ‘global knowledge networks’, or ‘global PPPs’. For example, the ‘transnational advocacy networks’ framework (Keck & Sikkink, 1999) is an internationalised version of the long standing public policy concept of ‘issue networks’.

Few dispute the importance of policy networks and their relevance to explaining or understanding outcomes in the reconfigurations of the relationship between society and the state (Sørensen, 2006, p. 193). Today, policies are implemented and public services delivered via a diffuse network of government, quasi-government and non-government agencies in collaboration with their stakeholders, who might be private providers, NGOs, interest groups or local communities. Indeed, policy networks have been subjected to lengthy empirical investigation across a number of substantive policy domains such as environment and agricultural policy, education policy, European Union policy or money laundering. It is in these substantive policy domains that the inter-layering of IPE ideas and public policy inspirations can already be seen. Empirical case studies are cross-pollinated (e.g. Tsingou, 2010). ‘Policy networks’ are phenomena addressed by both fields of inquiry where IPE is also far more likely to be concerned with various kinds of ‘production networks’ and ‘global value chains’. The engagement of IPE with notions of ‘network governance’ is more limited but as argued below in Part 3, it is a rising concern for both fields of inquiry.

A final point on cross-fertilisation: ‘regulation studies’ is another field of intersection for public policy and IPE scholars. Regarding regulatory networks, those in IPE are more likely to address the emergence of regimes – regulatory structures and macro-level architectures – to control a social or economic problem or manage public goods and bads whereas policy scholars approach these networks often through case studies of their design and decision-making dynamics. There are bound to be many other fields and phenomena that will bring IPE and public policy to the same topics if not to the same research questions and methods.

### **3. Global policy, transgovernmentalism and transnational administration**

The discussion in the preceding section points to common terrain and tensions over it between the two fields. However, a ‘blind-spot’ of both concerns the new administrative domains of global governance and the emergence of new cadres of international civil servants and transnational professionals. Public policy has been slow to lift its analytical gaze above the nation-state to engage with transnational policy dynamics. An exception is recent work on the ‘European administrative space’ (*inter alia*, Bauer & Trondal, 2015). IPE has lacked familiarity with meso-level processes of public budgeting or representative

bureaucracy, and organisational decision dynamics on matters such as human resource management. In this blind spot, however, we identify an opportunity for the criticisms identified above to be turned inside out as collaborations. Specifically, the misalignment of both IPE and public policy can find important conceptual redemption in tackling these nascent administrative domains.

The professional realities of *Governing Global Policy* are that a multiplicity of actors from business, civil society, expert communities alongside official actors share public-private governance and transnational administration. A much greater role for non-state actors entails the partial privatisation of policy processes and administration. Of varying structure, and power, the growth of new architectures of governance, and patterns of administrative praxis within them, provide opportunity for the scholar of public policy to inform IPE understandings on matters such as policy design, regulation, and bureaucratic management.

Of growing significance and ambit, we identify four dispersed modes of governance where IPE and public policy concerns intersect. The first two are different manifestations of transgovernmentalism; the second two dispersions involve different degrees of private involvement in transnational governance:

- (1) Horizontal dispersion, through movement of policy issues and coordination to inter-governmental networks between government officials at the same level: that is, networks of legislators, judges and regulators who have cross-national counterparts. This is an inter-governmental dynamic of information sharing that recognises the sovereign authority of state officials.

The Financial Stability Board of Finance Ministers attached to the G20 processes is a well-known case. Other examples include the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) – an official network of financial regulators with responsibilities for money laundering – and a case well surveyed by IPE specialists. At the intersection of public policy goals (corruption, drug trafficking or terrorism) the anti-money laundering regime speaks also to key IPE concerns regarding macro-economic competitive pressures on international financial centres and capital mobility (Tsingou, 2010). Policy analysis of other trans-governmental bodies, like the annual Four Countries Conference, composed of chief executives of electoral agencies from Australia, NZ, Canada and the UK, or the Vancouver Group that has worked to build trust and confidence in the work of the Intellectual Property offices of the UK, Canada and Australia through benchmarking studies and comparison of quality review procedures (Legrand, 2015), has focused on the decision-making processes and motivations of these elites as part of a transnational policy transfer community to build consensus.

- (1) Vertical decentralisation, through the horizontal trans-governmental networks of public sector officials mentioned above as well as their interactions with international civil servants in inter-governmental organisations (IGO) where there is collaboration and attempts at multi-level policy coordination. In short, an ‘IGOisation’ of governance where functionally specific networks parallel the earlier trend of executive agencies and management decentralisation of public service seen at nation-state level in many OECD contexts.

CGIAR (the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) is one of the oldest examples. The World Bank took a central convening role to coordinate donor governments and a world-wide network of scientific laboratories. There is a multiplication of such networks at the regional level, especially the European Union's (EU) regulatory networks in areas such as telecommunications, energy and data privacy. IPE scholars when looking at bodies like CGIAR see it as a mechanism to help secure food security outcomes. For both fields, it has attracted attention as an important venue for debates on international development assistance. In a policy transfer and diffusion dynamic, CGIAR and its donors have helped the development of consensus around, and tools and metrics for, the SDGs.

Policy scholars are also engaged by such issues but with the IGO-isation of governance are bringing with them a different arsenal of conceptual tools and distinct set of perspectives and terminology. As noted in a recent edition of *JEPP*, specifying crucial conditions under which 'international public administration' (IPA) may enjoy independence from member-state governments has become an increasingly vibrant research area. Yet, there remain three (at least) unresolved research tasks: (1) systematically *comparing* IPAs by offering large-N data across cases; (2) taking *organization* seriously by identifying how the organizational architectures of IPAs affect decision-making processes and subsequently the pursuit of public policy-making; and (3) examining the varied *consequences* of the autonomization of IPAs, notably for member-state public sector governance and for the integration of transnational regulatory regimes" (Trondal, 2016, p. 1097).

- (1) Diagonal delegation across the public-private divide, whereby government officials and international civil servants build partnerships with private sector actors. They go by different names: for example the multi-stakeholder 'global programs' of the World Bank, or 'global public policy networks' or 'global public-private partnership'. These 'global public policy networks' and GPPPs are quasi-public or semi-private. There are elements of neo-corporatism with the 'NGOisation' and/or 'Qangoisation' of policy not dissimilar to processes of 'arms length' or 'independent' agency delegation seen at the national level.

A prominent example includes GAVI (previously known as the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunisation) which is underwritten by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It has played a central role in the establishment of another GPPP called COVAX as one significant COVID-19 pandemic response. Other high-profile entities include the EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (Stone & Ladi, 2015). Where IPE might focus more on GPPPs as structures that help regulate finance and trade as well as drive globalisation, public policy is more likely to address the decision-making processes and financing, the constitution and internal governance, of these entities.

Again, these are phenomena that have been addressed by both international development and IPE scholars (Bull & McNeill, 2007). Government engagement with non-profit organisations is a field of extensive policy research in both OECD states and in developing countries (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Likewise, the now considerable body of work on public-private partnerships at the domestic level (Hodge & Greve, 2005) provides

valuable insight into the design of GPPPs with their evolution to the (global) public sector, and represents another potential intersection with IPE. We have argued public policy tends to explain meso-level processes and their connection to micro-level mechanisms of transfer among these multiple dispersions, decentralisations and delegations of policy making and policy delivery. New generations scholars in both fields are noting the structural ‘fragmentation’ of the architecture of governance that results (eg., Hanrieder, 2015) and which is exacerbated by our fourth dispersed mode of governance.

- (1) Unilateral initiatives from the private sector and civil society. Partnerships of transnational administration can be contrasted with private regimes. For instance, the bond-rating agencies such as Moody’s and Fitch but also the International Standards Organization are different types of private actors that perform global roles of accreditation and co-ordination, respectively. Business sometimes acts unilaterally to deliver public goods and services. Private rule making – such as in global forestry stewardship – is well recognised. IPE scholars have been particularly adept in addressing these initiatives that ‘de-nationalise’ policy (Büthe & Mattli, 2011) but policy and administration scholars have also tracked non-state standard setting and ‘transnational private regulation’ (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 2002).

These four governance dispersions have attracted scholarly attention leading to a multitude of case studies, comparisons of regulatory styles and other analyses. Yet, the possibilities for a mutual dialogue between public policy and IPE lies in addressing these four dispersions of governance in the aggregate. Standard setting, private regimes, transgovernmental cooperation are aimed at better co-ordinated or regulated markets and policy processes but also require new cadres of administrators, managers or technocrats. Collectively, the transnational policy communities that revolve around these four strategies constitute a discernible ‘global administrative space’, in which the strict dichotomy between domestic and international has broken down.<sup>2</sup> Yet, this ‘administrative space’ has a qualitatively different character to assumptions that prevail concerning sovereign states on matters of public authority and legitimate exercise of power. Formal public actors in global governance – that is, international organisations and states – remain very important actors, and often the dominant actors, but in terms of financing, regulation and delivery of public goods and services they are inextricably reliant on private and civil society actors. These non-state actors become influential in the framing, definition, implementation and enforcement of global policy norms and rules in a process of constant tinkering and adjustment of rules or standards.

New questions arise about ‘administrative styles’ and ‘executive powers and accountability’ of GPPPs and private regimes delivering public goods. The behaviour of transnational bureaucratic elites, the expert-executive nexus and the HR implications of transnational administrations are all conundrums that present new challenges in both theorisation and practice. A key assumption within public policy is that public organisations – whether they be IGOs and transgovernmental networks or partially public GPPPs – have motivations and interests of their own and that the managers and

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<sup>2</sup>See the program on ‘global administrative law’ at New York University School of Law: <https://www.iilj.org/gal/>

secretariats of these entities play an integral role in how policy is shaped and administered. Concerning the ‘global administrative space’, policy scholars have much to say about traditional concerns like implementations, monitoring and evaluation as well as matters of ‘public value’, ‘accountability’ and ‘representative bureaucracy’. Some argue that the more diverse range of actors and ‘cumbersome’ decision-making structures entail that global policy is ‘more vulnerable to design deficits’ due to vague legal terms and exceptions in international negotiations and a general lack of both resourcing and enforcement powers of international organisations (Knill & Tosun, 2012, p. 242).

#### **4. Conclusion: can IPE learn from public policy?**

Returning to the title of this paper: *What IPE can Learn from Public Policy?* there is much that has already been cross-fertilised with IPE as our foray into the policy diffusion and transfer literature reveals. More interaction could be achieved but that depends equally upon another question: *Can IPE Learn from Public Policy?* In the Introduction we outlined some possible reasons for the separate trajectories for IPE and Policy Studies. Academic incentive structures and sclerotic disciplinary traditions can act against the propinquity of Public Policy and International Political Economy. As one of our reviewers suggested, IPE scholars (at least in the US American tradition) typically search for generalizability, which does not have space for the idiosyncratic motivations of individual political actors in leadership roles and the erratic or perverse policy processes that policy scholars often highlight. Even so, a positive externality might result from COVID-19 pandemic responses in academia: On the one hand is the shift to Zoom interactions of all kinds rather than the primacy of physical attendance at mono-disciplinary conferences. On the other hand is prioritisation of research questions driven by pressing public problems rather than intra-disciplinary debates. Surging higher education systems in some countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa are also likely to challenge the Western-centric premises and disciplinary silos of traditional IPE and public policy.

Moreover, it is not only Public Policy that speaks to IPE: other disciplines and fields offer equally interesting insights and conceptual tool-kits. Indeed, as has become apparent in the preceding discussion, it is not simply the cross-pollination between IPE and Public Policy that is worth consideration. Both fields of study are linked into other disciplinary tributaries. IPE scholars find much of interest in Organisation Theory, Political Geography and Development Studies. Whether there is a ‘slow convergence’ between public administration, public management and public policy with IR and IPE, as claimed in one study (Kim et al., 2014: xiv), is yet to be seen. By the same token, the commonalities that we consider to exist between ‘global public policy’ on the one hand, and IPE on the other, are yet to be fully broached. Historically, IPE and public policy have maintained their differences. However, in an era of dispersed and fragmented ‘international public administrations’ (of the policy studies lexicon) and global governance (in the lingua franca of IPE) the complementarities are not only becoming apparent but impose a necessary dialogue.

#### **Disclosure statement**

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