
An International Political Economy Perspective of Administrative Reform

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Abstract

This paper outlines a method of studying administrative reform in nation-states through a focus upon the role and function of policy transfer structured by concepts of power derived from international political economy (IPE). In this approach, the nation state is viewed as the competitive state continually seeking advantage compared with other nation states, where administrative reform is one method pursued in this objective and driven by international factors. Through a discussion of the nature of competitiveness and power with the international system, a discrete range of models are presented to account for administrative reform which are then illustrated through two case studies of China and Hong Kong.

Introduction

In this paper, the potential of using concepts established within the international political economy literature to study administrative reform is explored. In particular, insights from policy transfer and the competition state literature (*Cerny, 1990 quoted by Peterson, 1993b*), are used to study the reforms that have occurred in the public sector environment which over recent years, particularly in management styles and operations, have been implemented by increasing numbers of nation-states in both the developed and developing worlds (1). In the context of the competition state, this paper argues that a motivation for implementing public sector reform is to derive an increased competitive advantage over other regions and nation-states.

Arias & Guillen (1997) and *Dolowitz and Marsh (1996)*(2), suggest a variety of frameworks for studying policy transfer. In this paper, a neo-

institutional perspective to the study of policy transfer is pursued as this is viewed as more accurately reflecting the contextual and system driven nature of the competition state. The degree of structuration within the environment and the interdependence of governments within the policy arenas, historical trends and other influential actors are also important factors in the neo-institutional perspective (*Arias & Guillen, 1997*).

The paper proceeds by first discussing the nature of administrative reforms, globalization forces and the competition state in broad terms. This is followed by an exploration of the competition state from the viewpoint of administrative reforms enhancing national competitiveness through institutional changes. To underpin this analysis, the nature of competitiveness is then discussed, linking concepts of power derived from international political economy with the policy transfer mechanism. This allows a simple model to be constructed, shaped by these two factors. Finally, two case studies of nation-states outside of the traditional reform focus are then used to briefly explore the validity of these models. These case studies outline the main reasons for the pursuit of such reforms, why they occurred when they did and what were the main motivators for this reform. The last part of the paper is a general conclusion on the usefulness of this methodology.

Administrative Reform Factors

Reforms in public management have been influenced by amongst other factors, new right arguments, changing international systems that place increased burdens upon the nation-state as well as the perceived value of incorporating business style operations into public sector activities. It is this latter aspect - and the mechanisms involved in the possible transfer of such business oriented reform policy themes and ideas between different regions and nation-states in the context of global competition and globalization, that are explored in this paper. In *Guy Peters (1997)* boolean analysis paper on reform diffusion, three types of administrative reform practices are identified, comprising market based reforms, participatory and deregulation based reforms. The market based reforms, derived from incorporating the mechanism of market allocation and competition into public organisations, obviously endow them with a strong competitive element. However, both the participatory and deregulation based reforms can also be viewed from an international competition perspective, as they alter and affect the systems that underpin the competitive state. Such

changes in these systems for example are primarily sourced from the exploitation of the knowledge of staff within public organisations and the adjustment of the structures of those organisations to better facilitate the delivery of services to clients and to the public.

To discuss the nature of global competition in the broader view of this paper, internationalization and globalisation are referred to as, “the transformation of industrial and financial capitalism, characterized by the gradual disappearance of principles, rules and modes of organization, as well as the methods of economic exploitation of material and non material resources, centred on the uniqueness and coherence of the ‘system’ referred to as national...” (*Petrella, 1990, p. 48*).

Globalization of the economy encompasses more than changes in national economic actors, incorporating as well public bodies, universities and other organized social groupings (*Petrella, 1990*). This has given rise to the competition state, where competitiveness is no longer restricted to enterprise rivalry on an intra and/or international level, but becomes a confrontation between the states themselves and the systems they operate. By considering the influence of business oriented reforms on administrative structures, account is given to qualify this influence, where public and private management is shaped by different operational criteria (*Arias & Guillen, 1997*). Nevertheless, given the underpinning nature of the systems that shape national competitiveness, arguably a bridge between globalization factors and the public sector reform environment can be made through adopting a global-systems perspective emphasised in studies of international political economy (IPE). This utilizes structural and relational concepts of power, contextualized in framework that emphasises institutional reform and change. In particular, analogies are made to these new competition state strategies which use public policy to promote market-rational behaviour (*Peterson, 1993*). The paper therefore seeks to wed state-centred competitiveness in a determinant international context.

The Competition State and the Public Sector

Structural competitiveness and new competition between nation states is a continuous confrontation of production systems, institutions, schemes and social organisations intertwined with educational systems, the technological infrastructure, management yrelational power attributes, where possession of knowledge is viewed as an important underpinning factor. In a similar fashion, neo-institutionalists view environments and

organizational settings as being highly interpenetrated where knowledge and its effective utilization and/or denial to other actors is the focus of this competition (*Arias & Guillen, 1997; Alvarez, 1997*).

Institutional Factors of Change

Industrialized states have transformed themselves from welfare states to competition states where government services delivered through public policy to the individual, firm and institution reflect these changes. The degree to which this transformation is derived from private sector concerns and commercial logic, policy choice or traditional public sector value is dependent upon the sector of interest and the policy setting.

In light of the argument of this paper, attention is directed towards exploring the external stimulus to reform derived from factors in the international system rather than internally sourced mechanisms where regions and nation-states drawn from similar cultural, social and political-economic backgrounds are viewed as being more likely to experience shared reform packages with resultant policy convergence between such nation-states. That is to say, there is an element of determinism about their development. The framework suggested here however diverges from this and from recent work by *Guy Peters (1997)*, who viewed reforms in Western style administrations (4) as primarily sourced from within government, where reform diffusion was structured by the presence of certain political factors, public sector deficits, the activity of trade unions and the culture of the nation-state. The importance of these internally sourced factors is readily acknowledged, but there is also a need to include influences derived from the international system and global forces as well. The perspective of *Wendt (1987)* is therefore adopted where administrative structures and actors are viewed as transforming together over time and sourced from these two dimensions.

The Importance of Globalisation and Internationalisation Factors in the Governance Context

Generally, perspectives on global competition and the influence of international systems are of two types. There are those who adhere to a strong viewpoint that a global economy already exists in most essential elements whilst on the other hand, some argue that a globally orchestrated economy only exists in certain sectors with the remainder structured by highly internationalized factors (*see Carroll, 1998*). In terms of sources of

knowledge on governance practices, the regional and nation-state governance systems, which by definition are geographically specific, are joined by other governance systems such as the supranational EU and in a lesser evolutionary phase, structures such as the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The development of such a mix of international governance systems supports the classic confrontation that in addressing international forces, regionalisation becomes a favoured policy option. In attempting to identify internationally sourced factors of influence upon regional and nation-state governance structures and delivery mechanisms, a multitude of different governance levels would need to be examined. This can be undertaken using some of the conceptual tools developed in IPE.

Much activity in exploring the interface between new competition strategies and the structures and shape of resultant governance systems has focused around technological issues (*see for example Peterson, 1991; 1993; 1995; Sandholtz, 1992*). In this environment, change is inherent and dynamic, requiring frequent reconfigurations of both policy content and objective as well as the delivery systems themselves. *Russell (1995)* suggests that this change also has an associated proactive political and sociological dimension, whereby those who advocate a particular technological system, tend to export their beliefs and ideals beyond their community. A particularly important route in this exportation, is through the formation of epistemic communities that can result in effective international policy co-ordination (*Radaelli, 1995; Richardson, 1996*). Broadening this view, it can be argued that factors derived from the operation of administrative reform experiences have similar advocates and similarly seek to export these factors. Resultant epistemic communities support the internationalization of knowledge through experience and practice, without concern for power and political allegiance. The utilization and development of this knowledge made available by such communities and the policy transfer route, with its range of ideological overtones and political agendas is viewed as a primary mechanism. Knowledge transmission is the key element in shaping the policy process and in the process of selecting solutions to problems, otherwise described as shaping the policy stream (*Radaelli, 1995 discussing Kingdon, 1984*).

In terms of the changing shape of government structures and supporting systems, *Stopford et al (1991:123)* argue that international

forces and system influences result in the creation of new, more robust institutions to promote, foster and establish a competitive edge. Such transformations in the international system and in regional and nation-state governance systems are viewed as dynamically interlinked and simultaneous. The delivery, choice and provision of increasingly efficient and targeted public support policies and mechanisms are therefore important factors underpinning a nation-state's competitiveness.

Governmental Competitiveness and Institutional Development: An IPE Perspective

This perspective of government pursuing competitive advantage is further supported by exploring current thinking on the nature of competitiveness and by adopting a neo-institutional perspective to the study of governmental structures, where organizations are seen as being embedded in cultural systems where the state, professions and dominant agents are powerful sources of influence (*Arias & Guillen, 1997*). Indeed, a focus on externally sourced factors of reform where structures are derived from influences in the international system and actors are viewed as being co-determined, requires just such a neo-institutional perspective with its emphasis upon historical path dependencies, trajectories (5) and where resultant public organizations do not act only on instrumental-rational motives. That is to say, they can also derive their operations and structures from socially prevalent forms of organizational behaviour (*Alvarez, 1997*), one important source of which is the international system.

This approach therefore stresses the impact of the existing institutional environment (both at a regional and nation-state level) and how forces operating outside of the national boundary become important. This argument neatly fits with current discussions on the nature of national competitiveness, which emphasises the role of the government (amongst other factors) as being paramount in shaping the resultant opportunities and effectiveness of regional and national businesses through macro and meso structural considerations (*Porter, 1990; Nelson, 1992; Edquist, 1997; O'Donnell, 1997*).

The competitive interactions of nation-states from an administrative reform perspective, address the question raised by political economists of whether considerations of efficiency should dominate those of welfare in shaping government priorities (*Stopford et al, 1991:55*). IPE converges with neo-institutional thinking on the role of knowledge and function of

epistemic communities in questioning the long term survival of the welfare state (*see Alvarez,1997:27*). This conflict of needs can be studied through power attributes.

Here, *Strange(1988)* broadly defines two major forces that shape international systems. These are relational power and structural power. Through this IPE power perspective, the problems recently identified by *Guy Peters(1997)* can be addressed in terms of differentiating between indigenous reform developments and those that have arisen through policy transfer mechanisms from external sources.

Power in the International System

Relational power is drawn from the realist perspective of international relations and describes the ability of A to get B to do something they otherwise would not do. Structural power however, is described as ‘the power to shape and determine the structures of the global political economy, within which other states (and regions), their political institutions, their economic enterprises and professional staff operate.’ (*Strange,1988:24-25*)

It is further argued that such power is associated with four separate but interrelated structures in the global system. These have been identified as security (6), finance, production and knowledge. Whilst the first three structures are addressed both directly and indirectly by Government, the fourth structure here, knowledge, which has been readily identified as being important in both the policy process (*Radaelli,1995*), the international environment (*Strange,1988; Russell,1995*) and governance and administrative structures (*Byrkjeflot,1997; Alvarez,1997*), is arguably the factor over which national (and regional) wealth is derived from the possession of superior competitiveness.

Defining knowledge as discussed above and earlier in a coherent and holistic fashion is beyond the scope of this paper (7) and it is an issue in of itself, that social science rarely qualifies or distinguishes from ‘information’ (*Radaelli,1995*). It can, in broad terms be stated however that administrative knowledge shapes managerial practices and is in turn shaped by them (*Alvarez,1997*). *Strange (1988:30)* and *Alvarez(1997:33)* suggest for example, that knowledge can be interpreted in two general ways, by viewing it as being either subjective or objective(8), both of which are important forms of structural and organizational (9) power. Knowledge

taken up and adopted by public sector organizations can then be viewed as comprising a package of these two types, where policy makers derive both subjective and objective awareness of these differing packages through the administrative practices in other nation-states. The mechanics of how this mix of knowledge is obtained, under what circumstances it is discovered, and who communicates it, is complex, although a focus on the actors and structures involved in this knowledge diffusion through the policy transfer literature can be useful in providing insights.

Arguably therefore, structural and relational power can be used to investigate the transfer of administrative practices between regions and nation-states with the objective of enhanced national competitiveness. Such a framework is broad based and a somewhat crude analytical tool, able to consider only one aspect of the origins and causes of change in the public and private sector. It is also likely to be of more importance in the public-private industrial and production sector environment, however it has heuristic potential in studying the emerging pseudo corporate environment of modern public administrations precisely because of an increased emphasis upon the business perspective.

The Policy Transfer Mechanism

Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996 identify policy transfer as one of a competing number of approaches in exploring the capture of knowledge and differing experiences in both the public and private sectors - lesson drawing (*Rose, 1991*), policy bandwaggoning (*Ikenberry, 1990*), policy fashion and policy diffusion (*Wright, 1997*) and policy convergence (*Bennet, 1991; Grant & McNamara, 1995*) are other terms that have been used to describe the specific relocation of policy aspects from one context to another, typically between different governance structures, but also occurring between different sectors of industrial activity (*see Arias & Guillen, 1997*) and under differing structuring conditions. It is part of a larger activity prevalent in both the public and private spheres reflecting modern managerial and competitive edge methods (10). Existing studies of policy transfer tend to have however been focused upon the multinational firm and its environment, to the detriment of other potential transfer routes and agents such as governmental actors and the global context in which they operate.

Policy convergence emerges from trends in international and global systems that direct the shape and general nature of national economies

reflecting the interplay between the four structures described previously. It is also arguably more likely to occur between nation-states with comparable origins such as those discussed by *Guy Peters (1997)*. Policy bandwaggoning, relates to the demonstration effect of the apparent success of a given policy in one context being duplicated in another for the same hoped for benefits. Policy transfer however relates more to the transmission mechanisms of specific policies as a result of the strategic decisions taken by actors inside and outside of government (*Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996:343*), and which determine the policy stream pursued (although policy convergence and policy transfer are arguably necessarily related (11)).

Earlier, the nature of structural power was related to the ability of an agency to influence global and international systems. Within those systems, operate professionals as well as enterprises and governments. Studies have highlighted that regions and nation states with stronger and more active professional associations tend to copy and reproduce organizational and structural formations in other countries (*Arias & Guillen, 1997*). Such associations therefore influence the rate of transfer or ideas and techniques.

The Meaning of Policy Transference

In this paper, the definition made by *Dolowitz & Marsh (1996)*, that policy transference relates to the specific emulation of a given policy aspect by one government of another's activity is adopted. Arguably this can relate to the different elements of the policy making process and encompass the general functional stages in the policy process, agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. These outline a functional framework within which the activities of the policy subsystem or transfer mechanism can be located (*Skok, 1995*). Thus policy transference can be equally argued to relate to one or more dimensions of a given policy arena and one or more stages in the policy process.

The practices that are transferred include policy goals, structure and content; policy instruments or *administrative* techniques; institutions, ideology, ideas, attitudes; and concepts, as well as negative lessons (*Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996:350*). The formation of government executive performance agencies for example, represents just such an administrative practice. This reform is usually implemented as part of a larger programme of reforms, although only certain aspects of the larger programme may be the actual focus of policy transference. Policy linkage with different reform practices, may also result in the transference of unwanted policy baggage

and associated socio-cultural cues. This can potentially result in the complete rejection of recognised administrative reform aspects and the promotion of indigenization(12), where cultural association can make them unacceptable as reform patterns to emulate.

Policy transference therefore refers to a process whereby 'knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place' (*Dolowitz & Marsh,1996:344*).

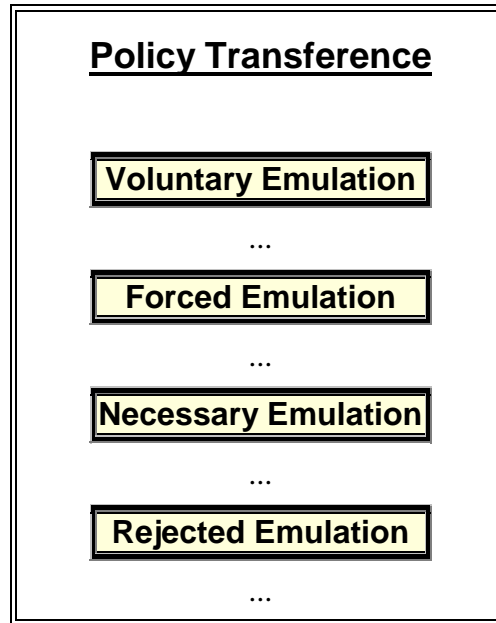
Transference occurs in different degrees in intensity, from copying, emulation, hybridization, synthesis and inspiration (*Dolowitz & Marsh,1996:351*). The actual occurrence of such transfers and their intensity can be determined for example by detailed inspection of relevant policy literature, parliamentary acts, governance structures and actions and so on.

A distinction is made between voluntary policy transference and involuntary policy transference (*Dolowitz & Marsh,1996*). Voluntary emulation and transference of policy practices may occur as a government seeks to gain benefits experienced by the policy originator, equally involuntary emulation and transference may occur through international agencies or supranational bodies forcing a change in a given governments structure and management operations.

Contained within this observation however, is the distinction between a necessary emulation and a choice emulation or transfer of a given policy practice. That is to say policy convergence may be a necessary but insufficient step in the process of policy transference, where convergence driven by deterministic means may not address the strategic needs of policy makers. To paraphrase and reclassify the distinction made by *Dolowitz & Marsh(1996)*, policy transference is therefore, depending upon the context and circumstances composed of, forced emulation (through for example Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), voluntary emulation (where the benefits that a given policy practice appears to bring to a government structure and performance are sought for overtly competitive reasons) and necessary emulation (where because of structural movements and policy activities of other governments, global and regional trends, a certain policy action is required in the observing government). Finally, there may be an additional

component, where in effect transfer of a given policy activity is explicitly rejected. The figure below indicates the different contexts which can be argued to structure policy transference.

FIGURE 1: Components Underpinning Policy Transference



Voluntary emulation, is more than simply caused by the search for policy solutions when existing solutions are viewed to be unsuccessful. New policy solutions may be preferred for ‘political’ reasons. As *Wright(1997:8)* states ‘reforms [...] are not politically agnostic’ in that they do not originate out of philanthropic thought or action(13). The period between recognition, transference and implementation of a given policy practice can therefore arguably lead to partial policy emulation which neither captures the benefits of the transferred policy nor minimizes the problems of the previous policy practice (14). The focus of policy success must therefore also be considered as well as attempts to limit the transplant of an idealised or misunderstood model. As *Cheung(1996)* rightly states, part of the issue of exploring the causes behind new public management (NPM) as it has been labeled (15), is whether any coherent theory can be formulated to account for administrative changes across countries, governments and cultures.

Contributing to the Discussion of a Theory of Administrative Reform

A neo-institutional perspective stresses the dependency of institutional formation upon pre-existing institutional paths and societal and cultural values (16). Changing paths for more effective institutional actions is difficult, although this is the focus of such recent (NPM) policy actions (see *Caiden, 1989*) and reforms in Eastern Europe (see *Grabher & Stark, 1997*). The effective transfer of policy practices is constrained by a range of factors, which *Rose (1991)* and *Guy Peters (1997)* approach from the 'supply' perspective, that of the originating nation-state or region. From the perspective of this paper, *Dolowitz & Marsh's (1996)* view upon constraints on the demand side as being a primary focus is supported, where past policies, existing structures and ideological preference are important variables and which constitute national (and regional) attributes in terms of structural and relational power.

Figure 1 given earlier, can be redrawn in terms of political-economic power and authority within a given governance system and this offers a research avenue to identify the policy transference process in administrative reform. Such a discussion may help identify the most suitable political framework in which to contextualize policy transference. In using the IPE regime of structural and relational (17) power, differences can be expected between the differing types of administrative structures discussed in the case studies (see *Cheung, 1996:32-33*) although equally, the drive for increased competitiveness in government services and administrations may negate this naturally historic difference.

The quest within comparative public administration has been for new ways of understanding cultural variables and other explanatory constructs (*Henderson, 1995*). One suggested methodology, particularly for non western administrations, has been to focus upon contextual studies, grounded in regional cultural values, an issue stressed by the neo-institutionalism framework. Such an approach can explicitly lead to the rejection of ideas through policy transference with recognised NPM nation-states and ethnocentrism. Indigenous factors can therefore emerge as being the major influences in shaping the policy stream, outcomes, structures and functions and in some cases dominate administrative reform options (18) (see *Guy Peters, 1997*). This can however lead to a reduction of structural and relational attributes in terms of international competitiveness.

In modern generic theories of management and organization, the relationship between organization, environment and the policy making and service provision perspective plays a central role. Academics suggest that the study of public administration is essentially a study of the issue of structural-functional distribution and changing allocations in governance structures (*Skok,1995*)(19). Generally, the public administrative socio-economic and political environment is very different from the private sector (20) and it may be that looking for patterns of convergence in reforms drawn from the private sector, which is a highly heterogeneous mix, is impossible.

However, reconsidering therefore the simple scenario given in *figure 1*, the range of possible different policy transfer actions that may occur given differing power structures and policy successes with associated competitive advantages can be outlined. The heuristic outline suggested in *figure ii* and *iii*, assumes that emulation is a desirable (either voluntary or necessary) or that it may be 'imposed' by the international system. Therefore in the figures below, country A operates a policy practice A whilst country B operates a policy practice B. The resulting influences derived from changes in the international system are judged as being either a policy success or not, which can either result in the practice endowing the nation state with structural power enhancing its position in terms of shaping the transference or not of the practice to the second nation state.

FIGURE 2: Construct of Some Simple Structural Power and Policy Success Considerations

| <i>Model</i> | <i>Country</i> | <i>Policy Success</i> | <i>Structural Power</i> | <i>Policy operation</i> | <i>Possible Action in shaping reform practices</i> |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | A | no | no | A | Internal focus and/or third party focus. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|--------------------------|--|
| | B | no | no | B | Voluntary emulation or rejection |
| 2 | A | yes | yes | A | Necessary emulation. |
| | B | no | no | Policy changed in B to A | |
| 3 | A | no | yes | A | Negative emulation - B necessarily dissuaded from policy B |
| | B | yes | no | B | |
| 4 | A | yes | no | A | Internal focus and/or third party focus. |
| | B | yes | no | B | Voluntary emulation or rejection |
| 5 | A | yes | no | Policy changed from A to | Negative emulation |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----|-----|---|--|
| | | | | B | |
| | B | no | yes | B | |

FIGURE 3: Construct of Some Simple Relational Power and Policy Success Considerations

| <i>Model</i> | <i>Country</i> | <i>Policy Success</i> | <i>Relational Power</i> | <i>Policy operation</i> | <i>Possible Action in shaping reform practices</i> |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 6 | A | no | no | A | Internal focus and/or third party focus. |
| | B | no | no | B | Voluntary emulation or rejection |
| 7 | A | yes | yes | A | Positive or negative forced emulation on country B |
| | B | no | no | A from B (or remain B) | |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|-----|-----|----------|---|
| 8 | A | no | yes | B from A | Positive or negative necessary emulation by A |
| | B | yes | no | B | |
| 9 | A | yes | no | A | Internal focus, third party focus. |
| | B | yes | no | B | Voluntary emulation or rejection |
| 10 | A | yes | no | B from A | Model 3. |
| | B | no | yes | B | |

Several trends emerge from *figures 2 and 3*. Firstly, two government structures arguably cannot possess structural and relational power in the same policy aspect, that is to say they are mutually exclusive policy practice attributes. One possibility suggested is, that given the correct factors, negative policy emulation can occur. That is to say, the power possessed by one government may be sufficient either to overtly or covertly dissuade a second government from pursuing the same policy practice or that the emulation may have strong negative aspects associated with it. For example, this may take the form of protectionism or neo protectionism such as Japan's Voluntary Export Requirements (VERs) and managed trade agreements particularly focused in the knowledge intensive industries. Furthermore, the possible outcome of a positive or negative forced/necessary emulation is also suggested, given different power relations and policy practices. *Wright(1997)* suggests that within public

sector reforms, radical reform initiatives require a strong state to initiate and implement them, such as with the Gore's US's deregulation reforms. This suggests limitations upon the range of possible policy transfer models in a power based analysis. In the next section, the actors involved in the transfer process are discussed followed by an attempt to 'fit' these descriptions with the discussions of the factors behind reform and performance based changes in the countries discussed.

Actors in the Policy Transfer Process

Actors in the policy process have been argued to play important roles in both the structural and functional allocation of resources and policy making in public administration and reform (*see Skok, 1995* for a discussion of such studies). A focus upon structural and relational power, would expect to identify certain actors playing a potentially more pivotal roles in policy transference under a given set of circumstances than others. Problems arise however, in determining these roles although it would be possible to use the list of potential policy actors identified by *Dolowitz & Marsh (1996:345)* and *Skok (1995)* to compile a further more complex table of expected relative roles under different power relations and policy successes. Such a list would include elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats/civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs/experts and supranational institutions for example.

To this list can be added the function and objective of potential new entrants (that is to say, those which are not part of the existing political structure or culture of the nation-state governance system) to the administrative reform environment that are derived from the external international system. As such reference is made to the work of *Snare (1995)*, *Skok (1995)* and *Kingdon (1984)*, who have focused upon the policy entrepreneur as the main external catalytic new entrant actor in shaping such policy processes and successes through the emergence of a policy window of opportunity (*Cram, 1994*).

Both *Snare (1995)* and *Skok (1995)* suggest that the policy entrepreneur role itself is composed of three distinct roles, each having a different and substantive activity in shaping the policy process through the streams of political activity, problem articulation, the discovery of policy alternatives and political processes. In the context of this paper, where concern is made with the mechanisms of transfer of policy practices, such roles of the policy expert, policy advocate or broker (*Skok, 1995:328*) and

policy troubleshooter or fixer (*Skok, 1995:326*), are equally applicable and explore the simplistic notion that public administration and policy implementation are synonymous and coterminous (*Skok, 1995*).

Before developing taxonomies further, with the potential result of reduced overall clarity, it would be more profitable to discuss the case studies and focus upon the set of contextual factors and interacting systems in each. *Dolowitz & Marsh (1996)* like *Rose (1991)* and *Wright (1997)* point out that the policy entrepreneur and expert may play a pivotal actor role through the formation of international epistemic communities (a point acknowledged earlier by *Strange (1988)* in an IPE perspective). As such, these expert communities can become central in shaping and effecting policy outcomes.

Hong Kong

The administrative reforms in Hong Kong highlight the role of the policy advocate in the transfer of reform practices from one governance structure to another. As such, the policy advocate is a political actor with a specific goal or objective shaped by internal blueprints. The pursued policy is undertaken in a proactive fashion and is typically task oriented (*Snare, 1995*). Whilst this is not the complete reason for the emergence of New Public Management (NPM) style practices and reform modalities in Hong Kong, the policy advocate has played a catalytic role in this atypical reform environment(21).

Beginning in 1989(22), public administrative reform in the territory, began to move away from the structured legacy of its colonial past. This was further developed by the Public Sector Reform Policy Group(23) in 1990 and 1991 with a series of broad reform strategies. Due to this administrative heritage, the government machinery was less reliant upon democratic institutions and procedures, and arguably more able to rapidly reflect strong executive leadership. Yet paradoxically, it is only with the reversal of the territories sovereignty that this strong guidance role has been exploited in favour of the public through legislative and administrative reforms and attempts made to redress the alienation and distance felt by the people of Hong Kong from their government.

It was with the arrival of the new Governor Chris Patten in 1992, acting in a policy advocate role, that the reforms discussed and initiated through 1990-1991(24) became more focused and serious in intent. In

Lam's(1996) study of decentralization in the Hong Kong reforms, the role of leadership within the territories civil service was identified as being a key value operating at all levels. Following the establishment of the government's Efficiency Unit in 1992, the governor's policy address of that year introduced the idea of performance pledges to government departments (*Burns,1994; Lee & Huque,1996; Lam,1996 (25)*). Tacit knowledge possessed by the governor drove this initiative, shaped not only by his experiences and political inclination in the UK (although there was little New Right ideology in the territory to build upon (*Cheung,1996*) but also by the governance structures in Hong Kong in the face of the imminent arrival of the Chinese. Performance pledges, driven from the top-down operate in conjunction with bottom-up incentives for civil servants who are fiscally rewarded (26) for accepting and institutionalising the new values associated with the new Hong Kong government's motto of 'Serving the Community'(27). Under this broad rubric, governance has been directed by the four elements of: vision and mission, customer feedback, staff commitment and departmental plans. It is within this last element, that performance pledges and related measures are the focus.

Where possible, trading funds were established for departments that provide services direct to the public and business. Other Departmental plans were comprised of the mission statements, performance pledges, financial summaries, performance indicators and human resource management plans (*Lee & Huque,1996:16*). By the end of 1995, all 47 departments offered and practiced such performance measures (28). These performance measures stated the services to be delivered, indicated the targets for each activity, the extent of success in meeting them, planned improvements, monitoring services and the complaints procedures. These reforms reflected policy bandwaggoning both in the influence of public reform success in the UK and Australia (29) as well as the increasing democratisation of the territory. The relative success of such reforms is primarily attributable to a change in leadership and specific policy advocacy, the situation of crisis as well as the contextual values of the territory, those of a strong and positive culture of the civil service (30) which facilitates managerial control of the changes (*Lee & Huque,1996: Cheung,1996*).

Overall, the governance structure of Hong Kong, prior to its return to Chinese sovereignty, was undergoing not only a public managerial reform but also a political reform, with accountability being the common linkage between the two. As both *Burns(1994)* and *Cheung(1996)* have

commented, the public sector reform package in Hong Kong has its ultimate impact upon both institutional development as well as human resource management reform. The reforms initiated were much broader than the initial public management canvas they were pinned to and were not primarily sourced from popular pressure for reform or competitive advantage edges. Instead they were seeking to overturn decades of colonial heritage and subservience and initiate a pervasive cultural change in the attitudes of civil servants (*Burns, 1994:242*).

In summary, it was a combination of both the needs of the Hong Kong region and the arrival and role of the new Governor that set the island off into NPM territory. That it was not wholly based on accepted NPM values is reflected in the atypical structure, performance and efficiency measures of the pre-existing governance structures (*Cheung, 1996*) (31). It is also reflected in the politically agnostic manner in which the reforms implemented were undertaken to reflect NPM values and characteristics, enhancing local initiatives and increasing their acceptance both by the civil staff and the public at large.

In the framework of this paper therefore, the emergence of the Hong Kong performance based departments reflected contextual values, the role of the policy advocate and the utilisation of policy bandwaggoning for the purposes of internal political and cultural reform. Tacit knowledge embedded in the policy advocate structured the implementation of the reforms NPM style policies can therefore be argued to have been emulated in a fashion reflected by model 7 in *figure 3*. That is to say, policy transfer was not forced by the success of NPM elsewhere, particularly in the UK, although this example had structured effects through the advocate and was a useful addition to the administrative reforms pursued. Policy emulation and the transfer of limited modalities of NPM was therefore generally positive by the terms described in *figure i*. Both *Lam(1996)* and *Burns(1994)* however have highlighted that the reforms have in certain aspects introduced negative elements into the civil service, with the suspicion amongst staff that the reforms were instigated to destabilize the government ahead of the transition to Chinese authority and the redesignation of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region (SAR).

China

China tends to differ from other countries both in terms of underlying philosophy and in the size of the governance structures involved.

Nevertheless, since 1978 following the backlash against the Cultural revolution (1966-1976) and the rejection of Mao's chosen successor, Zhou Enlai and later, Hua Guofeng, (*see Pyle, 1997:47-49*), Deng Xiaoping rose to power and instigated a series of reforms in the economic and public sector environment(32) with the aims of adjusting government organizational structure, transforming government management processes and improving efficiency and productivity in an increasingly internationalized economic structure (*Jiaqi, 1992*).

Whilst reforms in both arenas have been sourced from Western countries, China has sought to inject into its own political-economic systems such suitable capitalistic elements and traits. This has always been undertaken through a system which promotes 'Chinese characteristics' to such reforms (*Aufrecht, 1995*). The ideological heritage of such reforms is less of an issue under Xiaopings leadership than previous premierships although technical expertise is never regarded as being neutral. The focus upon external policy activities in such areas has become an open and recognised option, through such initiatives as the United Nations Development Programme, where foreign experts are brought to China whilst Chinese administrators are sent overseas.

Internally however, several paradoxes have emerged in the public sector reforms since 1978. In 1993, the 'Regulations on State Functionaries' act was adopted by the Chinese authorities after a marathon trial and debate between economic reformers and communist hard liners in the Chinese communist party that began in 1984 (*see Tsao, 1995*). Since 1989 and Tianeman Square, the hardliners gained a dispassionate edge to their bargaining ensuring that it wasn't until a decade after the initial drafting of the proposal that it was finally agreed to by all actors. The act strongly endorses and outlines Western style merit principles for public management. A job classification system, recruitment by examination and performance evaluations for staff and ministry are outlined. Supporting this act, were other governmental reforms which included the government organizational restructuring reforms in 1982 and 1988 aimed at better and more competitive management of the socialist market economy, a reduction in the government management of economic enterprises (33) and the freeing of central government from daily routines through the empowerment of enhanced agency formation (*Jiaqi, 1992*). These agencies are relatively free from influences of different interests which allow them to devote attention to policy making. These latter reform abolished departments having a

business function and replaced them with corporations more able to interact with the emergent socialist-market economy (*Tsao, 1995*).

In addition, the underlying philosophy of such competitive reforms does not sit well with egalitarian approach of Confucianism. Positions and pay within the Chinese civil service are governed by a rank-in-person classification, which promotes corruptive practices (*Tsao, 1996*) and which is difficult to align with performance based pay and organizational development. Such reforms affect not only the day to day operations of the Chinese civil service, but also affect its recruitment practices, where intellect and merit conflict with Confucian ideal (34). Furthermore, a merit and performance based approach to governance conflicts with traditional Chinese public management principles of personalism and *Guanxi*, the formalized network of personal favours and obligations a civil official enjoys (*Aufrecht, 1995*). With expertise never being regarded as being neutral as discussed above, and *cadres* or an administrative elite (35) playing an important role in Chinese government, appointment, delegation and creation of performance based structures and agencies within the Chinese government serves the two masters of the Communist Party and the Chinese Government (36).

It was stated earlier that along with the pace of economic and administrative reforms have come increased corruptive practices as comparative pay of civil servants falls with new 'westernised' business élites. Some government agencies have responded to this through the establishment of agency owned enterprises in the market place, which are undertake business and raise funds to increase salaries and improve facilities (*see Aufrecht, 1995*). It seems that the NPM style aspect of competitive government agencies is realised not as a direct result of government reforms, but as a requirement of internal changes and economic pressures.

Whilst the emerge of performance based agencies in Chinese public administration lags that of most Western nation-states, that they have emerged in a significantly different environment, structured by historical precedent, strong cultural and contextual values, highlights the competitive and economic advantages being sought by a tiny, but robustly growing combination of interdependent private and government structures. The most recent reforms have resulted in redefined functions, institutional establishment within an organization, a changed system of leadership and decision making processes.

In terms of the models of policy transfer outlined earlier, China has moved from a rejected emulation philosophy on ideological grounds, to a more pragmatic incorporation of Chinese styled Western public management reform practices. From *figure 2*, model 1 is suggested as the starting point for consideration of policy transfer, although model 2 with necessary emulation techniques is also suggested, driven by internal pressures resulting from the need be involved in competitively structured international and global business systems.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to associate arguments drawn from policy transfer, international political economy, the nature of competitiveness and administrative reform, to suggest an alternative route to understanding how and why certain administrative reforms have been undertaken by nation-states. Whilst its major limitations have been discussed in the text, the methodology suggests a useful heuristic tool for identifying, categorising and interpreting policy developments affecting nation-state government structures.

Furthermore, at this somewhat preliminary level, the cursory inclusion of the case studies supports the need for further work in clarifying the table of models given earlier as well as more detailed study of the countries more mainstream administrative theory tends to focus upon such as the UK, the US and Australia but from a more 'demand' and external perspective. Nevertheless, the paper has illustrated that there is a need to broaden the accepted understanding of administrative reform, especially in terms of the role and function of the international environment and factors derived from its development. Thus, whilst IPE has moved away from an explicitly state centred view of the mechanisms of a national economy, this paper has reviewed this position by re-examining a state-centred perspective of government structures underpinned by international factors.

Notes

1. A survey of the literature and information on the world wide web highlighted public sector reform programmes are active in New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, UK, Ireland, USA, China, Swaziland, Zambia, Thailand, South Pacific Islands, Venezuela,

Dominican Republic, Canada, Mauritius, Costa Rica, South Korea and the East European States to name but a few.

2. In their review of the literature of policy transfer mechanisms, they suggest a range of political approaches beyond pluralism that may have more relevance to understanding the public policy process through policy transference in this context. Amongst these suggested routes are New Institutionalism, rational choice and neo-marxism perspectives.
3. Porter's original diamond of competitive forces stressed the power of suppliers and buyers, the threat of new entrants to the market and that of new or substitute products as well as the existing rivalry within the industry. Dunning (cited by *O'Donnell (1997)* and *Lawton (1997)*) added several further factors to consider when understanding the nature of competitive strategy. Amongst these where the role of the government and its structures, the element of chance events as well as the function of foreign investment.
4. Four sub types of administration styles generally denoted by the title of 'western'. These are Anglo-American, Germanic, Napoleonic and Scandinavian.
5. This makes the role of historical precedents implicit, thus facilitating the identification of the nature of the relationships between two countries.
6. This was arguably more relevant to public and private sector interests when the realist perspective dominated the international environment, such as during the two cold wars.
7. See *Spender(1996)* or *Alvarez(1997)* for a brief summary of the principal dimensions to be grasped in approaching this arena.
8. The subjective interpretation of knowledge refers to its meaning to the owner of the knowledge - this includes for example practical knowledge, intellectual knowledge, pastime knowledge, spiritual knowledge and unwanted knowledge. The second class of knowledge is concerned with the objective perspective derived from a particular disciplinary interpretation, such as mundane, scientific and humanistic for example.

9. *Spender (1996)* quoting *Nonaka and Takeuchi(1995)*, outlines how the interaction between tacit and non tacit (explicit) modes of knowledge can be central to the understanding of organizational knowledge creation.
10. Such as benchmarking, policy deployment (this is also known by its original Japanese title, *Hoshin Kanri (Eureka & Ryan,1990)*) downsizing, the three E's of efficiency-effectiveness-economy, marketisation and agentification amongst others (see *Wright,1997*).
11. One of the most discussed examples of this is the world wide public sector reform trend for privatization policies, where in some countries such as Chile, these hoped for benefits were taken to policy extremes. It can also relate to different sectors of activity in more mundane success duplication efforts, such as the early efforts in the EU technological programmes to copy and emulate Japanese competitive success in advanced technologies.(see for example *CEC,1982*).
12. This has been described as a set of native patterns neither imposed nor copied from the West (colonial powers and/or Eurocentric systems). These patterns may encompass all of administration and all administrators or only a portion. Often they are said to involve religious or ideological elements (*Henderson,1995*).
13. An example would be the nuclear energy policy of the UK and the US in comparison with that of Japan, where technological pride and national security were viewed as greater policy priorities than efficiency and cost, which frequently overlooked and ignored easily obtained benefits to be derived form a slight change in policy priorities.
14. In the context of the nuclear energy policies for example, successive and better reactor designs caused rapid technology pushes and swings and ill thought through policies, partially implemented.
15. The basic tenets of NPM are argued to be a)the reduction of bureaucratic hierarchies and rules, b) the identification of costs of inputs and outputs, c) the use of contracts for the provision of public services, d)the introduction of purchaser-provider distinctions, through disaggregating organizations and their functions, e)the

increase of provider competition, f) the increase of consumer power through enhanced scope for exit and redress (*Lam(1996) quoting Hood(1994)*).

16. See *Nelson & Winter(1982)* for example on the issue of institutional path dependency.
17. In such frameworks for example, the state of California is able to effectively shape the products, sales and designs of automobiles through stringent environmental legislation and a large market of eager consumers. It has in effect, structural power over this regime.
18. *Henderson(1995)* stresses for example the reforms in China and Iran.
19. As such, a current policy focus upon policy networks and models has been suggested as offering a methodology of reconciling the changing values and practices of public administration with more traditional political and administrative requirements (referred to as the politics/administrative dichotomy) through a focus upon policy actors, their functions, roles and interactions (*see Cole et al,1991*).
20. Typically, public sector management focuses upon external values such as social justice, equality, legitimacy and the proper discharge of duties.
21. The reforms in Hong Kong were not motivated by the NPM standard global claims of the need to suppress Big Government, improving efficiency or coping with fiscal crisis *Cheung(1996)*.
22. The Finance branch of the Hong Kong government initiated the move to improve the process of financial management with publication of the Public Sector Reform document.
23. The Policy Reform Group is comprised of senior government officials and representatives of the private sector many of whom were appointed members of the Legislative Council (*Burns,1994*).
24. These discussions were focused in the Government Secretariat and a Public Sector Reform Steering Group (*Lam,1996*).

25. Performance pledges were one aspect of the four target areas identified by the Efficiency Unit for decentralizing the government. They were part of the Operational Reforms.
26. Such structures can however create additional difficulties for governance structures and move away from traditional public sector management ethos and values.
27. Part of the reason for the need to 'reward' civil servants for institutionalising reform values is aside from the establishment of a business ethos, the fact that with no UK style ministers to be held accountable for policy and actions, the civil servants themselves are made accountable (*Lam, 1996*).
28. There were also nine internal service departments which operated such measures.
29. Hong Kong government officials have stated that they were impressed by the public sector reform in Australia and the UK where similar movements have been underway for a length of time (*Burns, 1994*).
30. In this sense, civil servants feel a strong commitment to adopt the policy at hand and occurrences of whistle blowing are argued to be relatively uncommon amongst such staff (*Lee & Huque, 1996*).
31. That is not to say that Hong Kong was escaping from pressures for increased efficiency from a reduced resource base as *Lam (1996:32)* illustrates.
32. Such reforms had been a focus of Xiaoping's activity since 1966, where following the failure of the Cultural revolution to raise living standards, he had a relatively free hand to introduce policies he favoured and restore incentives to decision making.
33. It was also stated that there would be a reduction to 59 (from 86) of the number of ministries, commissions and units under the State Council. Government employees were also expected to fall by 25% during this time.
34. Where once acceptance to the Chinese Civil Service was based upon the ability of the candidate to recite and know the nine

Confucian texts, entrance examinations have replaced them (*Aufrecht, 1995*).

35. *Ibid*, p.179

This has effectively resulted in two overlapping bureaucracies.

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