

**Public Sector Reforms in Fiji:
Examining Policy Implementation Setting and Administrative Culture**

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ABSTRACT

For many years, public management reform has been an evolving concept. New Public Management (NPM) and Good Governance have been the two ground-breaking ideas, generating colossal discourse over the past three decades. Inspired by NPM-led policy changes in the developed world, many developing countries have lately joined the reform bandwagon but achieved limited success. Policy analysts observe that the policy planners in the developing world seem to have spent more resources in policymaking than addressing the policy implementation challenges. Also, the policy transfer effort ignored the issue of administrative culture. Focusing on Fiji, this article examines how the country's recent public sector reform initiatives have largely failed to bring about expected results. Based on the case studies of two organizations, it explains that the success and failure of policy change occurs in several ways, manifesting multiple challenges including a lack of well-prepared implementation framework and culture change.

Keywords: public sector reform, new public management, policy implementation, administrative culture

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Introduction

The nature and focus of public sector reforms have undergone significant changes over the years. With the advent of the Weberian approach, which introduced the strength of hierarchy, rule-based administration and neutrality, public administration was geared towards a more hierarchical, merit-based, centrally-controlled state apparatus during the prolonged colonial era. The post-colonial states, embarking on a journey of continuous reform, embraced various approaches including 'development administration' of the 1950s-60s, 'structural adjustment' during the next two decades, 'New Public Management' (NPM) in the 1980s-90s, and the 'good governance' agenda in the new millennium. Evidently, public sector reform/restructuring has altered with time, and no single reform approach is universally applicable and the policy discourse continues.

This paper reviews public sector reforms of the mid-1990s in Fiji in the backdrop of successful NPM-led reforms in their wealthier neighbours New Zealand and Australia. For analytical purposes, policy implementation conditions and administrative culture have been conceptualized as two key factors shaping reform, as they influenced the reform in Fiji, implying that Fiji is unique in its policy landscape, administrative history and culture, which are different from that of New Zealand

and Australia, therefore modeling reform approaches from these countries needs to be done cautiously.

After a brief theoretical re-visit on NPM, policy implementation framework and administrative culture, the paper attempts to explain why the NPM-led public sector reforms in New Zealand and Australia was a success. The focal thrust of the paper then goes on to assessing the impact of administrative reforms in Fiji. With case studies support, the paper highlights how good policy implementation and administrative culture facilitated reform success in some Fijian public organizations and vice versa. The paper examines how implementation context and administrative culture in individual public organizations impact reform outcome.

Policy Implementation and Administrative Culture as Key Determinants for Reform

The public sector reform agenda which has been at the core of policy discourse in many developing countries in the recent past requires an understanding of not only policy planning and design, but also its implementation. As the study of public policy developed over the past few decades, the focus of experts has been more on planning and design than on the implementation of policies. Policy implementation came to the forefront when policy makers and experts tried to explain why 'policy fails' in the developing world in particular.

Likewise, it is also important to acknowledge the importance of the specific administrative culture of a society/organization to measure the results of reform adopted there. Hence, the conceptual focus of this paper is to examine the implementation challenges and administrative culture vis-à-vis NPM-led public sector reform.

Revisiting New Public Management

The concept of New Public Management (NPM) surfaced as a response to continual weaknesses observed in the Weberian bureaucratic model resulting from the dynamic environmental changes (Appana, 2011). Since it became a conceptual spotlight in the literature of public administration in the late 1970s, the NPM became quickly popular across the World as a reform strategy. However, the theoretical roots of NPM goes all the way to the Chicago (Friedman, 1953) and Austrian (Hayek, 1978) schools of political economy, with their links to the New Right, in conjunction with the new institutional economics of Arrow (1963) and Niskanen Jr. and Niskanen (2007). Additionally, NPM is said to be a combination of economic organization theory and management theory (Aucoin, 1990; Hood, 1991). It was presented as a framework of general applicability or a 'public management for all seasons' (Hood, 1991). Basically, NPM edges around these views: (a) freedom to choose and freedom to manage; (b) achievement of results through accountability; (c) focuses on end results (Appana, 2011; Lodhia & Burritt, 2004); and (d) private sector approach towards public sector management (Hood, 1995; Parker & Gould, 1999)

NPM and Good Governance

Governance first became a commonly used concept in the early 1990s when the international donor community adopted it to connote its support of economic, managerial and political reforms in countries of the global South. Like development it cuts across sectors and thus is a concept that lends itself to many definitions. Similarly, it is being used for different purposes: for academic analysis, for policy prescriptions, and for civic engagement. The intellectual heritage on which governance discourse rests is varied and complex. It is possible, however, to confine it to two main parameters: (1) effectiveness and (2) legitimacy. Influences from public administration in particular come closest to the effectiveness dimension while those from international relations and comparative politics are closer to the one emphasizing legitimacy. The former tend to encourage a managerial and technocratic approach to governance while the latter give rise to a focus on the political aspects of governance. The former treat governance as an instrument to get things done with greater effect and is manifest, for example, in the donor interest to make aid delivery more effective. The latter encourage thinking about *how* things are done and lead to concerns about respect for the rule of law and how the state interacts with citizens. It is the difference between a results-based and a rights-based approach to development (Hyden, 2011). Like NPM, the governance/good governance agenda also became a panacea in the developing world in particular over the past decade or so.

It is vital to understand how NPM and governance are linked. Governance became gradually associated with the New Public Management School and its prescriptions for reforming public administration by contracting out responsibilities to non-state actors (Hyden, 2011). Ewalt (2001: 10) observes that "Governance refers to institutions and actors from within and beyond government". This has direct implications on policy implementation and with particular regard affects legitimacy efforts. For example, if there is greater legitimacy demonstrated by the people with decision-making power than this is clearly reflected in the approach in which the resources are mobilized and partnerships are managed. In governance there is a power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action. The policy implementation literature is replete with studies of coordination barriers and impacts (for example, Jennings and Ewalt, 1998). This power dependence further causes agency problems inherent in the principal-agent relationship.

Stocker (1998) mentions that NPM deals with transformation of the public sector that focuses on results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of service. This fits satisfactorily into the larger, political theory of governance. In spite of recognizing governance as a prime object of measurement and monitoring of public sector reforms, for the purpose of this paper, the authors have devoted analysing the Fiji reform from the NPM perspective examining through policy implementation and administrative culture variables.

Understanding Policy Implementation challenges

First and of utmost importance in implementing public policies is the role of leadership. Leaders are important because they focus their attention on three areas: (a) spearheading participatory development of a vision for public sector reform; (b) motivating and bringing out the best in staff; and (c) encouraging more direct involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of reform and thereby promoting greater responsiveness and accountability of public servants to the needs and concerns of citizens and clients in society. Doig and Hargrove (1990) argue that one of the keys to successful entrepreneurial leadership in government is to develop and nourish external constituencies who support new programmes and goals and to neutralize opposition to the leader's decisions and initiatives. It is generally acknowledged that an important element in successful leadership of reform is vision. What characterizes a leader is the ability to facilitate the development of a common vision that expresses the aspirations of both staff and key stakeholders with regard to where the organization wants to be in the future.

The second challenge is capacity building. It is a central success factor to policy reform, making government capable in partnering with the private sector, creating an efficient market economy, and delivering goods and services to citizens. A major part of capacity-building is aided by mobilizing resources. Mobilization of resources includes both planning and doing. This includes preparation of concrete action plans; clarification of performance targets and standards; and conduct of those activities. Managing this implementation task calls for a collegial and collaborative management style and negotiation and conflict resolution (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 29). Understanding the nature of the existing and obtainable resources that policy makers can deploy is critical to countering challenges to carrying out reforms.

The next challenge comes in coordinating policies. The primary role of coordination is to ensure that any particular policy initiative is broadly aligned with the explicit and implicit objectives of the government (Stewart and Ayres, 1998: 26).

The fourth challenge is monitoring progress and impact of policy change. As many policy reforms are long-term, monitoring in the form of process indicators is important. Monitoring policy change requires mechanisms both for periodic review and evaluation and for tracking policies across multiple agencies. Amongst the most common problems in the policy implementation process is setting targets or time-frame for achieving certain policy outcomes (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002).

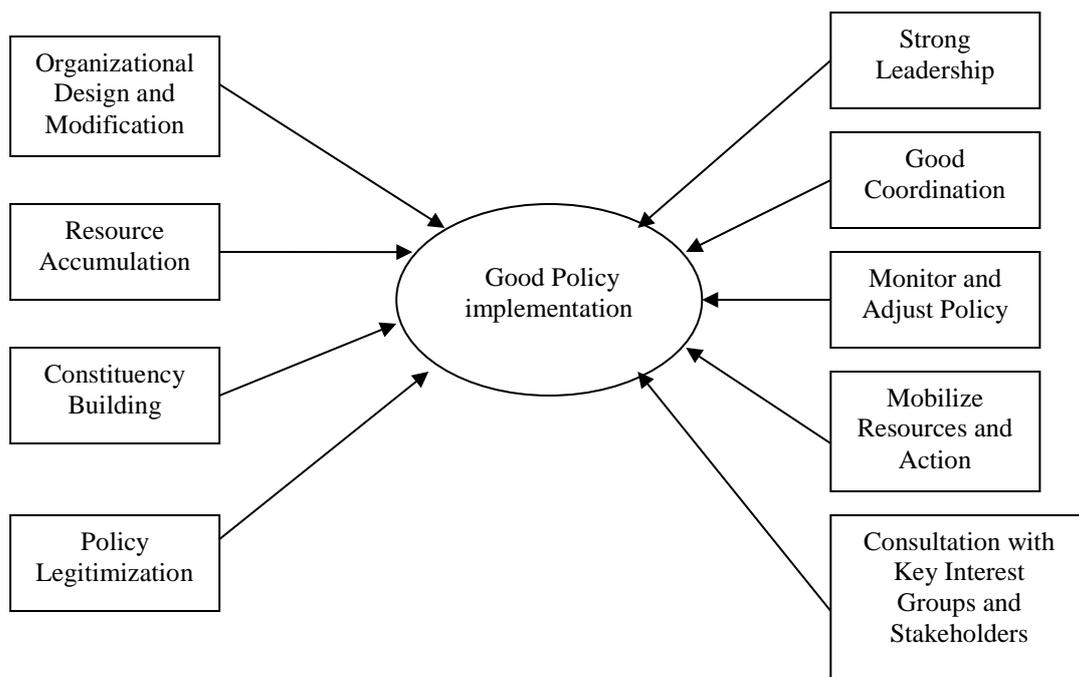
Participation/consultation is another salient challenge that affects legitimization, constituency building, resource mobilization and allocation and policy monitoring. Consultation brings key stakeholders together for policy dialogue and problem solving and increases the sustainability of policy. Periodic consultation between implementers and beneficiaries also increases the efficiency by generating timely inputs and greater cooperation so that delays are reduced (Alesina, 1994). Stewart and Ayres (1998: 26) say that "there is no single greater cause of policy break-down than failure to consult key interests". These key interests include civil society, citizens, and private sector.

The sixth challenge is constituency building. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) view that any policy needs to be marketed and promoted and an adequate constituency for the policy be developed. Constituency is defined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 26) as “those who will benefit by the change...They maybe consumers of the service provided, providers of inputs, or officials within the implementing agency who find their position or status enhanced by the change”. Brinkerhoff and Crosby further mention that constituency building complements and amplifies the legitimization process. Gillespie et al. (1996) say that support for policy change must be of sufficient importance to overcome or at least neutralize the forces opposing implementation.

The next challenge is resource accumulation. Ames (1987) says that resource accumulation means securing both initial funding and assuring the policy a place in the governments’ budget allocation process. To implement a new policy, human, technical, material and financial resources are needed (Grindle and Thomas, 1991; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989).

The last challenge is organizational design and modification. Significant policy changes affect an agency in terms of its internal arrangements and of its relations with its operating environment. This may call for new structures and procedures. This issue of organizational design poses several problems; the most crucial being the inertia of bureaucracy (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002).

Figure 1
Policy Implementation Challenges



The framework (Figure 1) depicts the aforementioned set of measures that serve as first theoretical construct for this paper in assessing the empirical evidence on why policy implementation fails. The framework will also serve as a guideline for assessing the good and bad cases of public sector reforms in Fiji in the sections that will follow.

Administrative Cultural Norms and Values

Culture has been described by researchers in various ways. The common agreement among them is that culture essentially demonstrates learned behaviour and shared ways of doing things (Islam, 2004, Keraudren,1996). The society in which one is born into teaches the collective ways of life which can be grouped as material and non-material. Here, material culture relates to physical objects that members of the society create and give meaning to whereas the non-material aspect of culture comprise of norms, values and symbols. Norms describe the standards of behaviour to be complied with as an everyday convention and are enforced and formalized in the form of national laws. Norms are a subset of values which is the shared idea about what is considered right, wrong and desirable.

Administrative culture in general reflects the uniqueness and complexity of the various regional, national, and local realities. This is usually portrayed by their distinctive historical experiences; their forms of insertion (subordination or domination) into the system of regional and international relations; and their levels of growth and fragmentation. Administrative culture is therefore made up of arts, knowledge and sophistication, common beliefs and practices and attitudes and the embracing of improvements (Riggs, 2002, Karyeija, 2012) and varies from country to country (Howlett, 2004). According to Castles (1990) distinctive national administrative cultures influence policy outcomes at the national level and nations are inclined to follow the models from which they emerged.

Just like all cultures, administrative culture is dynamic and has the potential to shift over time with changes in language serving as a key promoter (Schachter, 2002). Some of the agents that influence changes include the political culture and values along with subcultures of departments and agencies and professional subcultures (such as accountants, lawyers etc). Thus, the administrative culture can be viewed as an amalgamation of all these influences. When applied to new public management reforms, administrative culture may be characteristic of the following: democratic capitalist values, a corporate culture of some sort, management by results, excellence, best practice etc .

Administrative culture is often measured by researchers with variables such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, political neutrality/bias and ethnicity (Karyeija, 2012). Much of these variables are related to Hofstede's work on culture and dimensions or what is known as the cultural dimensions theory. His original theory proposes four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed. These being *individualism-collectivism* which focuses on the manner in which individuals are integrated into groups; *uncertainty avoidance* which explains how cultural

settings dictate the level of tolerance for a particular society; *power distance* which refers to the strength of social hierarchy and *masculinity-femininity* which describes the emotional roles of males and females (Hofstede, 1984, de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010).

Before examining the administrative cultural norms in Fiji, the following examples of administrative culture in countries around the world may give a comparative perspective.

According to Jabbra and Dwivedi (2004), administrative culture in the Middle East countries have the characteristics of being over centralized with ultimate control in the hands of the rulers and top bureaucrats, outmoded systems and practices within the public service that hamper expansion and innovation and create a more rigid system. These have the potential to breed nepotism, accountability issues, corruption, carelessness on the part of public servants to name a few. However, as stated by these authors, a lot of this sort of culture is reminiscent of indigenous culture, traditional values and styles of governance (tribal societies, parochial values, religious ethos and bindings).

Jamil (2002) in his study on Bangladesh states that the Bangladeshi administrative culture is an amalgamation of four traditions. The first is the *samaj*, which mirrors the broader societal values in which the local government functions in. The second pertains to the British colonial administrative system. The *samaj* and British administration reflect the traditional norms centering on stability and order. The third is the administrative reform processes resulting from successive governments in the 1970s and 1980s and last is community programmes initiated by the cooperative and NGO movements around the 1950s. These latter cultures demonstrate waves of change with more modern adoptions. Therefore much of the administrative culture in Bangladesh has spread and evolved against these unique traditional and modern backdrops.

Another study on Uganda by Karyeija (2012) concluded that much of the reason as to why civil servants were unwilling to embrace change such as a performance appraisal system was due to the fact that it did not align with their dominant cultural attitudes and administrative behavior. Uncertainty avoidance and power distance are partly to blame for such barriers however at the same time ethnic fractionalization also plays a part. An interesting implication of the study was that no matter how rational Anglo- Western value systems are, contextual factors such as the uniqueness of the African culture will prevent new systems to eventuate.

As an example of a formal body upholding culture, The Audit Office in Australia was created in 1901 to help the government in checking and reporting its accountability for the use of resources and transactions undertaken. The creation of the Office was done with noble causes in mind however its success demanded clear objectives and methodology in the form of an Audit Act and structured independent operations (John and Ryan, 2003).

The relationship between policy implementation and administrative culture is critically important in public sector reform. In the organizational design and modification step of policy implementation

for example, administrative culture is one of the vital components that should be studied carefully. Here considering the socio-cultural approach comes in handy. Culture exemplifies an independent variable which impacts the outcomes concerning democracy and administration through a (changing) hierarchy of values (Inglehart, 1977). If this element is neglected, it can lead to reform failures.

Given the above definitions and examples on administrative culture, this study will empirically focus on Fiji to examine the general cultural characteristics such as shared values, beliefs, norms and practices of public officials in the reform process and will also analyze Hofstede's work on culture in the context of Fiji.

Australia and New Zealand: The Trail Blazers in NPM-led Reform in the South Pacific

Australia and New Zealand are often seen as the pioneers of new public management movement in the South Pacific. In the spirit of new public management, they have adopted a more collaborative type of public management better known as the 'whole of government' (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007).

The NPM-inspired 'Whole of government' Approach

The 'whole of government' approach seeks to apply a more holistic strategy by applying insights from the other social sciences rather than just economics (Bogdanor, 2005). According to Perry (2005) cited in (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007, p. 1059), reform efforts under this approach reflect a combination of path dependency and negative feedback thereby promoting coordination, integration and outcome-based performance culture. This terminology can be traced to the reign of Tony Blair in 1997. He introduced this concept "joined-up government" with the aim to better grasp issues spanning the boundaries of public sector organizations, administrative levels and policy areas (Richards & Smith, 2006). This term in a nutshell tries to facilitate horizontal and vertical coordination in order to eliminate situations where different policies undermine each other (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). It allows for greater efficiency of scarce resources, creates synergies by bringing stakeholders together and offers the public a more flawless rather than disjointed access to services (Pollitt, 2003). The 'whole of government' concept can best be seen as an umbrella term describing a group of responses to the problem of increased fragmentation of the public sector and public services and a wish to increase integration, coordination, and capacity (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Ling, 2002).

The first and more obvious reason for adopting this approach is to do with overcoming the issues pertaining to the 'pillarization' of the public sector under the new public management reforms (Gregory, 2006). The second reason relates to the dynamic changes taking place worldwide. For instance, insecurity from terrorism has had some serious repercussions for public sector reforms in Australia (Halligan & Adams, 2004) and for New Zealand bio-security has become a critical issue (Gregory, 2006). On a more universal note, natural disasters, disease outbreaks and pandemics are up on the rise and has led to a tightening of government which Australians refer to as the

“thinking up and out” strategy, which embraces ‘whole of government’ measures (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007).

With this approach, an option is to hierarchically strengthen and reassert the centre which in the case of New Zealand and Australia can be seen by a strong (politically and administratively) prime minister’s office (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007; Halligan & Adams, 2004). There is also a focus in bringing back specialized agencies under greater central control. Another example is the development of organizational units in these two countries. These organizational units include new cabinet committees, inter-ministerial or interagency collaborative units, intergovernmental councils, lead agency approaches, circuit breaker teams, super networks, task forces, cross-sectoral programmes or projects with the main purpose of getting government units to work better together (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007; Gregory, 2006). The year 2003 saw a new cabinet Implementation Unit established in Australia to assist with the ‘whole of government’ activities.

In addition, the Australian government made efforts in 2002 to promote and facilitate coordination to areas such as national security, demographics, science, education, sustainable environment, energy, rural and regional development, transportation, and work and family life (Halligan & Adams, 2004). Hierarchical efforts undertaken in Australia include creating coordinative structures inside existing central structures, increasing the strategic leadership role of the cabinet, and focusing more on the follow up of central decisions. These efforts have been undertaken with the intention to put pressure on the sectoral authorities so as to compel them to collaborate and coordinate better (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007; Halligan, 2006)

Procedural efforts have also been initiated. In New Zealand for instance, more importance has been placed on effectiveness, broader long-term “ownership” interests, and greater outcome focus, in contrast to the more short-term and narrower “purchaser” efficiency and output focus that was typical of the new public management reforms (Boston & Eichbaum, 2005).

The idea is to work in a more smarter and pragmatic manner. Australia demonstrates this sort of collaboration via one-stop shops that aspire to deliver a seamless service (Halligan, 2006). Similarly, in New Zealand, service delivery organizations are being guided by network governance to furnish the principles of the ‘whole of government’ approach (Considine & Lewis, 2003).

Challenges in Reform-friendly Administrative culture

Whilst the ‘whole of government’ approach seems to be a preferred practice just like the new public management reform, it too requires culture change. With the ‘whole of government’ approach, a more cohesive culture grounded on common ethics is critical. This does not come so easily given the fact that the new public management reforms along with the post reforms focused on a sense of values, trust, value-based management, team building, participation and self development. Changes in approach may confuse the public sector and potentially corrode loyalty and increase trust related issues (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007). The report *Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia's Priority Challenges* (Committee,

2004), underlined the need to build a supportive Australian public sector culture that encourages whole-of-government solutions by formulating value guidelines and codes of conduct under the slogan “working together.”

Whilst this seems to be the practice undertaken in these two countries, there are also discussions on rhetoric and skepticism on the whole approach. For instance, in Australia it can be viewed as a fashion that suits political and administrative leaders who desire to be seen as thinking about big ideas. Examples supporting this notion is the concept of “value-based government, something that was brought into the country and spread as a fad but has now become more formalized. Another example is the accrual output-based budgeting system (Carlin & Guthrie, 2003). Similarly, in the case of New Zealand, Gregory (2006) observed a gap between what was preached and what was practiced.

Reiterating earlier discussions, the whole-of-government approach has difficulties and challenges of unintended risks, ambitious agendas and uncontrolled consequences and therefore demands greater balance (Ryan & Walsh, 2004). Effective implementation requires changed accountability system, dominant cultures and structural arrangements (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2007). As Figure 2 indicates, political will and influences coupled with organizational and professional culture shapes administrative culture through historical evolution in a geographic space. But Pollitt argues that just like new public management, administrative culture may not be a universal solution to problems everywhere always and may not be appropriate in all circumstances (Pollitt, 2003). It needs a cooperative effort by lower level politics and people on the ground.

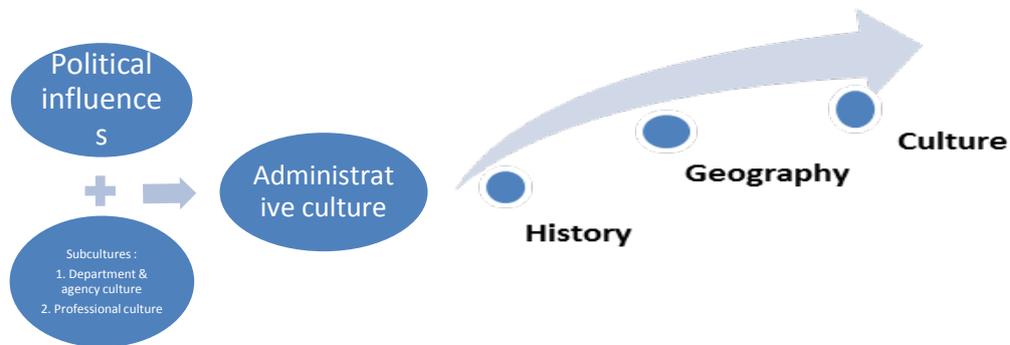
Two factors have considerably influenced the PICs including Fiji to initiate policy change towards public sector reform: (a) globalization, and (b) successful reform in New Zealand in the contemporary time. Over the last decade or so, New Zealand has undergone many reform programmes pertaining to social and economic policies of the public sector. New Zealand witnessed in mid 1984 an economic crisis as a result of a decade of worsening trade balances which manifested in a decline of approximately 30 percent in the country's terms of trade¹.

New Zealand - the Reform Motivator for Fiji

In the mid-1980s, New Zealand's 's deficit was 9 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and public debt stood at 60 percent of GDP. The situation worsened when accompanied by high levels of inflation and slow economic growth, which tremendously reduced per capita income (OECD, 1983; 1984). Following a mid-1984 election campaign dominated by economic issues, the Muldoon government was defeated resoundingly at the polls to usher in a Labour-led government (Bale and Dale, 1998). The new government put in place reforms to correct the core problems of design, implementation, and outcome of the reform programme (OECD, 1990–94). The objective of the new government was to create an “efficient public sector that was also responsive to the strategic policy direction of the government” (Bale and Dale, 1998: 103-104).

¹ Terms of trade refers to the quantity of exports that have to be sold to pay for a particular level of imports.

Figure 2
Administrative Culture and Performance



The following are the good practices evident in New Zealand reforms:

- a) The public service is more efficient and also smaller. One reflection of efficiency is that, in three years, without adjustment to their budgets to reflect price increases, departments have shown little evidence of a decline in the volume or quality of output. (Scott, 1994: 13 in Holmes and Wileman, mimeo)

- b) The smaller public sector is beginning to show clear improvements in operating efficiency and in responsiveness to clients. It costs the government less than it did ten years ago, and is no longer a regulatory impediment to ideas and productive energies in the wider economy and community (Scott, 1994: 18 in Holmes and Wileman, mimeo)

- c) Three key aspects of the reforms are seen as highly successful: (a) transparency in the activities and processes of the State; (b) the liberation of managers from central input controls; and (c) the new financial management and accounting systems revolutionizing the ways in which departments and officials work (Scott, 1994: 18 in Holmes and Wileman, mimeo)

The success of New Zealand reforms demonstrate that leaders can 'anchor' as an integral whole for the parts of reform process to be tied together. This implies, taking a more holistic and integrated approach to reforms. Coherence and consistency of New Zealand reforms is remarkable which can only be sustained through 'indigenous ownership' and 'political will'. It is also clear that leadership sets the course for shared vision, achievable objectives, and support from stakeholders.

Politics and Public Sector Reforms in Fiji

Over the last two decades, Fiji's political history has unfolded into a very rough political transition with four military coups, the recent one on 5 December 2006 resulting in condemnation by international communities and profiling the country as a politically unstable one in the Pacific region. The first two coups' occurred in 1987 when the democratically elected Labour government

was forcefully removed from legitimate power at gun point by the Fiji Military Forces. Again in 2000, a group of heavily armed soldiers from the Counter Revolutionary Warfare (CRW) unit of the Fiji Military entered parliament and took the government hostage for fifty six days and demanded for an indigenous Fijian Prime Minister and cabinet ministers which ended up in exacerbated division amongst Indigenous Fijians. Supporters of the coup numbering in some ten thousand native Fijians took to the streets of Suva by storm looting and burning shops belonging to affluent Indian-Fijian capitalists leaving the capital city in a state of anarchy therefore compelling the Military to declare a state of emergency and mount military curfews throughout the nation. International communities such as New Zealand, Australia and the US condemned the action taken by the nationalists.

The 5 December 2006 came about as a result of conflict between the then Laisenia Qarase Government and the military. The general unrest was attributed largely to one of the three bills (the Reconciliation Tolerance and Unity Bill, Qoliqoli Bill and the Land Tribunal Bill) that were to be discussed and considered in Parliament (Lal, 2007). The Bill that generated more debate across the spectrum was the Reconciliation Tolerance and Unity Bill, one that intended to offer pardons to some of the people who had participated in the 2000 coup. It is also imperative to note that crime such as rape, homicide, and desecration of Hindu temples were on the rise ever since the disputed Bill was introduced (Wikipedia, 2008). Consequently on 5th December, 2006 the military moved into the capital city Suva, and a state of emergency was declared by Commodore Frank Bainimarama.

As emphasized by the Interim Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama in many of his speeches, his Administration has mounted a 'clean up corruption' campaign (Duncan.R, 2007). The Interim Administration has a plan to move forward and the genesis of the plan is the President's mandate which seeks to "remedy the abuse, mismanagement and bad governance which was brought about by SDL-led Government under leadership of Mr Qarase in the last six years" (Fiji Government Press Release, 2007). Their policies are non racial and are not dictated by race or religion as the former government (Fiji Times, 2007).

The Reconciliation Bill has now been put aside as the Interim Administration focuses on building a better way forward for Fiji. The government has taken some desperate political, administrative and economic measures over the past years. In April 2007, it established the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption to (a) investigate acts of corruption; and (b) crack down on bribery, fraud and the embezzlement of public funds. It has engaged its efforts in accelerating a number of reforms in the various government ministries and departments. One critical plan is to reform the public sector. The Minister for Public Service, Public Enterprise and Public Sector Reforms has been given charge to reduce the size and cost of the civil service and at the same time bring about efficiency, quality and timely service. The government also set up a three-member Review/Reform Committee to review the functions of Municipal Councils on delivery of services, improve efficiency, incorporate greater accountability mechanisms and to provide the necessary amenities, infrastructure and facilities for the ratepayers and residents of each

respective municipality. In August 2008, the government adopted a *Draft People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress* to complement the Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands and to establish guidelines for any government policies in the country. Some of the key pillars of the Charter include sustainable democracy and good and just governance, accountable leadership and public sector efficiency and performance effectiveness (Government of Fiji, 2008). The role of appointing President of Fiji was previously with the Great Council of Chiefs under the Fijian Affairs structure but in October 2008 the Great Council of Chiefs was dissolved by Bainimarama government due to allegations of corruption and mismanagement of funds. In 2009, the government has formulated a Road Map as a framework for the achievement of sustainable democracy, good and just governance, socio-economic development and national unity. The promised 2010 elections in now deferred to 2014. Bainimarama reiterated that the elections would be held under the provisions of a new Constitution, which would eliminate institutionalised ethnic-based voting. The new Constitution might also amend the number of seats in Parliament, and possibly abolish the Senate (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fijian_general_election,_2014).

The potential impact of these reform strategies on Fiji has become somewhat debatable of late. Governments, trade unions, non-government organizations, think tanks and civil society have spoken about their implications on economy, governance and public welfare. However, it may be observed that in spite of these economic and public sector reform steps, Fiji has not yet achieved substantive benefits in terms of growth, employment, and poverty alleviation. For Fiji the process of national integration will be a daunting task. The rough political journey, characterized by interrupted democracy, military takeover, nationalist policy regimes, and lack of ethnic harmony may be attributed for an apparent failure of the nation to integrate itself into the global order and sustainable economy.

In Fiji, however, public enterprise reforms were first mentioned in the late 1980s with the actual reform process commencing in 1985 (Appana, 2003). Consequently as part of government policy, reforms were first introduced in 1992 during the government's 1993 budget address to Parliament (Appana, 2003; Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2001: 69). To justify reforms, the Rabuka Government claimed that public enterprises were not operating at high levels to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. Apart from this internal pressure to reform, external pressure also had its share of influences. Globalization, and the success elsewhere in New Zealand and Australia prompted Fiji to bring in 'reforms'. Donor agencies, particularly Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) also insisted on reforms (Duncan and Bollard, 1992; Prasad and Reddy, 2002). These reports highlighted not only positive aspects but also the disappointing economic performance experienced despite significant aid levels received along with favourable external environments. According to the World Bank, much of the sluggish performance exhibited by the Pacific member countries was attributed to the inability to stimulate private investment in productive sectors due to lack of a supportive policy environment and absence of dynamic growth strategies (Sutherland, 2000). This assessment was also recognized and identified by ADB and other donors in various reports (Hook, 2007). Other critics

also agree that the internal and external factors are both responsible for driving reforms in Fiji (Reddy, 1997).

In its decade-long reform journey, Fiji embarked on two key reform strategies: privatization of public enterprises and civil service reform with the introduction of performance management and change leadership (the introduction of Chief Executive Officer [CEO] replacing the Permanent Secretary designation). The early start of reform was confused as there was not adequate preparation in terms of legislation for the different stages of reform or the development of financial and governance framework and a lack of experienced staff at public sector reform (Hook, 2007). The progress of reforms in Fiji has been slow, ineffective and far from complete (Reddy et al., 2004). Political instability, bad governance, improper timing of reforms, lack of stakeholder involvement, lack of institutional capacity, and lack of resources (human, financial, technical, material) are the major weaknesses in the reform process. Political instability has created a major loss of human and financial capital resource base, and in the face of economic decline in the country there had been a lack of 'ownership' of reforms as well as in wastage of resources. Hence, less funds were available to support reforms. The general lack of consensus and cooperation among the key political players and amongst trade unions and business communities also posed a great challenge. Realizing the predicament because governments are formed by weak coalitions, political leaders pushing for reforms have lost some of their enthusiasm, as seen in Fiji². In Fiji, the change and uncertainty associated with regime and vested interests has further complicated the reform programmes well as created policy changes. The change in political leadership with various governments coming in and out has brought with it different policies towards reforms. Unlike the SVT [Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa] and the SDL [Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua], the People's Coalition government [Fiji Labor Party], due to its adherence to the general labor principles had been clearly populist, left leaning and sympathetic to workers (Reddy et al, 2004).

Reddy (1997) comments that the greatest challenge is to always keep in mind that change towards corporate culture would take time. The point he elucidates, is individuals become complacent and create their own 'comfort zones' throughout their working lives. To disrupt this and make them move in a completely new direction especially towards reforms is definitely not an overnight possibility. If and when it does go through the reform process, the most prudent factor - the staff attitude' will be the greatest challenge in implementation. Reforms in Fiji were further hindered by the lack of institutional capacity (Reddy et al., 2004). Reddy's research brings to light the fact that the institutions in Fiji are inappropriate and underperforming. Further, this study stresses that Fiji needs to focus on building sound socio-economic and political institutions/processes to improve governance (in both private and public sector), increase transparency and accountability, install legal, regulatory and supervisory frameworks, be sensitive to societal needs and have ownership and legitimacy.

² See:

[http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf/Attachments/RER+2002/\\$File/RER_Gray+Cover.pdf#search='how%20successful%20have%20reforms%20been%20in%20pacific'](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf/Attachments/RER+2002/$File/RER_Gray+Cover.pdf#search='how%20successful%20have%20reforms%20been%20in%20pacific')

Despite the critique presented above, the Fiji Government press release highlighted that the Qarase Government was trying to set good leadership examples through creating awareness of reforms. In this campaign representatives from the civil service were involved. It was aimed at providing awareness to government ministries and departments about the status, objectives and benefits of reforms (financial management and public enterprise reform programme). Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Public Enterprises Ministry, Parmesh Chand said that “once government officials at divisional and district levels are better informed about reforms, they will accordingly outreach to the broader community” (Press Releases, Fiji Government: Awareness on Reforms to Target Divisions, February 17 2006). He further says that “we need to take reforms ultimately to the people so that they can assess for themselves what it all means to them in terms of benefits and improvements in livelihoods” (Press Releases, Fiji Government: Awareness on Reforms to Target Divisions, February 17 2006).

Nonetheless, numerous reforms were initiated and executed in Fiji with mixed results. In the following section, two case studies are presented to demonstrate the varied achievements with public management reform. These cases examine the two theoretical constructs of the study: policy implementation environment and administrative culture. The cases also indicate as to how the reform landscape in a successful Fijian organization (Fiji Police Force) was similar to that in New Zealand and how the scenario in a poor performing organization (Public Service Commission) was different from the ideal model.

Good Reform: The Fiji Police Force

The Fiji Police was established after the British colonized Fiji on 10th October, 1874. During the colonial days, the officers cadre within the force consisted mainly of expatriates from the United Kingdom. After independence in 1970, the surge towards development and modernization encouraged an urban drift. An economically conscious Fijian society created a lot of expectations from its government and police service. Whilst changes were evident in the society, the Fiji Police Force (FPF) maintained the old way of doing things. In 1987, the first military coup took place after the Indian dominated Labour party won the election. The Military led by the then Commander Major General Sitiveni Rabuka took over the government and abrogated the constitution. He later declared Fiji to be a Republic. In 2000, another take over occurred led by George Speight with the help of a Unit from the Military Counter Revolution Warfare (CRW). These events greatly affected the country socially, economically and morally. It was during the event of 2000 that the integrity of FPF was very

much doubted. Public confidence and trust on police faded away and gaps between police and the people increased. This was because of the alleged involvement of the former Commissioner of Police and some senior police officers in the coup event. During the political turbulence of 2000, the then Deputy Commissioner of Police, Moses Driver steered the organization to at least gain some respectability from the people. A man of wisdom and foresight, and also very selfless in his efforts to lift the integrity of the police organization, he recommended that Fiji needed an expatriate as Commissioner of Police to bring back the confidence and trust of the people to the organization. This saw the appointment of Mr. Andrew Hughes a career Police Officer from the

Australia Federal Police. He had worked at the community, divisional, national and international levels of policing, specializing in investigations and investigation management. Appointed on 15th July, 2003, he inherited all sorts of problems in the force: militaristic hierarchy; lack of resources; internal bickering; nepotism; poor working conditions; Lack of transparency and accountability and low morale.

The Administrative Culture of the FPF was coercive, unethical and non-transparent. The FPF operated as a closed system where input was not taken from the stakeholders, the processes and approaches were non-transparent and the actual service delivery element (output) to the citizens was slow and unresponsive due to not only low morale and nepotism but also because of the bureaucratic rigidity and lack of expertise to tackle the upcoming changes. They basically lacked the necessary vision and foresight.

Mr. Hughes slowly took up the challenges by employing a consultative process which involved discussions with his chief officers, members of FPF and also with members of the public. Based on his consultations and input from the key stakeholder groups, he unfolded his new policing direction to meet the needs of the Fiji citizens in the current age. This could be seen as a good element of the successful implementation of the reform success. He created a broad-based constituency of support in and outside the FPF that recognized the need for change in the delivery of services to the public.

The Commissioner embarked on good governance in setting Strategic Plan for the organization such as the change of police uniform to let the community know and see that the organization is a professional body; making high level policies to ensure that the organization's service delivery is aligned to its mission, vision and values. The vision of FPF is to be a well respected and effective contributor to Fiji's law and justice sector, and other policing agencies as innovative and effective in crime prevention and enhancing community safety with the value of serving with integrity, building personal capacity, expending community partnership, looking after our people so that all can have harmonious working relations. To achieve these vision, mission and values; the Commissioner made policies on Training Development, Investigative Development, Community Policing, Reforming of HRM practices including overseas and local training by the university, and Physical Fitness.

Obongo (2007) says that the competency of the civil servants is an important determinant in facilitating improvements in quality and timely delivery of services. The entire purpose of setting up training and development opportunities of police officers was to enhance their leadership and management capabilities and capacity. Mr Hughes, displayed the qualities of an effective leader and drove the change programmes by having a strategic vision and the changes were directed towards ensuring a better police force that was ethical and professional in its conduct with citizens. Mr Hughes, as an outsider (expert) was able to understand the cultural values of the Fijian society; that they are based on communalism and collectivism. So he tried to involve everyone in the process to achieve the best for the FPF. He re-oriented the administrative culture.

These changes took FPF to a new shift in culture and application of contemporary policing practices. On culture change, the Commissioner emphasized good behavior and professional approach to policing activities. On accountability and transparency, the Police Force has its code of ethics which outlines the core tasks and behaviors in the performance of policing activities.

The initiatives resulted in the upgrading of the force working condition e.g; increase in salary by 30%; CID Allowances increased by 100%; detective and plain clothes allowances increased by 100%; while human resources increased by 816. In the same vein, the purchase of more patrol cars increased the mobility of force to respond rapidly to crimes. Also introduced was an Award night where hard working officers are rewarded for outstanding services

These reform initiatives have led to substantial improvements in Fiji policing work with increase in detective rate to 50% and establishment of a National Intelligence Service under the government's Strategic Development Plan for Fiji. The new reforms in the police also featured the introduction of modern management practices (an internal Board of Management as an accountable peak decision making body) and major review of community policing as well as and widespread consultation with key stakeholders and partners which has resulted in the development of a specific model better suited to Fiji's local culture and environment.

Poor Practice: Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission (PSC) in Fiji experimented with a short-lived performance management system that ended as a failure. The beginning of the 21st century has witnessed the enhanced role of PSC in initiating civil service reforms in Fiji. Of this the most famous and talked about was Performance Management System (PMS), which was introduced in January 2004 to motivate and develop a professional productive workforce along with extensive training programmes³. In order to bring about the performance based pay system through the implementation of PMS, Chief Executive Officers (CEO) were required to establish a performance improvement programme. Public Service Commission states that this programme is to provide the means to foster a higher performance culture and a method for deciding on merit pay, as well as provide an effective mechanism for managing poor performance.

It was envisioned that these administrative cultural values/norms (what at that point in time they thought should be done) would provide a link between the broadest aims of each Ministry or Department. According to the PSC, the PMS awareness training programmes commenced and the "PSC and Ministries/Departments will be jointly responsible for the conduct of training programmes."⁴

³ As part of an agreement between PSC and the University of the South Pacific, the mid-level Fiji civil servants are undergoing a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management. Started in January 2004, the Programme has so far trained 50 civil servants and currently another 30 are enrolled in the Programme. The goal of the Programme is to develop and deliver an accredited training

⁴ <http://www.fiji.gov.fj/cgi-bin/cms/exec/view.cgi/15/1849>

The end of 2005 saw that the government was not sure of what to do with regard to PMS due to huge implementation difficulties and financial implications. Therefore, the government finally returned to the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA approach and provided a 3 percent COLA payment for the year 2004 on 22 December 2005⁵. This payment is designed to maintain the purchasing power of the existing wages of all civil servants in the case of inflation⁶ (safety valve rather than a reward for all public servants). However, the PMS was a system to act both as a reward and a compensation for inflation. Although the PMS system was implemented for a good reason, it had its fair share of criticisms. There were several disputes regarding PMS and a tribunal hearing starting on 16 May 2005 and ending on 15 July 2005 took place. At the end of the hearing, reports were submitted to the Tribunal for an official decision. The Tribunal pointed out a number of discrepancies with the PMS policy. These include: (1) PMS was thought to help maintain the purchasing power of the existing wages of all public servants but apparently this has not been the case; (2) there were a number of shortfalls such as a lack of objectivity, difficulty in measuring performance and excessive and confusing paperwork; (3) it was questioned on its efficiency; (4) the tribunal believed that the PMS did not promote equity in pay determination; (5) the PMS was not sustainable in terms of its cost; and (6) it did not ensure that the Commission will necessarily achieve their objective of reduced operation costs. Administrative practices are one of the reasons for the suspension and failure of PMS. The PSC suspended this as it was not agreed to by the public service unions. It was the government who had strongly pressed for PMS which was criticized by the unions and condemned as unworkable in a World Bank review.⁷ The administrative cultural practices of the Fijian society based on the premise of collective bargaining have contributed to the bottleneck.

Also the cultural values/norms of the workers itself (public servants) added to the difficulty. The Fijian society is generally reserved and arrogant when it is about assessing their performance. So the western administrative cultural values which the NZ model advocated was not welcomed.

The PSC was not competent enough in employing the right formula for PMS. The unions wanted COLA and Government wanted PMS and PSC was the arm of government responsible for moving forward with this initiative. When the arbitration ruled in favour of unions, then PMS as a change management strategy seemed expensive for the Government. This reflected the poor planning on the part of the Government and PSC. The administrative values are very laid-back and inactive. There seemed to be no proactive strategies in place.

The administrative practices demonstrate that the PSC in particular did not have the "Right Commitment". They were pushed into this initiative by the Government. That is why it is seen that PSC did not analyze the application and implementation issues related to PMS. It did not know how feasible it was.

⁵ Fiji Government Press Release for December 22, 2005

⁶ Fiji Government Press Release for October 21, 2005

⁷ <http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=25335>

The administration had low morale, unions did not accept this change management and the cooperation from other stakeholders was also not forthcoming. How the ministries and CEO's coordinating the efforts is not clear. The PSC did not have the capability to facilitate the reform (PMS).

The Government probably embarked on the PMS a bit too soon to follow the footsteps of Australia and New Zealand. This is a major problem associated with policy transfer. The Government was the one pressing for this transfer. The top-down model of policy implementation was employed. The Fijian cultural context has been such that there has always been a strong preference for uncertainty avoidance (Chand and White, 2006). Given this, it can be clearly seen that as they have a greater tendency to stick to rules and regulations, and not indulge in risk taking initiatives or in introducing changes, policy transfer of employing Australian and NZ models failed.

Also, before embarking on this PMS policy, continuous training and awareness of PMS to all public servants should have been considered. The capacity to initiate change should have been developed. For instance, the CEO's themselves lacked interpersonal skills. The public servants input was not solicited in the PMS design as it was a transplant of the model, without considering the contextual and administrative cultural factors that negatively impinged the implementation.

PMS was a model successful in Australia and New Zealand, so the government thought that this will work in Fiji. The PMS policy in these two countries is outcome based, while Fiji is still in its infancy – input based level. There was no sign of SWOT (Strength, Weakness, opportunity, Threat) analysis. Neither was the model diagnosed on its applicability in the Fijian context. The NZ inspired model was adopted as it focused on western administrative cultural values that support risk-taking, empowerment, customer-orientation, "rightsizing", merit based performance.

One of the basic characteristics of the Fijian bureaucracy is that it discerns elements of bureaucracy. The public servants are guided by authority and stature. Widespread administrative norms include slow decision making processes, high levels of concealment and shifting responsibility to others. Discrepancy between norms and practice is also cited. There seems to be great emphasis on process rather than outcomes. In addition, there is citation of high power distance between the superiors and subordinates, centralized and non-participatory decision making processes as well as low level of risk-taking and high uncertainty avoidance. There is a close relationship between societal culture in Fiji and administrative culture. In fact, Fijian societal culture is determined by the village/family structure, and other belief systems that are ultimately reflected in the administrative system. Organizational culture is many a time a mere reflection of the societal culture and this laid back attitude of the public servants in PSC is one of the major drawbacks for PMS Model to be subject to failure. The culture of the people of collectivism, maintaining the status quo and authority orientation has shaped the culture of the organization. Now the question that maybe asked is: Could leadership or policy champion or "fixer" manage to implement NPM inspired reforms and transformed organizational culture in Fiji?

The PSC is led by classical bureaucratic values in the sense that it is more 'status-quo' oriented than 'result' and 'change' oriented. The administrative system is not changing. PMS will not work just by implementing it in a political bureaucracy and expect that changes will accrue. If the bureaucrat's/public servants focus on societal changes and also administrative changes then NPM inspired reforms could possibly succeed. It was mentioned by the general secretary of the Fiji Public Service Association, Rajeshwar Singh that they will be working with the government to devise a new system of assessing public servants' performance.⁸ There is no mention of how the public servants themselves will be involved in developing the indicators to measure performance or of them having knowledge on how they will be assessed. Before the performance measures are designed, it is critical to evaluate and analyze the job descriptions. Nothing on this has ever been indicated.

Leadership is a crucial element of achieving successful policy transfer and its implementation. It is the leader's responsibility to create a vision that must be aligned with the objectives. The PMS policy should have been appropriately aligned with implicit and explicit goals of the government. This alignment was lacking, because the Tribunals report noted 'lack of objectivity' as one of the shortfalls.

The government was ill prepared for the disruptive symptoms of PMS and they did not realize that assessing the thousands of civil servants in the state workforce would be a nightmare. The inertia of bureaucracy and expectation of a lifelong job and benefits of the civil servants in Fiji led to problems of morale. Changing staff morale requires a "political champion" to be able to actively induce changes and reduce resistance to PMS.

The government pushed PMS to PSC. For a policy transfer to succeed, it is vital that not only top managers be involved in consultation, but also operational managers and staff who are to be affected by the new policy. Due to lack of participation and consultation, followed by lack of legitimization and constituency building, PMS failed as 'ownership of PMS was lacking'.

The tribunal report rose that another shortfall was in measuring performance. This clearly shows that when the PMS was implemented, performance measures were not adequately designed. And when performance indicators are not in place, benchmarking becomes rather difficult. This is also reflective of 'policy complexity'. In this case, the complex nature of PMS, made it even harder to set performance measures.

The two cases above suggest policy transfer from a successful developed countries (e.g. Australia and New Zealand) to a developing and under-resourced and under committed societies such as Fiji is a daunting challenge. Obviously, top leadership commitment both at the political and administrative level in Australia and New Zealand has made it possible to implement NPM-spirited reform in the initial years and the 'whole of government' approach of late. Now, the pain of reforms that Australia and New Zealand have gone through in terms of strict fiscal and budgetary

⁸ <http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=25335>

policies and downsizing manpower and privatizing public services would be not acceptable in organizational cultural context of Fiji, which displays different values and priorities.

The bad elements of the administrative culture have impacted negatively the NPM-led reforms such as the PMS. Governance is about creating the self-governing networks. It is about working with various actors in partnership and developing strategies through which the government's capacity could be sustained. Governance is always sensitive to the political/cultural environment. In the context of this study, it can be seen that the very essence of governance of involving the actors (people impacted by PMS) was absent. This added to the difficulty of implementing PMS. It could be said that governance is about legitimacy; but this was highly lacking during the implementation. The bad elements of administrative culture of not questioning the superiors in policy implementation, lacking participation, being very group-oriented escalated the dependency. Greater levels of difficulty in accountability and in particular who is in charge and accountable for the performance outcome and what is the nature and impact on responsibility was unknown.

Whilst NPM is a commendable approach to undertaking and seeing through reforms, it needs to be realigned to the Fijian context. Even though NPM-led reform was successful in Australia and NZ, it was not acceptable in the Fijian context, as the values of the public sector and in general the society is very different from the western counterparts. Schick (1998) has in particular cautioned developing countries, which are dominated by informal markets that applying the NZ model could be risky. According to Appana (2011), the NPM model contains a number of internal tensions and contextual weaknesses especially in traditional contexts like Fiji when viewed in terms of the fact that NPM has "no clear overall understanding of democracy and the role of the bureaucracy in the political system" (Christensen & Lægheid, 2009, p. 5). There is very little in the NPM model that acknowledges the peculiarities of the Fiji context. It is largely for these reasons that public sector reforms in general and public enterprise restructuring in particular, are likely to have mixed results in Fiji (Appana, 2003).

In Fiji different governments offered different reform packages, failing to demonstrate a continued commitment. There was hardly a leader or policy champion to implement and monitor the NPM-inspired reforms in Fiji. The reforms were more rhetorical policy pronouncements, as displayed by successful democratic and military governments in the politically-unstable country.

Lessons Learnt

In this paper, 'reform policy failures' which accentuate as a result of problems in implementation have been identified. To ensure success and sustainability of policy implementation in the long run, the following preconditions are proposed:

- a) In Schiavo-Campo's view, long-term sustainability requires tackling issues of power head on with "a clear and public mandate, unquestioned political support and the material and human resources necessary to carry out its function" (Schiavo-Campo, 1994: 9). To

this can be added the need to embed the strategy in founding legislation and to ensure that key central agencies are fully committed to the changes. The inertia of bureaucracy and old-age bureaucratic culture circumvents policy implementation. However, even under these circumstances, policies can be at risk to the loss of a champion. Here, authors Sabatier and Mazmanian call a “fixer”, someone who can step in to implementation processes with the power to stop them going off the rails (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 198: 24).

b) Effectiveness of policy implementation depends on establishing clear objectives, timeframe and sequence of policies, performance benchmarks and transparent systems to monitor the impact of policies and measure its sustainability. Stewart and Ayres cited in Aulich et al. (2001), comment that the most crucial aspect of the policy process includes ongoing consultation, monitoring and evaluation. They further argue that the information generated in this way can be used to “fine-tune, restructure or even terminate the policy/programme”.

c) Efforts made by donor agencies/countries to support a particular policy, principally through technical assistance will not succeed if indigenous ownership and political will is absent. In addition, transplanting overseas models even New Zealand and Australia model requires a match with the emulating countries needs, as differences in social, economic and political variances can result in falter or failure of the policy. The consequence of employing the Australia and NZ model without knowledge of its implications for a small and developing nation like Fiji could be disastrous. The institutional structures of Australia and New Zealand vary considerably from that of Fiji islands. There is a considerable amount of divergence in the reform methods, outcomes etc of different countries. The initiative which succeeded in Australia and NZ did not necessarily succeed here.

d) The institutional capacity must be strengthened, there needs to be good governance and demand for policy changes. Mobilization of the voices of the community through genuine democracy and involvement can stipulate successful implementation. This is supplemented by greater stakeholder participation. As commented by Stewart and Ayres cited in Aulich et al. (2001), “there is no greater cause of policy breakdown than failure to consult key interests”.

e) The success not only depends on building a wide public consensus on the need for and importance of the policy, but also implying the need for a greater space for civil society and private sector, focused on establishing viable modalities for policy change. All these actors are to coordinate and network with each other more through horizontal linkages which are both non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic. The very concept of good governance. Such cooperation can lead towards leveraging the financial, technological and managerial strengths of the sectors involved to ensure feasibility of reforms. These sectors can also clarify and develop consensus on the policy issues, develop constituencies

and coalitions for change and an understanding of policy requirements and complexity, plan and take appropriate and practical advocacy and implementation steps, and further review and monitor actions taken in support of their plans.

f) The importance of involving the ministry officials or those who are to be affected by the policy change is critical. The chief factor is to encourage positive commitments. The policy dialogue process, which includes the participation of key government actors, serves to encourage officials to publicly commit to desirable policies and their implementation. This can help to generate commitment and ownership for reform implementation, and build a basis for accountability.

g) Any policy for it to be implemented among the other preconditions requires proper communication, teamwork and coordination.

h) Policy implementation must be a more integrated and holistic approach. The various components of the policy cycle must not be disjointed. A piece-meal, short fix solutions approach should be avoided.

It should not be forgotten that reform changes will never succeed if administrative culture is not supportive of the change efforts. Thus, changing the administrative culture and aligning it to the espoused values is vital. The role of the political champion and policy “fixer” is crucial in this regard. If administrative culture is a major bottleneck and not subject to changes then any change cannot flourish. In particular, neglecting cross-cultural differences in implementing reform initiatives is disastrous. The consequence lies in a need to analyze societal cultures as a relevant context for public management reforms, understanding them as independent external variables of their study.

CONCLUSION

Policy making and its implementation is an area that requires careful analyses. Where policies were designed and separated from the main thrust of implementation in the cycle, major bottlenecks and deadlocks have resulted. Through empirical analysis and Fiji case studies, this research highlights why policy reform succeeds and fails. Though the Fiji cases could not adequately explore all the policy implementation preconditions (Figure 1) and administrative cultural norms (Figure 2) that were conceptually outlined at the beginning of the article, some major implementation challenges and cultural constraints have been identified. By analyzing good and bad examples the article examines the challenges of policy implementation in the South Pacific countries in general and Fiji in particular. The research is a contribution towards the growing body of knowledge on “public policy discourse” and sheds light on the preconditions for successful policy implementation. The challenge areas include leadership, commitment, policy legitimization, resource accumulation, coordination, consultation, and capacity. The article concludes that while NPM approach in civil service/public sector reform brought breakthroughs in New Zealand and Australia, it failed somewhat in Fiji because of various administrative cultural influences including leadership and capacity constraints. This article has taken a modest approach towards identifying

the institutional loopholes and envisioning a future in which certain requirements must set the foundation for success of policy implementation in public sector reforms in Fiji.

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