

# Exporting Policy Models: The Role of International Governmental Organizations\*

Leslie A. Pal

School of Public Policy and Administration

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6

Canada

[lesliepal@gmail.com](mailto:lesliepal@gmail.com) (until July 1, 2006) [leslie\\_pal@carleton.ca](mailto:leslie_pal@carleton.ca) (after July 1, 2006)

An issue of increasing recent interest in the fields of policy analysis and public administration has been the spread of certain ideas about governance and administration around the world, particularly what has been termed the new public management (NPM). The preoccupation with NPM has obscured the fact that there is a much larger variety of public management practices and theories than just NPM that have rapidly been adopted around the world, but the central question remains the same: what are the channels, mechanisms, and dynamics of what appears to be a growing convergence, or at least an intelligible global debate, around contemporary governance? At the broadest level, the answer to the question contributes importantly to our understanding of globalization. As Scholte (2005: 140) has argued, globalization “could not unfold without governance arrangements that promote the process.” Governments have to be willing to cooperate in international regulatory regimes (of which there are hundreds) that to some extent create a level playing field or a matrix of roughly similar or even identical rules to create a “space of flows.” But these governance arrangements at minimum presuppose certain things: a common discourse about complex policy regimes, even if that discourse does not necessarily lead to agreement; and some similarities in public management processes and

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institutions. At the same time, it cannot be expected that these discourses and processes will converge automatically or simply as a matter of osmosis. NPM, interpreted broadly, is associated with democratic institutions, even if some interpretations of NPM emphasize market-based policy regimes, and not all states are necessarily disposed towards democratization. So the puzzle behind the question is what are the dynamics of adoption, as well as convergence, around public management practices?

This paper examines the impact of international governmental organizations (IGOs) in the spread of ideas and institutions of contemporary governance. Institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the OECD (though there are many more) have a self-evident interest in economic globalization. They essentially wish to help facilitate a distributed but global production and trade system, but in the last decade came to realize that if economic reforms were to be sustainable, they would require stable, professional, and democratic domestic governments who would not renege on reforms such as privatization, and who could be credible interlocutors with the world community of states. Other IGOs, such as the European Union (EU), have had a similar interest, but have had the additional leverage of setting standards for eventual accession, standards which include public management as well as democratic governance. There are of course, many other players in this process, such as transnational NGOs, individual governments through their technical assistance programs, think tanks and foundations, but we concentrate here on IGOs because of the unique advantages they have in spreading ideas and institutions. First, they have a prestige and visibility that eclipses that of most governments, even that of the United States. Second, they have superior financial resources through which to induce compliance by governments, and attract talent from outside (e.g., consultants can do quite well on World Bank contracts). Third, they have a global reach that is only rarely possible for single governments or other non-governmental transnational actors. Fourth, they are superior sites of knowledge generation, which coupled with their prestige, gives them an edge in proselytizing reforms.

The can organize global events, produce reports, analyses, and reviews that have a certain weight. Fifth, given their size, they can become repositories of expertise and institutional memory that is normally denied to most other transnational actors, and they can also engage in long-term technical assistance projects.

This is not to say that IGOs are predominant players in the transfer and circulation of ideas about public management. In a world of networked governance (Keohane, 2002), or multi-scalar governance (Mahon, 2006), IGOs are one of a bewildering array of actors at all levels. NGOs such as the Open Society Institute, for example, or the Centre on Nonviolent Conflict, can be strategically effective in stimulating governance and administrative reform. Bilateral technical assistance projects can also be important, clearly from the United States, but also from well-targetted programs such as Canada's or Sweden's. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that IGOs necessarily have the same ideas or approaches to management reform. While they are often broadly similar, there can nonetheless be significant and sharp differences. Even within single IGOs, given their size, there can be disputes and disagreements about approaches, as well as an evolution over time about the right policy prescriptions. Finally, recipients of ideas and assistance, whether governments or non-governmental (e.g., academic institutions, think tanks, NGOs), have their own interests and institutional constraints, and are not simply passive players in the process.

The paper will examine the role of IGOs in exporting policy models on public management, with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The focus on IGOs as conveyors and creators of policy ideas and institutions is a relatively new field of inquiry. Dawisha and Turner argued in 1997 that it "is practically a nostrum of the literature on political culture, civil society, democratization, and indeed of comparative politics that societal change is generated almost exclusively by domestic forces, and that attempts by international actors to influence the trajectory of a country's movement are likely at most to be marginal in their impact" (1997: 402). Schmitter, whose work on democratization in the

1980s and early 1990s was seminal, admitted in 1996 that there had been far too much focus on internal, domestic developments and that it was now time to “to reconsider the impact of the international context upon regime change” (1996: 27). Sustained studies of the policy impact of IGOs like Stone’s (2000) are an exception. The OECD, for example, has had almost nothing written about it (Woodward, forthcoming), though that is changing.

The regional focus is partly to make the analysis manageable (the same dynamics, for example, take place with the Asian Development Bank), and partly because the explosion in global public sector management debate and efforts to export certain models coincided almost perfectly with the collapse of the former Soviet Union (fSU). As we will see, with the end of the cold war, there was a new imperative to bring the fSU countries into the global capitalist system, and latterly to “democratize” them. The added dynamic of EU accession increased the pressure to bring some twenty fSU states up to EU standards of democratic government and public management.

The paper proceeds in several stages. First, it briefly reviews the public management literature on the spread of NPM, and notes that there is consensus that there was a global movement, though increasing doubts about how convergent that movement was. Second, it reviews the literature on policy transfer or policy learning, and notes that the role of IGOs has only been recently acknowledged. Third, it looks more closely at the work on the impact of IGOs on public management reform in CEE countries, both in terms of the relatively recent appreciation that they have played an important role, and specific country studies that have highlighted that role. The fourth section provides portraits of three IGOs: the OECD, the World Bank, and the EU (TACIS and PHARE programs). Finally, it concludes with several observations about the dynamics of exporting policy models in the case of IGOs, and possible directions for future research.

## **The Global Management Revolution**

The NPM literature is voluminous. For an overview see Lane (2000), Aucoin (1995), Barzelay (2001), Peters (2001, chap 6), Christensen and Laegreid (2002). There are conflicting interpretations of what NPM actually entails. Barzelay (1992: 5) argues that NPM calls for the “bureaucratic paradigm” of carefully defined roles, reliance on rules and procedures, line and staff distinctions, tight financial control, and central agency oversight, to be replaced with a more client-focused, service-oriented system. Bevir, Rhodes and Weller (2003) highlight the following features of NPM:

The term refers to a focus on management, not policy, and on performance appraisal and efficiency; disaggregating public bureaucracies into agencies which deal with each other on a user pay basis; the use of quasi-markets and of contracting out to foster competition; cost-cutting; and a style of management that emphasizes, among other things, output targets, limited term contracts, monetary incentives and freedom to manage....It is said to be a global phenomenon. (1-2)

Kenneth Kernaghan (2000) provides a useful list that contrasts what he calls “bureaucratic” with “post-bureaucratic” organizations. The characteristics of post-bureaucratic organizations are marked by citizen centred, results-oriented, decentralized, and competitive structures and processes. Hood (1996) claimed that the key features were an emphasis on: hands-on management; performance; output measures; disaggregated bureaucracy into smaller, self-contained units; competition; the emulation of private sector practices; and discipline and parsimony in the use of resources. Kettl (2000) broadly agreed in describing the trends in new management thinking as productivity (how can governments produce more services with less tax money?); marketization (how can government use market-style incentives to root out the pathologies of government bureaucracy?); service orientation (how can government better connect with citizens?); decentralization (how can government make programs more responsive and effective?); accountability for results (how can governments improve their ability to deliver what they promise?); policy (how can government improve its capacity to devise and track policy?). To complicate matters even further, while much of the literature in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on NPM as a shorthand for describing shifts

in public management theory and practice, Peters (2001) argued that NPM was in fact only a species of an even broader variety of changes in modes of governing. He discerned four emerging models: market, participatory state, flexible government (e.g., experimentation, low cost, virtual organizations, etc.), and deregulated government (e.g., more managerial freedom, entrepreneurial, creative, active). Each model diagnoses the governance/management problem differently, has different ideas about how the public sector should be organized and constructed, and offers different visions of the policy process.

Despite these differences in interpretation and emphasis, it is clear that a new model of public management was being debated in the 1990s, one that emphasized efficiency, markets, decentralization, performance and results accountabilities, and service. The typically cited “leaders” in this “revolution” were New Zealand (Boston, 1996; Boston et al., 1999; Aucoin, 1995), the United Kingdom (Savoie, 1994). Of equal interest in the discussion of NPM was how it spread and how deeply it was affecting governments around the world. “Since the 1980s, a global reform movement in public management has been vigorously underway” (Kettl, 2000: 1). Peters and Pierre (2000) noted: “Except perhaps during major wars there never has been the extent of administrative reform and reorganization that has been occurring during the period from approximately 1975 onward” (1).

The broad agreement that public management reform was occurring around the world was part of a larger debate about the causes and consequences of that reform. There were occasional observations in the literature on the effect of IGOs, principally the public administration section (PUMA) of the OECD. Hood (1998: 202) for example noted, somewhat cynically, that international organizations like the OECD and the World Bank had a vested interest in arguing on behalf of “best practice” models that they would then have a role in fostering and supporting. Premfors argued that the dominant narrative of public sector reform had been developed by PUMA and that it had “been very successful in

stimulating interest and debate among both member governments and wider audiences and in formulating and propagating a particular mode of thinking about administrative reform” (1998: 142). Other scholars agreed: "PUMA has been one of the nodal points in an international network, bringing together civil servants, management consultants and academics (an occasionally politicians themselves) who are interested in public management. It has helped shape what has now become an international 'community of discourse' about public management reform....The World Bank, the IMF and the Commonwealth Institute have also been international disseminators of management reform ideas” (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000: 20-21). However, for the most part, explanations of the global public management movement tended to emphasize functional reasons such as modernization or democratization (Lynn Jr., 2001). As for the consequences of that movement, at first the consensus seemed to be convergence – similar ideas and debates were leading eventually to similar reforms in both advanced and developing systems (Box et al., 2001; Pollitt, 2001). At the same time, there was another stream of scholarship that showed substantial divergences across political systems (Christensen and Laegreid, 2002; Peters and Pierre, 2001; Olsen and Peters, 1996; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Wise, 2002).

There was a clear sense that there was a global movement around public management reform, but research efforts tended to focus on the nature of reforms in specific countries rather than on the dynamics of the spread of reform ideas. We turn to this question briefly in the following section.

### **The Circulation and Transfer of Policy Ideas**

If we set aside purely functional explanations of why policy ideas and institutions appear in different jurisdictions and concentrate on dynamic explanations, one of the best candidates in the policy literature is network and transfer theories. Network theories come in various forms (Stone, 2002). All stress the salience of connections among groups of policy

actors, connections that create commonalities in viewpoints, shared languages and conceptual universes, political projects, and channels of communication and debate that refunctional for problem definition and policy solutions. The degree of unity or consensus in networks should not be over-emphasized, but the varieties of network theory do highlight commonalities among specific, if loosely connected, coalitions or networks.

The concept of networks arose as early as the late 1970s. Hugh Hecló (1978) crystallized new developments in American governance by identifying what he called “issue networks.” Hecló was not arguing for a new master concept but pointing out that the nature of the (American) policy system had changed: greater technical complexity of policy issues, and greater fluidity in issue generation as well. Another source of work on networks came from comparative research on industrial performance and economic policy. One of the earliest uses of the term “policy network” was in a book edited by Peter Katzenstein (1978), *Between Power and Plenty*. Katzenstein and his colleagues were interested in the ways in which domestic political structures affected foreign economic policy. Since “the domestic structures in the advanced industrial states differ in important ways, so do the strategies of foreign economic policy which these states pursue” (Katzenstein, 1978, p. 4). A key conditioning factor of foreign policy was the character of domestic interests and institutions, which could be termed the “policy network.” Work on policy network theory proceeded steadily (Thatcher, 1998), though it encountered growing criticism as well for being unable to provide robust explanations and relying more on metaphors than empirical testing (Dowding, 1995; Marsh and Smith, 2000; Dowding, 2001; Marsh and Smith, 2001; Raab, 2001, 2002). This work on policy networks was complemented by theories that emphasized “discourse coalitions” (Fischer and Forester, 1993; Hajer, 1997) and “advocacy coalitions” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, 1999).

An important observation on this brand of theory is that it restricted itself almost exclusively to the domestic policy arena. However, network ideas also were developed for



the international arena, and provide a sense of possible channels for policy export and adoption. Epistemic communities (Haas, 1992) is an idea developed specifically to capture the growing influence and impact of international networks of experts (usually in scientific fields) who develop ideas and policy discourses that then have global impact. Transnational advocacy networks were identified as well, in this instance to highlight non-expert, largely NGO based, international groups that organize around specific policy causes and pressure domestic governments through their capacities, knowledge, and leverage (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Reinicke (1999/2000) has offered the concept of “global policy networks”: “...loose alliances of government agencies, international organizations, corporations, and elements of civil society such as nongovernmental organizations, professional associations, or religious groups that join together to achieve what none can accomplish on its own” (44). Most of these theoretical approaches focus on the networks themselves, rather than the institutional sites (such as IGOs) within which or against which they might mobilize, though the interconnection between “global civil society” and global institutions is beginning to attract more focused attention (Scholte, 2005: 219, 367-68; Stone, forthcoming).

A final body of theory that can help conceptualize the way policy ideas move across jurisdictions is policy learning, policy transfer, or policy borrowing theory. Early efforts in the field focused on “diffusion” of policy models among American states (Walker, 1969; Collier and Messick, 1975; Eyestone, 1977), and it was only in the early 1990s that the focus shifted to cross-national borrowing or policy transfer. Wolman (1992) noted that at that point almost nothing was known about the process of policy transfer, how ideas get noticed across countries and implemented. Rose’s (1993) seminal work on lesson-drawing in public policy explicitly addressed policy learning across space and highlighted the role of IGOs:

Intergovernmental and international organizations encourage exchange of ideas between countries with similar levels of economic resources. The European Community and OECD encourage exchanges among advanced industrial nations. The collapse of the Communist system is creating a group of more than a dozen states that may learn from each other ways to make a transition to the market

economy and democracy. The IMF promotes lessons drawn from the experience of countries that have large foreign debts, and the World Bank and many United Nations agencies focus on programs of concern to developing countries. (105)

Bennett's work (1991; 1992; 1997) was a sustained attempt to explore policy transfer or diffusion. In one work, for example, he analyzed models of cross-national diffusion of policy around three public administration innovations: the institution of the ombudsman, freedom of information legislation and data protection (information privacy) law. He concluded that there was no one method of diffusion, but that there were different dynamics of adoption: lesson-drawing (where governments see a problem and borrow an existing solution), legitimation (referring to other international examples to satisfy domestic critics), and harmonization. The later is facilitated by IGOs: that with respect to data privacy, the nature of the problems of transborder data flows impelled legislation spearheaded by OECD and the Council of Europe in 1981 that then "became a powerful, if not determining, incentive for adoption: failure to act would have meant an inability to ratify the Council of Europe Convention, an exclusion from the 'club' within which personal data could be legitimately communicated, thus causing adverse economic consequences especially for the service sector" (1997: 228). This insight was supported by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996; 2001) in the following observation: "[I]nternational governing organizations (IGOs), such as the OECD, G-7, IMF and the UN and its various agencies, are increasingly playing a role in the spread of ideas, programs and institutions around the globe. These organizations influence national policy-makers directly, through their policies and loan conditions, and indirectly, through the information and policies spread at their conferences and reports" (2001: 11).

This brief excursion through the literature on cross-national policy diffusion shows, first, that it is a relatively recent area of research in policy studies. The work on international policy networks and such as epistemic communities and transnational advocacy movements has focused on the circulation of ideas and their advocacy through global channels, either

organized loosely in the form of professions or discourse coalitions, or more formally as international NGOs. The policy transfer literature has been interested in the dynamics of borrowing across jurisdictions, but the latest work has begun to take the role of IGOs more seriously as sites for policy debate as well as actors in their own right pressuring governments around the world to adopt “best practices” in one form or another.

### **IGOs and Public Management: General Assessments and CEE Observations**

As some of the work on policy transfer and lesson-drawing clearly noted, the collapse of the fSU meant the potential for a massive transfer of policies and institutions to the newly formed states, especially in CEE. Somewhat surprisingly, researchers from 1991 to roughly 1995 who focused on the region tended to stress the importance of different communist legacies and internal, domestic factors as determining the reform path that different countries would take. As noted earlier, Schmitter (1996) commented that most work in the field had ignored international pressures, and that it was time to look more seriously at them. Crawford and Lijphart (1997) echoed the re-thinking in posing two models of transition in CEE, one based on Leninist legacies and the other on functionalist pressures of liberalization:

In sum, this first cut at the evidence suggests that neither the Leninist legacy nor the imperatives of liberalization provides an adequate approach to the study of post-Communist political and economic change. Not all past legacies have become politically relevant. Although among elites, cultural legacies of passivity and intolerance seem to be losing their power in the political process, other legacies, such as the incomplete process of nation-building, are undermining liberalization in many areas. Some institutional legacies provide support for liberalization, and some immediate circumstances, rather than legacies, have worked to undermine economic and political liberalization. We must therefore turn to explanations that provide a more nuanced view of how past legacies and current circumstances interact to explain particular outcomes in the process of regime change." (31)

The realization that there needed to be a better link between domestic policy processes and international or transnational policy networks was arising in the international relations literature as well. Risse-Kappen noted that the "interaction between international

norms and institutions, on the one hand, and domestic politics, on the other, is not yet fully understood; work in this area has just begun" (1995: 31). At the same time, the potential importance of IGOs as venues or sites for policy diffusion and lobbying was also being recognized:

"International institutions are then expected to facilitate the access of transnational actors to the national policy-making processes. International regimes and organizations are likely to increase the availability of channels which transnational actions can use to target national governments in order to influence policies. INGOs and transgovernmental networks lobbying governments can do so more easily in the framework of international institutions. To a certain degree, international regimes and organizations are likely to reduce the differences in filtering effects of the various types of domestic structures. Even countries with state-dominated domestic structures such as France are probably unable to cut themselves off from demands of transnational actors when dealing with international institutions. International regimes and organizations would then provide channels into the national political systems which domestic structures might otherwise limit." (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 31; see also Risse-Kappen, 1994)

Within a few years, however, the impact of IGOs and international policy transfer to the region was better appreciated. Schimmelfennig (2002: 1) noted that "In the aftermath of the Central and Eastern European revolutions and the breakdown of communism, the CEECs [Central and Eastern European Countries] have turned to international organizations for guidance and assistance in their political and economic transformation, and international organizations have become strongly involved in the domestic politics of the CEECs, the restructuring of domestic institutions, and the entire spectrum of material policies." At the same time, however, he also claimed that the role of these organizations "has rarely been analyzed in a systematic, theory-oriented, and comparative way" (ibid.).

The appreciation of the impact of IGOs on policy development in CEE grew rapidly as evidence mounted through the 1990s on the importance of international influences. For example, Carothers (1996) points out that after 1989, democracy promotion took over from anti-communism as a way of uniquely fusing American's moral and pragmatic interests abroad, and become key part of US foreign policy (first in Latin America, and then CEE). This was also true for countries like Canada, the UK, Germany, Holland, Denmark, and

Sweden. He notes that these country efforts were soon joined by multilateral organizations of IGOs such as the UN, the EU, the OSCE, the OAS and even the Organization for African Unity (2). A key step for the US was the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act in 1989 - in its first five years it spent \$1.69 billion. Most of that was economic and humanitarian, but \$110 million went to democracy related programs (primarily political parties, elections, NGOs, and only slightly towards public management reform). Also, the National Endowment for Democracy (an arm's length but almost exclusively US government funded organization) spent \$17.8 million in region. This support to the region, according to Carothers, went through three phases: first, after the collapse, it was directed to helping write constitutions and electoral laws; second, once elections were actually held, it was broadened to redesign state and governmental institutions (e.g., parliament, judiciary, local government); and third (up to his time of writing in 1996) civil society development. Interestingly, in examining the focal points of assistance (in Romania, which was his case study), Carothers reviews political parties, elections, rule of law, parliament, civil society, trade unions, and the media, but makes no mention of public administration.

Smith (2001) agrees that "Western actors have played an unprecedented, active role in promoting democracy in Eastern Europe, using a variety of instruments. These actors include Western governments, multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and foundations" (31). In examining the EU, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and NATO – who focused more on democracy than on economic reform, she argues that while there was general consensus in west to support democratization, there was no clear definition of what that meant, and it varied country by country, no overt coordination, and some conflicting alternative objectives such as how best to introduce market mechanisms. Indeed, she argues that more resources and energy were put into liberalization of markets and economic reform than democratization (34). Like Carothers, however, her focus is on

democratization, and she has only two or three references to attempts to reform public administration.

One of the best overviews of the impact of international organizations in the region is by Jacoby (2001). Grounding himself explicitly in the literature on lesson-drawing and policy borrowing reviewed above, he points out that it assumes that innovation “is both voluntaristic and done against a background of fairly stable domestic institutions” (169). The situation in CEE, however, was one where international actors aggressively promoted certain models in the context of massive shifts in domestic political and economic institutions. Nor were domestic elites simply passive recipients of these models – they had their own local challenges to face and so actively negotiated the importation of these models to suit their own interests.

As it was, elite borrowing of Western institutional designs had a political logic that satisfied multiple constituencies. First, borrowing appeared to be a relatively easy way to design new structures without the uncertainty and time costs of experimentation. Second, by seeming to promise suitable substitutes, such borrowing made it much easier to jettison the widely discredited institutions of the recently fallen Marxist-Leninist regimes. Third, imitating “proven” Western Structures seemed to promise national elites a kind of “legitimacy windfall” vis-à-vis their own polities, with whom they had fragile ties of loyalty and trust. Fourth, copying Western structures seemed likely to reassure both Western investors and Western political figures, whose investments and aid elites sought to help achieve democratic capitalism. To oversimplify, the first two grounds might be seen as reasons of administrative convenience, while the latter two involved strategies of coalition building. (173)

Jacoby makes a useful contribution to our understanding of policy emulation/borrowing in the context of CEE (though this might apply as well to other parts of the world with similar characteristics) by varying the assumptions behind the mainstream literature: borrowing may be both voluntary and involuntary, and it may be faithful in its attempt to implement the model, or merely functional in the sense of being a loose point of reference. These distinctions provide three additional types of policy borrowing, or what he terms templates, thresholds and adjustments. Templates provide the “outline of an institutional structure or a policy” but “not every detail need be filled in by reference to the foreign models” (178). This is a case of more voluntary and functional borrowing. Thresholds

are typically wielded (or were, in the CEE case with the EU and NATO) later in the process. They are “qualitative and subjective judgements about minimum standards that new formal structures must meet to qualify a CEE nation for membership in an international organization” (181). Because monitoring is involved, even though the models can be adopted functionally, the emulation is less than voluntary and feels more coerced. Finally, adjustments are “relatively small correctives to some larger institutional scheme” (185). These types of policy borrowing tend to be “faithful” in Jacoby’s terms, and less voluntary, due to monitoring and oversight. In large part, the tedious and byzantine process of EU accession is an example of borrowing through adjustments – the underlying institutions and infrastructure is more or less accepted, and changes are made within that structure to emulate the key elements of external models. And yet, even given the usefulness of these models of policy borrowing through international channels, Jacoby admits that “explanations of international influences on CEE domestic institutions are still needed” (172).

Before turning to snapshots of the OECD, the World Bank, and the EU (TACIS and PHARE programs), we can briefly review the work on CEE public sector reform, with specific reference to CEE. IGOs and single-country technical assistance programs in the early 1990s tended to focus first on economic development (Wedel, 1998; Pickel, 1997; Meaney, 1995; Nello, 2001), in tandem with political democratization, realizing the economic changes were not sustainable – or indeed feasible – without properly functioning institutions. While the initial emphasis was on politics – parties, elections, the judiciary, constitutionalism, participation – it was almost immediately clear that administrative reform would be required if effective and efficient public policies could be expected eventually in the newly emerging countries (Hesse, 1993). Nunberg (1999) provides a useful overview at the end of almost a decade of reform. Indeed, after 2000, and certainly by the time the EU went through two rounds of accession, the reform trajectories of the fSU states in CEE began to diverge significantly (Àgh, 2003).

The Nunberg study, conducted for the World Bank, reviewed Poland, Romania, Hungary, Russia, and the German Democratic Republic. As she points out, the priority on economic and political reform tended to slow the pace of administrative reform, partly perhaps because of the overwhelming urgency of economic reforms, but also possibly a “wave of anti-statism that was both a reaction to the delegitimization of the communist state as well as a prevailing intellectual wind blowing in from influential quarters of the developed world” (1). Nunberg’s overall conclusions on policy borrowing with respect of public sector management models were:

The models and motivations driving the direction of ministerial restructuring vary, but the transfer or importation of foreign institutional arrangements appears to have been widespread. ... In addition, foreign models also have penetrated CEE countries through the delivery of expatriate technical assistance. The restructuring of ministerial machinery also has been significant, both through help to specific departments or particular functions within ministries or through head-to-toe "re-engineering" of entire agencies. ... Finally, perhaps the greatest influence from abroad comes as a function of CEE countries' quest to join the EU. Conformity to EU standards increasingly has driven the reorganization of ministerial functions. Hungary's Ministry of Interior based the design of many of its new service functions on EU norms. And, of course, Poland's bold and decisive 1996 administrative reform initiative was no doubt largely driven by the government's recognition that administrative modernization would be key to the country's successful entry into the EU." (246)

As this section has shown, it is clear that IGOs were heavily involved in the reform efforts in the region. But knowing this begs several important questions.

1. *What is the precedence or pecking order of the IGOs?* For example, the IMF and the World Bank, at least in the early period of transition, were clearly dominant because of their financial clout. As Stiglitz (2003) notes: "The fall of the Berlin Wall provided a new arena for the IMF: managing the transition to a market economy in the former Soviet Union and the Communist bloc countries in Europe. More recently, as the crises have gotten bigger, and even the deep coffers of the IMF seemed insufficient, the World Bank was called in to provide tens of billions of dollars of emergency support, but strictly as a junior partner, with the guidelines of the program dictated by the IMF" (14). Financial leverage induces



- patterns of policy borrowing that are closer to Jacoby's notion of thresholds and adjustments, whereas absent that leverage (e.g., the OECD relies on studies and "naming and shaming") the pattern would be closer to templates.
2. *How does that precedence varies over time?* In the early period of transition, the IMF and World Bank were the key IGO players, but as Nunberg notes, as of 1995 when the EU began the long process of considering accession, its role and influence became much greater.
  3. *What are the specific profiles of each IGO?* This would include general approach, assumptions, techniques and strategies used to influence the recipients of their ideas.
  4. *What is the articulation between IGOs and other policy players, specifically those involved in technical assistance around the governance reform process?* Those would include, for any given state, at minimum: active IGOs; bilateral technical assistance programs; foundations; NGOs; consultants.
  5. *What are the effects of IGOs on the policy process of their targets?*

The following portraits of three important IGOs, with reference to some of their activities in CEE during the transition, cannot answer all these questions, but should throw some useful light.

### **Three IGO Portraits: World Bank, OECD, and the EU**

#### *The World Bank*

The World Bank was one of the key Bretton Woods institutions established in 1944 to help rebuild Europe in the aftermath of war and to help manage the global economy to avoid another depression. The Bank is "owned" by 184 member countries, and consists of two institutions, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), which focuses on the middle income poor countries, and the International Development

Association (IDA), which focuses on the poorest countries. The Bank provides low-interest loans, interest-free credit and grants to these countries for development and poverty reduction. Originally the Bank provided loans for infrastructure development like dams and roads, and was a junior partner to another Bretton Woods institution, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), originally designed to maintain aggregate demand at the global level by providing loans to governments whose economies were facing crisis or decline. According to Stiglitz, both institutions changed dramatically in the 1980s. The IMF went from a belief in market failure to a champion of “market supremacy with ideological fervor” (Stiglitz, 2003: 12). The World Bank, which under the leadership of Robert McNamara (appointed President in 1968) had been re-directed from supporting small projects to poverty elimination, also embraced free markets as the solution to development problems faced by poor countries. Stiglitz argues that the fall of the Berlin Wall provided the IMF with a new mission – to support the transition from command economies to market economies throughout the fSU. But the task strained even the IMF’s financial resources, and so the Bank was brought on board to provide billions of dollars to support the IMF’s agenda, or the “Washington Consensus” (coined by Williamson, 1990) – a conviction that development will occur as a result of free trade, reduced public expenditures, tight monetary policies, and debt reduction.

The Bank had been designed to deal essentially with Third World countries, and despite a new conviction about free markets, with poverty elimination. The collapse in 1989 was both an opportunity and a challenge – suddenly the Bank found itself dealing not with grinding poverty, but with relatively developed industrial economies in CEE, shifting from communism to free markets and, hopefully, democratization. The Bank had to retool and hire new consultants familiar with European traditions of public policy and governance, as well as establish new divisions within the organization (Deacon, 1997: 65-67). The Bank’s work in CEE went through several stages:

For the World Bank assistance, the early years of public sector transformation meant Institution-Building/Technical Assistance (IBTA) projects that usually suffered from weak client commitment and turned into information technology projects with a limited prospect of sustainable impact on institution building. In the mid-1990s the World Bank initiated broader institutional reforms, such as public resource management and specific functions of state administration - tax administration, treasury system, etc. - in order to build up both technical and organizational foundations for modern public administration. In the last couple of years there has been an expansion in the scale, scope and depth of public sector reform according to the World Bank Strategy Paper in the fields of fiscal management, public administration and civil service, as well as legal, regulatory and judicial reform. In reviewing its own experience, the Bank paper refers to two separate strategies, one 'top-down' approach that starts with the needs as viewed holistically from a central government perspective, another 'bottom-up' approach that places more emphasis on the importance of locally initiated changes and feeds on the energy of civic associations. The Bank experts do not necessarily argue that one supersedes the other, but its prescriptions for the future lean more towards the importance of strengthening popular participation and control in Central and East European countries." (Agh, 2003: 538)

The Bank's objectives throughout this period were economic stabilization, the development of infrastructure, and "joining Europe". WB lending in the region averaged \$3-\$4 billion per year from 1990 to 1995, and in this period was about 17 per cent of total Bank lending (Wallich, 1995). Poland, Hungary, Russia, and Romania were main recipients. In some countries "public sector adjustment loans" (PSAL) were provided for improvements in public administration, the organization of ministries, and civil service reform.

The Bank took stock of its activities in the region in its 19<sup>th</sup> World Development Report of 1996, entitled *From Plan to Market*, and followed it up with a report the next year entitled *The State in a Changing World* that arguably indicated a major change in the Bank's thinking about governance issues (Agh, 2001: 234). The market approach favoured by the Bank in the 1980s gave way to a more nuanced appreciation of the importance of state capacity and effectiveness.

For many, the lesson of recent years has been that the state could not deliver on its promises. Transition economies have had to make a wrenching shift from state-led central planning, and much of the developing world has had to cope with the failure of state-led development strategies. Many have felt that a minimalist state would be the optimal solution; such a state would be innocuous but, on the other hand, ineffective. The Report explains why this extreme view is at odds with the evidence of the world's development success stories, be it the development of the industrial economies in the nineteenth century or the post-war growth "miracles" of East Asia.

These examples show that development requires an effective state, one that encourages and complements the activities of private businesses and individuals. An effective state is vital for the provision of the goods and services--and rules and institutions--that allow markets to flourish and people to lead healthier, happier lives. Without it, sustainable development, both economic and social, is impossible. Experience shows that the state is central to economic and social development, not as a direct provider of growth, but as its partner, catalyst, and facilitator. (World Bank, 1997)

Importantly, this new prescription for the importance of governance did not necessarily reflect the NPM principles discussed at the beginning of this paper. According to Goetz, the Bank was a late convert to addressing issues of governance, but as well “the dispersion of responsibilities for public sector reform inside the World Bank; and scepticism about the appropriateness of managerialist approaches in transitional settings shared by key staff have combined to limit the impact of NPM on governance-related initiatives” (2001: 1035). In a sense this should not be surprising – the Bank’s *raison d’être* is development, and moreover development across the globe that embraces countries with massive poverty problems and other instabilities. Its vision would necessarily be more catholic than an NPM largely grounded in developed economic and political systems. For example, in its 1997 report it stated that public policies and programs “must aim not merely to deliver growth but to ensure that the benefits of market-led growth are shared, particularly through investments in basic education and health. They must also ensure that people are protected against material and personal insecurity” (World Bank, 1997). Indeed, this scepticism of NPM by the Bank dovetailed with internal preferences in the region for public administrative systems on the Weberian, rather than NPM model (Geotz, 2001: 1046). In any case, by the late 1990s, the imperatives of EU accession were encouraging CEE states to develop bureaucracies that could better articulate with EU structures in Brussels.

### *The OECD*

The origins of the OECD lay in 1949 with the creation of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) to administer American and Canadian aid to

rebuilding Europe under the Marshall Plan. The OECD took over from the OEEC in 1961. Currently the OECD is an international body of thirty member states “sharing a commitment to democratic government and the market economy” (OECD, 2006a). Its original membership has expanded beyond North America and Western Europe to include Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Korea. The OECD also has interactions with states in the former Soviet bloc and in Latin America. Much of the focus of its work is on key policy issues, such as aging, agriculture, biotechnology, education, energy, health, security, sustainable development, trade and transport, and more recently, corporate governance.

The OECD also has an interest in governance issues and public sector management, principally through its Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development (of which the Public Management Committee (PUMA) is a part). Its rationale is as follows:

Good governance is critical to long-term economic, social and environmental development. The Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate (GOV) identifies changing societal and market needs, and helps countries adapt their governmental systems and territorial policies. This involves improving government efficiency while protecting and promoting society's longer-term governance values. ... GOV supports improved public sector governance through comparative data and analysis, the setting and promotion of standards, and the facilitation of transparency and peer review. This involves promoting understanding of the dynamics of public management and territorial development policies in different societal and market conditions, with a view to the long-term interests of all citizens. (OECD, 2006b)

PUMA has published several key international reports on governance. For example, a 1995 report entitled *Governance in Transition: Public Management Reform in OECD Countries* argued that: “OECD countries are undergoing profound structural change. An increasingly open international economy puts a premium on national competitiveness and highlights the mutual dependence of the public and private sectors. Citizen demand is more diversified and sophisticated, and, at the same time, the ability of governments to deal with stubborn societal problems is being questioned.... Traditional governance structures and managerial response are increasingly ineffectual in this context. Radical change is required in order to protect the very capacity to govern and deliver services. (OECD [PUMA], 1995)

In 2003 the Directorate published a policy brief on public sector modernization which surveyed twenty years of OECD member country attempts at reform. The report had a somewhat sober tone, noting that two decades of reform had yielded some clear improvements but had also created unanticipated problems. The pursuit of efficiency, which characterized most of this period, had been myopic and sometimes counterproductive. But the document still emphasized the need for better policy capacity – indeed the very problems created by the reforms demanded improved governance systems:

To complicate matters, governments are now under pressure for more profound changes to meet the requirements of contemporary society. A concern for efficiency is being supplanted by problems of governance, strategy, risk management, ability to adapt to change, collaborative action and the need to understand the impact of policies on society. To respond to this challenge, member countries, and the OECD, need better analytical and empirical tools and more sophisticated strategies for change than they have generally had to date. (OECD, 2003)

The OECD's focus on policy development as a key aspect of public sector reform is not restricted to its members alone but has formed part of the organization's efforts at international aid focused on formerly communist regimes. Its SIGMA program (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries), which is a joint effort by the OECD and the European Union (under its PHARE program, which since 1989 has been channeling EU financial and technical support for transition and reform efforts, and more recently, to prepare countries in Central and Eastern Europe to successfully join the EU), provides support to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey (OECD [SIGMA], 2006). Priority reform areas include: anti-corruption and integrity, policy-making and regulatory capacities, and public expenditure management.

SIGMA assists partner countries in strengthening policy-making capacities and in setting up co-ordination mechanisms at the centre of government, usually in the Office of the Government and/or the Prime Minister's Office, to ensure coherence among sectoral policies of ministries and consistency of government policy-making and implementation. Support is also given to developing methodologies for assessing the impact of legislation on the budget and the economy as a whole – including such

aspects as labour market, social and political impact – and on the management, organisational structures and process of adopting the *acquis communautaire*. (ibid.)

As we noted earlier, the OECD/PUMA seems, unlike the World Bank, to have become a firm convert to NPM by the mid-1990s, emphasizing both the need for and the inevitable process of “convergence” (Hood, 1998: 202). Interestingly, while PUMA was an important global voice championing NPM, SIGMA, as a program funded largely by the EU and designed to facilitate accession by CEE countries, relied much more on Western European examples (e.g., France and Germany) which had typically been sceptical of NPM. This is an interesting illustration of a point that Deacon (1997) makes about IGOs: they are often internally divided, or at least marked by debate over fundamental policy principles and advice. Moreover, without the financial levers available to the IMF or the World Bank, the OECD has to rely on its capacities as a venue for discussion, the shaping of discourse, and advice. As Ougaard (2004) puts it:

Thus the case is not that the organization as such -- neither the permanent bureaucracy located in Paris, nor the Council or its committees -- develops policies independently and imposes them on members. Decisions are made by consensus, requiring at minimum acquiescence from home capitals, and strategies, recommendations and proposals are developed in a process of dialogue that involves theoretical, analytical and political inputs from the OECD departments, from independent specialists commissioned by the OECD, and from experts and officials from member states' ministries and departments, as well as from nongovernmental organizations. In Martin Marcussen's terms, it has acted as an idea creator, an idea broker, an arena for ideas, and ideal promoter..." (86)

### *The EU (PHARE and TACIS)*

As Grabbe (2001) points out, it is much more difficult to discern a specific “EU – blueprint” or “official line” than it is for organizations such as the World Bank or the OECD. First, the actual standards that the EU holds up for accession cross the entire gamut of public policy and administration. Second, those standards are not always necessarily clear, and are deliberately applied within specific country contexts. Finally, the “EU” is an

abstraction that masks a multitude of players and institutions, so that it is not easy to arrive a single effect of impact.

How consistent and compatible are the different external sources of advice? The EU's advice is specifically designed to promote particular aspects of governance that are directly relevant to membership, rather than taking a holistic view of how administrations should develop; for example, the EU does not prescribe particular models of civil service reform. By contrast, the OECD (through its SIGMA programme) and the World Bank have been more active in providing specific advice on developing public administration more generally. Tensions can emerge where there are different logics lying behind general development of administrative capacity and the specific demands of EU membership (Nunberg 2000). After all, the EU's focus in each area is limited to the functions that need to be standardized to EU norms, not a complete blueprint for the public administration. (Grabbe, 2001: 1027)

The two key EU institutions that focus on governance and public administration reform are PHARE (Pologne/Hongrie: assistance à la réstructuration économique) and TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States). PHARE was created at a G-8 summit in 1990, and as its name indicates, was originally tightly focused on two countries, but then was expanded to cover all former Warsaw Pact countries, including the Baltic states, but none of the other countries in the fSU. It currently embraces the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as Bulgaria and Romania. Until 2000 it also included the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), but as of 2001 a new program (the CARDS programme, for Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stability in the Balkans) has addressed needs in these countries. Obviously, PHARE activities in what are now member states is will be scaled back and restructured so that those states essentially manage the program independently within their domains. TACIS was instituted in 1991 to aid the countries of the fSU. Both programs provide assistance through non-reimbursable grants, and both have highly centralized administration in the EU. PHARE aid, at least initially, was designed to be responsive, so was not sharply targeted. TACIS, by contrast, was.



In its first phase of the program (1991-92), TACIS focused on projects dealing with energy, training, financial services, transportation and food production. In 1993-95, as part of a new European Council Regulation, it focused on development of private enterprise, infrastructure, energy (notably nuclear safety). In the first phase the emphasis in the European regulation was on the developing a market economy. In the second and third phases (starting in 1996) this shifted to a dual emphasis on marketization as well as democratization. Over its first decade, TACIS monies gradually moved away from infrastructure projects to human resources and nuclear safety. Nonetheless, the results of the program have been mixed. An interim evaluation published in 1997 reported that the program was highly centralized, with typically baroque EU regulations and practices that made it cumbersome and unresponsive to real local needs (Davis and Dombrowski, 2000: 88).

PHARE was deliberately kept quite broad, with the main objective being the facilitation of applicant countries to accession to the EU. This was facilitated by a contracting process that identified broad country problems and then left it up to competitive bidding from consultants and organizations. Most projects were short-term and quite disaggregated (Deacon, 1997: 100). By the end of the 1990s, this open-ended and uncoordinated approach gave way to one in which EU officials intended "to dictate the agenda for institutional changes in the run-up to accession" (Jacoby, 1999: 62). In 2006 PHARE stated its first objective as "Strengthening public administrations and institutions to function effectively inside the European Union" (PHARE, 2006). An important characteristic of PHARE is its variety – key decisions about projects are made in the Commission, with participation by recipient countries, and the range of projects is bewilderingly wide, from building border posts to encouraging young video filmmakers to training on statistical systems and human rights, both for government officials as well as NGOs. Perhaps because of this wide remit, an interim evaluation of PHARE public administration projects was

severely critical of the program, saying that the ratings given for the achievement of the Public Administration Reform Programme objectives were “the worst for any sector” (PHARE, 2001).

Wider objectives of the Programmes assessed have, without exception, been very vague and immediate objectives have not been significantly better. The multi-country SIGMA Programmes assessed had no immediate objectives, presumably reflecting their demand-led nature. OMAS analysis of activities and results showed that Technical Assistance contractors generally completed their tasks such as drafting strategies, reviewing the operations of Government organs and proposing Ministerial reorganisations, drafting Civil Service legislation, conducting training and giving operational guidance. However, much of this activity was driven by the Commission Services rather than the Candidate Countries. The conclusions reached in OMAS Reports indicate how limited and fragile the achievements have been and the year 2000 assessments make clear the fundamental and continuing problems which stand in the way of effective Public Administration Reform. (ibid.)

Nonetheless, it in aggregate (i.e., beyond public administration programs per se) PHARE has evidently had an impact in bringing governance arrangements in candidate states up to EU standards.

## **Conclusions**

The preceding discussion permits several conclusions and observations. The first pertains to the idea of a global movement around public management reform, with a special focus on NPM. As Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) noted: "There has been considerable inter-country borrowing, facilitated by international bodies such as PUMA/OECD and the World Bank. ... There can be no doubt that the selling of management ideas has been one of the growth industries of the 1980s and 1990s. ... Departments and units charged with administrative reform have their own international networks, both bilateral and multilateral. The Public Management Service (PUMA) of the OECD was an influential nodal point in these networks from the late 1980s onwards" (31). However, even the snapshots provided above of the World Bank, the OECD, and the EU show that while public management reform was certainly on the agenda, it was not a single note phenomenon. The World Bank was quite tepid on NPM, while the OECD was enthusiastic (though its SIGMA program less

so), and the EU was positively cool. Indeed, in the case of the EU, the operational or functional imperatives of the accession process made the entire effort much more practically oriented. Interestingly, the obsession with a global movement obscured these differences, not simply in rhythm, but in emphasis and in support. This may mark the “middle age” of the NPM period (Hood and Peters, 2004), when there is more critical distance from its claims and accomplishments. Nonetheless, it is clear that the previous 15 years did indeed see a global *conversation* about state capacity and public management. An important avenue of inquiry would be to track the different tonalities in that conversation, particularly in IGOs, who were the standard bearers and effectively the implementers of much of what passed for management reform thinking in that period.

A second conclusion concerns the global knowledge networks, or what Hansen, Krause, Salskov-Iversen and Bislev (2002) call “transnational discourse communities” that were activated through IGOs around public management reform. The research conducted for this paper is just in its early stages, but two observations can be made at this stage. The first is that if one were to imagine the entire discourse community as visible at night from 10,000 feet up, it would probably look like any typical urban landscape – widely dispersed clumps of light, some connected with dense arteries, others almost isolated, some brighter, some dimmer, and perhaps a few of overwhelming size, surrounded by glimmering, but perhaps growing outskirts. They are on the same surface, and recognizably part of a system or community, but we need to be clear that there is an important variegation in that system, multiple levels and nodes. The OECD is not the EU, and neither is like USAID or other bilateral technical assistance organizations, let alone international foundations or professional associations. The mapping of this global discourse community has only begun.

A third conclusion *cum* observation is that we know relatively little about how the export of policy models actually takes place on the ground. This paper has adopted the lens of IGOs and their respective activities. An equally interesting approach would be to reverse

that lens and view policy transfer as a dynamic process taking place in a given space – a capital city or a single country. This would perhaps require the talents of an anthropologist as opposed to a policy analyst, but Wedel (1998 – coincidentally, an anthropologist by training) points out the way in which technical assistance organizations collide in the field, lack coordination, and compete (Perlin, 2003: 33). In short, understanding export is about more than understanding the product being exported and the means of transport – it requires an understanding of competitive “markets” and how consumers of those products respond and interact with those competitors.

The final conclusion, following from the previous one, is that we need to be very cautious about the impact or ultimate effect of these export efforts. There is a certain mythology about the influence of IGOs – after all, they have resources and leverage – but our snapshots should some doubts about the coherence of their programs and indeed their long run effects. For example, as Nunberg (1999) noted:

Perhaps the most salient feature of donor efforts in supporting administrative transformation has been the limited extent of assistance in comparison with privatization, macro-stabilization, or social safety programs. Administrative reform programs were the stepchildren of the transition; most donors have not viewed them as critical to initial or even overall reform success. (262)

It may very well be that the impact of actual policy export around public management ideas was less important in the long run than other reforms taking place in the economy of CEE countries, for example. But we know that in some instances – EU accession countries, for example – the pressures to adopt reforms were quite strong. And we also know that IGOs like the World Bank can use conditionality as an instrument of compliance. The question of “compliance techniques” as part of the policy export process clearly also requires more careful examination.

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