



Policy transfer in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific: when, how, who, what and from where?

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Aid programs often involve the transfer of policies and institutions to developing countries, yet borrowed or transplanted institutions may not suit local conditions. Institutional transfer has been a persistent issue in the history of the South Pacific, ever since the King of Tonga borrowed ideas about land tenure from colonial New South Wales. This article compares attempts to transfer institutions associated with 'good governance': land registration, constitutions, representative democracy, public sector reform and anti-corruption. It asks when the transfer took place, who was involved, how it took place, and where it came from, and draws some conclusions about its irrationality.

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Countries often borrow policies and institutions from each other. Japan reconstructed its institutions along Western lines in the nineteenth century. Later, the West looked to Japan for examples of 'best practice' in management. The idea of an ombudsman has spread from its Scandinavian origins. Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) provided a model for New South Wales. Decolonisation, the collapse of socialist states, and globalisation have intensified international borrowing.

Yet transfer or transplantation has often been opposed. The argument against the transfer of law was made most influentially

by the German legal theorist, Von Savigny. He saw the law, like language, as being embedded in a distinctive *Volksgeist* or 'spirit of the people'. His argument was part of a more general Romantic reaction against the universal claims of the Enlightenment (Von Savigny 1979[1829]). A similar nationalist reaction is expressed in arguments made in Fiji that democracy is a 'foreign flower' unable to survive in the hostile soil of the South Pacific (Larmour 1994).

The transfer of policies and institutions is a professional concern of aid donors, who increasingly believe that the right policies and institutions matter for development.



'Good governance' programs seek to transfer institutions modelled on those in the West: secure property rights, the rule of law, representative democracy, smaller government and uncorrupt administration. Transfer has been a persistent issue in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific: the state itself has been imported; foreign missionaries have established local churches; there have been attempts to make constitutions 'home grown'; and international financial institutions have been criticised for requiring policy changes as a condition for loans. The gap between introduced and indigenous institutions is sometimes blamed for the region's poor political or economic performance.

This article describes the results of research on the transfer of five kinds of institution into the region

- customary land registration
- Westminster constitutions
- representative democracy
- public sector reform
- anti-corruption.

The research uses a framework of analysis developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000). It also draws on the author's own experience in consultancy work, itself a technique of 'policy transfer', which Dolowitz and Marsh define as

[t]he process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000:5).

This article is concerned with the process of transfer: when and how it happened, who was involved, what was transferred, and from where. It looks for general themes, with examples from each case. Perceptions of crisis, for example, were particularly important in the timing of the transfer. Different types of consultants were involved in making the transfers. The article concludes

by asking how rational the process of transfer has been. In policymaking, rationality refers to a process of calculating and comparing alternative means to achieve a particular end. A rational policymaker identifies where they want to go, and compares alternative routes, and selects the best. That is the ideal. In practice, however, policymakers often follow the routes they know best. Or they select the first available. Or they follow the route chosen by those they admire. The results, evaluations, and explanations for transfer will be described elsewhere.

When

The earliest example of transfer in the South Pacific arose from a study tour of New South Wales made by the King of Tonga in 1853. His regime was coming under international criticism in ways that anticipated concerns with 'good governance' in the late twentieth century. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, for example, found it 'totally inefficient except for the needs of the merest savages' (quoted in Latukefu 1975:31). The King was shocked by the signs of visible poverty he saw in New South Wales, but impressed by the leasehold system of land tenure, which he introduced to Tonga.

In most cases, the transfer was associated with a particular combination of domestic and international circumstances, and was often dependent on what remedies were available off-the-shelf when a problem arose.

Perceptions of crisis

In each case, the transfer of institutions was associated with a crisis, or perceptions of one. A crisis is not always self-evident; it may need to be talked up. For example, in Solomon Islands in the 1950s, a land commission had diagnosed a 'breakdown' in customary tenure, and recommended land registration as a remedy. The breakdown was, if anything, slow and progressive



rather than catastrophic. It was difficult to find the point at which governments might feel something should be done; local politicians did not necessarily see that there was a problem. Some felt that customary tenure was working quite well, and favoured simpler records that would recognise and entrench it.

The crises that drove decolonisation, which involved the transfer of Westminster constitutions, were as much in the metropolitan countries as in the colonies. In Papua New Guinea, the decision for independence in 1975, rather than later, was a product of domestic circumstances in Australia. Britain's decision to divest itself of its Pacific colonies was the product of a global review of its overseas commitments, in the context of what was then perceived as a long-term decline in British economic fortunes. In Vanuatu, however, the crisis was local, as the *Vanua'aku Pati* steadily took control of the countryside.

Public sector reform was driven by fiscal crises. Papua New Guinea's first, in 1981, was precipitated by a combination of external shocks and internal 'leaks' (Kavanamur 1998:100). Externally, commodity prices were weakening, oil prices and interest rates were expected to rise, and inflation was reducing the value of Australian aid. Internally, a minister had suddenly decided to buy new aircraft for the national airline, while government agencies were granting more credit to the private sector and wage increases to workers. Kavanamur describes how Ministers had to be convinced there was a 'crisis' by the use of strong words like 'bankrupt' in briefing papers (1998:112).

The Asian Development Bank listed four triggers for its loan programs that were made conditional on public sector reform. Two of them invoked crises.

- Fiscal crises caused by 'overwhelming debt burdens and a ballooning public sector'.
- The prospect of declining external aid.
- The Asian financial crisis.

- Public pressure and political recognition of the need for reform (Knapman and Saldanha 1999:3–5).

Public and international concern about corruption was becoming widespread in the 1990s. However, that concern could lead to cynicism and disengagement, as much as pressure for reform. Crises helped mobilise popular opinion and, in turn, prompted the search for new policies and ideas from overseas. In Papua New Guinea, demonstrations against a government plan to hire mercenaries to end the Bougainville rebellion gave voice to a nascent civil society. It led to the creation of a national chapter of Transparency International, which campaigned against corruption, and for the idea of an ICAC, modeled on New South Wales and Hong Kong. In Vanuatu, a change of government led to an invitation to Papua New Guinea to provide assistance to set up the Office of the Ombudsman, long promised in the Constitution.

Perceptions of crisis might precipitate transfer, but also make it more difficult to achieve. Actions taken to resolve a fiscal crisis sometimes have unintended and negative consequences for recovery and reform. The better public servants might take retrenchment packages offered as part of public sector reform and return to the public service as consultants. Loan repayments might slow recovery.

Proponents of policy transfer sometimes regretted the end of the crisis. Papua New Guinea recovered so quickly in 1991 that the IMF was moved to criticise the government for dragging its feet on drawing down the loan. Missing revenues were replaced with revenue from other mining and exploration projects. Kavanamur concludes '[w]hilst it is easy to stabilise Papua New Guinea's economy, it is often difficult to sustain structural adjustment' (1998:115). In 1995, the South Pacific Forum Finance Ministers agreed amongst themselves that '[m]echanisms are also required to protect the reform process



from being undermined by temporary improvements in economic circumstances' (Joint Statement, Forum Finance Ministers Meeting, Port Moresby, 8 December 1995).

Crisis was the occasion and opportunity for a much broader reform agenda.

How

Di Maggio and Powell (1983) suggest there are three ways in which organisations become more alike, or 'isomorphic'. The first they termed 'coercive', when organisations respond to pressures from other organisations or their legal environment. For Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), the distinctive character of developing countries was their vulnerability to coercive policy transfer. In Papua New Guinea, for example, the World Bank attempted to make customary land registration a condition of a loan to Papua New Guinea, but withdrew this requirement after popular protest (Larmour 2002a). The coercion might also be indirect: indigenous political systems in the South Pacific had to adopt some of the forms of European states in order to deal with these same states.

The second way is 'mimetic'. Not all change comes as a result of external or intentional pressure. Faced with uncertainty, organisations will model themselves on others that have prestige. Here, DiMaggio and Powell cite Japanese emulation of Western organisational systems in the nineteenth century, and the reverse process of American imitation of Japanese management practices in the twentieth century. These were deliberate attempts to emulate other's success. But there was also a ritual element: US companies adopted Japanese practices to enhance their legitimacy and show they were trying to do the right thing (1983:151). Decolonisation involved mimetic transfer, as countries adopted the legitimate constitutional form of Westminster, even if it did not entirely suit local conditions

(Larmour 2002b). Similarly, Ward and Ballard argue that technical innovation in Papua New Guinea has been a matter of irrational emulation of expatriate techniques. Papua New Guineans adopted innovations that suited expatriates or which, having been used by expatriates, became regarded as items of status (1976:450). They compare the success of the pickup truck, as compared to bullocks or tractors as opposed to the digging stick (1976:451). The latter would have been a more rational choice.

The third is normative, and is related to the increasing professionalisation of work. The formal training required to enter professions produces standardised ideas and values, and professional associations transmit and reinforce them. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) had noticed the rise of international consultancy firms providing standard or 'best practice' answers to complex local problems. They transmit the professional values of accountants, such as transparency, and their language of corporate governance. Similarly, international financial institutions transmit the professional values of bankers ('soundness') and economists ('market-friendliness').

Techniques in transfer

Two kinds of technique are involved in transfer. First, there is the ability to prepare a project, deliver technical assistance, negotiate with foreign governments, or draw up a loan. Practitioners of these techniques include officials of international financial institutions, in-country aid programs, as well as non-government organisations and the consultants they hire. Their regular work includes preparing projects, negotiating loans, delivering technical assistance and evaluating the results. The skills they deploy are similar to techniques deployed in other disciplines, such as agricultural extension, adult education, decentralisation or organisational development.



Second, there are the techniques transferred: in our cases, the ability to do a survey, draft a constitution, count votes, organise a redundancy program, or investigate corruption. These skills are found in functional or specialist departments, like an Electoral Commission, a Public Service Commission, or an Anti Corruption Commission.

In each case, laws were copied. Loans from international financial institutions were made conditional on public sector reform. After the 1987 coups, donors withheld some kinds of aid from Fiji until it reformed its Constitution in the 1990s. The OECD proposed sanctions for countries like Nauru and Cook Islands if they did not implement money-laundering legislation designed, among other things, to reduce corruption.

Consultants were also used in each case. Short-term training and workshops were more prominent in anti-corruption activity. Study tours were involved in the attempts to transfer Kenyan legislation to Papua New Guinea and, most thoroughly, in the international research carried out by Fiji's Constitutional Review Commission. Workshops and larger scale national conventions of peak organisations were a characteristic feature of the Asian Development Bank's public sector reforms.

Each particular technique of government has its own history. We have seen how the first 'study tour' in the South Pacific was King Tupou's visit to New South Wales in 1853. The idea of national conventions seems to have begun in the constitutional negotiations of the 1960s and 1970s. It resurfaced in the Asian Development Bank's public sector reforms. The anti-corruption non-government organisation, Transparency International, has been particularly inventive of new techniques—both of transfer, such as its Corruption Perceptions Index, and corruption prevention, such as 'integrity pacts'.

Who

Advice about customary land registration was transmitted through a series of distinct networks of consultants. In the 1960s, a group of former Colonial Office officials, whose careers had intersected in Kenya, influenced legislation in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. In the 1970s, they were replaced by a group of Australian and New Zealand academics, who drew on New Zealand and other regional models, rather than Africa. In Papua New Guinea, these were replaced by a group of North American academics in the 1980s, linked to the Institute of National Affairs. They drew on research on Native American land tenure, and the first principles of public choice theory (Larmour 2002).

Consultants played a wide range of roles in constitution-making, providing political advice to governments, particular ministers, and (in Fiji in the 1990s) the opposition. The earliest were the missionaries who advised the Polynesian kingdoms, especially Tonga. They sometimes found themselves in ethically tricky situations, viewed with suspicion and facing conflicts of loyalty. Consultants were also heavily involved in the public sector reform programs promoted by the World Bank in Papua New Guinea and the Asian Development Bank in smaller South Pacific states. The Asian Development Bank's consultants were the vehicle for transferring ideas from Cook Islands to Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

Local professional organisations also played an important role as gatekeepers to transfer and tied power and specialised knowledge together. A weak local legal profession generally allowed for more constitutional innovation. The fate of land registration depended heavily on the support of surveyors. In Papua New Guinea, resistance to the idea of an ICAC involved an alliance of local police and legal professionals, who proposed their own alternative National Anti-Corruption Agency.



Types of consultancy

Reflecting on 'why visiting economists fail' Seers (1962) distinguished four types of adviser, each facing distinctive risks. An adviser might try to play a narrowly technical role, but this was likely to disappoint a government client. In any case, to exclude possibilities from analysis was an implicit political decision against them. Technical advisers easily found themselves frustrated and ignored if they found the government's whole approach to be wrong. The second type of adviser, which Seers called the 'statesman adviser' took on board the government's goals, and recommended ways of achieving them. The third type, or 'party adviser', took into account the government's concerns with survival and reelection: the need to assuage neglected regions, or to defer to powerful interests. One step further was the 'personal adviser', who identified closely with a particular leaders, and their fortunes.

In Melanesia, external advice on land registration was often presented in technical terms, though it was easy to show that its assumptions had political consequences. It favoured some kinds of applicant over others, and then defended their titles against further claims. Constitutional advice was less easy to separate from its political and partisan implications, and successful advisers deftly switched from the technical, to the statesmanlike, to the partisan, and even the personal. Principled local politicians were often able to attract considerable personal loyalty from their expert advisers.

The advice on public sector reform was typically delivered as neutral and technical, or framed in 'statesmanlike' terms of achieving a government's goals. There was suspicion in Cook Islands and, to some extent, Vanuatu that the consultants were acting in a partisan way, sensitive to government concerns with its own survival. Papua New Guinea's dealings with the World Bank and

its advisers were particularly tangled. In the 1998, the World Bank official responsible for dealing with Papua New Guinea defected to the Papua New Guinea side. His successor was later denied an entry visa by the government, on the grounds that he was interfering in domestic affairs, and in 2002 the former World Bank official turned whistleblower when he felt that the government was failing to meet its reform targets (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Four Corners*, 10 July 2002). From the point of view of governments, advice on corruption could look purely partisan.

Technical knowledge was often less important than a consultant's personal qualities, trustworthiness, and social position. The consultant often inhabited some in-between state, such as a naturalised citizen, or member of an ethnic minority. The line between 'insider' and 'outsider' advice was sometimes hard to draw. In Tonga, King George adopted an Englishman to be his adviser and gave him a Tongan title (Latukefu 1975:40). Non-indigenous citizens, and expatriates with close personal ties played important roles as givers and receivers of advice from abroad. It was a non-indigenous citizen, and woman, who energised the Office of Ombudsman in Vanuatu. The office was finally established with technical assistance from Papua New Guinea in 1995—a lateral transfer—and began its functions with a series of scathing reports on government corruption and incompetence.

What

While legislation may be copied across countries, other things are being transferred as well: the techniques described above; broader 'frameworks of meaning'; doctrines; and, in some cases, panaceas. Land registration and Westminster constitutions were explicitly 'legal' projects. New



accountability legislation was introduced as part of public sector reform in Cook Islands (borrowing from New Zealand), while Transparency International campaigned in Papua New Guinea in support of legislation to strengthen the role of political parties. Changing the law was not easy, particularly in countries where the government was a coalition, or in a minority in the legislature. It was nevertheless often easier than making newly established agencies work, or ensuring compliance.

The transfer of customary land registration was particularly legalistic—one of the reasons it failed was the absence of the administrative and commercial infrastructure necessary to make the law do the things it was supposed to. There were also transfers of laws in the constitutional negotiations, but for many years some parts of the constitutions—for example Leadership Codes in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, or rules governing political parties in Papua New Guinea—were not legislated for.

These ‘receptions of laws’ took place within wider changes in the framework of meaning that interpreted and justified them. Ideas in transfer were often part of a broader framework that gave particular events and issues salience and meaning. Indeed, alternative frameworks could interpret the same events quite differently. Customary land tenure, for example, could be seen alternately as ‘evolving’ or ‘breaking down’. From being an instrument of colonial government, the legal system presented itself after independence as an expression of popular will, enacted through a democratically elected parliament. Most of the laws remained the same, as their meaning changed around them. Transferred frameworks of meaning were also involved in public sector reform: put bluntly, the sale of government assets to pay government debt, or sackings of public servants to save salaries were presented as forward-looking policies of ‘privatisation’ and ‘public sector reform’.

Doctrines or counter-doctrines were embodied in texts, which were circulated at the time of the transfer, or to justify it in retrospect. Ward (1972), in an article on customary land registration, referred to it as an ‘agricultural revolution’ and this argument was particularly timely and influential in blocking land legislation in Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s.

The cases also show a vulnerability to the transfer of panaceas. The historian Latukefu faulted King George and the Tongan missionaries for believing the constitution was a ‘magic wand’ for Tonga’s problems. Now ‘thin’ changes in the electoral system—from first-past-the-post to alternative voting—are expected to have leverage on ‘thick’ ethnic or clan divisions.

From where

There was often no clear line to be drawn between sources of ideas for transfer. Arguments from first principles were buttressed by anecdotal evidence from a particular country. Or a particularly national experience was generalised into an abstract principle. The idea of ‘international best practice’ combines place and non place. So does the vague idea of ‘the West’. Generally, six different combinations of place and time are found (Table 1).

In the first column, the borrowing is from somewhere: specifically named places, or regions like ‘the West’. In the second column are more abstract sources, such as the first principles of economics and accounting, myths or utopian fantasies. I have called them ‘nowhere’ after H.G. Wells science fiction novel *News from Nowhere*. Wells’ protagonist wakes up in a utopian future, which provides a critique of the present.

The rows in Table 2 point to borrowing from the present, the past (though this is often forgotten) and the future. The typology also points to the sources that cut across the



categories: 'the West' for example is partly a region, but it is also something more placeless, abstract, and futuristic. 'Westminster' is similarly abstracted, but drawing its prestige from an English past. The Bible—which became a source of inspiration for nineteenth century constitution makers—sits somewhere between the columns. It refers to real Middle Eastern places, but they are far away, and almost mythic.

in the mid 1970s, and consultants with experience in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands influenced the development of policy in Vanuatu in the early 1980s. There was transfer round the rim when Papua New Guinea provided technical assistance to Vanuatu to set up its first Ombudsman office.

In Melanesia, there is a long-running pattern of borrowing and comparison, positive and negative, with Africa. Outsiders

Table 1 Sources of borrowing

	Somewhere	Nowhere
The present	A. Other countries	B. First principles
The past	C. National History	D. Myth
The future	E. The West	F. Utopia

Borrowing from somewhere

In Cell A, the borrowing is from specific places. Kenya, for example, was the source for customary land registration, while Tanzania was influential for Papua New Guinea's constitution (Goldring 1978). Di Maggio and Powell's idea of 'mimetic' change suggests that countries will look to the most prestigious models, but many of these places were quite small and peripheral. However, the archaeology of the policy is only part of the story. Policies are transmitted through intermediate places and broader networks. Tonga's constitution borrowed from Hawaii's, which, in turn, drew on the United States and United Kingdom. The ideas about customary land registration that originated in the Sudan were developed in Kenya before being picked up in Melanesia.

As well as spreading outwards along 'spokes' of a wheel, there were transfers around the 'rim'. Papua New Guinea's Commission of Enquiry into Land Matters influenced its Solomon Islands counterpart

sometimes saw Melanesian institutions through an African lens. Barnes questioned the use of 'African models in the PNG Highlands' (1990). He was not against comparison, but faulted his colleagues for comparing the 'muddled configurations of actual alliance, cooperation and conflict observed in the field', with highly abstract and simplified models derived from African research. In doing so, they had missed 'distinctively non-African characteristics of the highlands' (Barnes 1990:45), including the multiple allegiances of individuals, and the high value placed on violence. Political science in the South Pacific keeps turning back to Africa for ideas about 'weak states' (Dauvergne 1998), 'indigenous capital' (MacWilliam 1999), or the 'criminalisation of the state' (Dinnen 2002), or simply 'Africanisation' (Reilly 2000).

Ideas about land registration, as we have seen, were deliberately copied from Africa. So were constitutional innovations, such as Leadership Codes. Compared to Africa, decolonisation and subsequent financial



crises came later in the South Pacific. There were positive and negative references to African experiences in constitutional debates, and later over structural adjustment and public sector reform. At other times, the comparisons were negative and disparaging: the region was said to be 'not like Africa', or 'would not go down that path'.

There was greater interest in 'intra regional' comparisons and solutions during the period immediately after independence, particularly in land tenure (Larmour 2002a). Public sector reformers borrowed ideas more generally from OECD countries. In particular they looked to New Zealand, which was an extreme exemplar of public sector reform in global terms and in a strong position to influence its former colonies in the South Pacific.

Borrowing from nowhere

Place-to-place transfers were combined with more 'placeless' sources in texts and arguments from first principles. Knetsch and Trebilcock's (1981) report on land policy was influential on PNG government policy in the early 1980s. While they drew on research on American Indian land tenure, their argument was universalist: Melanesian landowners were assumed to be self-interested maximisers, like everyone else. The Tongan Constitution drew on the Bible as well as Hawaii, and Latin American liberation theology influenced Papua New Guinea's Constitutional Planning Committee. The Phoenix Foundations's *A Blueprint for a New Nation* was written for the Nagriamel rebels in Vanuatu, but published in Amsterdam (Doorn 1979), and devised from libertarian first principles. The academic advisers to Fiji's Constitutional Review Commission based their arguments on the evidence of the application of alternative voting (AV) in other countries, but they also relied on arguments from first principles about how rational candidates would respond to the incentives

the electoral system presented them with. Transparency International's handbook cited examples from particular places, but also proposed new doctrines of its own, such as 'integrity pacts'.

In Fiji, the arguments from first principles were subsequently reinforced by advice from a particular place, Australia. Its Australian provenance was not strongly emphasised by the Constitutional Review Commission, except to reassure against criticisms of exoticism. Once implemented, however, the Labour party in Fiji turned to advice from its counterparts in Australia, in particular about the effects of distributing preferences.

The involvement of international organisations in the transfer of ideas, policies or institutions contributes to their placelessness. The prototype was the colonial empire, which smeared ideas around the world. The British Empire facilitated lateral transfers, as well as implanting English institutions in colonised countries. The Torrens Title originated in South Australia, for example.

The Commonwealth now promotes 'good governance'. The OECD has promoted ideas about public sector management and, more recently, reforms against money laundering. The World Bank casts itself as an 'ideas bank'. Its annual *World Development Report* sets the agenda for thinking about development. Countries wishing to join the European Union have to first adopt its institutions. The World Trade Organization encourages its members to adopt more liberal economic policies. In the South Pacific, the Forum Finance ministers have adopted a set of principles about accountability, and review each other's performance in achieving them.

Corruption prevention is the most extreme example of reforms devised and driven by an international organisation. Whereas the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank became vehicles or conduits for transfers among their members, Transparency International was set up as an



international non-government organisation precisely to promote the transfer of ideas. Its earliest targets included other international organisations (OECD, European Union) as well as national governments. It has its antecedents in the churches, missions, and abolitionist societies of the nineteenth century who also argued from first principles in the Bible and promoted ideas that had not yet been tried anywhere.

Borrowing from the past

Nationalists often look back for inspiration from particular myths and customs as an alternative to introduced or imperial ideas and institutions. As an alternative to the imported Kenyan ideas of land registration, in Solomon Islands, for example, supporters of customary land records looked back to the early nationalist movement called *Maasina Ruru*, in which people 'wrote down custom'.

In most cases, the past was seen as something to be rejected, or improved upon. In Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, the turn to the Kenyan model was driven by a recognition that existing legislation was not working. The alternatives promoted by the Institute of National Affairs in the 1980s, and the land registration legislation drafted for East Sepik and East New Britain were also conscious of past failures. The independence constitutions were generally built on the frameworks of late colonial constitutions, but the orientation was towards the future, and imagining difficulties that might come up.

Public sector reformers did not show much interest in learning from past attempts at reform. The New Public Management generally takes an adversarial stance to the past, and is suspicious of public servants' ability to reform their own activities. Its impulse, in Cook Islands and Vanuatu, was partly a radical rejection of the past—it traded on popular understandings that 'we can't go on like this'.

Borrowing from the future

Early versions of customary land registration were strongly 'forward looking', imagining a common future in which indigenous farmers and settlers would share a common tenure system. It was sometimes presented as 'evolutionary', assuming changes were taking place that the law might anticipate and channel. However, Ward later warned against the Kenyan model as an 'agricultural revolution'.

For many countries, borrowing from the United States (or, until 1989, the Soviet Union) was to borrow, to some extent, from your country's own future. For colonies, the highest form of modernity was often vaguely represented by the metropole, perhaps London, or Australia's modernist capital, Canberra. Because they were also real places, it was possible to see how those ideas actually worked in practice. As we saw, the King of Tonga was shocked by the poverty he found in New South Wales.

The nineteenth century Tongan Constitution looked towards the future in its grant of adult male suffrage and the transformation of land tenure that accompanied it. Ghai describes how the PNG Constitution was meant to create the new conditions for its success. It failed, but paradoxically survived.

...the system which it intended to create did not exist but had to be called into being (Ghai 1997:312).

The public sector reforms promoted by the ADB were couched in future-looking terms—they were sold as once-and-for-all reforms that would clean up government. Transparency International's approach also borrows heavily from the future. The downside to these utopian aspirations was pervasive disappointment, or élite calls for more 'political education' to align popular aspirations with their own.



Irrationality

The Melanesian Commissions of Inquiry into Land Matters, Papua New Guinea's Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC), or Fiji's Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) talked about goals and alternatives. The decisions, however, were made elsewhere and the results, as Fitzpatrick complained of the CPC report, were surprisingly 'ordinary', in spite of the fuss (1980:209). For land, the Allan Commission recommended that customary land be registered as individually owned freehold, in the same way as alienated land had been. What was good for Europeans must be good for Solomon Islanders. Papua New Guinea's Commission on Inquiry into Land Matters recommended a qualified version of the Kenyan model that had outraged MPs a few years earlier. For the constitutions, Solomon Islands Governing Council system reverted to the Westminster type, as did the Cook Islands' review in the 1990s.

Commissions did lead to some constitutional innovation, such as Kiribati's presidential/parliamentary hybrid, the land groups legislation in Papua New Guinea, or the provisions for decentralisation in Melanesia. But it was a search within a perimeter of acceptable thought. Representative democracy was generally accepted as a given, though Samoans had successfully argued for *matuai* suffrage in the 1960s, and some Fijian nationalists were profoundly unsympathetic to democratic values after 1987.

However, that rationalistic mode of transfer by Commission of Inquiry did not apply to public sector reform in the 1990s, nor to Transparency International's transfer of anti-corruption ideas. The banks, finance departments, and their consultants were confident they had the right answers. In any case, the atmosphere of crisis that brought them in did not lend itself to the creation of a

Commission of Inquiry. The money was about to run out. Payrolls had to be cut, and government assets sold to pay back the debts. The banks and their consultants had faced these kinds of situations before, and drew on that experience, as well as their own professional doctrines. In the South Pacific, they faced local officials who were dealing with a fiscal crisis for the first time. Yet the rational consideration of means and ends was not completely set aside. The banks and donors funded a series of studies and consultancy reports, though decisions were not necessarily based on them. They talked in a language of means and ends. And they were often willing, after the event, to evaluate what they had done, and admit where they had got it wrong (for example, Knapman and Saldanha 1999).

Transparency International's style differed from the Commission of Inquiry. Its style was populist rather than elitist. It was driven by anger at corruption, and impatience with rationalisation. It deferred to national differences, and national initiatives, but it had also assembled its own body of doctrine (embodied in its Handbook) and devised new techniques, such as integrity pacts. Anti-corruption campaigns are also vulnerable to millenarian calls for national renewal, and zero tolerance. Again they may be right, but they are not rational in the sense of means/end calculations.

March and Olsen's research on policy-making has questioned the prevailing rational model (1989). Instead of identifying goals, and deciding between means to achieve them, they found policymakers reaching into a metaphorical 'garbage can' for the first solution that came to hand. More broadly, solutions are produced independently of problems, and the links between them depend on timing and opportunity as much as choice. Solutions end up looking for problems to attach themselves to. The international financial institutions in this



sense are a storehouse of conventional ideas—they get the opportunity to implement them when countries come to them in a crisis for a loan. Transparency International is similarly a storehouse of bright ideas about what to do about corruption; it promotes them laterally among the international organisations it lobbies. It also promotes them with and through national chapters, who lobby their own governments from within. In both cases, however, the ideas come before the problem, which becomes an opportunity to implement them. They may be the right ideas, but they are not subject to any process of rational testing. Contrary evidence is downplayed or unsought. A similar sense of ‘solutions looking for problems’ surrounded customary land registration, and public sector reform. Local crises provided the opportunity for solutions already in circulation to gain a foothold.

Behind this ‘garbage can’ process is the power of professional doctrine. In the case of land registration, it was the doctrine of surveyors (lawyers tend to be cooler towards registration as it tends to reduce opportunities to make money in conveyancing and litigation). In the case of Westminster, it is the doctrine of constitutional lawyers. There are fewer professional interests at stake in the promotion of democracy, though the highly technical debate about voting systems may be a sign of growing professionalisation among specialists on electoral systems. In public sector reform, it was the doctrine of accountants. Transparency International in many ways cuts across the professions hitherto dominating the discussion of corruption and its control—police and lawyers. Its populist approach is anti-professional, though it draws on emerging professions of media management and lobbying to get its points across.

Conclusions

These Papua New Guinean and South Pacific cases show policy transfer to be a common process, with a history that goes back to the missionary advisers and study tours of the 1850s. It was often driven by crises, or perceptions of crisis that promoters of reform had to talk up. Different types of consultant were involved, as were other marginal social figures, and professional associations. Policies were borrowed from particular places, but also from derived from first principles. Some borrowers looked to the past, but radical reformers borrowed from the future, and were sometimes disappointed.

The process of policy transfer was not particularly rational, in the sense of means-end calculations. Sometimes it involved coercion. At other times, it involved emulation of prestigious foreign institutions, in spite of their local unsuitability. International organisations actively promoted ideas, looking for opportunities to introduce them. Local crises provided the opening for the introduction of the professional enthusiasms of surveyors, lawyers, accountants and economists. The policies they introduced might be appropriate, but there was rarely the time or means to test their relevance to local conditions or local objectives.

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