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Original
Spatial governance and planning policy transfer in the Global South. The role of international agency and the recirculation of policies / Blanc, F., Cotella, G., Dbrowski, M.. - In: PLANNING PRACTICE + RESEARCH. - ISSN 0269-7459. - ELETTRONICO. - 38:6(2023), pp. 749-762. [10.1080/02697459.2023.2275422]

Availability:
This version is available at: 11583/2983627 since: 2023-11-06T13:30:45Z

Publisher:
Taylor & Francis

Published
DOI:10.1080/02697459.2023.2275422

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13 October 2026

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Planning Practice & Research

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cppr20

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To cite this article: Francesca Blanc, Giancarlo Cotella & Marcin Dąbrowski (2023) Spatial governance and planning policy transfer in the Global South. The role of international agency and the recirculation of policies, Planning Practice & Research, 38:6, 749-762, DOI: 10.1080/02697459.2023.2275422

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2023.2275422

Published online: 06 Nov 2023.

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PLANNING PRACTICE & RESEARCH
2023, VOL. 38, NO. 6, 749–762
https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2023.2275422

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EDITORIAL

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Spatial governance and planning policy transfer in the Global South. The role of international agency and the recirculation of policies

1. Introduction

The transfer of policy knowledge, approaches and practices has become ubiquitous across different policy areas (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, 2012; Stone, 2012; Evans, 2017). Municipalities, regional authorities and national governments routinely search for inspiration and solutions to their policy challenges abroad, including in the fields of spatial governance and planning.[1] One of the most important reasons behind this trend – on the demand side – is the growing complexity of spatial development challenges in an increasingly volatile and uncertain world facing globalisation and now also deglobalisation trends (Williamson, 2021), multiple crises (political, economic and environmental challenges, housing shortage, migration, disruptions of global value chains, etc.) and the growing interdependency between policy sectors and levels of government (Cerf, 2019). Under these conditions, the tasks that decision and policymakers face are increasingly multifarious and compound, which requires new knowledge, diverse skills and templates for policy (Stead, 2012). At the same time, policy transfer is also driven by the supply side as new technologies and ideas to tackle urban challenges emergefor instance, based on big data, smart city platforms, sponge city solutions, renewable energy, circularity, or – more on the process side – on digital citizen engagement tools or co-creation and deliberative innovations, just to name a few (Athey, 2017).

Importantly, the international circulation of policies is supported by an elaborated and expanding network of global and local knowledge transfer channels. This includes the proliferation of transnational city networks (such as United Cities and Local Governments, Eurocities, C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate Change and Energy, etc.), the diffusion of spatial policy handbooks and catalogues of good practices produced by international organisation and research consortia (e.g, UN-Habitat and the World Bank, but also the ESPON programme, Urbact and the European Urban Initiative), the multiplication of international fora, conferences and study visits as well as of bi- or multi-lateral agreements between governments at different levels to promote exchange of planning and governance knowledge (Adams *et al.*, 2011a). This policy transfer infrastructure enables processes of diffusion and learning among planners and policymakers, which can be supported by advocacy networks and powerful multinational companies (Adams *et al.*, 2011b; Rapoport & Hult, 2017; Stone *et al.*, 2020), but can also entail a more coercive or strongly incentivised and formalised modes of transfer of urban solutions, based on conditionalities related to membership of certain organisations (like the European Union for instance) or access to international funding schemes (Cotella *et al.*, 2015; Cotella & Dąbrowski, 2021; Blanc & Cotella, 2023a, 2023b).

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On the one hand, policy transfer in the fields of spatial governance and planning can trigger innovation and learning, which improves the capacity of organisations at different territorial levels to deliver better strategies, policies and plans, make urban planning more democratic and bottom-up and overall, better achieve its political goals. On the other hand, it may be subject to pitfalls, as governments too often rely on policy transfer to legitimise domestic decisions and consider it a sort of 'silver bullet' to address or cover for domestic policy failures. This can lead to 'copy-pasting' of solutions from one context to another, or to blind emulation without necessarily considering the need to adapt the transferred policies and practices to the new local specificities, resources, capacities, and institutional idiosyncrasies, running the risk of policy failure due to misinformed or incomplete transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000) or 'fast-track institutionalisation' processes (Whitney & López-García, 2023).

Whatever the outcome may be, it is important to highlight that in practice spatial governance and planning policy transfer seldom manifests as the simple transfer of a solution from a 'place A' to 'place B'. It is a complex process involving many actors and requiring a more or less tortuous 'translation' of policy solutions to fit the recipient context (Stone, 2012, 2017). As such, it is a process embedded in multilevel power relations and dynamics, and subject to multiple interests including international organisations and powerful, globally-operating consultancy companies, financial organisations and think tanks (Stone *et al.*, 2020; Montero, 2020). This entails biases towards certain approaches and solutions over others, which are seldom recognised and obscured by the glossy and naively positive communication on those transferred solutions conveyed through 'sanitised' best practice accounts (Stead, 2012) or by leveraging on 'comfortable landscapes', such as the one framed by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Blanc & Cotella, 2023a). In turn, this has in various circumstances led to the emergence of a so-called 'urban solutionism' whereby 'quick fixes' to complex urban problems are circulated and advocated by international organisations, often disregarding any knowledge on how to address the underlying causes of contemporary urban challenges (Montero, 2020).

One consequence of these multilevel power relations and dynamics and of the action of international organisations is that global policy transfer processes tend to be biased towards a rather unidirectional transfer of knowledge from the Global North to the Global South, reflecting the lack of attention paid to the specificities of urban planning within the latter and leading to a diffusion of 'pasteurised' urban solutions (Peck & Theodore, 2015; Blanc & Cotella, 2023a). This calls for a more critical view of the policy transfer processes in the Global South, as well as for a higher consideration of the policy transfer processes of spatial policy and planning knowledge within the cities and countries of the Global South and from the Global South to the Global North (Porto de Oliveira *et al.*, 2019). Against this background, and echoing the recent claims towards a 'Southern turn' in planning research (Watson, 2014; Galland & Elinbaum, 2018; Blanc et al., 2022a, 2022b), this special issue aims to shed light on the under-researched issues of South-South and South-North circulation of policy knowledge in the field of spatial governance and planning. In so doing, through the collected contributions, we explore the following research questions.

- What are the mechanisms and drivers of the circulation of spatial policies and planning knowledge within and out of the Global South contexts?
- Who are the actors behind this process(es) and what are their agendas?
- What are the factors that mediate the process of policy transfer and influence their impact on the ground?
- What are the patterns of adoption and translation of internationally sourced spatial planning solutions within and from the Global South?

In the remainder of this editorial, we will provide a brief overview of the policy transfer literature, and argue in favour of the opening of a 'Global South' perspective on the matter. Drawing on this, we set the objectives of this collection of papers against the existing knowledge gap and provide the readers with a roadmap to navigate the contents of the special issue. The editorial is rounded off by a number of future research perspectives, that ideally could together contribute to shape a preliminary research agenda on the matter.

2. Exploring policy transfer in the Global South

The literature on policy transfer is rather large and heterogeneous, encompassing different understandings of the concept and focusing on a multitude of aspects (Table 1).

Dolowitz and Marsh formulated probably the most widely used definition of policy transfer as the 'knowledge about how policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) are used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 5). When doing so, they intend policy transfer as a proactive process of transferring policy knowledge from one place to another involving

Table 1. Overview of the different understanding of policy transfer and of the related literature.

Concept	Discipline	Authors	Interest	Focus
Policy transfer	Political science	Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), Evans (2009), etc.	How is transfer of policy taking place pro-actively (voluntary or coercive), what is being transferred, and when it can lead to policy failure?	Content, process, agency
Lesson-drawing	Political science	Rose (1991, 1993, 2004)	Under what circumstances and to what extent can a programme that is effective in one place transfer to another?	Content, process
Policy diffusion/ convergence	Political science, planning	Knill (2005), Healey and Upton (2010), etc.	How policies spread by osmosis or contagion?	Adoption pattern
Policy learning and translation	Political science	Dunlop (2009), Stone (2012), etc.	How do policy actors learn from abroad; who facilitates this; how is foreign practice translated to fit the domestic context; how do policy transfer networks facilitate learning?	Process, epistemic communities and networks, translation and learning dynamics
Policy mobilities	Geography	McCann and Ward (2011), McCann (2011), etc.	Linking global circuits of policy knowledge to local policy practice, politics, and actors.	Process, agency, context, spaces

Source: adapted from (Dąbrowski *et al*., 2020).

politicians and practitioners as well as policy entrepreneurs such as think tanks, companies, lobbies, research institutions and international organisations (Stone, 2012). This strand of literature on policy transfer emphasises transfer agents, who they are, their motivations, and under which conditions this process can lead to success or failure (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009). The latter may happen if one adopts a 'one size fits all' approach to transfer without adaptation to the local context, in which transfers involve only selected elements of a policy or strive to transfer a policy that is hardly suitable for the recipient context due to missing resources, skills of the transfer agents or other structural conditions that need to be in place for a given policy to work. There is also a number of contextual barriers that policy transfer processes tend to run into (Evans, 2009; Dąbrowski et al., 2018, 2019). The notions of 'success' or 'failure', however, are per se contested and fuzzy. After all, it is difficult to specifically identify what is success and for whom (Marsh & Sharman, 2009), and how it is actually possible to determine and/or measure the success or failure of such a complex activity as policy transfer, which is more akin to a 'bricolage' or a 'tinkering' process rather than an orderly shift of knowledge from one place to another (see Stone, 2017).

A closely related notion to that of policy transfer is lesson-drawing. Put forward by the work of Richard Rose (1991, 1993, 2004), it also emphasises the process and content of transfer from a practical angle, in so doing providing guidance to policy practitioners on how to effectively draw policy lessons from abroad. However, there is also a host of related concepts, putting an accent of different aspects of policy transfer (see Table 1). Notably, some strands of political science and planning literature also investigate 'policy convergence' (e.g. Bennett, 1991) and policy diffusion (Healey & Upton, 2010). In this approach, the focus is on exploring how policy practices, programmes, ideas or paradigms are diffused internationally, and how this may lead to a different degree of convergence of policies in different contexts. In other words, the emphasis here is on the international patterns of adoption of policy solutions and approaches facilitated by networks connecting policy practitioners and circulation of best practices, from the leading countries towards less developed contexts where policy 'lags behind' (Stead & Cotella, 2011).

It is important to highlight that policy transfer literature still has several gaps and its object, that is, the practice of transferring policy between contexts, has itself been criticised on many grounds. For instance, the research on policy transfer tends to overlook the processes through which foreign practices are adapted to the local context and how these processes are shaped by political interests and agendas of the actors involved (Stone, 2012). These power dynamics and the specificities of the context to which a policy is 'imported' are, in fact, important factors that shape the process of policy adoption or policy translation to adapt the elements of the policy transferred to the local needs, interests, place-based specificities and capacities of the policy actors. Another problematic aspect is that learning from best practices, despite being commonplace, brings with it risks and requires paying attention to what is actually transferrable, how this can be done and what it took to develop the original policy in its home context in the first place (Stead, 2012; Stone, 2012). Rose (1991) warned about those risks, arguing that lesson-drawing from foreign policies entails uncertainty about the fit of the solutions to the local context and the potential conflicts that applying them may trigger. Nonetheless, scholarly literature and the policy publications promoting best practices tend to ignore these risks

and seldom explore cases of failed transfer (which can be insightful), preferring to emphasise 'success stories' (Stone, 2012). This, in turn can lead to copying mistakes through unreflective copying-pasting of foreign policy models in the face of complexity (Sharman, 2010).

As such, various authors have argued that the policy transfer literature has until now paid insufficient attention to the questions of agency, power and politics on the global-local nexus that international circulation of policies does entail (Peck & Theodore, 2010, 2015; McCann & Ward, 2012; Temenos & McCann, 2013; Montero, 2020). Few studies focus on the roles of the local and non-state actors as well as that of international networks and globally operating organisations in the processes of circulation and translation of policies (Stone, 2012). This gap has been addressed by the policy mobilities strand of research, mainly in the field of geography, exploring the linkages between the global circuits of policy knowledge to local policy and planning practice, its politics, and agency (McCann & Ward, 2011, 2012; Temenos & McCann, 2013). This approach stemmed from an observation that policy transfer research has a 'tendency to fall into a literalist trap of assuming that little happens to policies *along the way* or *in the telling* as they are moved from place to place'. Whereas what is crucial and yet often overlooked are 'sociospatial nodes within global circuits of policy knowledge' (McCann, 2011, p. 111) where policy knowledge is produced, modified and reinterpreted as it travels across space.

When it comes to the geographical origin and destination of the policies and practices under scrutiny, the policy transfer practice (as well as literature addressing the latter) has been recently criticised from the point of view of a bias towards export of solutions from the developed countries to the developing ones (Montero, 2020; Blanc & Cotella, 2023a). This Global North bias is problematic, because, on the one hand, it can entail a neo-colonial perspective and overlook dynamics of power, domination and vested interests behind policy export and import activities. On the other hand, the Northern bias ignores the reality of policy transfer and circulation of planning practices that happens between countries and cities within the Global South and from the Global South to the Global North.[2] Recent studies have started to address the issue, stressing the need to shift the attention from import towards export of spatial governance and planning practices from and among the cities in the Global South (e.g. Porto de Oliveira *et al.*, 2019; Stone *et al.*, 2020; Jajamovich & Delgadillo, 2020; Romano & Porto de Oliveira, 2023). Overall, while acknowledging how Global South spatial governance and planning may be still considered 'a "field" under construction' (Galland & Elinbaum, 2018), various academic and institutional contributions in the last years have started to comparatively analyse Global South approaches to spatial governance and planning more systematically (Rossbach & Montandon, 2017; Blanc et al., 2022a, 2022b), in so doing arguing for and trying to consolidate a knowledge arena for academics to inquire the spatial planning changes occurring within the Global South (Watson, 2014; Galland & Elinbaum, 2018) and to build a planning theory 'rooted' in the South (Mukhopadhyay *et al.*, 2021). Despite these efforts, however, insights into the institutional factors that condition the process of South-South and South-North policy circulation are still rather scarce and fragmented (Montero & Baiocchi, 2022) and more research is needed to understand the dynamics, motivations, and impacts of these processes. As it will be further introduced below, this special issue constitutes an attempt in this direction.

3. Objective and organisation of the special issue

This special issue contributes to the scientific debate focusing on spatial governance and planning policy transfer in and from the Global South. In so doing, it expands the ongoing debate in *Planning Practice and Research* on policy transfer (e.g. Colomb, 2007; Stead, 2012; Morphet & Clifford, 2014) to the Global South and, by drawing insights on the functioning of the policy transfer processes and on their success and failure from a number of empirical case studies, warn decision and policymakers of the risks that surround the uncritical transfer of spatial planning practices as 'quick-fix' solutions.

As mentioned above, there is still little knowledge about how solutions from the Global South travel from one context to another, how they are recirculated, and adapted to the local contexts in which they land, and, critically, who is involved in this process. Aiming at filling this gap at least partially, the collected contributions shed light on this under-researched aspect of spatial governance and planning policy transfer. Particular attention is dedicated to the ways in which global agencies or major philanthropic organisations promote certain agendas, in so doing favouring the biased transfer of selected practices. The authors of the various papers reflect on how 'urban solutionism' (Montero, 2018) driven by the mainstream international organisations, impacts the spatial governance and planning practice on the ground in the countries and cities of the Global South. More in detail, as the so-called 'global philanthropy' promoting the transfer of certain urban solutions have been accused of pushing their hidden agendas through new form of colonialism, this special issue critically reflects on the power relations behind the transfer of policy knowledge drawing on novel empirical evidence. Finally, by adopting an alternative perspective on policy transfer focused on South-South and South-North circulation of knowledge, this collection of papers puts into question the hegemonic Western theoretical models and paradigms that place the state and the formalised channels of inter-institutional learning at the centre. By contrast, the authors contributing to this special issue endeavour to shed light on 'experimentalism' in policy transfer in the Global South, where informal practices could also be the content of transfer, reflecting the importance of informal urbanisation and planning practices emerging outside of the formal state structures (see Unceta *et al.*, 2020).

The special issue *Spatial governance and planning policy transfer in the Global South. International agency and the recirculation of policies* is composed of five contributions that approach the main thematic focus from different perspectives and angles. After this editorial introduction, a contribution by Francesca Blanc engages with the policy mobilities literature and the Latin American 'urban reform' paradox by looking at the development of the recent Ecuadorian spatial planning law (Blanc, 2023). In particular, Blanc explores the existing tensions between the progressive concepts included in the country's constitutional framework and the spatial planning tools outlined by the law by analysing the process of translation and the agency behind it. According to her, the institutions of property rights played a crucial inertial role, that hampered the development of spatial planning tools that could translate these concepts into practice, in so doing pointing out the importance of path-dependent logics in determining the final outcome of policy mobilities.

Following a similar line of inquiry, the contribution by Máximo and Royer explores the implications of the Brazilian Federal Urban Law and, in particular, of the City Statute legal framework (Maximo & Royer, 2023). The authors discuss how the latter guides urban policies across the national territory and has gained international prominence at a moment when Latin American countries have become exporters of policies. The proposed argument guides the readers through the field of multilevel urban policy mobilities between international and subnational levels, providing them with insights on how the City Statute guidelines and contents are simultaneously disseminated and questioned across Brazilian and Latin American territories, as a meaningful case of South-South policy mobility.

The third article included in the special issue explores how the international climate policy agenda gets territorialized in four intermediate cities of the Andean Region: Pasto (Colombia), Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas (Ecuador), Iquitos (Peru), and Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia). To do this, Carrion, Ariza-Montobbio and Calero build on the scientific debate concerning policy diffusion and the urban politics of climate change to explore and discuss the complementary mechanisms that lies behind the process of policy diffusion, in terms of coercion, competition, emulation and learning (Carrion *et al.*, 2023). They argue that the fast-paced diffusion of the climate policy agenda has contributed to trigger a 'tinkering process' aimed at translating climate instruments in the different domestic contexts, through as many attempts to comply, repair, adjust, or experiment with the multi-scale climate action framework. As a consequence, the resulting measures are commonly adopted at the local level without directly confronting dominant sectors or changing structural inequalities.

Whereas the transfer of policy solutions from one context to another is a well-explored issue, in his contribution Giovanni Vecchio acknowledges the often-overlooked role of problem setting in policy setting and transfer, with a particular reference to transport policy and urban mobility issues (Vecchio, 2023). He argues that the prevalent rational approach to urban mobility privileges problem solving logics over problem setting, in so doing overlooking the role of problems in policy transfer processes. In order to bridge this gap, Vecchio provides a thorough review of institutional and academic contributions, to support the comparative analysis and discussion of the case studies of Bogotá and Santiago de Chile, two Southern cities that have justified their mobility policies referring to social issues. The analysis shows that, within both contexts, social concerns have played an instrumental role in aligning the problem to its solution and justifying the adoption of solution that have been already predetermined by the involved decision-makers.

The last contribution, authored by Sogen Moodley, focuses on the South African context and, in particular, on the role of local institutional factors in enabling global policy translation (Moodley, in press). The author argues that the value of knowledge management vehicles in city-to-city learning and 'knowledge-sharing enablers' deserves prominence and this argument is supported by means of autoethnographic exploration of the activity of the author within the Durban's Municipal Institute of Learning. The chronicle of the Institute's establishment and of its successes, as well as of challenges that it had to go through as a consequence of the changing institutional landscapes is presented. This leads to exploration of how increasing urbanisation rates have stimulated African planners to look at and try to learn from other cities. The story offers both useful

lessons in knowledge exchange practice and opportunities for critical scholarly reflection, remarking one more time how policy transfer and mobilities processes are not exempt from pitfalls and require careful evaluation and reflection.

4. Towards a research agenda

Even though this special issue offers a critical and novel contribution to the debate on the transfer and recirculation of spatial governance and planning practices in the Global South, the work presented in it merely scratches the surface of a much wider, emerging research agenda. In this light, drawing on the results brought forward by the contributions here collected, and bearing in mind the aim to continue to fill the literature gaps that have been highlighted in this editorial, we conclude our introduction by pointing out a number of perspectives for future research on the matter, that we hope may inspire the work of other researchers interested in the subject in the future.

A first issue concerns the geographical coverage of the contributions collected in this special issue that is limited to four contributions focusing on the Latin American context and one on South Africa. We are aware that the Global South is by no means a homogenous environment when it comes to the institutions and processes contributing to policy transfer and mobilities. Further research is certainly needed to broaden the coverage of spatial governance and planning policy transfer in the Global South, by also engaging with other countries from Africa and Asia. In doing so, it may be possible to expand the global offer of policy ideas and models and to further inquire into the nuances that characterise the global power dynamics shift in policy transfer (Porto de Oliveira & Romano, 2023). At the same time, extending the research scope to other countries and regions in the Global South would allow for highlighting similarities and differences in the policy transfer process as well as in the motivations of the actors engaged within different contexts.

A second element that is worth further exploration is the role of time in policy transfer processes, as recently suggested by Morais de Sá e Silva and Porto de Oliveira (2023). Alongside agents and spaces of transfer, closer attention to the timing of policy transfer is certainly an interesting avenue for future research, which entails consideration of the combination of exogenous inputs with path-dependent logics, and of how the resulting dynamics end up influencing spatial governance configurations and planning practices. As argued already elsewhere (Blanc & Cotella, 2023b), different timings and sequence of events may indeed affect the success or failure of policy transfer process, making these elements worth investigating.

All the contributions included in this special issue highlight that it is never a linear process that results in a complete success, i.e. in the achievement of the exact results that were expected by the actors that have initiated the transfer process and contributed to follow it through. As with every planning activity, success is difficult to measure holistically, and all the analysed cases have shown various 'elements of failure', that may be rooted in the initial motivations of the actors involved, in the timing of the process, or in the scarce attention to the local institutional and cultural contexts at a specific stage, etc. In the light of these multiple, differential aspects of policy transfer failure, we argue that it may be worthwhile to reflect in a more structured manner on their nature and causes. This in turn, could entail building on the many empirical cases that are already covered in

the literature to develop a 'typology of policy transfer failure'. The latter may be used as a good basis to reflect on how the different causes of failure may be addressed, hopefully, leading to more successful outcomes of policy transfer in the future.

Another potential exciting research avenue concerns the fact that transfer processes do not limit their impact to the targeted policy area. In most cases, the adoption of an 'alien' policy element contributes to trigger a number of spillover effects in the receiving context, for instance, highlighting specific weaknesses of the local institutional environment, or stimulating the correction of mistaken practices in fields that are not necessarily directly linked to the one explicitly touched upon by the policy borrowed from abroad. Moreover, and perhaps more interestingly, in selected cases policy transfer can generate an impact on the institutional environment that has originally generated the policy, as a consequence of reflexive feedback on the functioning of the transferred policy or practice towards its place of origin. As a matter of fact, one could argue that the diffusion of a policy or instrument in multiple contexts may contribute to its incremental fine-tuning and improvement. This innovation generated from the practices that have been researched extensively in the context of the European Union (among others: Janin Rivolin & Faludi, 2005; Cotella & Janin Rivolin, 2011), suggests that the transfer of policies, instruments as well as specific *modus operandi* from one context to another, does not contribute to change only the context receiving the transfer. It is the element that is transferred that changes through its continuous adaptation to new contexts, in so doing evolving and potentially becoming more resilient to failure. When following this assumption, it would be interesting to study how and to what extent existing programmes aimed at favouring policy transfer and circulation (e.g. C40 Cities, the UN-Habitat Global Urban Agenda process etc.) have led to incrementally strengthening the policy frameworks that they promote and, in turn, their impact on the ground.

Finally, the confluence between local territorial governance and the changing global policy agendas – for instance concerning climate change mitigation and adaptation, public health, or sustainable urban development – should be further analysed by looking at their mutual interactions and at the drivers and agents of policy knowledge transfer, as well as by going beyond a preconceived conceptualisation of a unidirectional transfer from global to local. This research agenda becomes even more pressing when one considers the currently destabilising and shifting geopolitical situation. This is driven, on the one hand, by the growing pressures to de-globalise the economy (which are either sustainability-driven and aim to shorten and regionalise the value chains to reduce the carbon footprint of overseas logistics, fuelled by the rising protectionism, or disruptions in supply of critical materials and goods), and, on the other hand, by the recently erupting (e.g. in Ukraine) or latent (e.g. in Taiwan) conflicts, which redefine the global political dividing lines and alliances. Thus, the patterns of policy transfer – including the transfer of planning policy from, to, or within the Global South – require a reassessment and further investigation in the wake of these ongoing geopolitical tensions and reshuffling.

Notes

1. We adopt Janin Rivolin's definition of spatial governance and planning, that conceive the latter as an 'institutional technology of government', operating 'as a hinge between the public authority and the social usage of space' (2012, p. 68). As such, spatial

governance and planning systems are social constructs establishing and applying, at a given time in a given institutional context, certain techniques aimed at allowing and ruling the collective action for the use of space (Berisha et al., 2021, 2023). Like any technology, they continuously revise their functioning in the face of changing circumstances and, when doing so, are subject to multiple sets of influences from inside and outside the system. Among them are also those that allow for the transfer of selected practices from one context to another.

2. Among the best-known examples of such South-to-South and South-to-North policy transfer in spatial governance and planning is that of participatory budgeting (Sintomer et al., 2008, 2012). Originating from Porto Alegre in Brazil, the latter has been rapidly adopted by a growing number of cities across the world, giving the citizens agency and engaging them in planning processes in a new way, albeit with different local adaptations and, at times, controversies and capture of the process by the better organised local groups. Another example, although not always as successful, concerns the transfer of the bus rapid transit, an urban mobility solution which has become ubiquitous across the cities of the Global South (Wood, 2014; Ardila, 2020; Montero, 2020) but also in selected Asian and European cities (e.g. Busways in Nantes and MetroGuagua in Malaga).

Acknowledgments

The contributions collected in this special issue were presented at a seminar organised by the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST, Politecnico di Torino) and the Spatial Planning and Strategy section of the Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment (TU Delft), under the auspices of the AESOP Thematic Group on transboundary spaces, policy diffusion and planning cultures. The event took place on 26 October 2020 and offered the opportunity to debate and reflect on the cross-fertilisation and adaptation of spatial planning policies in the process of policy transfer in the Global South, focusing on South-to-North and South-to-South transfer of planning concepts and practices.

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