

Importing Ideas: The Transnational Transfer of Urban Revitalization Policy

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Abstract: This article demonstrates that the business improvement district (BID) is a model for urban revitalization that policy entrepreneurs have deliberately transferred, both intra- and inter-nationally. Data collected via personal interviews and organizational surveys reveal the origins of the BID model, why and how it was successfully transferred to eight different countries, and the types of conditions that prevent its adoption. Special attention is given to the application of the BID model in the United States and the Republic of South Africa for the purpose of illustrating how entrepreneurs apply new policies in contexts with divergent histories, and political and socio-economic conditions. This study does not test or expand policy transfer theory. However, through a detailed description of the work done by urban revitalization policy entrepreneurs, it seeks to make a modest contribution to the policy transfer literature. It also intends to augment the burgeoning BID literature by identifying key policy agents, documenting their successes, examining their failures, and considering their motivations.

Keywords: business improvement districts, history, policy transfer

Property and business owners in urban contexts around the globe are using state authority to create a new form of government to protect their interests. With the power to impose taxes and provide collective services, business improvement districts (BIDs) supplement publicly funded efforts to attract visitors and investors, enhance the pedestrian experience, and improve the city's ability to compete with regional office parks, shopping malls, and suburban living. The BID, I argue, is a relatively new urban revitalization model that policy entrepreneurs have deliberately transferred, both intra- and inter-nationally.

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BID organizations implement compulsory funding mechanisms within geographically defined areas to achieve three principal goals: they aspire to be delightful, safe, and clean. Under the rubric of “delightful,” BIDs seek to attract visitors, investors, and residents to commercial areas. Such campaigns range from aggressive marketing schemes to comprehensive streetscape improvement programs. For example, most BID organizations craft a single identity for their jurisdiction and take on activities designed to reinforce a positive image or market niche. Self-promotion and public relations manifest in the form of landscape improvements like the installation of plants and trees in public spaces, organizational logos, slogans, web sites, newsletters, outdoor events like concerts and festivals, and colorful banners.

To promote safety, many BID organizations develop and implement crime prevention programs including service arrangements with police and the provision of private security patrols.^[1] A variety of combinations exist. In Canada, the Downtown Winnipeg BID, Prince George Downtown BID, and the Bank Street Promenade BID supplement policing efforts with private security patrols, but the Downtown Oakville and Downtown Orillia BIDs rely solely on local police to address crime-related issues.

The deployment of private security patrols is a popular crime deterrence method among BID proponents. BID security personnel, commonly known as “ambassadors” carry cellular phones or two-way radios and function as the “eyes and ears” of the police; they also perform hospitality-related functions such as assisting visitors with directions.^[2] Agreements with police range from informal requests for additional patrol cars to formal and ongoing commitments. For example, in Canada, the United States, and South Africa, some BID organizations—particularly those in large urban settings—establish police mini-stations within district boundaries, purchase their equipment, and cover their salaries. The Green Point City Improvement District in Cape Town pay the salaries for the South African Police (SAP) officers assigned to the area and purchase shared equipment such as cell phones, radios, bicycles, vehicles, and uniforms. BID safety programs may also include such services as monitoring public space with surveillance cameras, operating computerized crime mapping systems, and on-site crime prevention assistance for business owners. The Times Square BID in New York City, for example, relies heavily on closed circuit television surveillance cameras for the purpose of crime prevention.

The third dimension of the typical BID program, cleanliness, involves activities like mechanical and manual sweeping as well as high-pressured washing. Graffiti removal includes painting and scraping activities to remove tags, stickers, and bubble gum from buildings, signage, and telephone poles. The Center City BID in Philadelphia assumes responsibility for administering their own sanitation program, while others, like the Green Point and Oranjek-loof BIDs in Cape Town, enter into a fee-for-service arrangement with private vendors.

WHAT IS POLICY TRANSFER?

Policy transfer is a widespread practice. For example, Americans borrowed the idea of a national income tax from the British,^[3] and Europeans imported the concept of skyscrapers and cloverleaf intersections from the United States.^[4] The literature on policy transfer has substantially grown in the last decade^[5–8] and overlaps with the lesson drawing literature. Policy transfer, also known as lesson-drawing,^[9] policy borrowing,^[10] policy shopping,^[11] policy band-wag-oning,^[12] and systematically pinching ideas,^[13] is a term that describes the voluntary flow of ideas between individuals and is regarded as a type of policy learning because it involves the acquisition and utilization of knowledge about policies elsewhere.^[14] Put simply, policy transfer attends to the way that poli-cies and practices in one context are used to develop policies and practices in other settings.^[15]

Individually, policy agents represent public, private, or public-private organizations and function as experts or “policy transfer entrepreneurs”^[16] who advocate the spread of certain policies and information. Collectively, and within specialized domains, they create transnational information networks. For hundreds of years, urban policy entrepreneurs—like architects, planners, and other experts—have traveled to study other places, make contacts, attend lectures, and return to their homelands to report what they had learned. For example, French planners visited the United States to study New Deal projects and housing schemes.^[17] In the early 1950s, the United States developed large shopping malls in suburban locations to accommodate automobile-oriented customers. Nations, like Canada and Australia, with space and affluence quickly followed suit. More recently, British officials implemented the Urban Development Grant after the United Kingdom’s Department of the Environ-ment examined “potentially adoptable” policies for inner-city revitalization, namely the US Urban Development Action Grant.^[18]

Much of the policy transfer literature focuses on domains such as labor^[19–21], education,^[22,23] and the environment^[24–28] and the urban revitalization policy transfer literature is scant. While this article does not seek to test or expand policy transfer theory, it does intend to make a modest contribution to the policy transfer literature through a description of the work done by urban revit-alization policy entrepreneurs. Additionally, it intends to contribute signifi-cantly to the BID literature by identifying policy agents and their motivations, explaining why BID policy entrepreneurs sometimes experience failure, and describing the challenges of applying BID policy in new contexts.

A systematic examination of the BID model through a policy transfer lens is an important task because the practice of policy transfer is on the rise.^[29] It is also reasonable to believe that policy transfer within the urban revitalization domain is becoming more popular. Consider the following examples. Tax-increment-financing (TIF), an area-based tool for revitalization like the BID, originated in California in 1952 as a means to provide local matching funds

for federal grants. By 2000, TIF-enabling legislation was on the books in forty-eight states.

Other redevelopment concepts like community development corporations (CDC) and main streets have recently multiplied in a similar fashion. The first CDC, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Renovation Corporation, formed in 1966 with funding from the Model Cities program. Today there are more than 3,600 CDCs nationwide, according to a 1998 study by the National Congress of Community Economic Development. Likewise, more than 1,700 downtown commercial districts in 39 states operate main streets that are sponsored by the National Trust for Historical Preservation.

The transfer of urban policy is an increasingly common practice because public sector involvement and support for revitalization efforts is diminishing. Thus, new coping mechanisms are necessary. Moreover, advancements in information and communication technologies, like the internet, allow urban policy entrepreneurs to save time and resources by importing “best practices” from other cities. Such activities are cause for concern because some policy entrepreneurs base their actions on subjective evidence, adopting new concepts hurriedly instead of critically analyzing the legislative, economic, political, and other differences between the exporting and importing contexts.^[30] This type of approach proves to be particularly problematic when the new policy intervention fails or aggravates the urban problems it was intended to resolve.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purposes of this article, the policy transfer literature provides a framework for examining the relationship between three important variables: urban revitalization policy (which in this case is the BID), the entrepreneurs who actively promote and deter policy adoption, and the setting where these policies are applied. In doing so, this study will answer a discrete set of research questions. The first and broadest question is: does the BID model represent an instance of transnational urban policy transfer? If so, where did the model originate? Why and where did the model transfer? This discussion demonstrates why certain entrepreneurs transferred the BID model from one country to the next and identifies the countries that have successfully adopted BID legislation and initiated fully operational BID organizations. It also answers such questions as: How did the BID model transfer? Which policy entrepreneurs aggressively promoted the BID model? What motivated them to share information? What are the most common mechanisms for sharing information?

Despite the successful transfer of the BID model to a wide range of national contexts, there are contexts, like the City of Boston, where BID policy has encountered considerable resistance. This case provides valuable insights for BID advocates by addressing the question: Under what conditions

do policy entrepreneurs experience difficulty with importing ideas? Finally, a comparative analysis of the BID model shows how urban policy entrepreneurs apply new policies in contexts with divergent histories and political and socio-economic conditions.

APPROACH

The objectives of this exploratory study are to document the transnational transfer and application of urban revitalization policy through an exhaustive examination of the BID model. To accomplish these objectives, I rely on a multi-method qualitative and quantitative research design, collecting data from a range of primary and secondary sources. Primary data collection involved the distribution of a five-page survey instrument as well as the execution of semi-structured personal interviews with BID managers, public and private service providers, and government officials in selected cities. Secondary sources included BID enabling legislation, public hearing transcripts, scholarly papers, newspaper articles, trade magazines, and conference proceedings.

The five-page survey instrument contains questions in open-ended and multiple-choice formats and is organized into five distinct sections. They are: Formation, Structure and Scope, Purpose, Performance Evaluation, and Evolution, as shown in Figure 1. For the sake of comparison, some portions of the survey instrument are identical to the one designed by Mitchell to survey American BIDs.^[31]

To begin, I identified BID and other downtown management organizations by obtaining and compiling mailing lists from previous studies, the internet, professional membership organizations and national, state, and local governments. Next, I compiled a comprehensive list of 1,200 non-American downtown management organizations in countries around the globe (Canada, 347; Japan, 261; Europe countries, 225; Australia, 185; New Zealand, 140, and South Africa, 42). To increase the likelihood of participation, I modified language in the survey instrument for each country.

Minor changes included referring to BIDs as “Business Improvement Areas” for Canada and “City Improvement Districts” for South Africa. Surveys sent to Japanese town management organizations were translated into Japanese. Project staff mailed envelopes, each containing a cover letter, survey, and postage-paid reply envelope, to the manager of each downtown management organization identified. Managers who did not return a completed survey received reminders in the form of letters, phone calls, and electronic mail messages. In the end, 398 non-American organizations were classified as BIDs because they use a special tax assessment on property and/or business as a source of funding and we achieved an overall response rate of 32%.

Survey Instrument (Sample Questions)
<p>Formation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In your own words, briefly describe the impetus or need for planning the organization. 2. In what year did the planning phase begin? 3. In what year was your organization legally established? Begin operations? 4. Which best describes the group(s) responsible for forming the organization? (a) <i>Business owners</i>; (b) <i>Property owners</i>; (c) <i>Elected officials</i>; (d) <i>Government agencies</i>; (e) <i>Residents</i>; (f) <i>Medical institutions</i>; (g) <i>Educational institutions</i>; (h) <i>Other</i> _____ 5. Did they experience opposition? If so, from which group? (<i>Same set of choices as above</i>) <p>Structure and Scope</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which of the following best characterizes your organization? (a) <i>Government agency</i>; (b) <i>Nonprofit organization</i>; (c) <i>Combination of government and nonprofit</i>; (d) <i>Private agency</i>; (e) <i>Public and private agency</i> 2. Currently, your organization has how many full-time employees? Part-time employees? 3. How many members are on your governing board? 4. How many properties are located in the BID? How many city blocks does your organization cover? 5. Approximately, what is the current annual budget (in US dollars)? 6. Which of the following are sources of funding for your organization? (a) <i>Special tax assessment on property and/or business</i>; (b) <i>Voluntary donations or in-kind contributions</i>; (c) <i>Subsidies or grants from federal/state/central/local government</i>; (d) <i>Subsidies or grants from foundations</i>; (e) <i>Bonds (public or private)</i>; (f) <i>City general tax revenues</i>; (g) <i>Sale of goods and/or services</i>; (h) <i>User fees</i>; (i) <i>Other</i> _____ <p>Purpose</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly describe the organization's central mission. 2. To what extent is your organization involved in providing each of the following services? (a) <i>Capital Improvements</i>; (b) <i>Consumer Marketing</i>; (c) <i>Economic Development</i>; (d) <i>Maintenance</i>; (e) <i>Parking and Transportation</i>; (f) <i>Policy Advocacy</i>; (g) <i>Public Space Regulation</i>; (h) <i>Security</i>; (i) <i>Social Services</i>; (j) <i>Other</i> _____ <p>Performance Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has your organization established standards of performance from which to evaluate its outcomes? 2. Is an agency or organization other than your own responsible for performance evaluation? 3. If so, which of the following has been used as a measure of organizational performance during the past year? (a) <i>Crime rates</i>; (b) <i>Retail sales</i>; (c) <i>Number of jobs created</i>; (d) <i>Pedestrian counts</i>; (e) <i>Occupancy rates</i>; (f) <i>Customer surveys</i>; (g) <i>Number of businesses</i>; (h) <i>Other</i> _____ 4. If you circled "Crime rates," which type of crime has been a problem during the past year? (a) <i>Homicide</i>; (b) <i>Rape</i>; (c) <i>Robbery</i>; (d) <i>Assault</i>; (e) <i>Theft</i>; (f) <i>Vandalism/graffiti</i>; (g) <i>Prostitution</i>; (h) <i>Panhandling/loitering</i>; (i) <i>Other</i> _____ 5. Which of the following has been used as a method to deter or decrease criminal activity? (a) <i>Paid security patrols</i>; (b) <i>Volunteer security patrols</i>; (c) <i>Police patrols</i>; (d) <i>Closed circuit television/surveillance cameras</i>; (e) <i>Computerized crime mapping</i>; (f) <i>Notification of property/business owners</i>; (g) <i>Increase number of visitors/outdoor events</i>; (h) <i>Scaling vacant buildings, rapid graffiti removal, etc.</i> <p>Evolution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which phrase best describes how your organization has changed its physical jurisdiction since implementation? (a) <i>Increased drastically</i>; (b) <i>Increased slightly</i>; (c) <i>No change</i>; (d) <i>Decreased slightly</i>; (e) <i>Decreased drastically</i>; (f) <i>Other</i> _____ 2. Which of the following describe how the number of full-time employees has changed since implementation? (a) <i>Increased drastically</i>; (b) <i>Increased slightly</i>; (c) <i>No change</i>; (d) <i>Decreased slightly</i>; (e) <i>Decreased drastically</i>; (f) <i>Other</i> _____ 3. Approximately, what was your organization's first annual budget (in US dollars)? 4. In your own words, briefly describe how the organization's central mission has changed since implementation.

Figure 1. Survey Instrument (Sample Questions).

From this list, the research team forwarded a letter of introduction to BID directors, later contacting them on the telephone to describe the study, request promotional documents such as newsletters and pamphlets, and schedule a personal interview. I conducted approximately 59 on-site personal interviews throughout Canada, the United States, and South Africa to augment the survey data. I relied on the semi-standardized interview because it allowed me to blend elements of the standardized and unstandardized interviewing

structures. Participants received a copy of the interview questions in advance, as shown in Figure 2. In retrospect, it is evident that the face-to-face contact not only aided an expeditious and in-depth investigation, but also facilitated the establishment of a working relationship with BID managers.

Interviews varied in style and length. Some were less than an hour in duration and took place over the telephone, some were several hours long and were held in the BID manager’s office, and others spanned several days and included a tour of BIDs throughout the metropolitan area. A total of 72 interviews took approximately 120 hours to perform over a span of nearly 5 years. 59 were face-to-face interviews, 13 were telephone interviews, and the average interview was 90 minutes in length. When respondents permitted the use of a hand-held tape recorder, I transcribed the interview verbatim.

Beyond the survey and the personal interviews, this study relied on a review of BID enabling legislation, public hearing transcripts, scholarly papers, newspaper articles, trade magazines, conference proceedings, BID web sites, newsletters, reports, and correspondence. Typically, public hearing transcripts for BID authorization, reauthorization, plan approval, and plan amendment are available to citizens upon request. Such hearings record the testimonies of BID advocates and opponents, providing valuable information about the policy transfer process. For this study, the author conducted a comprehensive assessment of transcripts recorded by the City of Philadelphia.

<p>Personal Interview (Sample Questions)</p> <p><u>Policy Formulation (Policy Emergence)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why was there interest in adopting the BID model? Who initiated the effort? Was anyone else influential? 2. Could you describe the process of how the policy was developed? 3. Did anyone oppose this proposal? Who? If so, why? 4. How long did it take to pass the legislation (from the first efforts at drafting legislation until it was enacted)? 5. Did any of the information you looked at raise any possible problems with the BID idea? 6. Did your city do any cost-benefit analysis or other policy analysis while the proposal was being developed or while legislation was pending? If so, was it favorable or critical of the proposal? 7. What information did you actually consider when developing the proposal? How was that useful? 8. Was there any particular program or legislation that you used as a model? 9. If so, did you make any adaptations? What were they and why did you make them? 10. Were there any organizations outside state government who took an interest in the regulations? 11. What influence did they have? 12. What information did you have about BIDs at the time? Who did you get this information from? <p><u>Policy Application (Policy Success)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where did the monies come from to plan/organize/set up the BID? 2. How did the group negotiate the size and shape of the BID? 3. Was there a planning committee/interim board members? 4. How did the BID select an Executive Director? 5. How did the group mold an identity/on what assets did they focus? 6. What is the mission? What are the key goals? 7. How did the group negotiate the provision of services? 8. Which services do the BID provide? 9. Who provides and manages these services? 10. What are the BID’s principal funding sources? What is the annual budget? 11. With which organizations does the BID collaborate? For what purpose? 12. Did the BID negotiate/document baseline services with local government?
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Figure 2. Personal Interview (Sample Questions).

These transcripts include 867 pages of testimony, spanning a period of more than 8 years.

While most secondary sources are available to the public, considerable difficulties arise with respect to accessing internal BID reports, correspondence, and meetings. However, my relationship with Philadelphia's BID directors resulted in access to official reports such as those submitted to the City of Philadelphia's Commerce Department and the Philadelphia Police Commissioner, feasibility studies, and organizational meetings. Hence, this study incorporates observations made from August 1999 through July 2000 in such forums as the University City District's Public Safety meetings, the South Street BID's monthly meetings, the CCD's roll call, and the Philadelphia Police Department's weekly Compstat meeting. In short, these observations supplemented the more traditional data sources and assisted me in developing a more intimate understanding of BID-related policies and activities.

POLICY SUCCESS, EMERGENCE, AND RESISTANCE

To facilitate a discussion on how BID policy is subject to transfer, this article offers a distinction between two stages, success and emergence.^[32] Policy success is realized by entrepreneurs with the formal adoption of policy such as the passage of enabling legislation. Said another way, policy entrepreneurs experience success once legislation is approved. It is important to note that the manifestation of functional BID organizations is also evidence of policy success. At present, BID organizations exist in eight national contexts. They are: Canada, the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Serbia, Albania, Jamaica, and the United Kingdom.

In contrast, the other stage of policy transfer is policy emergence. Entrepreneurs in this stage involve themselves with the study of BID policies in other places and activities such as proposing, drafting, and lobbying to implement BID legislation in their homeland. My investigation reveals that policy entrepreneurs in at least seven countries—Japan, Austria, Germany, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Romania—are presently engaged in this stage. Because the following discussion would be incomplete without recognizing that policy entrepreneurs sometime fail, it ends with an account of BID policy resistance and an account of the conditions that hinder and prevent policy transfer.

BID POLICY SUCCESS

Where did the BID model originate? By the mid-1960s, the impacts of rapid suburbanization began to negatively affect retail sales and commercial growth

rates throughout the City of Toronto. For example, from the early 1920s through the mid-1960s, streetcars delivered visitors to the thriving commercial area now known as West Bloor Village. However, the opening of several regional malls, including the Yorkdale Mall, along with the completion of the Bloor-Danforth subway line in 1967, detrimentally impacted this small commercial area located in the western corner of Toronto. Malls offered shoppers a climate-controlled environment with free parking and other amenities and the shoppers who once rode streetcars on Bloor Avenue were directed underground.^[33]

In 1963, Neil McLellan, a jewelry store owner and Chairman of the Bloor-Jane-Runnymede Business Men's Association's Parking Committee, invited members of the City's Planning Board to discuss the possibility of a business district.^[34,35] For several years, the Business Men's Association relied on voluntary contributions; however, as participation waned, disagreement among business owners intensified and the Association's coffers diminished significantly.

This invitation started a long dialogue between local representatives and businessmen, and spawned the formation of a committee. The Committee, including representatives of the Business Men's Association, City of Toronto Planning Board, City Council, Department of Public Works, Parking Authority, City Surveyors Department, City Real Estate Dept, City Legal Department, Department of Streets, Metro Roads and Traffic Department, Department of Parks and Recreation, Development Department, Toronto Transit Commission, Toronto Hydro Electric Commission and Ontario Hydro, was formed to explore the feasibility of business district with a self-imposed tax on local property owners as a means to circumvent the free-rider problem and to make collective improvements which would protect their individual investments.^[36]

After considerable research into the subject, the Committee discovered that the formation of such a district required enabling legislation. With cooperation from the Department of the City Solicitor, the Committee crafted the necessary legislation which passed in the Legislature on December 17, 1969.^[37,38]

Six months after the Province of Ontario passed Section 379g of the Municipal Act, the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto passed By-law No. 170-70 and the world's first BID, Bloor West Village (then known as the Bloor-Jane-Runnymede Improvement Area), became a legal reality. With a modest budget, the voluntary management board designed the first BID program. The agenda focused on streetscape improvements and special events and in the first year they supervised the installation of more than 100 large planters, new benches, trash receptacles, banners, lighting, newspaper dispensers, and holiday decorations. They also worked with Ontario Hydro and Toronto Hydro Electric System to remove utility poles from the street and move services below grade.^[39] According to Alex Ling,

businessman, property owner, and BID Director for more than thirty years, these basic streetscape elements dramatically improved the pedestrian experience and attracted customers to the area.

Why and where did the model transfer? With the power to tax members, the BID model represents a persistent, competitive, and flexible strategy to confront local dilemmas through the provision of additional public services and hundreds of governments throughout the Province of Ontario have since allowed the authorization of BID organizations. Though the Canadian BID movement began in the 1960s and peaked in the 1980s, the BID model remains a popular as evidenced by the recent endorsement of the Downtown Yonge Street BID in Toronto and the Downtown Montreal Commercial Development Association in Montreal. One reason why the model transferred so rapidly throughout Canada is that Canadian governments encouraged the establishment of BIDs; in the 1970s, the Province of Ontario made infrastructure grants available, but only BID organizations were eligible for funding.^[40]

Despite my best efforts, I was unable to pinpoint exactly how the BID model migrated from Canada to the United States. There is, however, agreement among experts that the New Orleans Downtown Development District, established in 1975, was the nation's first BID.^[41] Currently, BIDs exist in many large American cities including New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, Houston, and Philadelphia. Because the CCD is frequently visited and studied by BID policy entrepreneurs from around the world and previous research by the author involved an in-depth examination of Philadelphia's BIDs,^[42] this article now turns to the story of how the BID model migrated to Philadelphia.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Philadelphia's population grew at an impressive rate. However, suburban shopping malls appeared in the 1950s and the exodus of both central-city businesses and the white middle class to the urban periphery instigated a decline in population that continues today. Interested in making Philadelphia's central business district more competitive, the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC), a not-for-profit membership organization supported by Philadelphia's business leaders that formed in 1956, deliberately imported the BID model.

In 1985, the CPDC invited Richard Fleming, then President of the Downtown Denver Partnership, a non-profit business organization that plans, manages and develops Downtown Denver and its BID, to attend a "special meeting of interested downtown parties".^[43] Shortly after Dick Fleming's visit, the CPDC, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, the Chestnut Street Association, and the Foundation for Architecture supported a series of meetings to discuss the formation of a downtown management association for Philadelphia. For more than four years, Peter Wiley, then Executive Director of CPDC, led the effort by researching BID organizations throughout the country. Working with an attorney, Wiley gained a detailed understanding of the state enabling statutes.^[44] He also communicated with the managers of nearby BIDs in Allentown, Pennsylvania and New York City. Philadelphia's

business leaders then created a Downtown Management Task Force, allocating \$50,000 to conduct a feasibility study which later recommended the creation of a BID. By May 1988, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Kevin Tucker, an active proponent of community policing, and Mayor Wilson Goode publicly supported the formation of a BID for the central business district. In 1989, Ronald Rubin, President and CEO of the Rubin Company, agreed to take on the responsibility for advancing the BID model. As a well-respected and established real estate developer, property and business owners quickly rallied around him to support the BID endeavor.^[45]

In 1990, Mayor Goode signed the Bill into law and by 1991 the Center City BID was operational. Interestingly, the Center City BID served as a model for subsequently formed BIDs in Philadelphia because its programs are visible, it possesses considerable wherewithal, and it is managed by a group of highly dedicated, creative, and charismatic professionals. In fact, from 1992 to 1998, the Center City BID's Executive Director, Paul Levy, testified in support of the seven BID plans brought before City Council because he hoped the entire city would become more competitive—not just its center.^[46]

It is not entirely clear whether or how the BID model migrated from the United States to New Zealand. However, in an interview with Karen Remetis, Founder and Chair of the National Main Street Trust in New Zealand, Remetis explained that the Main Street model migrated from the US to Australia and from Australia to New Zealand. Mall development in New Zealand began in the 1960s and its towns and cities—like their counterparts in Canada and America—were negatively impacted by suburbanization. In the early 1990s, Council planners throughout the country adopted the Main Street model and at least 30 of the more than 150 Main Streets have implemented a separate rate, or self-funding mechanism, which qualifies them as BIDs. Remetis noted that while the term BID is not used in New Zealand, town center organizations have borrowed ideas, like uniformed ambassadors, from the American BID model.

In contrast, the BID model is relatively new to South Africa and was imported directly from the United States by a discrete set of actors in Johannesburg. The first BID enabling legislation passed in Africa in 1999. Johannesburg, the economic hub of South Africa for more than a century, began to decline in the 1970s. Much like North American cities, the development of suburban shopping centers and office parks attracted people to the urban periphery. This trend continued throughout the 1980s, and by the early 1990s, disinvestment in the urban core resulted in higher vacancies, increased crime, and considerable physical decline.^[47,48]

In November 1991, property owners, developers, and businesses organized the *Strategic Initiative Workshop*. With more than two hundred private and public sector participants, the two-day workshop resulted in a mandate to form a trilateral partnership between business owners, community members and the then City Council.^[49] Financed entirely by the private sector and

charged with transforming Johannesburg into “an attractive, clean, safe and vibrant city,” the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) Ltd. was established in August 1992.

With an interest in investigating international urban renewal practices, Executive Director, Neil Fraser, visited several American cities in 1993. The same year, the CJP implemented a pilot BID, the Central Improvement District. However, without the requisite enabling legislation, the BID represented a voluntary effort to reduce crime in a twelve-block area of the downtown.

The first democratic elections at the end of 1995 resulted in a legitimate local government, and the newly elected urban authorities quickly expressed an interest in combating decline and marketing the City as a world city.^[50] Simultaneously, the Johannesburg Inner City Development Forum (JICDF) emerged, representing a partnership between private sectors and public sectors including senior planners in Gauteng Government and the Local Authority as well as City Councilors. In 1996, 21 JICDF representatives attended the “First World Congress on Town and City Centre Management” in Coventry, England. Led by the CJP, IDA, and the Association of Town Center Management (ATCM), the group then toured such US cities as Atlanta, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and New York City.

Subsequent to this on-site inspection of best practices, the JICDF conducted a visioning exercise to adopt a shared image for the City of Johannesburg.^[51,52] During the exercise, the JICDF, working with the IDA, noted that there were significant parallels, like increased vacancies and crime, decreased property values, and physical decay, between Johannesburg’s central city and cities like Pittsburgh and Detroit.^[53] At the October 1996 Vusani Amadolobha Conference, the Gauteng Provincial Government carefully examined the BID model. The CJP, in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Development Planning and local government, drafted the *Gauteng City Improvement Districts Bill*, which the Gauteng Provincial Legislature passed in 1999.

Partnerships for Urban Renewal, established in 1999 by Fraser to handle urban renewal strategies for areas beyond the Johannesburg city limits, successfully established South Africa’s first BID in the City of Pretoria. Today, there are dozens of BID organizations operating in communities throughout the Republic of South Africa, namely Johannesburg, Midrand, and Pretoria.

The BID model quickly migrated from the Gauteng Providence to South Africa’s peninsula. In the late 1990s, Cape Town property owners and city management raised concerns regarding urban decay in the central business district and researched a variety of international models for urban revitalization in Denver, Seattle, New York, Washington, DC, and Coventry. As a result, the Cape Town Partnership (CTP) formed and the Cape Town City Council enacted a municipal by-law authorizing the creation of BIDs. Tygerberg and South Peninsula municipal administrations soon replicated this by-law, save minor modifications.^[54]

BID organizations also exist in Serbia, Albania, Jamaica, and the United Kingdom. According to Steven Rosenberg, Chief of Party for the Serbia Local Government Reform Program, there are four functioning BID organizations in Serbia. In his capacity as general counsel of New York City's Office for Economic Development, Rosenberg facilitated the implementation of more than 40 BIDs throughout the city and said that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) deliberately imported the concept to Serbia (in Krusevac, Nis, Valjevo, and Zrenjanin) and Albania (in Durres) for the purpose of improving local government performance, including financial management and citizen participation. In 2002, business leaders from Serbia visited New York City and examined a dozen of its BIDs. In fact, one Serbian business leader was so fond of the trash receptacles in Lincoln Square that he noted and later implemented the design.

Generally speaking, the BID organizations in Serbia focus on capital improvements such as lighting, façade enhancements, benches, and banners, as well as marketing and sanitation services.

Similarly, USAID assisted with the development of BID legislation for Jamaica as well as the establishment of the Kingston Restoration Company (KRC), non-profit merchant organization. By 1995, the Downtown Kingston Management BID was established to handle problems such as crime, grime, and illegal street vendors.

After extensive research and considerable debate, the first British BID, the Kingston-upon-Thames, began operations on January 1, 2005. England's central government began a deliberate investigation into the adoption of the BID model in 1992 by studying organizations in the United States and several public-sector bodies and national businesses provided the funding and support for a pilot BID project a decade later. To solve this dilemma, the British government looked at the US experience with BIDs and decided to change the legislation, so that this mechanism could be imported and implemented in the United Kingdom.^[55,56] Ultimately, the ATCM (Association of Town Centre Management), the entity entrusted with administering the pilot project, selected 23 sites located in cities such as Birmingham and Bristol, Coventry and Manchester, Liverpool, Lincoln, and London. In anticipation of successful policy transfer, researchers recently compared and contrasted the economic, political, and social contexts of the United Kingdom and United States and carefully consider the potential spatial repercussions of policy application.^[57,58]

BID POLICY EMERGENCE

Policy entrepreneurs in countries around the globe continue to advocate for the transfer of BID policy. Throughout the course of this investigation, I discovered that although BID organizations do not yet exist in Japan, Austria,

Germany, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Romania, enabling legislation is under consideration in these countries.

For example, the Japanese government is investigating BID enabling legislation enacted in other countries and the Tokyo metropolitan government is testing the feasibility of a BID. In 1999, the Japanese government passed legislation allowing the creation of TMOs (Town Management Organizations) to assist with the revitalization of central business districts in Japan.^[59] To establish a TMO, local governments must submit an application describing proposed development plans to the prefecture as well as the central government. If approved, the municipality receives financial assistance and the authority to appoint a TMO to oversee plan implementation. Although TMOs do not impose compulsory assessments on property owners and therefore do not qualify as BIDs according to the definition used for this study, the Shiodome-chiku Machizukuri Kyogikai TMO, a non-profit corporation, is the country's first pilot BID. Established in January 2003, this organization makes use of mandatory assessments and oversees security and maintenance services for the area.

BID POLICY RESISTANCE

To gain a deeper understanding of policy transfer, it is critical to identify the reasons why a policy fails to transfer from one place to another, yet the literature contains little information on the subject of resistance. To date, work in this area has been limited to the importance of special interest groups^[60] and the strategies of resistance employed by recipient actors.^[61] While BID policy appears to proliferate, there are a few contexts where it has encountered considerable resistance. To advance the conversations on policy resistance and to provide insights to entrepreneurs with an interest in BID policy, I address the question: under what conditions do BID policy entrepreneurs experience difficulty with importing ideas?

Property and business owners are sometimes unable to establish a BIDs in cities where enabling legislation exists for the following reasons: they find themselves without the leadership necessary to formulate a collective vision for the area; they lack the financial wherewithal necessary to operate a BID; or they face opposition from a significant proportion of the local property and business owners. For example, sudden shifts in political leadership can prevent policy implementation. In 2000, the then Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Luis Paulo Conde, hired an independent consulting firm to assess the feasibility of implementing several BIDs. After studying BIDs in New York, Philadelphia, and Denver, the consultants planned to build a pilot BID. Although city bylaws allowing the establishment of BIDs were drafted, a new mayor was elected, and the BID model permanently moved to the back burner.

These cases, however, pale in comparison to the resistance witnessed in the City of Boston. Here, a faulty state law, union opposition, and a contentious legislative environment explain the failure of policy entrepreneurs to complete the transfer process. Despite nearly a decade of consensus among the Mayor, City Council, and property owners, the Downtown Crossing BID has yet to be realized. Experts blame the state law that authorizes the establishment of BIDs, which was passed in 1994. The law contains an opt-out provision and property owners have the right to decline participation within 30 days after the organization of the BID. Then Governor William Weld added the provision because of his public position against new taxes and his concern that BID revenues would upset the state cap on property tax levies.

The opt-out caveat, albeit contradictory to the fundamental purpose of a BID, has not prevented the establishment of such organizations in other parts of the state like Hyannis and Springfield. Downtown Crossing BID proponents refused to adopt the opt-out approach, because a large number of the properties in Downtown Crossing were owned by individuals and companies abroad that would be difficult to contact. Instead, they decided to pursue a mandatory BID in the form of a home rule petition. This approach required approval by Boston City Council as well as the Legislature.

In 1998, after some wrangling between the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the city's chief financial officer over whether BID levies would subordinate to city taxes in a foreclosure, Mayor Thomas Menino filed the home-rule petition and the City Council approved it. However, opposition from the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association, and a handful of locally elected officials cited excessive pay, conflicts of interest, and other problems with BIDs in New York City and expressed concern that such entities privatize jobs by replacing police officers with private security guards.

Nearly two years later, opposition persists. The staff of the Legislature's Local Affairs Committee recently completed a study that further criticized the BID proposal for favoring the interests of larger property owners, failing to require sufficient government supervision, and extending the right to tax to a corporation. The bill remains on hold.

STUDY FINDINGS

Results from the mail surveys and personal interviews designed to trace the transfer of BIDs across several national contexts show that a wide range of policy entrepreneurs including, but not limited to, property owners, business owners, local governments, public agencies, NGOs, elected officials, private consultancy firms, international organizations, and researchers are responsible for the intra- and inter-national transfer of the BID model. They also provide evidence that the BID policy network is an open system whereby relationships

rely on such principles as trust, respect, and reciprocity. Within this system and through a variety of communicative mechanisms, BID policy entrepreneurs deliberately and effectively maintain a network for sharing information, ideas, and resources within and beyond their domestic context. They are motivated to share information because they recognize the advantages of urban policy transfer, especially the benefits associated with membership in a policy network such as the opportunity to benefit from the exchange of information.

As demonstrated earlier, internationally focused entities like the IDA (International Downtown Association), ATCM (Association of Town Centre Management), and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) fostered information exchange by providing centralized forums for parties with similar interests, thus allowing participants to form alliances and reduce transaction costs. The majority of BID policy entrepreneurs are formal members of at least one of these professional organizations and they share information within the network by attending conferences, participating in study tours, and distributing written materials like journal articles, professional magazines, and newspapers. These larger membership organizations also provide research on other BID programs, receive technical assistance from government agencies and private consultants, and manage staff who collect information via telephone, electronic mail, and the Internet. Furthermore, interviews with BID managers indicate that these entrepreneurs regularly engage in prospective policy evaluation, but favor informal methods such as advice and anecdotes from experts and are less likely to employ more formal methods of prospective policy evaluation like modeling and microsimulation.

Prospective policy evaluation is the process of assessing the potential effects of a policy transferred from another country.^[62] In the spirit of this study, I have borrowed a set of guidelines that were recently developed for policy-makers. These guidelines highlight the issues that deserve consideration prior to policy adoption, and I use them as a framework for interpreting the data that I gathered on how BID policy is transferred and applied in Canada, the United States, South Africa, and beyond. According to this framework, there are several conditions that local entrepreneurs should evaluate before they attempt to borrow ideas from other places. They are: adequacy and accuracy of information, similarity of problems and differences in setting, policy performance, and policy application.

Responsible prospective policy evaluation requires access to ample and accurate information. According to data collected through the mail surveys and personal interviews, BID policy entrepreneurs consider a wide range of information before they support enabling legislation or implement BID organizations. Is the information that they need readily available? It seems so. As demonstrated earlier, Philadelphia's policy agents began their investigation into the model by inviting a national expert to speak on the subject of BIDs and later researched New York's enabling legislation. In contrast, policy entrepreneurs in South Africa started collecting information by conducting

on-site visits and studying international practices in a handful of US and British cities. These two cases exemplify the experience of most BID policy entrepreneurs—new agents may readily enter the policy network and quickly gain access a host of information without difficulty.

Although the majority of managers believe that information sharing is useful, it is important to point out that with respect to policy transfer the BID model is problematic because it mandates self-promotion. Said another way, BID organizations with highly visible programs are not necessarily effective in creating delightful, safe, and clean environments; an impressive marketing scheme is merely evidence that a BID manager is doing his or her job.^[63] Therefore, importers are rightfully skeptical and the BID policy entrepreneurs that I interviewed expressed some frustration with the task of borrowing ideas from organizations especially when it was difficult to distinguish between objective and subjective accounts of success. They noted that self-evaluations, in particular, should be carefully scrutinized. Most interviewees agreed that seminars and conferences are useful mechanisms for sharing information and learning from peers. However, several mentioned that presentations of the BID model as a panacea for urban ills are superficial and raise suspicion.

Such activities beg the question: why do urban policy entrepreneurs advocate the transfer of the BID model? While some researchers have raised concern about unfettered policy promotion, commenting that the role of the International Downtown Association is to sell advice and information about BIDs,^[64] my experience leads me to believe that policy entrepreneurs like McLellan, Ling, Levy, Fleming, Rosenburg, and Fraser actively promote the model for the purpose of building a coalition of support that will justify their beliefs and publicize their redevelopment activities. Like Levy, who provided testimony in support of multiple BIDs throughout Philadelphia, and Rosenburg, who transported the BID model from New York City to Eastern Europe, McLellan initially advanced the movement by giving a presentation of the new model to a seminar of the Canadian Association of Renewal Officials in Toronto in 1971 and even continued to travel “across the province and the country preaching the BID gospel” during his retirement.^[65]

Within this framework, prospective policy evaluation should also include an analysis of the similarity of problems and goals between the exporting and importing countries. Thus, a vital question for importers is: how similar is the problem in the originating country? By the end of this research project, I discovered that in each instance of successful BID policy transfer, BID managers, business leaders, and local officials cited the exodus of key businesses and residents from the central city due to the introduction of the automobile, suburban shopping mall, and modern office park as the driving force for BID policy adoption. In short, the BID model initially materialized in response to suburbanization and this condition remains the primary incentive for its proliferation.

The causes of suburbanization as well as the contemporary social and political characteristics of a city, however, vary across countries. Therefore, it is essential that policy entrepreneurs not only consider the similarity of problems, but that they also understand differences in setting. They should ask: how does originator's policy setting compares to the recipient's? As previously described, the JICDF's visioning exercise entrepreneurs quickly drew parallels between cities like Pittsburgh and Johannesburg. Seemingly their problems had common root causes; however, there were a host of differences worthy of serious consideration.

Historically, Johannesburg had no corporate commitment to the central city, leadership was nonexistent, and the mayor lacked the power necessary to rally public attention around the issues facing the central city.^[66] Moreover, Johannesburg's experience with crime and order deviated significantly from the American experience. During apartheid, the SAP represented a force of oppression; presently, they are very few in numbers. Although the Metropolitan Police Force was established in the late 1990s, its focus is on traffic and council by law enforcement,^[67] so Johannesburg has extraordinarily low levels of public security services. Finally, the socio-economic problems facing Johannesburg are vastly different than those faced by American cities. For example, Johannesburg has a very high unemployment rate (30%), thus chronic problems with informal traders, homeless people living on the streets, drug use, and violent crime.

According to the guidelines set forth by Mossberger and Wolman, entrepreneurs should systematically evaluate prospective policies in the originating country prior to adoption.^[68] Put simply, entrepreneurs should refrain from borrowing ideas unless they have proof that it is successful elsewhere. Most BID policy entrepreneurs collect information by actively seeking out expert opinions, collecting promotional literature on BIDs, and conducting on-site visits to observe operational BIDs prior to borrowing ideas. Most are satisfied with these subjective accounts of success and few systematically scrutinize the model or require evidence of effectiveness. This is likely the case because most BIDs are not required to monitor performance and those that are usually self-monitor.

Additionally, it is important for entrepreneurs to engage in a systematic comparison of multiple urban revitalization policies prior to BID adoption because a detailed analysis of divergent policies leads to a deeper understanding of the historical, political, and socio-economic conditions that they must confront and such an approach improves the likelihood of designing an appropriate response to the problems at hand. Though few entrepreneurs have approached the adoption of BID policy methodically in the past, late adopters—like the property owners and local officials in Cape Town as well as England's central government—practice rather creative and cautious techniques. For example, the CTP methodically assessed and effectively blended revitalization models from a variety of contexts including the United States (Denver,

Seattle, Washington, DC, and New York), Ireland (Dublin), England (Liverpool, Manchester, and Coventry), the Netherlands, Australia (Adelaide), and Brazil. England, as mentioned previously, launched a pilot project that involved the institutionalization of fewer than two dozen BIDs instead of whole heartedly embracing the model.

Finally, prospective policy evaluation includes a critical consideration of the policy's application in a foreign context. As illustrated earlier, the BID model has three principal aims: delight, safety, and cleanliness. To achieve these goals, most BIDs support a combination of activities including consumer marketing, capital improvements, policy advocacy, maintenance, security, economic development, transportation, and social services. To better understand the way that the BID policy is applied in different national contexts, the survey instrument that I distributed asked managers to describe their level of involvement ("very involved," "somewhat involved," or "not at all involved") with each of these services.

Results show that the services that Canadian and American BIDs provide are quite similar. For example, the majority of Canadian and American BID organizations are "very involved" in consumer marketing.^[69,70] Furthermore, at least half of the Canadian and American BIDs surveyed indicated a high level of involvement with capital improvements as well as activities relating to policy advocacy like lobbying government on behalf of business interests. Interestingly, security is more central to BID programs in South Africa, with 100% of the respondents claiming that their organization is "very involved" with the provision of security services as compared to 28% of the American BIDs and 27% of the Canadian BIDs.

Despite the lack of focus on security issues in Canada and the United States, South African policy entrepreneurs in Johannesburg and Cape Town relied on the BID model to solve their problems with crime. The BID model is flexible, and responds to the historically, politically, and socio-economically divergent contexts that Johannesburg and Cape Town present. For example, BID policy entrepreneurs in Johannesburg—a landlocked, Afro-centric, business-oriented, concrete jungle—had serious problems with violent crime and could not rely on publicly funded police departments for support. In Philadelphia's Center City BID security ambassadors attend the daily, military-style roll call briefings held by the police on a daily basis. In Johannesburg, security ambassadors also attend such roll calls, but South African and Metropolitan police do not participate. Instead, the BID assumes responsibility for protecting citizens and saturates the BID designated area with security ambassadors who utilize the right of citizen arrest when necessary. Under this right, they have the ability to apprehend, hold, and charge anyone engaging in illegal activity. Few security ambassadors, save the rapid response team, are armed.

Cape Town also faced grave crime problems that threatened the economic fate of this older, Euro-centric, tourist-oriented city with endless ocean-front

property and scenic beauty. The political climate in Cape Town, however, was more conducive to supporting a positive relationship between the CTP and the police. Unlike the CJP whose attempt to make use of public services was stopped by the police in Johannesburg, the CTP was able to negotiate contract services from the SAP in the form of Community Patrol Officers (CPOs). With an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 million, the Cape Town Central City BID's primary focus is crime prevention.

CONCLUSION

Through a synthesis of data collected over a five year period, this article demonstrates that the BID is a model of urban revitalization that policy entrepreneurs—like property owners, business owners, local governments, public agencies, NGOs, elected officials, private consultancy firms, international organizations, and researchers—deliberately transferred within and across several national contexts. Although the model originated in Toronto, Canada, and quickly spread to the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Serbia, Albania, Jamaica, and the United Kingdom, BID policy entrepreneurs periodically experience resistance. Advocates in the City of Boston, for example, have worked for more than a decade to implement a BID organization but have failed due to union opposition and a dissonant legislative environment. Despite a handful of defeats, the BID movement is thriving.

In closing, entrepreneurs with an interest in strengthening this policy network and seeing BID organizations take hold in Asia and Eastern Europe should devise reliable methods of prospective policy evaluation, especially with regard to acquiring accurate information, assessing differences in setting, and predicting policy application. Because the IDA currently functions as a central repository for information about BIDs for policy entrepreneurs around the globe, it would be appropriate for it to take the lead on devising such methods. Other internationally focused organizations like the ATCM and USAID are reasonable alternatives.

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