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Panel D: When Governance Travels: Adaptation and Resistance

**Translating Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood:
Conceptual and Empirical Challenges**

Draft Paper presented by Ursula Lehmkuhl

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Adresse der Autorin:

Universität Trier

Lehrstuhl für Internationale Geschichte

54296 Trier

Tel.: +49 651 201 2186

Email: lehmkuhl@uni-trier.de

web: <http://geschichte.uni-trier.de/>

1. Governance as a travelling concept: Adaption, rejection, and resistance in Areas of Limited Statehood

The core argument of the SFB 700 research program is that the social science governance discourse is characterized by a central deficit. The analytical perspectives and normative implications of the governance concept and governance discourse only reflect the political, institutional and philosophical constitution and scope conditions of modern and highly developed democratic nation-states in the OECD world. When attempting to apply the governance concept to historical or contemporary areas of limited statehood, serious empirical and conceptual problems arise. “Governance” does not travel easily, neither as a concept nor in the sense of export and transfer of Western governance institutions.

Thus, during the first funding period of the SFB 700 much time and energy was devoted to refining and re-defining the governance concept so that it can be applied to areas of limited statehood in the non-OECD world or to non-Western cultures in which the modern (nation-) state’s monopoly on the use of force and its ability to enforce political decisions does not exist or exists only to a limited degree. We agreed on the following minimal normative definition of governance that analytically informs the empirical research of the SFB projects:

By governance we mean the various institutionalized modes of social coordination aiming at the creation and implementation of collectively binding rules and regulations or at the provision of collective goods.

Avoiding or at least reflecting on the inherent normativity of the governance concepts and going beyond essentializing perspectives was a first step in our endeavor to apply governance to the analysis of historical and contemporary political realities in non-western cultures. In the second funding period the conceptual work on the further refinement of the governance concept as a travelling concept has become one of the SFB’s core theoretical objectives.

The analysis of appropriation and rejection processes as well as governance transfer and translation between local governance discourses and governance institutions in areas of limited statehood belongs to the three new research objectives of the SFB during the second funding period. We explore how and why processes of translation, cultural adaptation, and

resistance are influenced by external demands for governance on the one hand, and local orders and governance concepts on the other. What kind of discursive exchange processes between the exporting societies/polities and the importing societies/polities can be observed? Which (culturally determined) conflicts of interest can be discerned? Which learning and diffusion processes take place? And how do we have to evaluate and assess these processes normatively?

By including appropriation and rejection processes as one of the SFB's new research perspectives we react to the increasing scholarly attention to processes and mechanisms by which ideas and concepts travel through time and space. Since neither governance approaches nor diffusion theories have yet been able to explain how governance can be transferred and translated and when and why Western governance scripts are rejected or even produce open and sometimes violent resistance, new interdisciplinary research perspectives are needed.

As elaborated in the project description of the synthesizing project A1: Risse/Lehmkuhl the SFB's approach to the question of "how governance travels" is theoretically and methodically based on a heuristic framework informed by diffusion research and transfer and translation studies as well as postcolonial theories. Going beyond diffusion theories, transfer and translation research reminds us that the export of governance scripts is no one-way street. Governance "travels back" producing feedback loops and reflexivity. The interaction processes accompanying governance transfer also change and transform the sending societies and their agents (for a discussion of reflexivity and double reflexivity see Giddens 1984).

In addition, our methodological and conceptual discussions have been informed by first results of the empirical analysis of governance in areas of limited statehood focusing on functional equivalents of Western governance modes on the one hand and on interaction and communication processes in the sense of "Aneignung und Abwehr" – appropriation, adaption and rejection or resistance – between local and Western governance actors on the other.

The question of how Western political concepts, norms and ideas are diffused and transferred globally is not new. In diplomatic history the "cultural approach" has influenced

research on international norm exchange since Akira Iriye's seminal article published in 1979 (Iriye 1979, 1991; for a discussion of the cultural turn in diplomatic history see Lehmkuhl 2001). Concomitantly the "cognitive turn" in political science in the 1980s pinpointed the relevance of worldviews, ideational systems and (enemy) images as crucial factors influencing cooperative as well as conflictive interaction processes in international relations (for a discussion of the state of the art see Fiebig-von Hase/Lehmkuhl 1997). In theoretical perspective this discussion led to the introduction of constructivism in IR theory (see the debate about culture and international relations in the *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*, 1996-199).

U.S. historians of American foreign relations like Emily S. Rosenberg, Frank Ninkovich, Thomas Paterson, etc. have analysed the impact at home and abroad of American foreign policies focussing on the post-World War II period, notably the Cold War and on research along the North-South axis. The first volume published in the SFB 700 Palgrave Series "Governance and Limited Statehood" is still written in this tradition. Like Rosenberg's "Spreading the American Dream" (Rosenberg 1982), "Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law – American and European Strategies" (Magen et al. 2009) deals with the question of "spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform ..." (Magen et al. 2009: 3). The comparative analytical framework developed in this volume for the analysis of democracy promotion is based on traditional political science concepts capturing a "logic of influence" through assumed causal mechanisms by which ideas diffuse, such as control, coercion, material incentives and the manipulation of utility calculations, normative suasion through socialization, persuasion or emulation, and capacity-building. The underlying assumption of this approach is that diffusion works unidirectional. The global spread of ideas, policies, and economic as well as social practices is analysed from the perspective of an ideational or normative hegemon – or in the case of "Promoting Democracy" of two hegemons, Europe and America – possessing the means and instruments to induce and produce convergence of ideas and practices despite vastly different socio-economic and cultural contexts.

This "one way" approach has been criticized by historians and anthropologists following postcolonial theories and the cultural and transnational turn of the 1990s. With

transnational and global history becoming a dominant paradigm historians emphasize “*histoire croisée*” (Werner 2005; Werner/Zimmermann 2006), entanglements (Lepenies 2003), and for that domestic and local ways of appropriation and rejection (Conrad/Randeria 2002; Kocka/Haupt 2009), including the “invention of traditions” (Bhattacharyya-Panda 2008). In contrast to diffusion research, postcolonial and transfer studies have focused on historical, spatial and cultural contextualization. Ideas do not just spread across time and space, but meet specific historical and social contexts in which they are adapted and transformed (Paulmann 1998; De Grazia 2005). These contexts need to be examined as “*translational spaces*” – as spaces where relationships, situations, identities and interactions are shaped through the mediating process of cultural translation (Bachmann-Medick 2009: 9, 2004a, 2004b, 2007; Renn 2006; Venuti 2008).

Like governance, the translation paradigm is utilized in a range of disciplines. In the debate about a “translational turn” (Bachmann-Medick 2009; Buden/Nowotny 2009), the category of translation is more and more disassociated from a linguistic and textual concept. History, sociology, and cultural studies use translation not only as an analytical category but consider translation a transnational cultural practice, a category of action itself (for a sociology of translation see Renn 2006). Hence, translation serves as a category to structure e.g. the analysis of interaction processes of transfer of meanings which are changed or transformed. The starting point of the translation concept is not the assumption of two separate, unconnected contexts but the interpenetration and entanglement of different contexts, discourses, and social fields (Fuchs 2009). The fact that meanings are usually shared only partially across contexts points to the rejection and resistance perspective that translation studies opens for the analysis of global interaction processes.

The translation perspective offers a critical perspective on governance by stressing the historical context-dependency of the normative core of the governance literature, on the one hand, and its discursive and social constructedness, on the other. Governance is not an objective given. Instead, governance has to be interpreted as a global cultural script emanating from Western modernity and reflected in contemporary Western social science. This script has become part and parcel of Western rationality including some strong normative connotations which have informed, e.g., ideas about “global governance”

(Commission on Global Governance 1995). Historical as well as contemporary Western efforts at governance transfer are mostly informed by this cultural script. The SFB's goal is to critically reflect this script by taking its embeddedness in a globally shared and entangled history as a starting point for our reflections.

Moreover, by arguing that transcultural interaction contexts need to be examined as "translational spaces" the SFB adopts arguments and premises put forward in the debate about the "*spatial turn*". We recognize the need to overcome methodological nationalism and the national container approach still characterizing most of social science research. By focusing on transnational phenomena, we acknowledge the political, social and cultural relevance of transnational spaces situated between or above the territorial confines of the nation state (e.g. Pries 2008). However, with Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai 1991, 1996), Linda Basch (Basch et al. 1994), Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Gupta/Ferguson 1992), Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 2004), Ludger Pries (Pries 2008) and Steffen Mau (Mau 2007, 2010) we argue that there are a plurality of competing spatial frameworks at any given time. By recognizing the constructed nature of space as well as the simultaneity and fluidity of various spatial frameworks (Brun 2001; Faist/Özveren 2004; Finnegan 2008; Low/Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Pries 2001; Soja 1989; Wilton/Cranford 2002) the SFB not only explores adaptation, appropriation, rejection and resistance processes in transnational spaces, but also in forms of politically defined territories on the local, the national, and the regional level.

The project of Stefan Rinke, for example, which is going to present first results from the historical analysis of adaptation and resistance processes at the Latin American frontier in this workshop, very much focuses on the local level and applies a micro-historical approach, as does the project of Lehmkuhl and Finzsch which explores settler imperialism at the North American and Australian frontier. Ursula Schröder's project by contrast focuses on international security governance export by analyzing international security assistance on the international and transnational level. Sven Chojnacki's and Marianne Braig's projects focus on border regions.

Applying a constructivist perspective to the broad variety of localities analyzed by the individual projects of the SFB, governance spaces are conceived of as transfer and

translation spaces. Hence, ideally the relation between space, place, culture, and governance should be analyzed by exploring the cultural meaning attributed to space (specific localities) by various social actors through their practices and politics, and the variety of modes of governance over time. Cultural meaning attributed to space expresses itself in, among others, the material cultures or the symbolic significance that mark the specificities of the localities in which interaction takes place. By acknowledging coexisting and rival claims about the cultural meaning, construction and appropriation of spaces, conflicts of interest leading to sometimes violent and very often conflict-ridden forms of rejection and resistance can be explored in a culturally informed way. In fact, the focus on specific localities conceived of as sites of resistance, in which cultural hybridity, transcultural practices, and overlapping identities constitute counter-hegemonic practices and discourses, permits the deconstruction and the assessment of power relations that inform transfer and translation processes and the struggles that may result from them (Massey 1994).

Although, the SFB has established the analysis of appropriation and rejection processes as well as governance transfer and translation between local governance discourses and governance institutions in areas of limited statehood as one of the new three new research objectives, a more refined comparative framework of analysis reflecting the spatial, the temporal and the translational component of interaction in many-cultured contexts that could be applied to the diverse universe of the SFB projects is still missing. And I think that the discussion in this workshop could and should also help to establish such a framework. Two major challenges have to be tackled: first the broad variety of spatial contexts analyzed by the single SFB projects and secondly the quite heterogeneous discipline-based analytical methods and approaches with which governance transfer and export is explored.

2. How Governance Travels: A comparative framework of analysis¹

A possible solution to both challenges is offered by the fact that although using different wording and distinct empirical references depending on the specific disciplinary context, scholars dealing with diffusion, transfer and translation processes have in common that they

¹ The following part is a further development of a framework of analysis developed by Ursula Lehmkuhl and Thomas Risse in an unpublished research proposal for a project entitled “TransGov: Transfer, Translation, Resistance – When Governance travels”.

usually distinguish between various interrelated analytical dimensions characterizing and steering diffusion, transfer, and translation processes. Among these dimensions are content, actor constellation, context of interaction, practices, modes and media of communication and interaction, transfer instruments and mechanisms, and outcomes of transfer.

Transfer and translation studies add the perspective of reflexivity and draws attention to the analysis of possible feedback loops. The literature about space, place and culture offers research perspectives underlining the importance of the spatial dimension of interaction processes in which content is negotiated and translated. Spatial zones have to be approached as multi-layered, concrete as well as symbolic spatial configurations (not just local-regional-national-transnational or urban-rural, but also public-private, formal-informal, legitimate-illegitimate, actual-remembered-forgotten, etc.) in which micro—and macro-social processes are related and work together in a criss-crossing of temporal levels. And this is, where the historical dimension and the perspective of “longue durée” come in. Historicizing our research by integrating empirical case studies from the period of late antiquity (Esders), the early modern period and the early 19th century (Lehmkuhl, Finzsch, Rinke) not only allows historical comparison but also draws attention to inter-temporality in the sense that a contemporary transfer and translation situation might explicitly or unconsciously refer to a story situated in the past while immediately speaking to the present. Thus the politics of memory and the discursive framing capacity of hidden memories influence appropriation or rejection processes and might even cause open and sometimes violent resistance in transfer and translation contexts.

An analytical framework for the analysis of governance export and the travelling capacity of the governance concept in the context of the specific transdisciplinary set-up of the SFB 700 could take these dimensions as a common reference system for the analysis of adaptation, appropriation, rejection and resistance processes. Referring to the above described spatial and temporal contextualization of translation processes, which themselves engender cultural and social change, and by explicitly recognizing the social constructedness of difference and diversity in multi-cultured interaction contexts, SFB projects could try to systematically and comparatively answer the following questions:

1. *Content*: What aspects of governance are being transferred and translated transnationally and why are they transferred? On a most general level, entire concepts such as democracy or “new public management” as well as values and principles (human rights, rule of law, Islamic Shar’ia) can be transferred as well as particular norms and institutions (court systems, party systems, regulatory and standardization bodies). More specifically, policy transfer also has to be considered (specific environmental regulations, banking rules, anti-corruption instruments, etc.). The analysis of the content of governance transfer has to distinguish between different types and the specific quality of governance concepts. What quality/type of “governance” instrument/concept lends itself to adaptation and which content does produce resistance? How does content change over time and with which results? How do *lieux de mémoire* influence the perception and interpretation of Western norms and institutions and how do they contribute to the power of contesting scripts? What are the major counter-scripts to Western governance concepts? How and why do certain Western governance scripts resonate with contesting scripts stemming from different cultural settings, and why are others rejected?

2. *Actor Constellations*: Who are the transferring actors (corporate actors as well as citizens) and with whom do they interact at the receiving end of transfer, translation, and resistance processes? Which actors serve as global promoters or translators of governance ideas and practices? What are the interests, qualifications and qualities of transferring actors/cultural brokers? How do aspects of cultural ambivalence influence the way actors behave? How important is the self-conception of these actors as intermediators and “brokers” in the transfer processes? Do these actors themselves reflect about their intermediary position between their own culture and the “other” culture, between “fremd” and “eigen”, between “old” and “new”, etc.? How do they deal with resistance?

3. *Interaction Context*: The analysis of the diffusion and translation of governance has to pay attention to the structural, spatial and temporal context in which governance transfer takes place. Four aspects have to be distinguished. First, *power relationships* have to be considered: Which types of asymmetrical exchange processes can be distinguished and how do they govern the transfer of governance? Under what conditions do power asymmetries lead to resistance and when do they result in incomplete adaptation? Are symmetrical

power relations more conducive to successful governance transplants than power imbalances between the actors involved in the transfer and translation processes? How does discursive power affect governance diffusion and transfers, and who controls the discourses?

Second, we need to pay attention to the *institutional context* in which governance transfer takes place. In other words, the “governance of governance transfer” is at stake here. In this context, the distinctions introduced by Williamson 1975 which has informed much of the governance research in political science (Börzel 2010; see also Benz 2004a) has to be scrutinized critically. According to Williamson governance transfers can take place in a hierarchical context (command and control; rule and authority [Herrschaft]), in competition systems, and in networks as well as negotiation systems. To be sure, a close look at functional equivalents will identify more and structurally different institutional contexts. In the project on Settler Imperialism, for example, treaties play a significant role as institutions regulating Indian-White relations at the frontier. Again we have to be aware of hidden memories and memory politics and the representational function of certain institutions in local settings. Institutionalized symbolic markers characterizing specific localities very often are factors producing resistance and violent conflicts.

Third, the *normative and ideational context* has to be addressed. Modern international law and its demands for (good) governance reflects a universal value consensus which encompasses fundamental human rights, the rule of law, and the provision of basic collective goods (Ladwig and Rudolf 2010). This consensus cannot simply be given up in favor of prioritizing local values and norms over global governance norms without leading to value relativism and particularism. At the same time, international norms must recognize the reality of normative pluralism and cultural heterogeneity.

Fourth, the *social constructedness of difference* and the representation of governance concepts in specific localities and spatial contexts need to be taken into account. How, when and through whom do different historically constructed markers of cultural difference become politically mobilized in different spatial contexts? How does the representation of difference and diversity influence interaction and behavior in culturally diverse settings? And how does this influence governance transfer?

4. *Media and communication practices:* What are the instruments, channels and media of transnational communication in governance transfer, and how can we explain the emerging discourse structures? What are the media and instruments with which governance is transferred? How do the mediators involved structure the concomitant discourses and what kind of existing discourse structures frame the overall communication process? Transfer media can be mass communication devices (TV, newspapers, internet), but also actor-specific networks such as epistemic communities, advocacy networks, public private partnerships (Schäferhoff et al. 2009), and even ordinary citizens. In historical perspective other media will be more important. As described in the project by Stefan Rinke institutionalized forms of communication like the *Parlamentos* serve as a medium through which old and new practices are negotiated. Which practices of governance translation can be observed? And how do these practices change over time? How do inter-temporality and particular historical memories and memory politics influence communication practices and the discursive representation of difference in the sense of “das Eigene” and “das Fremde”?

5. *Export Instruments and Transfer Mechanisms:* Which causal mechanisms of transfer and translation processes can be distinguished? Which mechanisms are operating under which conditions and how are these mechanisms related to the outcomes of transfer and translation processes?

Diffusion research distinguishes between various mechanisms (Börzel/Risse 2009). First, governance transfers can be coerced upon societies, social groups, and citizens, e.g. when external actors interfere with the domestic sovereignty of a country (from colonial rule to modern protectorates). A second mechanism of intentional transfer involves the use and manipulation of incentive structures. Receiving actors might be entitled to some benefits if they import governance institutions, but they can also be sanctioned if they refuse (e.g. Western programs for democracy promotion, see Magen et al. 2009). Third, non-manipulative mechanisms of transfer concern persuasion, learning, and other socialization devices.

However, diffusion and norms transfer often takes place unintentionally. Here, we can distinguish between emulation and mimickry. Emulation concerns the conscious adoption of some concepts, policies, or rules to solve functional problems (e.g. “best practices”).

Mimicry, however, involves the “downloading” of transfer products irrespective of their functional usefulness and simply because actors want to belong to a given (international) community (see Meyer/Rowan 1991).

Transfer and translation studies again broaden the spectrum by including mediation and negotiation as transfer mechanisms.

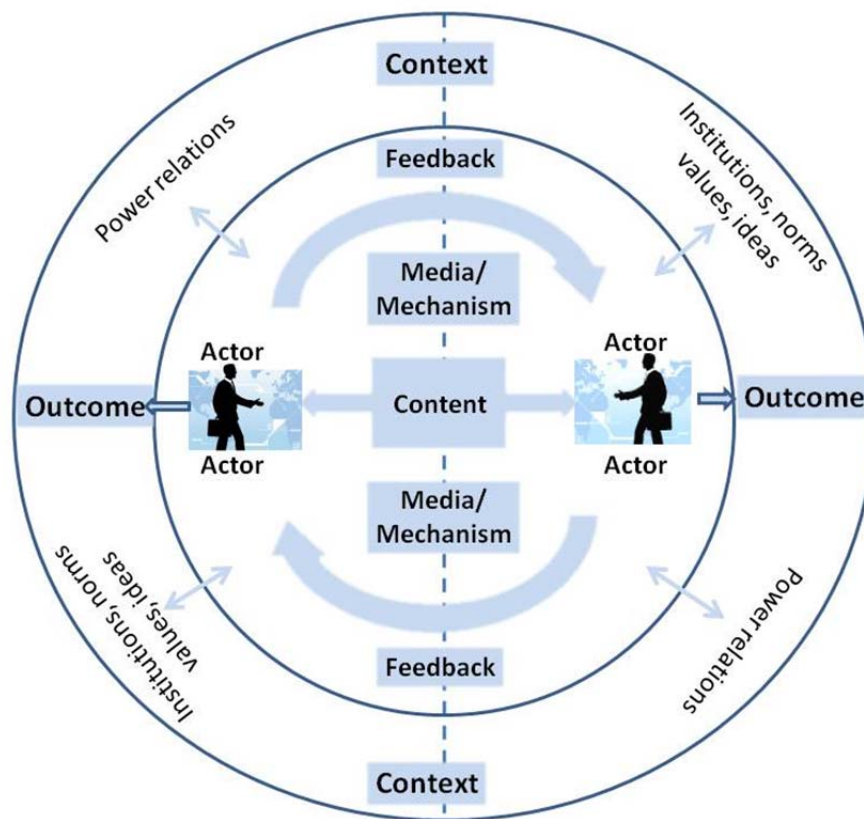
6. *Outcomes*: What is the outcome of these transfer and translation processes? Are outcomes related to the specific mechanisms of a given translation and transfer process? What explains the variation in outcomes of governance transfers and diffusion? How are differences in outcomes related to actors, power structures, media, and mechanisms of transfer processes? Sociological institutionalism has argued that the global diffusion of Western rationality has led to a growing convergence and homogeneity of institutional solutions (Powell/ DiMaggio 1991; Thomas et al. 1987; Drori et al. 2006). At the same time, institutional convergence is not expected to lead to homogenous social practices. Rather, as sociological institutionalism claims, the more we see institutional convergence, the more we would expect decoupling of local practices and “organizational hypocrisy” (Brunsson 2003). States of the global South, for example, might adopt a Western governance script, but their political and social practices might continue on a rather different path. Apart from convergence, we might also encounter continuing divergence as well as enduring rejection to efforts of governance transfer and diffusion. The most interesting outcome of transfer and translation processes might be the invention of novel solutions and the innovative, but also selective adaptation of global governance scripts and their translation to fit local conditions and practices.

A general hypothesis which has influenced research in various disciplines of the social science posits that transformative change is the more likely to occur, the more externally transferred concepts, ideas, and norms resonate and can be made compatible with local political and cultural traditions. Last not least, we have to tackle the problem of sustainability. How sustainable are the outcomes of transfer and translation processes? How are new cultural, social, political and economic practices habitualized? What are the institutional effects on political, economic, social, and cultural structures?

7. *Reflexivity of transfer, translation, and resistance and feedback loops*: What happens when governance concepts travel back? What is the impact of transfer and translation processes on the sending societies? How and under what conditions do the processes and outcomes of transfer and translation processes accompanying the export of Western models and scripts alter Western societies and polities and transform exporting organizations and institutions? What are the normative consequences of the reflective effects of governance export? And how is our own context-boundedness as governance researchers affected when modified governance concepts travel back (double reflexivity)?

These seven dimensions are interrelated and describe a circular logic that allows substituting the sender-receiver-model of diffusion and its underlying one-way assumption of transfer.

Graph 1: Translating Governance - A circular framework of analysis



Exploring governance as a travelling concept and the translation of governance in areas of limited statehood on the basis of the analytical framework developed above would allow producing a comparative typology of patterns of convergence, divergence, and resistance as well as of scope conditions of transfer and translation. It would allow us to formulate hypothesis trying to explain the varied patterns of convergence, enduring divergence, and resistance. And it would help to uncover how governance concepts are amalgamated with local traditions, which conflicts emerge, and what is “lost in translation”. Finally, we would also get new insights into how and why processes of translation, cultural adaptation, and resistance are influenced by external demands for governance on the one hand, and local orders and governance concepts on the other.

3. When Governance travels? Suggestions for future research and a culturally refined governance approach

→ Ideas to be prepared for the final Panel discussion on Saturday

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