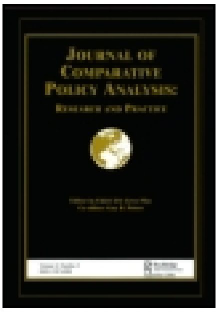

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The OECD and "The Rest": Analyzing the Limits of Policy Transfer

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The OECD and "The Rest": Analyzing the Limits of Policy Transfer

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ABSTRACT *Prompted by the rise of the emerging economies and the growing importance of the G20, the OECD has formally announced its intention of establishing itself as a key actor in global policy coordination. As part of this ambition, it has embarked on cultivating closer relations with five G20 countries it designated as key partners through the so-called "Enhanced Engagement" programme: Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. This article mobilizes concepts from the policy transfer literature to explain why the OECD's attempts to increasingly involve all five countries in its policy have fallen short of its original ambitions, and also why the transfer of its policy work has been uneven across policy and country issue.*

Keywords: OECD; Emerging Economies; Global Economic Governance; Brazil; China; Policy Transfer

Introduction

Over the decades, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has strengthened its work on policy production and transfer, earning itself the reputation of being one of the – if not, *the* – world's most important International Organizations that provides policy advice across a huge range of issues (Pal 2012). The OECD does not have funds to dispense with, and has only a limited toolbox of legal instruments, so can rarely coerce its members to comply (Woodward 2009). Nevertheless, its policy work has been seen as largely successful thanks to the unique way the OECD works. Policy ideas are co-produced through dialogue, debate and negotiation between OECD Secretariat staff and national policy-makers: once mutual agreement is reached, policy is transferred through high-quality technical reports, and implementation is supervised through peer review (Pagani 2002; Mahon and McBride 2008).

Combined, members enjoyed for decades the lion's share of world GDP, international trade and foreign direct investment flows. But, from the 1990s and, in particular, during

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the 2000s, the OECD recognized that its members' weight in the world economy was shrinking; meanwhile, certain emerging countries were displaying rates of growth far superior to OECD members. Mahbubani (2012) claimed the OECD was becoming a "Sunset Organization".

The recognition that the organization faced relative economic decline in the face of "shifting wealth" was a turning point for OECD senior staff and members (Clifton and Díaz-Fuentes 2011a). Understanding that a failure to incorporate key emerging countries would undermine the future of the organization as a key global policy network, the OECD undertook a programme of unprecedented organizational reform during the 2000s. A critical strand of this programme was to seek to engage a small number of key emerging economies in the OECD's policy work. The OECD effectively "cherry-picked" five countries to approach: Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. At the heart of this programme, labelled "Enhanced Engagement", was the aim of bringing these five countries into OECD policy work, in order to gradually embed them in their policy network with a view to them eventually joining the organization (OECD 2007).

For decades, the OECD had gained vast experience in transferring policy across its member countries. But nearly all of these were Western, capitalist and, for the most part, high-income, developed economies. It was less clear whether the OECD would be so adept at involving emerging and developing countries, with non-Western traditions, including different approaches to business organization, regulation and state policy, as well as diverse cultural, linguistic and intellectual traits. The OECD Enhanced Engagement programme offers a fascinating set of cases to evaluate the success or otherwise of the organization's capacity to transfer policy to these new partners. It is of interest then to enquire – since policy transfer is voluntary – which factors explain OECD success or otherwise in producing policy networks with these countries.

To date, most analysis of OECD policy transfer has focused, logically, on the extent to which policy impacts upon its members. To the best of our knowledge, this paper is novel in its focus on the evaluation of OECD policy transfer to non-members. Because we are covering new ground, the strategy we take here is to sketch out and then comparatively evaluate policy transfer from the OECD to Brazil, China, Indonesia, India and South Africa from 2007 to 2013. To do so, we rely primarily on quantitative information on participation by the five countries in policy work supplied by the OECD, supported by a range of qualitative information plus 16 semi-structured interviews with OECD senior officials and national policy-makers representing Brazil and China between 2010 and 2012. Our analysis uses the Evans and Davies (1999) policy transfer framework as an organizing device.

We find that the OECD has increased its role as policy transfer agent to all countries, though this has not necessarily led to a roadmap to membership. We identify that a key reason for countries' reticence to engage more broadly with the OECD can be found in factors involving cognition and recognition, which slow down processes around the emergence of policy networks between the OECD and the country in question. We claim this blockage is largely associated with the perception of the OECD as being too "Western". However, OECD "Westernness" presents a greater obstacle for some countries than others, and also intersects more sharply in some policy areas than others. We illustrate our argument by examining in greater detail OECD policy interaction with China and Brazil.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. In the second section, we explain why the rise of "The Rest" (Amsden 2003) poses a significant challenge to the OECD as agent of policy transfer. In the third section, we demonstrate how the OECD has historically diffused a particular "Western" approach to policy. In the fourth section, we use the stages of policy transfer by Evans and Davies (1999) as an organizing device to comparatively explore the extent of OECD policy transfer to the five emerging economies. Conclusions follow.

Why the Rise of "The Rest" Challenges OECD Policy Work

Policy production and transfer was a central task from the start for the OECD's predecessor, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which had been charged with the coordination of peer examination of national economic policies before the dispatch of Marshall Aid was authorized. This was "coercive" policy transfer and the process was aptly referred to at the time as "confrontation" (Aubrey 1967: 39). When the OECD replaced the OEEC from 1961, the mutual examination by peers of economic and financial policies – later to expand broadly across social, political, technological, environmental and other policies – continued as a core task. No longer was adhering to this process coercive, as the OECD had lost its function of helping to dispense aid. Under the new OECD, cooperation was now voluntary (Aubrey 1967). The OECD had neither "carrots", such as the granting of aid and finance, nor "sticks", such as sanctions, fines or retaliatory clauses. Nevertheless, it was effective in transferring policy across members thanks to its unique organizational attributes when compared to other major international economic institutions.

The OECD produces policy ideas through mutual dialogue and consensus building after discussion and deliberation among expert officials from its Secretariat and national policymakers from specific policy fields at its headquarters in Paris. The OECD's policy work enjoyed significant legitimacy for several reasons. First, it was partly based on "insiderism", in that policy consensus had been partly internalized, after agreement between representatives of the organization and their member states (Pal 2012). In addition, the economic stature of its members as a share of the world economy reinforced its claim to be spreading the "right" kinds of policies. In short, economic success was used as evidence of policy legitimacy. In the post-Cold War period, after the collapse of the Soviet Union from 1989, there was a quiet "euphoria" at the OECD, as if this vindicated the legitimacy of its own policies, boosted by the perceived "failure" of its adversary's central-planning or command policies.[1]

Confidence in its own legitimacy as a source of policy started to be shaken as the consequences of the findings of the OECD's own rigorous research on the evolution of the global economy were gradually comprehended. Research was spearheaded in particular by the late Angus Maddison, both inside and independently of the organization (Maddison, 2007a, 2008). It became clear that a number of late or newly industrializing countries were experiencing rapid growth, and that they were gaining important footholds in the world economy. If these predictions were correct, OECD members' long-term domination of the share of world GDP and trade was entering a period of steady relative decline. Indeed, OECD research estimated that, by 2030, OECD members would no longer boast the lion's share of world GDP measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). This, it was calculated, had fallen from 60 per cent in 2000, to 51 per cent in 2010, and was set to fall further to 43 per cent in 2030 (OECD, 2010a). Since Angus Maddison passed away, new OECD predictions by Andrew Mold (2010) set the OECD decline more sharply, at around 30 per cent of GDP in PPP by 2030.

The organization, dependent on its reputation as an agent of policy transfer, faced four major challenges. Firstly, historically, OECD research and policy work had been West–West: policy was produced *by* the West, transferred *through* the West, *for* the West. It was geared to satisfying the requirements of its members, who, in the end, funded the organization. As the importance of non-members grew in the world economy, OECD policy work would cover a shrinking share, and would therefore become gradually less important at the international level. Secondly, without excellent data on important parts of the world economy, the OECD would not have a good understanding of key parts of the whole "economic jigsaw". OECD members existed in an interdependent world and needed good access to high-quality data and latest trends in emerging markets in order to have a complete picture of the world economy. Thirdly, the OECD had relatively little policy experience with developing and emerging countries. The OECD could claim some policy experience with non-members, but this had been at the margins of the organization's remit, usually through the Development Assistance Committee. Moreover, previous OECD work had been "on" developing countries, with a focus on members' aid to former colonial territories, and tended to take the form of unilateral, sometimes patronizing, "advice". In addition, OECD policy transfer to non-members had usually been conducted in its two official working languages, English and French, whilst the staff was predominantly European, and most of them had received training from Western universities. Non-Western countries, such as Japan, which had joined in 1964, were significantly under-represented (Clifton and Díaz-Fuentes 2011a, 2011c). This trajectory may constitute a further barrier to the organization's aim of internationalizing its policy work. The fourth challenge was the most profound and concerned the intellectual content of policy itself. From the 1970s, in particular, the OECD had promoted economic policies in the direction of free markets, liberalization, competition, policies associated with what Williamson (1990) famously called the "Washington Consensus". Now, the newly emerging (or, in many cases, re-emerging) countries, had not strictly abided by these free market policies. In particular, a debate opened between Asian scholars who, taking different perspectives, showed how the role of a strategic state was a major reason for Asia's success (Chang and Grabel 2004; Lin et al. 2013). Moreover, for scholars including Joseph Stiglitz, one of the reasons for the West's downfall in the ongoing financial and economic crisis was that the policies pursued by the West, in the direction of market deregulation, went too far (Stiglitz 2010). In addition, it seems that the Great Recession is having longer-lasting effects on OECD members than in "The Rest", which is still growing (IMF 2012). Put simply, to many policy-makers and scholars looking at the OECD from the East, policy recipes promoting trade and capital market liberalization look, quite simply, unrealistic or, at worst, wrong.[2]

Full recognition of this dilemma jolted the OECD out of its "comfort-zone", propelling staff and member representatives to forge a consensus on how to reform the organization with a view to ensuring its continued key force shaping global policy. Reform started at the beginning of the 2000s. It took various forms, including: budgetary reform; an agreement to embark on limited enlargement to four countries; an "outreach" programme designed to promote work across all the continents; a commitment to actively seek joint action with other international organizations, through the co-production of policy and, most importantly, a programme to "woo" five key emerging countries into the OECD fold (OECD 2007). The Enhanced Engagement programme consisted of an attempt to literally "engage" five countries its members had agreed on as key: Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. In the light of the phenomenon of shifting wealth, this programme was

Table 1. The OECD, enhanced engagement and G20 in 2011

	Population		GDP (PPP)	
OECD in the G20 (number of countries)	**Billion**	**%**	**Billion USD**	**%**
OECD members in G20 (11)	997	14.4	35,479	44.9
OECD candidate in G20 Russia	143	2.1	2,376	3.0
OECD Enhanced Engagement in G20 (5)	3,030	43.9	19,873	25.2
Other G20 (2)	67	1.0	1,388	1.8
G20	4,238	61.3	59,117	74.9
World total	6,909		78,970	

Source: Authors based on World Bank (2012).

highly strategic for the organization. Not only were the five economies G20 members: combining OECD members plus the five, in addition to Russia, an OECD candidate, the OECD could claim it produced policy work for nearly two-thirds of the world population and three-quarters of world GDP (PPP), as seen in Table 1. This development helped boost the OECD's open ambitions to support G20 work (Gurría 2011: 321).

The Enhanced Engagement programme is therefore strategically vital to the OECD in its aim of attracting large economies. If the OECD managed to eventually attract these five emerging economies to join and, given Russia is already on its accession "waiting list", the OECD would include all G20 countries bar two (Argentina and Saudi Arabia). Indeed, at first, the OECD (2007) unequivocally stated its end goal was to persuade these countries to join. More recently, recognizing that progress has been slower and harder to achieve than first thought, discussions about their eventual membership have been toned down, and the emphasis is on encouraging the quality and quantity of their cooperation in the OECD's daily policy work. However, we next argue that an important obstacle to the emergence of policy networks lies in the fact OECD policy has been shaped by the West and may therefore be perceived as too Western by "the Rest" (see, for example, Lin and Rosenblatt 2012).

The OECD as Agent of Western Policy Transfer

From the 2000s, the OECD included as part of its strategic objectives the aim of making its policy more globally relevant, to bolster its position as a central network of global governance. Historically, policies produced within the OECD were devised by and for Western countries. We surmise that this may pose one of the greatest challenges to OECD efforts to diffuse its policies to emerging countries, particularly to those national contexts which most differ from its relatively homogeneous member base. In this section, we show the OECD's continued Western bias by examining synthetically its restricted attitude towards membership, its staff recruitment practices, and provide examples of how this impacts upon the policy produced.

A Restricted Western "Club"

Keohane and Nye (2001) claimed that all international organizations, even ones with universal membership, functioned broadly as Western clubs, at least until the early 1990s.

However, not all international organizations are as "clubby" as others. The OECD stands as one of the most "Western" of all major international economic organizations. Clifton and Díaz-Fuentes (2011b) documented the OECD's long-term restrictive approach to its membership; here, a summary must suffice. The OECD inherited all original OEEC members (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK and both occupied zones of Western Germany) plus Canada, Spain and the US. From this point onwards, enlargement was very slow: only Japan (1964), Finland (1969), Australia (1971) and New Zealand (1973) joined initially. Then, from 1973 to the end of the Cold War, no further members were admitted to the club. So, for the first three decades, the OECD was heavily European, and fundamentally acted as a transatlantic alliance. It was only from 1989 that a gradual decision to open up the OECD to more members was agreed upon: but even this happened slowly. A wave of enlargement was extended, first, to Mexico (1994), thanks to the support of the United States, and then to the Czech Republic and Poland (1995), Hungary and South Korea (1996) and, finally, the Slovak Republic (2000). Indeed, enlargement often came about after "horse-trading" between members sponsoring different regional allies. OECD staff openly recognize that enlargement was not seen as a strategic question until the 2000s. The change of heart towards a more open attitude to membership was promoted by the rise of the emerging economies (OECD 2007). One result was a new wave of enlargement: two European economies, Estonia and Slovenia, and two non-Europeans, Chile and Israel, joined in 2010. Despite these last two waves of accession, because new members are relatively small economies, the OECD has not managed to turn the tide of its members' combined force in the world economy. Though the Russian Federation expressed an interest in joining in 1997, its road-map for accession was not agreed upon until 2007: and it remains on the waiting list for future membership. This is the context in which the OECD approached five key emerging economies to get involved in its policy work, with a view to eventual membership.

We argue that, though OECD staff skill sets are excellent for dealing with Western, developed economies, they are more limited when dealing with non-Western and/or developing economies. Again, path-dependency matters. By 2011, the profile of OECD staff by nationality was still heavily biased towards a small number of Western economies. Of the 2,500 staff employed, most of whom are based at its Paris headquarters, French, British and American staff made up 58 per cent of overall staff numbers. France is the most over-represented country in OECD staff by some way (OECD 2012b). In contrast, other countries are significantly under-represented, such as Japan, which, though joining early on and contributing a large share of the OECD budget, makes up less than 3 per cent of jobs.

Why does this matter? Justin Lin, the first World Bank Chief Economist from a developing country, argued that the extent to which an international organization is really international is reflected in its recruitment of professionals from diverse cultural, linguistic and intellectual backgrounds (Lin et al. 2012). Moreover, the quality of staff has an enduring effect on the capacity of organizations to perform (Nasi 2011). Language, culture and education help facilitate or hinder mutual understanding, communication and cooperation in inter-personal contexts. Thus they are part of the framework enabling or restricting cognitive processes which in turn affect the emergence of policy networks (Evans and Davies 1999: 376).

Senior OECD officials and policy-makers from China and Brazil recognize that the external perception of the OECD as too Western is an obstacle for the organization's global strategy.[3] Language itself is one barrier: the official OECD web page for Global Relations requires communication to be written in English or French.[4] The OECD is slowly improving its linguistic diversity: for example, Secretary General Angel Gurría is a native Spanish speaker and the Deputy Secretary-General, Richard Boucher, speaks Mandarin. But cognitive barriers go much deeper. One illustration must suffice. The OECD has sent an "envoy" to Beijing since 2007 to further develop its relationship with the Chinese. Much of the correspondence from Paris, including invitations to the Chinese to attend OECD meetings, is coded in a particular bureaucratic style which is meaningful to OECD staff and members. It is not, however, meaningful to the Chinese. The OECD envoy must translate "OECD-speak" on-the-ground to convert it into a meaningful message of potential interest to the Chinese. The problem is that responses from the Chinese are then "re-coded" and sent back to Paris as signs of victory but often draw a blank from staff in Paris, as they do not follow the codes of "Western" diplomacy. What looks like progress on the ground in China is not necessarily appreciated by a staff unfamiliar with the complex workings of Chinese culture.

Policy Transfer by the West for the West

Based on our discussion of the OECD as a Western organization, as reflected in its membership and staff background, we now argue that this has consequences for the process of policy transfer. To do so, we also bring in some key concepts from the policy literature which we will use as organizing devices. The classic definition of policy transfer is "knowledge about how policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting" (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000: 5). Policy transfer is usually divided into two broad categories, coercive and voluntary, whilst distinct mechanisms of transfer have been identified, such as learning, imitation and diffusion (see Clavier 2010 for a general discussion). As Stone (2003) observed, when policy transfer is coercive, we focus on what *enforces* the transfer; but when it is voluntary, we tend to reflect more on what it is about the *characteristics* of the policy itself (content, suitability, usefulness, compatibility) that facilitates its transfer. Because the OECD almost exclusively involves voluntary policy transfer, it is useful to use as an organizing device for our analysis of its performance the 12-stage policy transfer model as introduced by Evans and Davies (1999:377). This model is already very well known in the policy literature and will be only synthesized here. As the authors insist, the 12-stage model is only orientative; they do not suggest that policy transfer is lineal, or unidirectional; nor must it start with the first stage and finish with the last. Additionally, the authors recognize that policy transfer may not be a rational process, and is likely to be contingent on many environmental factors. The stages are: (1) recognition (where there is policy necessity or dissatisfaction from the interested party); (2) search (where there are no obvious "home-grown" policy solutions); (3) contact (with an agent of transfer); (4) emergence of information feeder network (the agent becomes a feeder of information to the potential "client"); (5) and (6) cognition, reception and emergence of transfer network (if and when the elite mutually find a common value system a "policy transfer network" may emerge); (7) elite and cognitive mobilization (the agent is expected to provide high-quality, relevant and adequate information); (8) interaction (the agent organizes events or forums for the exchange of ideas); (9) evaluation (once the potential client is satisfied with interaction, they will evaluate the policy itself); (10) decision enters policy stream (policy acceptance); (11) and (12) process and outcome (whether transfer was faithful to or deviant from the original; evaluation).

With these policy transfer stages in mind, we now proceed to examine how the voluntary mechanism functions in the OECD. A number of scholars have recently made important contributions on this topic (Mahon and McBride, 2008; Martens and Jakobi 2010; Pal 2012). The OECD is structured into three sub-organs: the Council, the Committees and the Secretariat. The Council, its highest body, is constituted of one ambassador from each member state plus one from the European Commission. Permanent country representatives meet regularly and decisions are taken by consensus. The Council holds an annual meeting at ministerial level to decide on the future budget and work plan.[5] The committee structure is made up of around 250 committees, whose meetings are attended by thousands of national experts. The Secretariat consisted in 2011 of around 2,500 staff, and is composed of economists, lawyers and other professionals who carry out work as instructed by the Council. This work is then discussed and implemented by the committees. The Secretary General of the Secretariat is also chairman of the Council. So the thrust of OECD policy work is driven by the Council, developed by the Secretariat, and examined and implemented through the committees. This explains the Western orientation of policy, which is produced on the initiative of a club of Western countries (which pay its budget), shaped by staff (over-represented by France, the UK and the US), and then implemented across its mostly Western members under the supervision of relatively like-minded peers. And it is this Western-style approach to policy-making and transfer, we argue, that acts as a barrier in restricting the potential of the OECD to convert itself into a genuinely global policy network. The uneven extent to which it has transferred policy to the five emerging economies is now evaluated.

Examining OECD Policy Transfer to "The Rest"

The Enhanced Engagement programme which commenced in 2007 aimed to engage the five emerging economies in the OECD's day-to-day policy work with a view to their eventual membership (OECD 2007). The programme functions on multiple levels, and has formal and informal dimensions. At the highest level, senior officials intensified contact with top representatives of the emerging countries through formal, high-level diplomacy and visits, including invitations to the OECD annual ministerial conference. At the middle level, the OECD has sought to engage national policy-makers from the five countries in its policy work by extending invitations to formally participate in its thematically organized committees and sub-committees. At the informal level, the OECD increasingly works in partnership with regional and international organizations in the production of joint reports and the co-organization of meetings on or in these five countries.

Our evaluation of OECD policy transfer to the five countries focuses on this middle level, using official information provided by the OECD on participation by national governments in committees and sub-committees.[6] This data is supplemented by other official and secondary material, as well as information derived from 16 semi-structured interviews with OECD senior officials and national policy-makers representing Brazil and China. The Evans and Davies (1999) policy transfer framework is used to organize our findings. The Enhanced Engagement programme, by attracting participation by emerging economies in its (sub-)committee work, fits neatly with their description of a policy transfer network. We avoid dichotomous conclusions that policy transfer occurred or did not but, instead, pay attention to intermediate signs of transfer. Activity at the earliest and latest stages of transfer will all be considered as potential evidence.

Before proceeding to detailed evaluation, we make a general observation. The original end game of Enhanced Engagement was to attract the five countries to join (OECD 2007). But only a few years into the programme, the OECD acknowledged that this end game was possibly over-ambitious, and it re-stated its aim more modestly, as increasing policy networks with these countries (OECD 2010b). Author interviews with OECD officials and representatives of Brazil and China provide as the leading reason for this reticence to join the perception that the OECD in general and its policies in particular are still too Western-oriented. For example, Chinese officials remarked that OECD policies promoting financial liberalization were responsible for the crisis in the West and wholly undesirable.[7]

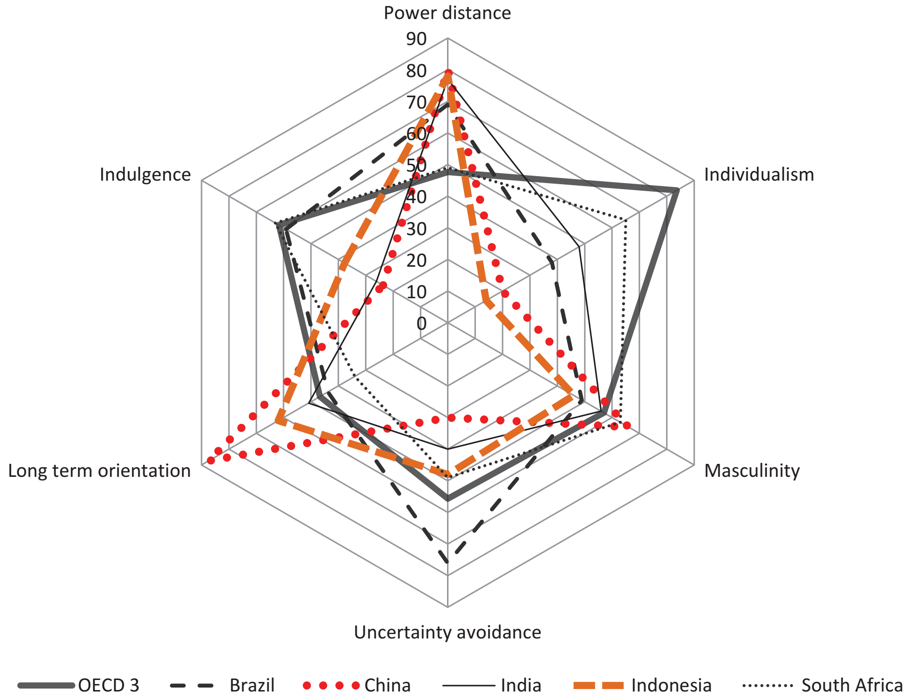
In the rest of this article, we mobilize the concept of "Westerness" at both the country and policy issue levels and introduce it into the Evans and Davis (1999) framework to test how effective this is in explaining the uneven progress in producing policy networks by country and sector. Westerness is a hugely complex concept to grapple with. In the context of our framework, Westerness and its counterpart(s) may affect policy transfer in particular from stages 5 and 6 onwards, wherein cognition and reception may produce a transfer network *if and when the elite mutually find a common value system* (Evans and Davies 1999). OECD Westerness is potentially experienced more sharply by some of the five countries and in certain policy issues than in others.

Key factors shaping cognitive and recognition phases, as inter-personal experiences, include language and culture. English is an official language in South Africa and India. According to the respective national official statistical offices, the percentage of the population that speaks English in South Africa is 29.2 per cent, of which 9.6 per cent speaks English as a first language (Statistics South Africa 2013). India follows, with 10.3 per cent of the population speaking English, and 0.2 per cent as a first language (Indiastat 2013). In Brazil, 7.5 per cent of the population speaks English (Governo Federal Brasil 2013). Reliable statistics are not available for Indonesia or China, but estimates are that less than 1 per cent of the population speaks English in both cases.

We can also evaluate difference from Westerness using cultural indicators. Hofstede's well-known work compares national, regional and organizational cultures using six cultural indicators. Following Hofstede et al. (2010) and Hofstede (2014), we can take the average results from the group that dominates OECD staff (France, the UK and the US) as the "OECD-3" and compare this average to the emerging countries (see Figure 1). China is furthest away from the OECD-3 for four out of six indicators (power distance, individualism/collectivism, long-term orientation and indulgence). China is also far from the OECD-3 in uncertainty avoidance, though Brazil is further. Overall, South Africa is in general the closest to the OECD-3, followed by Brazil, India, Indonesia and China. In this light, we could tentatively anticipate that cognitive processes through language and culture will be more fluid with South Africa, and hardest with China, with the other countries in intermediate positions.

To this general layer of linguistic and cultural concerns should be added policy issue areas. Cognitive experiences of distinct policy areas will also be influenced by contingent factors, including the extent to which policies are *required* in the home country, as well as the extent to which the OECD policies on offer are perceived as being *useful* and *appropriate*. Intuitively, it will be easier to transfer across an OECD policy where the host policy is deficient and where OECD policy is perceived as the best solution. Contingent contextual

Figure 1. "OECD-3" is an average of France, the UK and the US



Source: Elaborated by authors using Hofstede et al. (2010) and Hofstede (2014).

differences will shape perceptions: if policy is not necessarily required by the host, or OECD policy is perceived as weak or inappropriate for the setting, policy transfer is less likely. Quantifying contingent differences across countries is hugely complex, so, for the sake of simplicity, we examine indicators used by La Porta et al. (2004) including constitutional traditions and judicial checks and balances across 71 countries. For property rights traditions, South Africa scores closest to the OECD average, followed by Brazil, India and Indonesia; China's score is furthest. As regards legal traditions, South Africa and India are close to the English common law tradition, and Brazil and Indonesia to the French commercial law; China, with its communist legal influence, is furthest away. Finally, regarding an indicator for democracy, Brazil is closest of the five to the OECD score, China is again furthest. These findings would lead us to tentatively anticipate that policy transfer will be hardest to China than to the others, and easiest to South Africa and Brazil. We now turn to analyse the data on participation in OECD policy work.

The OECD classifies its over 250 committees, sub-groups and forums into the following central themes: Economic Policy; Environment; Development Assistance; Public Governance and Territorial Development; Trade and Agriculture; Finance and Enterprise Affairs; Financial Markets Committee; Tax Policy and Administration; Science, Technology and Industry; Employment, Labour and Social Affairs; Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Local Development; Education; Statistics; Transport; and two agencies, International Energy Agency and OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (OECD 2012b). Whilst there is some sectoral logic to this organization, there are also signs of ad hoc organization. For instance, OECD work on chemicals is categorized under Environment, whereas it could just as easily be included under Trade, Enterprise Affairs or Science, Technology and Industry. On analysing the participation of the five countries, we aggregate the OECD's own organizational logic by emphasizing overall *policy issue logic*. The participation of the five countries is set out in Table 2. Countries can participate at different levels: chair, vice-chair and full member, all

Table 2. Enhanced engagement countries' uneven participation in the OECD

	Brazil	China	India	Indonesia	South Africa
Chair or assimilated					**1**
Working Group on Good Laboratory Practice					1
Vice-Chair or assimilated	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**
Global Forum Steering Group		1			
Global Forum Peer Review Group			1		
Governing Board of the Development Centre	1			1	1
Working Party No. 10 on Exchange of Information & Tax Compliance		1			
Scheme for the Ap. of Internat. Standards for Fruit & Vegetables					1
Member / Full Participant	**18**	**3**	**15**	**4**	**18**
Global Forum Peer Review Group	1	1			1
Advisory Group for Co-operation with Non-OECD Economies			1	1	1
Member in activity Committees, Forums, Schemes, etc.					
Development Centre and DAC WP on AID efectiveness	1		1	2	2
Forum and groups on Tax matters	1	1	2		1
Board and networks on Education	3				
Schemes for cereals, oil, maize, vegetables, fruit standards etc	5	1	6		6
Commitees for chemicals, steel, coal and transport	2		1	1	2
WG on establishment, tests, laboratory pract, investment, chemicals etc.	5		3		5
Observer clasified by activities in committees, forums, schemes, etc.	**36**	**23**	**27**	**3**	**66**
Competition and enforcement	4	1	5	3	3
Statistics	3	1	3		4
Tax policy		11	12		12
Science, Technology	8	9			10
Communication and Information	1		4		4
Agriculture and commodities	4		1		6
Trade	4		1		1
Financial affairs	3		1		1
Public Governance	9				9
Education		1			
Environmental hazard - biotechnology - Chemicals hazards					11
Territorial development					5

Source: Authors based on OECD (2012a, c and d).

requiring continued participation at all meetings, and observer, which is an "ad hoc" means of participating whilst avoiding heavier commitment.

As tentatively predicted, South Africa and Brazil are the two most active participants in OECD policy work. Both countries have participated broadly across many policy issue areas, at both high and lower levels of formal commitment. Interestingly, many of the policy issues in which the two countries engage overlap, the major differences being that South Africa is not formally involved in education, whilst Brazil is much less involved in taxation and territorial development. South Africa has assumed the chair of Working Group on Good Laboratory Practice, two vice-chairs (Working Party No. 10 on Exchange of Information and Tax Compliance and Scheme for International Standards for Fruits and Vegetables), acts as member on 18 committees (including aid, tax, agricultural schemes, chemicals, steel, transportation, laboratory tests and investment), and has observer status on 66 other committees (particularly tax, science and technology, chemicals and public governance). Brazil is also active, participating as vice-chair of the Governing Board of the Development Centre, as member of 18 committees, and with observer status on some 36 others.

India follows closely behind. India participates vigorously but in a narrower range of policy issues than South Africa and Brazil, focusing as it does on taxation, agricultural schemes, competition and enforcement, and communication and information. India acts as vice-chair for the Global Forum, is member of 15 forums and observer on 27 more. China's participation has been less than senior OECD staff had wished.[8] Participation is much narrower than the other four countries, being largely confined to taxation. China is vice-chair on Working Party No. 10 on Exchange of Information and Tax Compliance, member of only three bodies (taxation, agricultural standards and the Global Forum) and observer on 23 forums (nearly all of which are for tax and science and technology policy). Indonesia is the latecomer to participation in OECD policy. Indonesia's relatively reduced participation in the OECD is viewed by officials as actually quite fast, due to the fact the relationship between the OECD and Indonesia has only been developed recently, after a change in the political system, whereas prior contact between the OECD and the other four economies goes back at least to the 1990s. Indonesia participates least, to date, in OECD forums, occupying one vice-chair on the Governing Board of the Development Centre, membership of four and observer of three organs. Indonesia appears particularly interested in competition, aid and chemicals/minerals/transportation.

This uneven participation by country and sector is a challenge for the OECD's ongoing global relations strategy, particularly as it appears that the slowest and most narrow progress is being made with the partner it most prizes: China. Using indicators on linguistic and cultural distance and other indicators, we had tentatively predicted policy transfer from the OECD would be easiest to South Africa, Brazil and hardest to China. We now use these concepts, accompanied by the transfer model (Evans and Davies 1999), to look more closely at OECD policy interactions with Brazil and China.

It is telling that the initial contact between Brazil and China with the OECD differed substantially. The Brazilian government demonstrated a broad interest in the organization from the start, first by its joining the OECD Development Centre in 1995 and, second, by signing a country programme with the OECD in 1998. In contrast, China's initial contact was narrower: China sought out OECD expertise on taxation policy as deep reform of the system became urgent (Maddisson 2007b). Secretary General Jean-Claude Paye (1984–1996) wished to encourage China's involvement in the OECD, so an agreement was made whereby OECD tax specialists would train local taxation civil servants at tax centres in China, such as at Yangzhou.[9]

Contact may result in the policy transfer agents acting as an "information feeder network" in an attempt to attract potentially interested parties to increase their involvement with that agent (Evans and Davies 1999). This was the idea behind the Enhanced Engagement programme. Through this strategy, the OECD could demonstrate its possession of high-quality, relevant and attractive country- and context-relevant information to the "client" country, and offer structures for transfer in distinct policy issues. However, while the Brazilian government accepted a large number of invitations to participate formally across many policy issues, the Chinese government declined multiple invitations to participate with the major exception of taxation. In other words, it is at the fifth and sixth stages of the policy transfer model that the unevenness of OECD policy transfer becomes manifest: that is, "cognition, recognition and emergence of transfer network". For stages five and six to work, Evans and Davies (1999) argue it is important that a "common value system" emerges, whereby elites in the policy agent and client country find mutual collaboration beneficial.

From our discussion of different aspects of the judicial and legal landscape in La Porta et al. (2004) we had tentatively established that South Africa and Brazil were closer to OECD policy frameworks than China. This provides a starting point to help understand why Brazilian officials perceived formal participation in OECD policy as more beneficial broadly, whilst Chinese officials were more cautious. Once Brazil became involved in the Enhanced Engagement programme, officials representing particular policy issue areas were attracted to the offer of specific OECD policy work because these approaches were perceived to be required and appropriate for policy developments at home. A good example is OECD work on Public Governance, which Brazil embraced. The OECD Public Governance approach is closely based on Anglo-Saxon concepts such as privatization, New Public Management (NPM) and managerialism (Pal 2012; Alonso forthcoming). This Anglo-Saxon tradition was appropriate for the Brazilian context: from democratic transition during the 1980s, the Brazilian Minister of the Federal Administration under the first Cardoso Presidency, the self-defined Anglophile Luis Bresser-Pereira, helped orchestrate a NPM-style reform (Presidency of the Republic State Reform Committee 1995; Bresser-Pereira 2003). These in place, OECD Public Governance policy resonated well with the ongoing reforms implemented in Brazil.

Though broad, Brazil has not elected to participate in all policy issues. For instance, South Africa, China and India participate vigorously in OECD tax work, while Brazil is more reticent. The main reason for Brazil's reluctance is not, we argue, due to a significant gap in policy issues; rather, it lies in pragmatism. Firstly, there is a lack of demand for new tax policies. Taxation levels in Brazil are relatively high, at around 32 per cent of GDP in 2010, making Brazil Latin America's second most efficient tax collector (OECD-ECLAC 2012). Secondly, Brazil has sought out other transfer mechanisms than the OECD, particularly, from the 1960s, the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Inter-American Centre of Tax Administration and the US-sponsored "Alliance for Progress" (Office for Public Affairs 1966). From the Brazilian perspective, its taxation system works well, it identified alternative policy transfer agents early on and, today, the direct and indirect costs associated with "using" OECD policy work are perceived as outweighing the benefits.[10] So the reason for Brazil's reluctance to get involved in OECD tax work is not the inherent difference of the systems; rather, the interest in policy change here is weak.

China's participation, in contrast, is the narrowest, concentrating on taxation. Interest in this policy area was driven by pragmatism. Maddison showed that the weak fiscal position of the Chinese government during the 1990s was one of the three most serious problems facing the country. Government revenue in China as a percentage of GDP fell from 31 per cent in 1978 to only 10 per cent in 1995 (Maddisson 2007b: 18). This huge fall was caused by tax concessions awarded by provincial and local governments as well as a decline in revenue from state enterprises, partly as a result of increased competition from the special export zones. In addition, China was seeking to insert itself increasingly in the global economy, and needed to conform to international models of taxation, for instance on multinational corporations, transfer pricing and so on. China took up the OECD's offer of helping train tax officials especially through international training courses and exchanges organized through the Yangzhou Tax Academy. Legal scholars have shown how China borrowed heavily both from the OECD and the United Nations when reforming its taxation system (Li 2012). Taxation policy remains the best example of how policy was transferred and effected real change on the ground in China. Despite cultural, linguistic and legal differences, China was receptive to OECD policy in this field for pragmatic reasons: the government had a real need to address low levels of taxation, whilst the OECD, together with the UN, offered the best available models for adaptation (Kudrle 2014). This, accompanied by the OECD's "reaching out" to China, helps explain why policy was transferred.

Beyond taxation, China has moved more slowly to express unambiguous interest in expanding its participation in other policy areas. To illustrate, we examine Public Governance, taken up enthusiastically by Brazil, but not by China. There are various reasons for China's relative lack of participation in OECD policy work on this topic. Firstly, at the general level, China has simply become so powerful as a global economy that the case for its "bending" to adapt to OECD norms is increasingly difficult to make. There is a strong perception among elite Chinese scholars and policy-makers that the OECD has not always backed the "right" policies, and they see the ongoing crisis as clear proof of that. On the practical side, there is also the question of deep cultural and linguistic limits, both on the side of the OECD and on the side of the Chinese, which does not facilitate fluid diplomacy. More specifically, the Chinese perceive the strong Anglo-Saxon approach in OECD Public Governance policy work as remote from the administrative reforms required by the Chinese authorities. NPM reforms were not broadly relevant for China due to deep cultural, organizational and political differences across systems (Yang 2007: 1386). With the important exception of taxation, and the partial exception of science and technology, policy transfer from the OECD to China has largely become unstuck around stages five and six: cognitively, OECD policy is not viewed as attractive enough to pursue, at least formally, through committee involvement. This leaves a rather frustrated OECD staff, lamenting China's "failure" to take the last step and "come onboard".

Conclusions

The OECD has decades of experience as an agent of policy transfer, but this tradition has been mostly limited to the production and transfer of policy among, between and for Western, developed countries. In view of the challenges posed by shifting wealth to its future viability as a global policy network, the OECD has undertaken organizational reform, in order to make itself more relevant on the international scene. We examined a key strand of this reform: OECD efforts to engage five G20 emerging economies in its policy work, by bringing them more closely into its committees and sub-groups with membership as an end goal. We explained reticence on the part of policy-makers of these countries to join the OECD which in the broadest terms could be explained by a perception the OECD is still too Western. We then explored the extent to which the Evans and Davies (1999) transfer model could be used to explain uneven policy transfer from the OECD by country and policy area.

Different reasons were provided for distinct levels of policy transfer by country. However, using the Evans and Davies (1999) stages of policy transfer, we found that some policy was getting unstuck in stages five to six, where cognitive acceptance of the relevance and effectiveness of OECD policies was not always produced by the "client" country, particularly in the case of China. We argue the OECD faces an uphill climb to capture the interest of emerging countries and find significant evidence of efforts to do so. It is not "too late" for the OECD to improve its success in transferring policy: it has much experience and policy knowledge to offer. However, to do so, it would do well to deepen genuine policy dialogue and do away with rigidities such as Anglo-Saxon "best practice" models. By putting into practice the acknowledgement that there is more than one "correct" approach to industrial, taxation and education policy, and adopting a genuinely more "open" approach to policy, the OECD may gain sufficient policy traction to be able to attract greater participation from more heterogeneous countries, whilst producing policy more adaptable to diverse national contexts.

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Notes

1. Interviews with OECD senior officials, 2010.
2. Author interviews with Chinese policy-makers, Beijing, November 2012.
3. Interviews with Chinese, Brazilian and OECD policy-makers by authors in 2012.
4. See: http://www.oecd.org/globalrelations/contactus/
5. The OECD budget is divided into two parts. Part I, amounting to around half its consolidated annual budget, is derived from national contributions calculated on a scale associated with the size of the economy. In 2012, the top contributor, the United States, provided nearly 22 per cent of Part I, followed by Japan, contributing nearly 13 per cent. Part II funds projects of interest to some of the members not covered in Part I and is funded after extensive annual negotiations among members.
6. This is available at: http://webnet.oecd.org/oecdgroups/
7. Author interviews with Brazilian, Chinese and OECD policy-makers in Paris and Beijing, November 2012.
8. Interviews with senior OECD officials, July 2010 and November 2012.
9. See http://www.tax-edu.net/ch/english/ for details of the tax centre.
10. Interview by authors with Brazilian delegate to OECD, November 2012.

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