



Beyond imitation: Adaptive policy transfer in Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer

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Abstract

Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) are a prominent social policy in the Global South. Indonesia's Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), introduced in 2007. The paper reconceptualizes policy transfer by treating adoption and adaptation as mutually constitutive mechanisms. We specify two mechanism bundles. Using a qualitative case study with 15 semi-structured interviews and document analysis of government and international reports, we show that adoption without adaptation would have lacked local fit, while adaptation without adoption would have lacked legitimacy and financial support. Their interaction produced a recognizably global yet distinctly Indonesian PKH that weathered administrative fragmentation and infrastructural constraints. Our main contribution is to specify four testable interaction mechanisms linking adoption and adaptation: (1) targeting and the DTKS working with facilitators, (2) conditionalities working with Family Development Sessions and phased sanctions, (3) bank transfers working with staged digitalization, and (4) a maternal and child focus working with coverage expansion; we show that their joint operation accounts for PKH's survival and concrete design. Theoretically, this advances a tractable framework of hybridization as a transfer outcome, moving beyond coercion versus adaptation dichotomies and yielding observable implications for program survival and design. Future work should test these mechanisms comparatively and quantify the effects of Family Development Sessions and digitalization on compliance and inclusion.

Keywords

Conditional Cash Transfer, Family Hope Program, Global South, hybridization, policy transfer

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Introduction

Policy transfer has become an essential lens in public policy research, particularly in the Global South, where international organizations, donor agencies, and transnational networks play a central role in shaping national policy choices. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000) define policy transfer as the process by which ideas, institutions, and policy instruments travel across jurisdictions, influenced by voluntary learning or coercive pressures. In developing countries, these processes are evident in large-scale social protection reforms, with Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) schemes being one of the most prominent examples (Bastagli, 2011; Fiszbein and Schady, 2009). Originating in Latin America, most notably Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Escola* and *Bolsa Família*, CCTs combine short-term poverty alleviation with long-term investment in human capital. By the mid-2010s, more than 70 countries had implemented CCTs, making them a global 'brand' of social protection reform actively promoted by international organizations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2017a; Son, 2008). Building on this literature, we propose an integrated framework that views adoption as institutional anchoring and adaptation as contextual problem-solving, linked through four observable interaction mechanisms with testable implications for design and program sustainability. We use Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Família* as canonical reference cases to anchor the global CCT script. The comparison serves as a conceptual yardstick rather than a second case study, clarifying which elements of PKH reflect the adoption of global templates and which reflect adaptation to Indonesia's decentralized and sociocultural context. Mexico's flagship CCT, launched as *Progresa* in 1997 and later renamed *Oportunidades* and *Prospera*, was discontinued in 2019; the education transfer function was reconfigured into the Benito Juárez scholarship scheme. Our references to Mexico use the program's mature design prior to discontinuation (Development Pathways, 2019; Marquez-Padilla et al., 2025; Niño-Zarazúa, 2020).

Indonesia's *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH), established in 2007, represents one of the Southeast Asia's earliest comprehensive CCT programs (Beleli, 2022; Saguin and Howlett, 2019). Modeled partly on Latin American precedents, PKH initially targeted poor households with children and pregnant women but has since expanded to include older adults and persons with disabilities. Its significance is reflected in the rapid increase of its budget, from IDR 388 million in 2007 to IDR 36.9 trillion in 2020 (DPR Republik Indonesia, 2020; Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2021), which signals its consolidation as Indonesia's flagship poverty alleviation program.

However, PKH did not emerge in a vacuum. The Social Safety Net (JPS) reforms during the 1998 Asian financial crisis and the 2005 Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT/BLT) established crucial institutional and political precedents (Ramesh, 2009). Both reforms bore the imprint of the World Bank, initially through coercive loan conditionalities in 1998, and subsequently through technical and evaluative support in 2005 (World Bank, 2007, 2012a, 2012b, Tshuma, 2018). Taken together, these episodes generated a path-dependent trajectory in which Indonesia's welfare system became progressively aligned with global social protection models. This interpretation resonates with Sumarto's (2023) analysis, which highlights how World Bank prescriptions since the late 1990s

consolidated an externally shaped reform path, positioning PKH less as a new departure than as the continuation of that trajectory.

At the same time, Indonesia's experience demonstrates that policy transfer was not a matter of simple replication. While PKH's early design reflected global CCT scripts emphasizing targeting, conditionalities, and monitoring, the program was progressively reshaped through domestic adaptation. National actors such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Bappenas, supported by local facilitators, recalibrated donor-driven designs by introducing soft conditionalities for vulnerable groups, adjusting benefit levels to local contexts, and embedding PKH into long-term national development frameworks such as the RPJMN (Bappenas, 2014; Nazara and Rahayu, 2013; Zakiah et al., 2020). These modifications reflected Indonesia's decentralized governance structure, sociocultural norms of *gotong royong*, and community solidarity, which facilitated program acceptance. This dual process of external coercion and domestic adaptation illustrates that adoption and adaptation are not linear stages but mutually constitutive mechanisms that work together to create a hybrid model. In other words, PKH could not have achieved its success without the interaction of both processes, the adoption of international elements and adaptation to local needs.

To clarify what 'mutually constitutive' means and avoid tautology, we distinguish two mechanism bundles. First, institutional anchoring (adoption) comprises conditionalities, proxy means testing unified in the DTKS, and centralized monitoring and evaluation; these elements provide credibility, financing, and administrative templates. Second, contextual problem-solving (adaptation) comprises community facilitators, Family Development Sessions (FDS) with phased sanctions, broadened eligibility for older adults and persons with disabilities, and staged payment migration from PT Pos to HIMBARA and then to digital channels; these elements generate operational fit and social legitimacy. The anchoring bundle enables problem-solving; for example, the DTKS makes participatory verification actionable. In turn, problem-solving sustains anchoring; for example, FDS-driven compliance and reliable delivery justify continued funding and monitoring. In this interaction, hybridization is not merely a label for having both elements; it is the causal condition for program survival, reflected in stable budgeting and continuity across administrations, as well as in specific design features such as dual targeting, conditionalities combined with FDS, hybrid payment rails, and broadened eligibility. This interplay created a policy that is globally recognizable in its structure yet uniquely Indonesian in execution, showing why both elements are necessary for a viable and sustainable program (Béland et al., 2018; Beleli, 2022; Porto de Oliveira, 2022; Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet, 2023).

Despite these valuable insights, existing studies on PKH tend to examine either international adoption pressures or domestic adaptation processes in isolation. Analyses focusing on adoption highlight how global actors shaped program initiation through financial leverage and policy prescriptions, while those emphasizing adaptation show how Indonesia recalibrated external designs to fit its fragmented governance and cultural contexts. The intersection of adoption and adaptation as mutually constitutive mechanisms that produce hybrid outcomes remains underexplored. In other words, while previous research has captured important dimensions of PKH's evolution, it has yet to provide an integrated framework that explains how external coercion and domestic innovation jointly shaped the program's trajectory.

This article seeks to fill that gap. It pursues two primary objectives. First, it examines how the coercive influence of the World Bank and other international actors shaped the adoption of PKH within Indonesia's path-dependent trajectory of social protection reform. Second, it examines how domestic actors and cultural logics mediated and reinterpreted global policy prescriptions, resulting in a hybrid model that combined donor-driven designs with local adaptations.

The article makes three contributions. Conceptually, it moves beyond linear and technocratic frames by specifying four observable interaction mechanisms between adoption and adaptation: (1) targeting and DTKS operating together with facilitators; (2) conditionalities combined with FDS and phased sanctions; (3) bank transfers combined with staged digitalization; and (4) a maternal and child focus combined with coverage expansion. It argues that hybridization is the transfer outcome that explains both PKH's durability and its concrete design. (Duong, 2023; Heinrich et al., 2021; Kuhlmann, 2021; Lee et al., 2025; Legrand, 2021; Stone, 2017). Empirically, it provides an in-depth account of PKH's evolution, tracing how donor coercion, national policy agendas, and community-level norms, such as gotong royong, interact to yield those mechanisms. Practically, it derives a design rule for CCT reforms: pair donor-validated instruments (conditionalities, DTKS, centralized monitoring and evaluation) with institutional and cultural embedding (facilitators, FDS, hybrid payments, inclusive eligibility) to balance credibility with local feasibility. In doing so, the article positions Indonesia's PKH as an instructive case of policy hybridization in the Global South and contributes to a more context-sensitive understanding of global policy mobility (Kaasch et al., 2018; Kemmerling and Makszin, 2023; Minkman et al., 2018; Olken, 2019; Suharto, 2018; Yuda, 2023).

Conceptual frameworks

Policy transfer as the conceptual foundation

The study of policy transfer has become an essential lens for examining how ideas, institutions, and policy instruments circulate across jurisdictions and are reconstituted within distinct political, economic, and cultural settings. Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996, 2000) seminal contributions remain the most influential in shaping the debate. Their framework provides this foundational definition and outlines eight guiding questions: why transfer occurs, who the actors are, what is transferred, where lessons are drawn, the degree and completeness of transfer, what constraints transfer, and what outcomes follow. These dimensions enable scholars to situate transfer not as a neutral process but as one deeply embedded in politics, institutions, and power asymmetries (Béland et al., 2023; Fadgen, 2020; Hulicka et al., 2023; Hwang and Song, 2019; Liu and Wang, 2021; Nedley, 2017; Street, 2017; Timms, 2011; Witter et al., 2019; Zhang and Marsh, 2016). We therefore propose an integrated framework that treats adoption as institutional anchoring and adaptation as contextual problem-solving, linked through four observable interaction mechanisms with testable implications for both design and program survival.

In their later work, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) further refined the concept by distinguishing between voluntary transfer, where governments actively seek lessons, and coercive transfer, where adoption is shaped by external pressures such as loan conditionalities

or international norms. They also highlighted the importance of ‘transfer subjects’, encompassing policy goals and instruments, as well as institutional structures and ideologies. This refinement underscores two critical insights: first, that transfer processes are inherently political rather than technocratic; and second, that actors play a decisive role in negotiating, resisting, or reinterpreting global models.

Subsequent scholarship has expanded and nuanced this framework. Evans and Davies (1999) introduced a multi-level perspective that situates transfer within networks of organizations mediating between global scripts and local implementation. Stone (2004, 2012) distinguished between ‘soft transfers’ of ideas and principles and ‘hard transfers’ of laws and institutions, demonstrating how the form of transfer shapes local outcomes. Benson and Jordan (2011) emphasized that transfer mechanisms rarely operate in isolation but unfold through overlapping mechanisms of emulation, bounded rationality, and coercion. More recent studies have shifted attention from linear diffusion models to accounts that stress policy mobility, translation, and hybridization. Peck and Theodore (2015) argue that policies do not travel intact but are disassembled, reassembled, and reinterpreted across jurisdictions. Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet (2023) highlight the agency of Global South actors in reshaping international policy scripts, while Haupt (2023) underscores the contested, multi-directional nature of transfer. Kemmerling and Makszin (2023) further show how models originating in the Global South are beginning to influence welfare debates in advanced economies.

Within Indonesia, these debates are particularly salient. Studies of the *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) demonstrate that while international organizations, such as the World Bank, exercised decisive influence in promoting adoption through conditionalities, proxy means testing, and centralized monitoring, domestic actors recalibrated these imported designs to fit Indonesia’s decentralized governance structures, socio-demographic realities, and cultural values. Earlier scholarship has highlighted aspects of adaptation and coercion; however, what remains underdeveloped is a framework that treats adoption and adaptation not as separate stages, but as constitutive mechanisms whose interaction produces hybrid policy outcomes. Building on Dolowitz and Marsh’s framework, this study advances adoption and adaptation as central analytical categories for understanding policy transfer in the Global South. By examining how these mechanisms intersect in shaping PKH, the analysis contributes to theoretical debates on policy transfer and empirical understanding of how global models are reinterpreted and reassembled in national contexts.

Adoption and adaptation as constitutive mechanisms: toward hybridization. We advance an integrated framework that defines adoption as institutional anchoring that supplies credibility, financing, and administrative templates, for example conditionalities, proxy means testing via the DTKS, and centralized monitoring and evaluation, and defines adaptation as contextual problem-solving that generates operational fit and social legitimacy, for example community facilitators, Family Development Sessions with phased sanctions, coverage expansion to older adults and persons with disabilities, and staged payment digitalization. Hybridization arises when adoption enables adaptation, and adaptation in turn preserves or extends adoption. The framework specifies four interaction mechanisms: (1) targeting and the DTKS working with facilitators, (2) conditionalities operationalized

through Family Development Sessions and phased sanctions, (3) bank transfers progressing to staged digitalization, and (4) a maternal and child focus evolving into demography-responsive coverage. Each mechanism yields an observable design feature and a survival payoff.

Policy transfer has often been understood as the circulation of policy instruments, institutions, and ideas across jurisdictions, yet recent scholarship emphasizes that this process is neither linear nor uniform (Bolognesi et al., 2021; de Oliveira, 2020; Pacheco-Vega, 2021; Saguin and Howlett, 2019). Rather than replication, transfer involves the selective adoption of external elements and their adaptation to domestic institutional, socio-economic, and cultural realities (Carley et al., 2017; Crase et al., 2020; Jabal et al., 2023; Milhorange et al., 2022; Ouma, 2020; Vinke-De Kruijf et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2024). This study conceptualizes adoption and adaptation not as sequential stages but as constitutive mechanisms whose interplay explains how global models are localized and reconstituted into hybrid forms (Berchtold et al., 2010; Bissell et al., 2011; Milhorange et al., 2022; Pacheco-Vega, 2021; Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet, 2023; Stone, 2017).

Adoption as external alignment. Adoption is the selective uptake of globally validated design elements that signal alignment with international policy norms and secure external legitimacy (Gavens et al., 2019; Howlett and Saguin, 2021; Martínez-Izquierdo and Torres Sánchez, 2024; Wang and Zhang, 2024). Governments adopt measures to improve technical efficiency, satisfy donor expectations, strengthen bargaining power, and gain credibility in domestic politics. In Dolowitz and Marsh's framework, adoption relates closely to the 'objects of transfer' (policy goals, instruments, institutions) and 'sources of transfer' (foreign models, international organizations). In the case of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs), adoption often takes the form of borrowing conditionalities tied to schooling and health; proxy means testing for targeting, and centralized monitoring frameworks, all considered hallmarks of the Latin American prototypes (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009; Rawlings and Rubio, 2005). For Indonesia's Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), adoption anchored the program within the global CCT paradigm by embedding these features into its initial design, strongly influenced by World Bank prescriptions and technical support. Adoption thus served a symbolic and strategic function, projecting Indonesia as a reform-oriented state aligned with international poverty-reduction agendas such as the MDGs and later the SDGs (Astutik et al., 2022; Jayanti et al., 2019; Umusya'adah et al., 2018).

Adaptation as domestic recalibration. Adoption alone, however, was insufficient to ensure program viability. Imported designs required extensive recalibration to fit Indonesia's decentralized governance structure, socio-demographic realities, and cultural logics. Adaptation, therefore, functioned as a constitutive mechanism, transforming borrowed elements into contextually workable and socially legitimate practices (Dussauge-Laguna, 2013; Legrand, 2021; Saguin and Sha, 2021; Stone, 2017). Four mechanisms illustrate how adaptation operated in PKH. First, institutional fit was achieved by introducing *pendamping sosial* (community facilitators), who mediated between central designs and local implementation, ensuring compliance monitoring and trust-building in fragmented

governance settings (Blanc and Cotella, 2023; Turner-Walker et al., 2021; World Bank, 2012a). Second, socio-demographic recalibration expanded eligibility beyond children and mothers to include older adults and persons with disabilities, reflecting demographic pressures and intergenerational household structures (Hartarto and Wardani, 2023; Hartarto et al., 2021; Noegroho et al., 2024; Umusya'adah et al., 2018). Third, cultural embeddedness was realized through Family Development Sessions (FDS), which reframed conditionalities into participatory forums grounded in *gotong royong*, Indonesia's ethos of mutual cooperation (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2019, 2021; Sugiyama and Hunter, 2020). Fourth, incremental innovation in payment systems evolved from manual disbursement via PT Pos, to HIMBARA banks, and eventually digital platforms, demonstrating how resource constraints spurred adaptive experimentation that enhanced transparency and financial inclusion (Palaon et al., 2020; Tiovilda and Melissa, 2025).

Toward hybridization. These dynamics illustrate that adaptation was not a peripheral correction, but rather a constitutive process that ensured program durability and legitimacy. Adoption of internationally validated features was supplied, but only through adaptation were these features rendered viable in Indonesia's decentralized and culturally diverse context. Their intersection produced hybridization: a program globally recognizable in its conditionalities, targeting, and monitoring, yet distinctly Indonesian in its localized innovations such as FDS, community facilitation, broadened eligibility, and incremental digitalization. Hybridization thus exemplifies what Peck and Theodore (2015) described as the 'disassembly and reassembly' of policy in motion, where external scripts are selectively borrowed, reinterpreted, and reconstructed.

Policy transfer scholarship provides the scaffolding for this claim. Building on Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000), who foreground the politics, actors, and constraints of transfer, later work shows that policies travel through translation rather than replication and are reassembled across scales and networks (Benson and Jordan, 2011; Evans and Davies, 1999; Peck and Theodore, 2015; Stone, 2004, 2012). Recent contributions emphasize the agency of the Global South and multi-directional flows, with Southern innovations increasingly informing global welfare debates (Haupt, 2023; Kemmerling and Makszin, 2023; Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet, 2023). Taken together, this literature situates hybridization as an expected outcome when external templates meet domestic institutions, interests, and moral economies.

Indonesia's PKH exemplifies this negotiated reassembly. International organizations, especially the World Bank, anchored adoption through conditionalities, proxy means testing, and centralized monitoring, while domestic actors recalibrated these features to decentralized governance, demographic realities, and cultural norms. Prior studies have documented coercion and adaptation separately; what has been missing is a single framework that explains how adoption and adaptation intersect to produce hybrid outcomes.

This article supplies that framework. It refines the work of Dolowitz and Marsh by demonstrating that adoption, understood as institutional anchoring, and adaptation, understood as contextual problem-solving, operate as mutually constitutive mechanisms. It highlights the agency of the Global South by showing how Indonesian actors reinterpret and innovate upon global models. It theorizes hybridization as the negotiated transfer

outcome that is simultaneously credible internationally and legitimate domestically; thus, PKH is not a diluted replica, but a reconstituted program that blends global scripts with local imperatives. We therefore treat adoption and adaptation as constitutive mechanisms whose interaction yields hybridization. The next section applies this integrated framework to PKH, tracing selective adoption, contextual adaptation, and the resulting design features and survival effects.

Research method. This study employs a qualitative research design guided by the policy transfer framework of Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000) to analyze the adoption, adaptation, and hybridization of Conditional Cash Transfer programs in Indonesia. A single case study design was used to examine how Program Keluarga Harapan was shaped by the transfer of international models, particularly Brazil's Bolsa Familia and Mexico's Progresa Oportunidades, and recalibrated within Indonesia's governance, institutional, and sociocultural settings. Mexico and Brazil serve as comparative anchors rather than full shadow cases. They guide our coding of adoption as institutional anchoring and of adaptation as contextual problem-solving, and they structure Table 1. Since Mexico's program was discontinued in 2019, we treat it as a canonical baseline for the global CCT script and code its features based on the pre-2019 design. In interviews, several national and donor actors explicitly referenced Progresa Oportunidades and Bolsa Familia when discussing PKH's conditionalities, targeting, and payment reforms. When specific programs were not named, interviewees invoked global CCT standards in those same domains. Accordingly, we used these two programs as canonical illustrations in the interview protocol and in our coding decisions.

This article adopts a qualitative process tracing strategy to reconstruct how PKH's travel was operationalized and subsequently reworked through interactions between centrally designed policy scripts and subnational implementation practices. The aim is not to produce a statistically representative account across Indonesia's 500-plus districts but to generate mechanism-based inference about how adoption and adaptation become mutually constitutive in a decentralized governance environment. Consistent with process tracing, we triangulate interview testimony with documentary evidence to identify the sequence of key design choices, implementation routines, and workarounds through which policy elements are translated into practice.

Data collection combined semi-structured interviews and document analysis. A total of 15 key informants were selected through purposive sampling to capture diverse institutional perspectives and critical viewpoints. Most interviews were conducted in Jakarta between July and December 2024, with a smaller set undertaken in mid-2025. Central level interviewees included senior officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Bappenas, the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction TNP2K budget policy analysts from the Audit Board of Indonesia BPK expert staff of Commission VII of the DPR overseeing social affairs, as well as representatives of policy think tanks and civil society advocacy organizations engaged in PKH reform. These actors constitute the national policy community that has overseen PKH since its launch in 2007 and through subsequent reforms that reshaped program design, implementation, and monitoring.

Table 1. Adoption and adaptation across Mexico, Brazil, and Indonesia.

Program Feature	Mexico	Brazil	Indonesia
Similar Program Features			
Participant Coverage	National: 5.8 million families, 26 million individuals (out of 126 million population), 20.6% of the population in 2021	National: 13.8 million families, 38 million individuals (out of 213 million population), 17.8% of the population in 2021	National: 10 million families, 40 million individuals (out of 273 million population), 14.6% of the population in 2021
Different Program Features			
Conditionalities	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School enrollment and minimum attendance rate of 85% monthly and annually. Graduating from high school <p>Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of all household members with the number of visits to health centers and attendance of mothers at health and nutrition counseling sessions 	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 85% school attendance in 3 months for children aged 6-15 years. <p>Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children 0-7 years: vaccination and follow-up nutritional development. Pregnant women: pre- and post-natal visits, health, and nutrition seminars 	<p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum attendance rate of 85% of effective learning days. <p>Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant/ nursing mothers and young children should check their health at health facilities/ services. Social Welfare: The older adults and disabled groups participate in social welfare activities according to their needs at least once a year. Additional Interventions: Beneficiary families attend monthly Family Development Sessions (FDS)
Targeting System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic targeting is used to determine which rural areas participate initially. Proxy means test is used for household targeting within areas and in urban areas. The program itself conducts targeting and enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic targeting is used to allocate slots to register low-income households. Proxy means test is used as the household targeting system. Municipal governments conduct program targeting and enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic targeting is used to target areas with high poverty rates. Proxy means test is used to assess household economic conditions. Integrated Registration Data is used to update and verify beneficiary data. Participatory registration gives communities a role in determining beneficiaries

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Program Feature	Mexico	Brazil	Indonesia
Impact Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly accounted for in program design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no systematic effort to integrate impact evaluation into the design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on measurable results in program design
Benefit Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiated by age, class, gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiated by poverty level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiated by age, education, health, and family economic status
Payment Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash at unique program payment points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via debit card usable at banks, ATMs, and lottery points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash distribution through PT. Pos Indonesia Non-cash assistance distribution through the Association of State-Owned Banks (HIMBARA), consisting of BRI, BNI, Bank Mandiri, and BTN
Implementation of Conditionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strict benefit reduction on first non-compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning system: Non-compliant households need additional 'attention' and problem resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit reduction from the first month, and aid is stopped if non-compliance occurs for three consecutive months.

Sources: Author's adaptation of Fiszbein and Schady (2009); additional elaboration based on expert interviews and official documents.

Mexico's Prospera was discontinued in 2019; comparisons use the mature pre-2019 design.

To incorporate subnational implementation dynamics into this national case narrative, we conducted a small set of additional interviews in two municipalities. Additional interviews were conducted in Padang and Pekanbaru to complement national-level perspectives by tracing how centrally designed PKH scripts were interpreted and recalibrated in decentralized implementation settings. The purpose was not to generalize from two municipalities to Indonesia's 500-plus districts but to use them as illustrative contrasts that sharpen mechanism-based inference about hybridization and adaptation. Site selection was theory-driven because the two localities offer structured variation in subnational coordination capacity facilitation practices and normative environments through which targeting and conditionalities become locally workable arrangements. In Padang, eligibility claims and matching processes commonly involve community-facing authorities such as wali nagari, lurah, and informal kinship authorities, which can shape the willingness to propose beneficiaries, making sociocultural mediation analytically visible. In Pekanbaru, local government actors describe their role largely as a supporting system with limited policy discretion, so adaptation is more observable as administrative facilitation and cross-sector support for routine program delivery. This design is consistent

with policy mobilities scholarship that emphasizes simultaneous attention to central arenas and localized sites where mobile policy forms are negotiated and made governable (Hadjiisky et al., 2017; Peck and Theodore, 2015).

Documentary data further strengthened the analysis and was used both for triangulation and for timestamping reform episodes. Sources included government reports, legislative texts, donor evaluations, and program implementation guidelines, with special attention to World Bank documentation, given its pivotal role in advocating CCT adoption in Indonesia and shaping early PKH reforms through financial and technical support.

Interview data were transcribed, thematically coded, and analyzed with reference to Dolowitz and Marsh's (2000) eight elements of policy transfer: policy goals, content, instruments, programs, institutions, ideologies, ideas, and attitudes, and negative lessons, while explicitly distinguishing adoption, adaptation, and their interaction. Coding proceeded in two stages: open coding to identify emergent themes, followed by axial coding to map linkages between international adoption, domestic adaptation, and hybridization across national and local arenas. Transcripts were read repeatedly to preserve contextual nuance and to detect patterns of interpretation, negotiation, and constraint across different actor groups.

For operationalization, we code adoption as institutional anchoring when a design element is directly derived from international templates or donor prescriptions, such as conditionalities, proxy means testing, unified in the DTKS, and centralized monitoring and evaluation. We code adaptation as contextual problem-solving when a design element is redesigned to address Indonesian constraints or norms, such as community facilitators, Family Development Sessions with phased sanctions, broadened eligibility for older adults and persons with disabilities, and staged payment migration from PT Pos to HIMBARA and then to digital channels. We use process tracing to test the observable implications of the four mechanisms for both design consequences, dual targeting, conditionalities, with Family Development Sessions, hybrid payment channels, and broadened eligibility and survival consequences, stable budgeting compliance without backlash, delivery resilience, and broader political support. For each design element, we recorded the year of national introduction and the year of major reform as reported in program guidelines and multilateral evaluations. Where dates diverged, we privileged official guidelines and triangulated with interview testimony. Several interviewees referenced reform waves rather than specific years. In those cases, we timestamped events using documentary sources and used interviews to confirm ordering rather than precise dates.

We treat adoption and adaptation as mutually constitutive when two conditions are observed. First, an adoption element enables subsequent adaptation; for example, the DTKS provides an auditable backbone that facilitates participatory verification by facilitators. Second, an adaptation feeds back to preserve or expand the adoption element, for example, improved compliance and delivery reliability through Family Development Sessions, which help justify continued financing, monitoring, and evaluation. Evidence for these conditions is based on temporal sequencing in documents, convergent interview testimony, and corroboration in implementation guidelines and evaluation reports.

To strengthen the credibility and transparency of the analytic process, approximately one-quarter of the interview transcripts were double-coded by a second researcher. Coding discrepancies were addressed through a negotiated agreement process until convergence was achieved, thereby improving the reliability of the thematic categories. For transcripts coded by a single researcher, peer debriefing sessions with senior colleagues and academic supervisors served as an additional reliability check, ensuring conceptual clarity and reducing interpretive bias. Member checking was conducted with selected informants, including officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs, social facilitators, and researchers from think tanks, to confirm the accuracy of thematic interpretations and to ensure that preliminary findings reflected actors' own understanding of policy dynamics. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process, documenting coding iterations, analytical decisions, memo writing, and reflections on positionality. This ensured transparency and confirmability, allowing external reviewers to trace the logic of interpretation.

The coding process ultimately revealed five dominant clusters: donor-driven anchoring, local reinterpretation of conditionality, facilitator-centered problem-solving, infra-structural and administrative constraints, and hybrid institutional arrangements. These clusters collectively explain how PKH became neither a replica of global CCT models nor a wholly endogenous Indonesian innovation but a hybrid constructed through iterative negotiation across levels of governance.

Result and discussion

Global CCT as a transferable policy script

We frame the results in relation to canonical Latin American CCTs to make the role of comparison explicit. Mexico and Brazil provide the baseline against which we identify what PKH adopted from the global script and what it adapted to Indonesia's governance, demographic, and cultural conditions. Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) emerged in Latin America in the late 1990s through flagship programs such as Mexico's *Progresas/Oportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Família*. These initiatives were designed to combine short-term poverty alleviation with long-term investments in human capital by conditioning transfers on school attendance, maternal health visits, and nutrition monitoring. Their perceived effectiveness, backed by rigorous impact evaluations, elevated CCTs into a global policy 'brand' endorsed by major development institutions, including the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and later by the Asian Development Bank (Bastagli, 2011; Fiszbein and Schady, 2009; Rawlings and Rubio, 2005).

Within less than two decades, CCTs spread well beyond Latin America to Asia, Africa, and parts of Europe, with more than seventy countries implementing some form of the policy by 2014 (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2017b). This trajectory represents a striking inversion in global policy mobility: models pioneered in the Global South became reference points for developing and advanced economies (Mazzeo Rinaldi and Leone, 2023; Peck and Theodore, 2015). The diffusion of CCTs was not solely the result of voluntary emulation but was actively promoted by international financial institutions through policy advocacy, lending frameworks, and technical assistance (Beleli, 2022; Curry et al., 2013; Gonnet, 2020; Osorio Gonnet, 2019).

However, as scholarship emphasizes, the spread of CCTs was never a matter of wholesale replication. Policy transfer is better understood as a dynamic process of selective adoption and context-sensitive adaptation (Haupt, 2023; Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet, 2023). While core features such as proxy means testing, conditionalities in health and education, and cash disbursement mechanisms formed the recognizable ‘global script’, their meaning and implementation varied substantially depending on governance arrangements, sociocultural norms, and institutional capacity (Minkman et al., 2018; Stone, 2012).

Across the PKH case, hybridization is not treated as a one off design decision but as an ongoing process through which centrally defined instruments are made implementable by combining formal scripts with locally situated mediations. This framing aligns with policy mobility accounts that conceptualize transfer as translation and assemblage rather than replication, where policy elements are reconstituted through institutional layering and everyday practices that stabilize delivery under decentralization (Peck and Theodore, 2015). A key implication for our analysis is that adaptation does not only refer to deviation from rules. It also includes the practical work through which implementers reconcile standardized requirements with local legitimacy, service ecologies, and administrative constraints, thereby producing hybrid governance arrangements.

Indonesia’s *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH), launched in 2007, exemplifies this dynamic of global diffusion and local recalibration. As one of the first Southeast Asian countries to institutionalize a CCT, Indonesia adopted key elements from Latin American prototypes but introduced significant modifications. Participatory targeting was developed through the *Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial* (DTKS), reflecting efforts to institutionalize evidence-based social policy (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2021). *Family Development Sessions* (FDS) transformed conditionalities into collective learning forums rooted in *gotong royong*, embedding cultural legitimacy into compliance mechanisms (Sugiyama and Hunter, 2020). Community-based facilitators were mobilized to navigate decentralized governance and bridge national directives with local service delivery (Bappenas, 2014).

These adjustments reflect both structural constraints and deliberate innovation. Indonesia’s post-1998 decentralization required adaptation of centrally scripted models, fiscal pressures from fuel subsidy reforms in the mid-2000s necessitated external borrowing tied to social protection expansion (World Bank, 2007, 2012a, 2012b), and cultural logics shaped how international models could be accepted locally. As a result, PKH is simultaneously globally recognizable and distinctly Indonesian, a hybrid policy model that has emerged from negotiated intersections of donor influence, domestic governance, and cultural embedding (Nazara and Rahayu, 2013; Sumarto, 2023). This dual movement illustrates that adoption and adaptation are not linear stages but mutually constitutive mechanisms that jointly generate hybridization. To clarify what mutually constitutive means, we distinguish two mechanism bundles. Institutional anchoring, understood as adoption, comprises conditionalities, proxy means testing through the DTKS, and centralized monitoring and evaluation, which provide credibility, financing, and administrative templates. Contextual problem-solving, understood as adaptation, comprises community facilitators, Family Development Sessions with phased sanctions, broadened eligibility, and staged payment migration from PT Pos to HIMBARA and then to digital

channels, which generate operational fit and social legitimacy. Hybridization emerges when these bundles interlock in practice, so that institutional anchors enable local problem-solving, and local problem-solving in turn preserves or extends the institutional anchors.

Beyond documenting how global CCT models influenced Indonesia, it is also important to consider whether Indonesia's own experience has begun to shape international debates. Several global and regional policy discussions have started to reference Indonesia's PKH as an illustrative case, though not as prominently as Latin American programs. Publications by the World Bank, ADB, and UNICEF increasingly describe PKH as a CCT model that expands coverage while integrating community facilitation and local problem-solving in ways distinct from its Latin American predecessors. Beyond gray literature, a growing strand of scholarship identifies Indonesia as an instructive case for understanding how individualized conditionality frameworks confront collectivist social norms. Sumarto (2021) argues, for example, that Indonesia demonstrates the limits of fully individualized CCT designs in settings where social obligations and communal expectations remain strong. In comparative discussions of social assistance in Southeast Asia, Indonesia's PKH is frequently highlighted as a flagship CCT that has expanded nationally while institutionalizing a facilitator-based delivery model and Family Development Sessions (FDS). At the same time, recent studies and policy reviews point to persistent challenges in targeting accuracy and to the heavy administrative workload faced by PKH facilitators (Asian Development Bank, 2023; Haliim et al., 2024; Kusumawati and Kudo, 2019; Purba et al., 2024; Syamsulhakim and Khadijah, 2021; Yulia et al., 2022).

To make the mechanisms of hybridization observable beyond national-level design choices, we use Padang and Pekanbaru as embedded local contrasts. Read alongside the national narrative, these sites show how centrally designed scripts are stabilized through different channels, sociocultural mediation, and negotiated compliance in one setting and constrained discretion coupled with administrative enabling and cross-sector support in another. This contrast is not intended to rank implementation as strong versus weak, but to show how the same nationally defined policy elements become workable through different combinations of formal and locally situated practices.

Adoption of CCT elements in Indonesia: selective uptake of global models

Adopting Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) in 2007 reflected international pressures and domestic political imperatives. At the global level, the World Bank and other development agencies strongly promoted Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) as the preferred poverty-alleviation instrument in the early 2000s, positioning them as cost-effective, evidence-based programs for human capital investment (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009; Rawlings and Rubio, 2005). In this context, Indonesian policymakers strategically aligned domestic reforms with internationally validated models to secure donor confidence, strengthen bargaining positions with international lenders, and consolidate legitimacy for new welfare initiatives in national politics (Kwon and Kim, 2015; Sugiyama, 2011). Adoption, therefore, served a dual function: it anchored Indonesia within the

global consensus on CCTs while simultaneously providing domestic elites with a reformist policy instrument that projected the state's responsiveness to poverty concerns.

This selective uptake occurred within a path-dependent trajectory shaped by earlier donor-driven reforms. The *Jaring Pengaman Sosial* (JPS), introduced during the 1998 Asian financial crisis, was tied directly to IMF and World Bank loan conditionalities and institutionalized targeted assistance (Sumarto, 2023; Takagi, 2016). The 2005 Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT), introduced as compensation for fuel subsidy cuts, further entrenched donor influence by relying heavily on World Bank technical assistance, evaluation frameworks, and fiscal backing (World Bank, 2007, 2012a, 2012b). These experiences constrained the policy space available to Indonesian decision-makers and created institutional expectations that aligned social protection reforms with international prescriptions.

When PKH was formally launched in 2007, policymakers selectively incorporated three key features from Latin American prototypes rather than replicating their entire institutional architecture. The first was conditionalities, which tied cash transfers to children's school attendance and maternal and child health visits. These conditions mirrored the logic of Mexico's *Progresar/Oportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Família*, while simultaneously aligning Indonesia with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Djulius et al., 2022; Hudang et al., 2024; Umusya'adah et al., 2018). Conditionalities thus functioned as technical instruments and symbolic markers of Indonesia's engagement with international development agendas, framing PKH as a human capital investment strategy (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2021). Tracing the rollout, conditionalities were introduced nationwide in 2007, the three-stage sanction framework was formalized in 2015, and the approach was further clarified in the 2024 Technical Guidelines.

The second adoption dimension was targeting mechanisms, particularly proxy means testing (PMT) and the creation of a unified social registry. Institutionalized through the *Basis Data Terpadu* (BDT) in 2011, later rebranded as the *Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial* (DTKS), these instruments represented a significant step toward bureaucratic modernization (Bappenas, 2014; World Bank, 2012b). They signaled adherence to global standards of evidence-based targeting, reduced political discretion in enrollment, and provided a common database that could be used across multiple social protection programs (Coady and Parker, 2009; Kwon and Kim, 2015). International partners such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (Asian Development Bank, 2014, 2020; World Bank, 2017, 2020a) also recognized the DTKS as a crucial innovation that improved efficiency and accountability in Indonesia's welfare system. On the implementation timeline, the unified registry was created as the BDT in 2011 and consolidated as the DTKS during 2015–2017 (including the SIKS-NG rollout).

The third feature was the program's centralized monitoring and evaluation architecture. Although Indonesia's post-1998 decentralization necessitated later adjustments, the initial emphasis on centralized oversight was consistent with World Bank recommendations and international best practices in CCT governance (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009; Morais de Sá e Silva, 2017b). Through its Social Assistance Program and Public Expenditure Review, the World Bank supported the establishment of monitoring and

evaluation frameworks, including compliance checks and randomized impact evaluations, that reinforced PKH's credibility to domestic stakeholders and international partners (World Bank, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2020b). Centralized monitoring also served a political function, strengthening Jakarta's visibility and authority over welfare provision and countering the risks of fragmentation across Indonesia's more than 500 districts and municipalities. Over time, the core monitoring and evaluation architecture was developed between 2007 and 2012, with subsequent enhancements in the late 2010s and further refinement in the 2024 Technical Guidelines.

Taken together, these adoption choices were neither neutral nor purely technical. They were politically consequential acts that embedded globally recognized features, conditionalities, proxy means testing, unified databases, and centralized monitoring into Indonesia's welfare architecture. By doing so, Indonesia satisfied donor requirements, secured continued external financing, and projected a modern, reform-oriented image of governance. At the same time, adoption provided domestic elites with a powerful political resource: internationally validated models that could legitimize state interventions in poverty alleviation. As Sugiyama (2011) observed in Latin America, international models often serve as political capital, and Indonesia's adoption of PKH followed a similar pattern.

However, as Kwon and Kim (2015) rightly argue, adoption primarily served as an entry point rather than a guarantee of long-term viability. Indonesia's decentralized governance, socio-economic diversity, and infrastructural limitations meant that Latin American design features could not be transplanted without modification. PKH would have struggled to achieve operational feasibility and local legitimacy without extensive adaptation. Thus, while adoption was crucial for establishing international credibility and domestic authority, it was through adaptation and hybridization that PKH evolved into a contextually viable and culturally embedded social protection program. We therefore use Mexico and Brazil as a conceptual yardstick and narrate the sequencing of Indonesia's reforms for each design element in the Results.

The comparative trajectory of CCTs in Mexico, Brazil, and Indonesia highlights both convergence and divergence in design. For Mexico, we refer to the architecture in place before the 2019 discontinuation of Prospera and the shift to Benito Juárez scholarships. While all three programs share a common rationale of linking poverty alleviation to human capital investment, their implementation reflects distinct institutional legacies, political priorities, and cultural logics. Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades* emphasized strict compliance and targeted enforcement, whereas Brazil's *Bolsa Família* introduced more flexible sanction mechanisms and strong municipal engagement. At the same time, Indonesia's PKH recalibrated these models within a decentralized governance context. These cross-national contrasts underscore how the global CCT script has been selectively reinterpreted across diverse settings. To capture these distinctions systematically, Table 1 presents a comparative overview of the key features of CCTs in Mexico, Brazil, and Indonesia, highlighting areas of alignment and the unique recalibrations that made PKH contextually viable.

As shown in Table 1, the similarities between Mexico's *Progresa/Oportunidades*, Brazil's *Bolsa Família*, and Indonesia's PKH primarily lie in their adoption of conditionalities, targeting mechanisms, and cash transfer modalities. These shared features reflect

the strength of the global CCT script as promoted by international development institutions. However, the divergences are equally significant. Unlike Mexico, which applied strict sanction mechanisms, and Brazil, which emphasized municipal-level flexibility, Indonesia recalibrated enforcement through phased sanctions embedded in *Family Development Sessions* (FDS), transforming compliance into a collective learning and empowerment process. Similarly, while Mexico and Brazil concentrated primarily on children and maternal health, PKH broadened eligibility to include older adults and persons with disabilities, reflecting Indonesia's demographic structure and cultural expectations of intergenerational solidarity.

Payment systems further highlight this process of contextual recalibration. Whereas Latin American programs initially relied on bank-based transfers, PKH began with manual disbursements through PT Pos before gradually shifting to state-owned banks (HIMBARA) and, more recently, digital payment platforms. This incremental evolution illustrates how infrastructural limitations spurred adaptive innovations, enabling Indonesia to align with international standards of efficiency and transparency while addressing domestic constraints.

These contrasts demonstrate that PKH's divergence from Latin American models was not a failure to replicate but a purposeful recalibration. Adoption secured international credibility, while adaptation enabled operational feasibility and cultural legitimacy. In this sense, PKH exemplifies hybridization, combining global policy templates with national priorities and sociocultural norms to produce a program that is both globally recognizable and distinctly Indonesian.

Adaptation: contextual recalibration

If the adoption of the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) provided it with internationally validated features and political legitimacy, it also introduced transfer objects such as conditionalities, proxy means testing, and centralized monitoring that aligned PKH with global norms. However, these elements could not be transplanted intact and had to be recalibrated to Indonesia's decentralized governance, diverse demographics, and limited infrastructure. Adaptation thus emerged not as a peripheral correction but as the constitutive mechanism through which symbolic adoption was translated into practical, durable, and socially legitimate implementation. In the local material, adaptation becomes visible in two analytically distinct but complementary ways. In Padang, adaptation is foregrounded as normative translation and negotiated compliance, in which eligibility claims and the matching of poverty status are mediated through community-facing authorities such as wali nagari and lurah, thereby embedding central targeting routines within local governance relations. Informal kinship authority can also shape program uptake, indicating that access and compliance may be conditioned by locally situated legitimacy beyond formal administrative channels. In Pekanbaru, adaptation is more visible as administrative facilitation under constrained local discretion. Local government actors describe their role largely as a supporting system rather than a co-designer of policy, and adaptation appears in workarounds that enable central routines, including door-to-door ground checking supported through correspondence with RT and RW structures, as well as logistical and cross-sector support for P2 K2 delivery involving health and education actors.

Indonesia's radical decentralization after 1998 dispersed administrative authority across more than 500 local governments (Bappenas, 2014), rendering centralized Latin American models such as *Progresas* or *Bolsa Familia* ill-suited to the Indonesian context. PKH resolved this institutional mismatch by introducing *pendamping sosial* (community facilitators) who bridged central program design with local delivery. These facilitators verified beneficiaries, monitored compliance, and conducted outreach, while evaluations by the World Bank (2012b, 2020b) highlighted their role as brokers of trust between the state and communities. Decentralization, often viewed as a liability, thus became an impetus for localized institutional innovation (Blanc and Cotella, 2023).

Indonesia's socio-demographic profile also drove adaptation. Whereas Latin American CCTs primarily targeted mothers and children, Indonesia faced rapid population aging and widespread multigenerational households (Syukri et al., 2010; Umusya'adah et al., 2018). As a result, PKH expanded eligibility to include older adults and persons with disabilities, extending coverage to vulnerable groups excluded from earlier prototypes (Zakiah et al., 2020). This recalibration aligned with the RPJMN 2015–2019, which emphasized inclusive social protection across the life course. PKH shifted its focus from child-centered human capital investment to broader household vulnerability by addressing intergenerational caregiving and demographic pressures. Similar recalibrations have been observed in other Global South programs, such as Thailand's social pension and China's *Dibao* (Gao, 2018; Hammond, 2018; Teerawichitchainan and Pothisiri, 2021).

Equally important was the embedding of PKH within Indonesia's cultural ethos. Rather than relying on punitive sanctions to enforce conditionalities, PKH institutionalized *Pertemuan Peningkatan Kemampuan Keluarga* (Family Development Sessions, FDS), transforming compliance into participatory health education, financial literacy, and parenting support forums. Infused with the principle of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), FDS fostered community solidarity and reduced stigma associated with targeted poverty programs (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2021; Petunjuk Teknis Pelaksanaan Program Keluarga Harapan, 2024). This resonates with Sugiyama and Hunter's (2020) notion of 're-signification', where global policy scripts acquire new meanings when translated into domestic moral economies. Conditionalities thus ceased to be bureaucratic mandates and became instruments of empowerment and collective learning.

Finally, PKH's adaptation trajectory was shaped by resource constraints, including minimal financial infrastructure in rural areas. Initial disbursements were made manually through PT Pos Indonesia (World Bank, 2007), but subsequent reforms shifted distribution to state-owned banks, specifically HIMBARA, and later to digital platforms as part of Indonesia's broader financial inclusion agenda (Komarawati et al., 2025; World Bank, 2021). Expert interviews underscore that this incremental digitalization was less a top-down design choice than a pragmatic response to infrastructural scarcity, which later evolved into institutional innovations that enhanced efficiency, transparency, and financial inclusion. The partial return to cash distribution in some remote regions during 2022–2023 demonstrates PKH's adaptive flexibility in balancing innovation with local realities.

The following four mechanisms illustrate how adoption and adaptation interact in practice and why this interaction underpins both design choices and program survival.

Mechanism 1: Targeting Feedback Loop, Interaction of the Unified Social Registry (DTKS) and Community Facilitators. The adoption of proxy means testing and the unified registry (DTKS) established standardized eligibility and auditability requirements as mandated by donors. However, these instruments could not adequately reduce inclusion and exclusion errors in a decentralized setting without community facilitators who verify households, mediate appeals, and synchronize updates with village registries. As facilitators reduced disputes and kept data current, monitoring and evaluation indicators improved, thereby sustaining external financing and annual budget increases. This interaction yielded a dual targeting regime that combines a DTKS backbone with participatory verification. The survival effect is stable funding and bureaucratic buy-in because targeting is both auditable for donors and acceptable to communities. Chronologically, the unified registry was created as the BDT in 2011, the facilitator corps scaled nationally around 2012, and DTKS consolidation proceeded with the SIKS-NG rollout in 2015–2017.

Mechanism 2: Compliance Translation, Conditionalities Operationalized through Family Development Sessions and Phased Sanctions. Early conditionalities signaled a human capital orientation and aligned with global CCT templates, but strict sanctioning undermined local legitimacy in diverse settings. Family Development Sessions and a three-stage sanction system redefined conditionalities by shifting the emphasis from punitive control to collective learning in health, parenting, and financial practices. This mechanism hybridizes a formal compliance script with sociocultural mediation by moving enforcement from sanctioning toward facilitated learning and frontline persuasion. This shift is observable in local practice, where conditionality enforcement may be treated as negotiated rather than strictly punitive, with sanctions described as rarely applied in a strict way and compliance pursued through persuasion to avoid social backlash. This local pattern clarifies how compliance translation operates as a hybrid mechanism, retaining the authority of conditionalities while reconstituting their meaning through locally legitimate practices. This shift increased compliance and reduced attrition among hard-to-reach households. Improved compliance was then fed back into centralized monitoring and evaluation as positive performance, which consolidated conditionalities as both acceptable and fundable. The resulting design consequence is the pairing of conditionalities with Family Development Sessions. The survival effect is sustained compliance without social backlash. In sequencing terms, conditionalities were introduced nationwide in 2007; FDS modules were piloted from 2014 to 2015; a three-stage sanction framework was formalized in 2015; FDS was scaled up from 2015 to 2017; and FDS was codified in 2024.

Mechanism 3: Infrastructure-Realist Payment Reform, Progression from Postal Cash to State-Owned Banks to Staged Digitalization. Adopting bank-based transfers aligned PKH with efficiency and transparency norms. However, infrastructure gaps necessitated a staged migration, which transitioned from postal cash distribution to state-owned banks and then to a mix of digital channels in peri-urban and rural areas. This hybrid channel reduced delivery failures, facilitated grievance redress, and promoted financial inclusion. As failure rates decreased and traceability improved, both donors and the government increased allocations. The design consequence is a mix of cash, bank, and digital

payment rails. The survival effect refers to the resilience of delivery under logistical shocks, such as remoteness and intermittent connectivity. The Pekanbaru material is consistent with this mechanism because maintaining disbursement routines and beneficiary outreach during channel shifts requires local administrative enabling and cross-sector coordination, even when policy design remains centrally specified. In this setting, hybridization is expressed as an operational assemblage, where centrally specified routines depend on municipal coordination, routine facilitation, and cross-sector support for program sessions, making delivery workable even when local discretion over policy design remains limited. Over time, disbursements were handled by PT Pos from 2007 to 2012; e-money LKD pilots began in 2014; non-cash transfers via HIMBARA expanded from 2016 to 2021; staged digitalization took place from 2020 to 2021; and cash fallbacks were reintroduced in remote areas from 2022 to 2023.

Mechanism 4: Life-Course Fit in Coverage Design, Demography-Responsive Expansion to Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities. The original adoption prioritized maternal and child outcomes. Indonesia's demographic profile, including population aging, disability prevalence, and multigenerational households, created pressure to expand eligibility to older adults and persons with disabilities as an adaptation. This expansion reduced intra-household tensions and increased public acceptability, thereby protecting core education and health conditionalities from political rollback. The design consequence is broadened eligibility. The survival effect is broader, encompassing cross-coalition support, because the benefits better align with household realities. Tracing the rollout, the program began with a maternal-child core in 2007, broadened eligibility to older adults by 2016, and added a disability component by 2017.

These mechanisms demonstrate that PKH was not a diluted replica of Latin American CCTs but a reconstituted program tailored to Indonesia's governance structures, demographic imperatives, cultural norms, and resource environment. Adaptation transformed adoption's symbolic alignment with global norms into substantive institutional viability, embedding PKH into Indonesia's decentralized polity, inclusive demographic agenda, and cultural fabric. In theoretical terms, Indonesia's case reinforces recent calls to reconceptualize policy transfer as a process of hybridization, where global models are disassembled, reassembled, and re-signified in recipient contexts (Kemmerling and Makszin, 2023; Peck and Theodore, 2015; Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet, 2023). PKH exemplifies how Global South actors exercise agency by adapting imported designs and generating innovations, such as FDS and inclusive targeting, that now inform global debates on social protection.

Rather than a descriptive label, hybridization is evidenced here by the four mechanisms in which adoption enables adaptation and adaptation, in turn, preserves or extends adoption. Each interaction yields a distinct design feature (dual targeting, conditionalities with Family Development Sessions, hybrid payment channels, and broadened eligibility) and a corresponding survival effect (stable financing, compliance without backlash, delivery resilience, and broader political support). Without this interaction, adoption alone would be technically elegant but socially fragile, whereas adaptation alone would lack resources and recognition.

Hybridization: negotiated outcomes

The evolution of *Program Keluarga Harapan* (PKH) demonstrates that policy transfer in Indonesia has been neither linear nor a matter of simple replication, but rather a negotiated outcome in which adoption and adaptation intersect to generate hybrid forms. PKH remains within the global Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) family due to its adoption of internationally validated design elements such as conditionalities, proxy means testing, and centralized monitoring (World Bank, 2007, 2012a). However, the program has been reconstituted through domestically driven innovations shaped by Indonesia's decentralized governance structure, sociocultural values, and infrastructural constraints. These borrowed features quickly encountered limits in Indonesia's fragmented administrative context, making adaptation indispensable to ensure operational feasibility and social legitimacy. Through mechanisms such as participatory targeting, community facilitators, and Family Development Sessions (FDS), PKH recalibrated imported models into institutionally workable and culturally resonant arrangements. In this sense, PKH cannot be read as a mere Latin American import, but rather as a program that is simultaneously global in form and Indonesian in substance.

The structured contrast between Padang and Pekanbaru clarifies what this negotiated hybridity looks like in practice. In Padang, hybridization is stabilized through sociocultural mediation and negotiated compliance, where formal targeting and conditionality scripts are enacted through locally legitimate and relational practices. In Pekanbaru, hybridization is stabilized through constrained discretion, coupled with administrative enabling and cross-sector support, in which the local government does not substantially reshape program rules but becomes essential to operationalizing central instruments. Read together, these sites show that hybridization and adaptation are not reducible to strong versus weak implementation. Instead, they specify how different translation channels can deliver workable results while preserving the authority of national design features.

The Mexico–Brazil baseline clarifies that PKH's trajectory is not replication but negotiated reassembly: adoption aligns PKH with the canonical CCT script, while adaptation recalibrates that script to Indonesia's decentralized polity and moral economies, yielding the four interaction mechanisms we document. A minor clarification: Mexico's federal CCT ended in 2019, with education transfers folded into Benito Juárez scholarships, and our references use the program's mature pre-2019 design. Chronologically, most adaptation steps followed anchoring elements by several years, with DTKS after BDT, phased sanctions and FDS after initial conditionalities, and digital payment rails after bank migration. This pattern is consistent with the claim that adoption enabled adaptation and that adaptation, in turn, preserved or extended adoption.

PKH exhibits distinctive characteristics that highlight its hybrid architecture compared to the Latin American prototypes. Mexico's *Progres/Oportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Família* provided initial templates for conditionalities and targeting, but their centralized institutional frameworks were misaligned with Indonesia's post-1998 decentralization. PKH diverged by embedding community-based verification, participatory registration, and locally embedded facilitators to bridge gaps between national directives and local delivery. Conditionalities were retained but reframed into FDS, transforming

compliance from a bureaucratic requirement into an empowerment process rooted in *gotong royong* (Sugiyama and Hunter, 2020). Benefit structures were also recalibrated: whereas Latin American programs prioritized maternal and child health, PKH expanded coverage to older adults and persons with disabilities, aligning with demographic imperatives and cultural expectations of intergenerational care (Zakiah et al., 2020). Similarly, Indonesia's payment system evolved incrementally, from manual disbursement through PT Pos to non-cash transfers via HIMBARA banks and ultimately to digital platforms, illustrating how infrastructural scarcity spurred innovation in financial inclusion (Komarawati et al., 2025; World Bank, 2021). Table 2 summarizes the CCT elements borrowed, adapted, and reconstituted in Indonesia's PKH, in comparison with Mexico and Brazil, further illustrating how hybridization materialized through these program design choices. These comparative patterns are consistent with and can be causally unpacked by the four interaction mechanisms specified above.

Hybridization in PKH is most visible in its compliance and targeting regimes. Conditionalities drawn from Latin American scripts were not enforced solely through sanctions but reframed through FDS to encourage behavioral change and collective solidarity. Similarly, while proxy means testing and the national *Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial* (DTKS) mirrored global standards, Indonesia supplemented these with village-level validation and participatory registration to strengthen accuracy and legitimacy at the community level (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2021; Widyaningsih and Ruhmaniyati Toyamah, 2023; World Bank, 2020a). Expanding coverage to groups excluded from earlier models, such as the elderly and persons with disabilities, underscored Indonesia's responsiveness to demographic realities and social expectations. These practices align with Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet's (2023) argument that Global South actors reshape international scripts through contextual innovations, thereby exercising agency in transfer processes.

At the theoretical level, PKH illustrates the dynamics of policy mobility and translation. Peck and Theodore (2015) emphasize that policies do not travel intact but are disassembled, reassembled, and reinterpreted across contexts. PKH exemplifies this negotiated hybridity: global prescriptions provided symbolic and institutional anchors, but local actors recalibrated them into operational, culturally embedded practices. This outcome demonstrates that adoption and adaptation cannot be treated as sequential phases; instead, their interaction produces hybrid forms that secure both international credibility and domestic resonance. By extending Dolowitz and Marsh's (2000) framework, the Indonesian case underscores that adoption and adaptation are constitutive mechanisms whose intersection explains the durability of policy transfer. Moreover, as Haupt (2023) and Kemmerling and Makszin (2023) argue, hybrid forms originating in the Global South increasingly feed into global debates, challenging the long-standing assumption of one-way transfer from North to South. Our claim is not that hybrids simply contain two elements; rather, specific interactions between adoption and adaptation generate identifiable design features and survival payoffs that would be unlikely under either an adoption-only or an adaptation-only path.

At the same time, hybridization also exposes enduring paradoxes. Despite PKH's consolidation and rapid budget expansion, from IDR 388 billion in 2007 to IDR 36.9 trillion in 2020 (DPR Republik Indonesia, 2020; Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia,

Table 2. PKH hybridization typology.

Mechanism	Anchoring element (adoption)	Contextual problem-solving (adaptation)	Design feature	Survival payoff	Sequencing (introduction → reforms)
Targeting feedback loop	Proxy means testing & unified registry (BDT/DTKS)	Community facilitators & participatory verification	Dual targeting (DTKS backbone & village validation)	Stable funding & bureaucratic buy-in	2011 (BDT) → ~2012 (facilitator corps scaled) → 2015–2017 (DTKS consolidation incl. SIKS-NG)
Compliance translation (FDS & phased sanctions)	Conditionalities in education/health	Family Development Sessions (FDS) & three-stage sanctions	Conditionalities paired with FDS	Compliance without backlash	2007 (conditionalities) → 2014–2015 (FDS pilots) → 2015 (three-stage sanctions formalized) → 2015–2017 (FDS scaled) → 2024 (FDS codified)
Infrastructure-realist payments	Bank-based transfers as a governance norm	Hybrid rails (postal → HIMBARA → staged digital) with local fallbacks	Mix of cash, bank, and digital channels	Delivery resilience & traceability	2007–2012 (PT Pos) → 2014 (e-money/LKD pilots) → 2016–2021 (HIMBARA non-cash expansion) → 2020–2021 (staged digitalization) → 2022–2023 (cash fallback in remote areas)
Life-course fit (eligibility expansion)	Maternal–child core	Inclusion of older adults & persons with disabilities	Broadened eligibility	Broader political support & household fit	2007 (maternal–child core) → by 2016 (older adults added) → by 2017 (disability component added)

Sources: Author’s elaboration based on expert interviews and official documents.

2021), Indonesia's poverty reduction has plateaued at around 9–10%, and inequality has remained stagnant at a Gini ratio of 0.38 (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). This suggests that while hybridization has ensured program durability and political legitimacy, it has not fully addressed the structural drivers of poverty, such as labor market informality, regional disparities, and limited social insurance coverage. The World Bank's report, *Investing in People: Social Protection for Indonesia's 2045 Vision*, similarly concludes that while CCTs, such as PKH, improve short-term welfare and human capital outcomes, they cannot serve as standalone solutions to structural poverty without integration into broader labor market and social insurance reforms (Holmemo et al., 2020).

The Indonesian experience also contributes to global debates by illustrating the tensions between individualized conditionality frameworks and collectivist social environments. Unlike Latin American CCTs, which assume that compliance is an individual behavioral choice, PKH operates in a setting where decision-making is embedded in family obligations, kinship structures, and community expectations. As scholars such as Sumarto and colleagues have noted, these features mean that purely individualized CT designs risk generating resistance, misunderstanding, or non-compliance when applied in Indonesia. PKH's reliance on facilitators, negotiated compliance, and community-based socialization thus offers an important counterpoint to the standardized, behaviorist assumptions that underpin many global CCT templates.

In this sense, the Indonesian case strengthens the broader argument, emerging in comparative social policy scholarship, that the effectiveness of CCTs depends on value fit between program design and prevailing social norms. International discussions increasingly point to Indonesia as an example of how conditionality systems must be adapted to collectivist value structures if they are to achieve both legitimacy and behavioral change. PKH's hybrid form, shaped by negotiation between global CCT rules and local cultural logics, offers a distinct model for countries where social obligations are relational rather than individualized.

Nevertheless, PKH makes empirically and theoretically significant contributions to global policy debates. By situating PKH within global debates on cultural fit and the limits of individualized conditionalities, this study shows that Indonesia not only imports CCT ideas but also contributes conceptually to understanding how global social policy models are reshaped in collectivist societies. Empirically, it demonstrates that selective borrowing and contextual recalibration yield hybrid outcomes well-suited to fragmented governance, demographic diversity, and cultural norms. Theoretically, it demonstrates that external coercion, domestic adaptation, and innovation converge in the Global South to produce distinctive and durable welfare programs. Moreover, innovations such as FDS and inclusive targeting strengthened PKH's legitimacy and represent contributions to the global CCT repertoire, underscoring the capacity of Southern innovations to influence international discourses on social protection.

Compared with prior studies, this analysis provides theoretical nuance. Kwon and Kim (2015) highlighted institutional adaptation as central to Indonesia's CCT trajectory, while Sumarto (2023) emphasized the role of international pressures, particularly those from the World Bank, in shaping early adoption. Building on these insights, the present study demonstrates that adoption and adaptation are not sequential or isolated stages but

interdependent mechanisms that interact to produce hybridization. In this sense, PKH is more than a case of adaptation to local governance; it is an example of negotiated reconstitution, showing how global frameworks are selectively borrowed, recalibrated, and embedded within Indonesia's socio-political fabric.

The Indonesian case of PKH advances the literature on policy transfer in several important ways. It extends Dolowitz and Marsh's (2000) framework by showing that adoption and adaptation, while analytically distinguishable, are empirically inseparable. Adoption provides legitimacy as an entry point, while adaptation ensures sustainability through contextual recalibration. Their intersection, hybridization, constitutes the transfer outcome, rather than a peripheral adjustment. It also contributes to debates on the agency of the Global South. While Kwon and Kim (2015) emphasize institutional adaptation and Sumarto (2023) underscores World Bank pressures, PKH illustrates that domestic actors were not passive borrowers but active innovators. By embedding international scripts into local institutional and cultural logics, Indonesian policymakers created a hybrid program that contributes to the global repertoire of CCT models, thereby reinforcing scholarly arguments that Global South actors actively shape processes of policy mobility (Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet, 2023; Stone et al., 2020),

This study also foregrounds cultural embeddedness as constitutive of transfer. Integrating the principle of *gotong royong* into FDS redefined conditionalities from punitive enforcement into collective empowerment, showing that the legitimacy of global scripts depends on their re-signification within local moral economies (Sugiyama and Hunter, 2020). Moreover, the case reconceptualizes scarcity not as a barrier but as a driver of innovation. Resource and infrastructural constraints, such as limited financial inclusion and weak digital infrastructure, compelled incremental reforms, from postal cash distribution to HIMBARA bank transfers to digital platforms, that enhanced efficiency and resilience (Komarawati et al., 2025). Scarcity thus served as a driver of adaptive innovation, enriching theoretical debates on policy transfer under constraint.

Taken together, these contributions reposition Indonesia's PKH not merely as a derivative of Latin American precedents but as both an empirical case of negotiated hybridization and a theoretical contribution that extends existing frameworks. By demonstrating how adoption confers legitimacy, adaptation ensures sustainability, and hybridization generates innovation, this study enriches contemporary debates on policy mobility. It highlights the plural and contested trajectories of social protection in the Global South. While Table 1 anchors the canonical CCT script via Mexico–Brazil and time-stamps adoption choices, Table 2 drills down into PKH's internal hybridization, mapping each adoption–adaptation interaction mechanism to its design feature, survival payoff, and sequencing.

Table 2 shows how specific policy elements in Indonesia's Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) were borrowed, adopted, or adapted from Latin American Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) models. Rather than importing a ready-made design, Indonesian policymakers engaged in a selective, negotiated process, highlighting the interplay between adoption and adaptation. Borrowed elements, such as proxy means testing (PMT) and digital transfer mechanisms inspired by Brazil, reflected Indonesia's initial alignment with international standards for evidence-based targeting and financial modernization. Adopted features, including geographic targeting and the Unified Beneficiary Database

(DTKS), demonstrated how global best practices were institutionalized with minimal modification, providing international credibility and signaling institutional modernization. More striking, however, were the adapted components, such as Family Development Sessions (FDS), social facilitators, participatory registration, and phased sanction mechanisms, which reveal how global templates were recalibrated to achieve cultural legitimacy, institutional fit, and operational feasibility within Indonesia's decentralized governance system. These comparative patterns are consistent with and can be causally unpacked by the four interaction mechanisms specified above.

These findings demonstrate that Indonesia's PKH does not represent a linear diffusion of CCTs but a negotiated hybridization process. Adoption provided the entry points for internationally validated design elements, conditionalities, proxy means testing, and centralized oversight, which anchored Indonesia within the global CCT paradigm and signaled international credibility and domestic political legitimacy. However, adoption alone proved insufficient when confronted with Indonesia's decentralized governance, socio-demographic heterogeneity, and infrastructural limitations. Adaptation, therefore, became the constitutive mechanism through which these elements were recalibrated into contextually viable arrangements. Mechanisms such as community facilitators, Family Development Sessions (FDS), expanded eligibility for older adults and persons with disabilities, and incremental digitalization illustrate how adaptation transformed imported templates into locally meaningful practices. What emerged was not replication but a hybrid program: globally recognizable yet distinctly Indonesian in its operational design and normative orientation.

Thus, PKH exemplifies the negotiated convergence of global policy scripts with domestic governance, culture, and resource management logics. This trajectory reinforces Peck and Theodore's (2015) conceptualization of policy mobility as a process of disassembly and reassembly, illustrating how policies travel through translation processes rather than replication. At the same time, it aligns with Porto de Oliveira and Osorio Gonnet's (2023) emphasis on Global South agency, illustrating how domestic actors reshape international models into hybrid forms that are both legitimate locally and credible internationally. In this sense, PKH provides an empirical case of hybridization and a theoretical contribution, demonstrating that adoption and adaptation are not sequential stages but mutually constitutive mechanisms that generate enduring welfare architectures.

Conclusion

This study has examined the transfer of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) to Indonesia through the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), demonstrating that policy transfer is a negotiated process involving adoption, adaptation, and hybridization. The findings offer practical lessons for policymakers in Indonesia and other developing countries, suggesting that sustainable CCT reforms require not only technical design and donor support but also alignment with local governance structures and cultural values. Furthermore, the findings suggest that future research could explore integrating digital infrastructures and local adaptations to enhance the effectiveness of social protection programs across regions with decentralized governance. This study provides policymakers with practical

insights, suggesting that successful social protection reforms require a careful balance between global policy templates and local contextual adaptations. Adoption provided the entry points by incorporating globally recognized features such as proxy means testing, conditionalities in education and health, and centralized targeting systems. Adaptation, however, transformed these elements through recalibration to Indonesia's decentralized governance, sociocultural values such as *gotong royong*, demographic realities, and resource constraints.

The interaction of these mechanisms generated a hybrid model of social protection that is at once globally recognizable and locally distinctive. We identify two mutually reinforcing bundles of mechanisms: institutional anchoring, which includes conditionalities, proxy means testing via the DTKS, and centralized monitoring and evaluation; and contextual problem-solving, which includes community facilitators, Family Development Sessions with phased sanctions, expanded eligibility for older adults and persons with disabilities, and staged payment digitalization. Their interaction produces four observable design features: a dual targeting regime, conditionalities paired with Family Development Sessions, hybrid payment channels, and broadened eligibility, along with four survival payoffs: stable funding, compliance without social backlash, delivery resilience, and broader political support. A practical implication is to pair donor-validated instruments, such as DTKS, with conditionalities and monitoring and evaluation, and to incorporate contextual fixes, including facilitators, Family Development Sessions, hybrid payment channels, and inclusion rules, so that credibility is balanced with local feasibility.

The Indonesian case demonstrates that hybridization is not a residual outcome but a constitutive feature of policy transfer in the Global South. PKH embodies selective borrowing and contextual recalibration, illustrated by participatory targeting, Family Development Sessions, community-based facilitation, and incremental innovation in digital disbursement systems. These practices ensured the program's feasibility and legitimacy in Indonesia's fragmented governance environment, contributing novel institutional and cultural dimensions to the global evolution of CCT design. At the same time, hybridization should be understood as a scope-bounded explanation: it accounts for program durability and concrete design features, but it does not by itself address the structural drivers of poverty and inequality. Complementary reforms in labor markets, social insurance, and regional development remain necessary for sustained welfare gains.

Theoretically, this study extends Dolowitz and Marsh's framework by advancing adoption and adaptation as analytically distinct yet empirically inseparable mechanisms that jointly produce hybridization. In doing so, it emphasizes the importance of negotiated hybridity and cultural embeddedness in understanding how global models travel and transform. The Indonesian case contributes to the policy-mobility literature by demonstrating that innovation flows are multi-directional, rather than one-way from the Global North to the South, with the Global South generating models that inform broader debates on social protection. In addition, we offer testable propositions: the four interaction mechanisms yield observable hypotheses for comparative research, such as an association between Family Development Sessions and higher compliance without increased beneficiary exit, and between hybrid payment channels and greater delivery resilience in low-connectivity areas.

The findings underscore the importance of designing transfer processes that institutionalize participation, embed cultural values, and build adaptive capacity. Indonesia's experience suggests that participatory verification reduces exclusion errors, community facilitators function as developmental intermediaries rather than mere compliance enforcers, and adaptive evaluation systems enable continuous recalibration in response to shifting socio-economic conditions. These lessons are highly relevant to policymakers and international development actors working in decentralized, culturally diverse settings.

At the same time, this study opens avenues for further research. Comparative analyses across Global South contexts could illuminate how governance architectures shape the balance between adoption, adaptation, and hybridization. Likewise, examining the role of digital infrastructures in accelerating or constraining adaptation processes offers fertile ground for inquiry, particularly as technology-mediated transfers become central to global social protection frameworks. Future research could examine more systematically how PKH is referenced in global policy forums and whether Indonesia's hybrid approach is increasingly seen as a viable alternative for CCTs implemented outside Latin America.

In conclusion, Indonesia's PKH demonstrates that global social protection frameworks do not travel intact; instead, they are reinterpreted, renegotiated, and reconstituted into hybrid arrangements that enrich local practices and inform global theory. By foregrounding adoption, adaptation, and hybridization, this study presents a more plural, reflexive, and context-sensitive model of policy transfer that positions the Global South not as a passive recipient but as an active site of innovation in global social policy. Taken together, these insights indicate that the durability and credibility of CCTs rely on the mutual constitution of adoption and adaptation, while long-run poverty and inequality reduction depend on coupling program design with macro-structural reforms.

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Supplemental material

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