POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:
Lessons from the Chilean Policy on
Public Management Modernization

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Abstract

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the implementation of public management modernization policy between 1990 and 2013. Programs and initiatives included in the modernization policy have been the control management system, the procurement system, the Civil Service and the “High Public Management”, transparency and the access to public information, and the program seeking to improve effectiveness in public management called “Chile Gestiona.” This study applies the scheme to analyze policy implementation suggested by Hasenfeld and Brock (1991), who identify the driving forces domain such as the pursuit of rationality, organization-policy environment fit, bureaucratic discretion and adaptation, power relations, and leadership and competence. Information analyzed in this study comes from 67 interviews to actors who have played key roles in the implementation of modernization initiatives, official documents, press clippings and academic literature.

Findings of this study diverge from those of Hasenfeld and Brock. This might be attributed to methodological aspects but also to the characteristics of the government activity areas that the two policies belong to. This would imply an association between the characteristics of the policy area and the major forces domain driving implementation.
INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this article is to identify the main factors influencing the implementation of the Chilean public management modernization policy (PMMP). An additional focus is to assess whether there would be differences in the implementation of policies from different areas of government and what conceptual implications derive from it. The analysis of factors that play important roles in the execution of policy mandates not only contribute to the understanding of the role of implementers but also to realize whether or not there is common grounds in the implementation of policies from different areas of government activity.

The article focuses on Chile and analyzes the implementation of the public management modernization policy (PMMP). Specific endeavors in the context of this policy have addressed the management control system, the public procurement system, the civil service and the hiring of senior public managers in a merit-based selection system, transparency and the citizen access to public information, and the program called Chile Gestiona, which is oriented to improve results and productivity of public agencies.

The Chilean PMMP is rather an endogenic policy since it is not originated in citizen’s demands but in authorities and high public officials concerns about how to make the State more effective to implement other policies that are directly related to the improvement of the population well being. On the other hand, Chile’s PMMP is a policy endeavor in whose context a variety of initiatives and programs have been undertaken from 1990 to 2013, covering five democratic administrations with different ideological orientations.

Thus, the analysis of the Chilean PMMP gives the opportunity to identify the main factors driving policy implementation, to understand their role and to realize whether there would be similarity between the
Chilean PMMP and what the literature have found in studies on US social policy cases.

The following sections of the article includes an exposition on the theoretical framework, a description of methods and data used in the analysis, a presentation of the evidence on the implementation of the Chilean PMMP, and a discussion on its conceptual implications. The final section offers the main conclusions from the study.

ON THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Research on policy implementation has a long tradition. Challenging the common understanding that “no research under the explicit label of implementation was carried out before the publication of Pressman and Wildavsky’s seminal book titled ‘Implementation’ in 1973,” Saetren (2005: 561 – 569) shows that studies in this field started in the decade of 1930, mainly through doctoral dissertations, and that the publications of books and journal articles on this theme “can be traced back to, at least the mid-1950s and even earlier.” Policy analysis has been concentrated on formulation issues (see, for instance, Scartascini et al 2011, Stein et al 2008, Boeninger 2007, Stein et al 2006, Aninat et al 2006) and the topic of policy implementation has just recently started to be addressed (see, for instance, Ardanaz et al 2010, Cortazar 2007).

Dimitrakopoulos and Richarson (2001: 336) define policy implementation as “the complex process of putting a policy into practice by a variety of mechanisms and procedures involving a wide and diverse range of actors”. Later, they argue that this “is the stage of the policy process where the underlying theories of policy decisions, the choice of policy instruments and the resources allocated during the formulation process are tested against reality.”

Thus, the analysis of policy implementation would be the identification of factors that are mainly influencing what people or targeted sectors actually receive from the state or government interventions. Putting
in this way, the dependent variables would be the actual or intended results of the policy while the independent variables would those influencing factors.

The search of those influential factors has led to the rise of perspectives of how implementation analysis should be undertaken. In a top-down perspective, Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980), for instance, suggest that there would be three sets of variables involved in implementation processes: tractability of the problem, ability of the statute to structure implementation and non-statutory variables affecting implementation. Bardach (1977), in turn, sees implementation as a game in which actors behave strategically to influence the implementation of a program with the purpose of protecting their interests; then those in charge of implementing the policy should structure the game in such a way that the desired outcome can be obtained. Others have walked the opposite way, such as Lipsky (1980) who argue that street level bureaucrats would play a major role in policy implementation, since they design routines and mechanisms to fill the omissions of the policy. In words of Hill and Hupe (2009: 52), in the Lipsky point of view “implementation of policy is really about street-level workers with high service ideals exercising discretion under intolerable pressure ... (and) attempts to control them hierarchically simply increase their tendency to stereotype and disregards the needs of their clients.

On the other hand, Ramesh (2008: 44) sees implementation as both macro and micro processes, arguing that while “macro implementation refers to federal or central interface with state agencies, where the policy is enacted”, micro implementation would address the “state or field level, where the policy is executed through projects.” According this view, the flow would go from macro to micro implementation.

In turn, Elmore (1979-1980) distinguishes two clear approaches to analyzing policy implementation: forward mapping and backward mapping. The former assumes that “policymakers control the
organizational, political and technological processes that affect implementation” (p.603), that “process are linked in essential hierarchical relationship” (p.604) and because of that “implementation begins at the top of the process, with as clear a statement as possible of the policymaker’s intent and proceeds through a sequence of increasingly more specific steps to define what it is expected of implementers at each level” (p.602). Backward mapping instead is a kind of analysis that walks the opposite way. It begins at the lowest level and backs up through the organizational structure to realize the capacity of the implementing agency to accomplish the policy goals. According to Elmore (1979-1980: 605), backward mapping assumes that “the closer one is to the source of the problem, the greater is one’s ability to influence it; and the problem-solving ability of complex system depends not on hierarchical control but on maximizing discretion at the point where the problem is most immediate.”

Ramesh (2008) and Elmore (1979-1980) describe the perspectives of the classical debate about the top-down and bottom-up models of analysis on policy implementation. On this, Hill y Hupe (2009) argue that top-down perspective would be chosen with the purpose to achieve simplicity in the analysis, while bottom-up approach would be preferred by those who stress complexity. Seen in perspective, both approaches may be seen as complementary, since taken together they provide a much better understanding about the reality of implementation (Howlett and Ramesh 2003; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). In turn, Elmore (1985) argue that the combination of both approaches help to understand the selection of means and tools made by the policy designers as well as the motivation of those who put the policy into practice.

Thus, the analysis of policy implementation would be the search for explanations of what would be the factors (or variables) associated to an actual or intended result of a policy intervention. Those factors or variables might be located at the macro or micro level, at the top or at the bottom of
the structure, which may be identified through a forward or backward mapping analysis.

After examining 37 studies on implementation of social policy – including top-down, bottom up and iterative analysis – Hasenfeld and Brock (1991) identify five types of patterns playing a key role, which they call driving forces domain. According to these authors, policy implementation may be characterized as the dynamic interaction of the following driving forces domains: the pursuit of rationality, organization-policy fit, bureaucratic discretion and adaptation, power relations, and leadership and competence. This article will test whether these main forces domain may be useful to explain the implementation of a policy beyond the social policy area, such as the Chilean PMMP, and whether the order of relative importance of them found by the cited authors correspond to the one of the implementation of PMMP.

The pursuit of rationality would refer to how the relationship between goals and means allocated to the policy is understood and whether the implementers behave according to the policy statute. The organization-policy fit pay attention to the organizational structure in which the policy is being implemented. The organizational setting play a major role in implementing the policy because “organizations tend to develop routines, or standard operating procedures, by which personnel interact in a regular and predictable ways to solve regular and predictable problems” (O'Toole and Montjov 1984: 492). The bureaucratic discretion and adaptation refers to the street level bureaucrats behavior when implementing a policy. The power relations driving force focuses on whether a concentration of power would facilitate implementation or whether the lack of clarity about goals and means in the policy statute would led to negotiation between implementers and stakeholders. Leadership and competence as a driving force refers to how and what type of leadership may guide the implementing organization to fulfill the policy mandate.
Thus, in the following sections this article will test whether these driving forces are or not present in the implementation of the efforts to modernize public management in Chile.

METHODS AND DATA

This is a case study aimed at explaining how the implementation of the Chilean PMMP was carried out. According to Yin (1994: 1) the case study is the preferred strategy when the research question is about “how” or “why”, when the researcher has little control over the events and when the research concentrates on a contemporary phenomenon of the real life. In turn, the explicative case study allow to identify the best explanation – among several – on a set of event, which later can be applied to similar situations within a same phenomenon (Yin 1994: 5). In addition, the word case refers to “experiences in which events involve interventions that may lead to changes in the policy on public management” (Barzelay et al 2003: 23).

Following Hasenfeld and Brock (1991), the unit in this study is the inter-organizational network in which PMMP has been implemented. Data comes from four sources: interviews, official documents, academic bibliography and the press. 67 interviews were conducted seeking to get an integral view about the implementation of PMMP. Two ways of identifying potential interviewees were applied: making a list of people who performed key positions during the PMMP implementation and asking the interviewees to suggest other key people to interview. Interviewees were high-level public officials (an ex President, Ministers, Undersecretaries, Chief of Public Agencies), congressmen, public managers, high-level advisors, leaders of unions of public employees, experts and scholars (see table Nº1). Interviewees were selected according criteria of theoretical sampling and theoretical redundancy, which permitted to collect testimonies and information that led to identify relevant analytical categories and to avoid
getting already known information or without analytical value (Valles 2007).

Table No1. Type of Actor Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Actor Interviewed</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undersecretaries</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiefs of Public Agencies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors &amp; Public Managers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressmen</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts &amp; Scholars</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s records.

With the purpose of identifying the main factors on the implementation process, interviews included open questions on strategies, concepts and objectives guiding the implementation, fostering factors and obstacles faced, main characteristics of the process, main actors and their role, main decisions made, and what those in charge of the policy did to implement it. The interviews were done as nice conversations on the area in which the interviewee participated. Interviews were done in different moments between 2008 and 2013 depending on the availability of time of interviewees. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and, later, analyzed through the application of software for qualitative analysis and the “grounded theory method.”

Although the group of interviewees does not constitute a representative sample, a key aspect to identify the perceived relative importance of each force domain was to determine how often the interviewees referred to issues related to these forces domain. The analysis of the interviews allowed identifying sentences by interviewees related to each main forces domain. These sentences were grouped according the role fulfilled by the interviewee during the implementation process (high public official, advisor or public manager, and others) and counted (table No2). Since each interviewee may have talked more than once on issues

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1 For an explanation of the “grounded theory method” see Valles 2007
related to a main force domain, the number of sentences collected is far greater than the number of interviewees. The recurrence in which an interviewee has referred to a particular factor has been understood as the importance that he/she is giving to it. In addition to that, an analysis about the relationship among these forces domain and how the interviewees perceive them is also undertaken.

Press clippings, from 1990 to 2012, were analyzed with the purpose of complementing the information provided by interviews, putting the testimonies and the role of actors in context as well as capturing the relevant facts and circumstances that occurred along the implementation. “El Mercurio”, “La Tercera”, “La Cuarta”, “La Nación” y “El Siglo” were the newspaper examined.

The reading of official documents was aimed at identifying the government goals on the policy, interventions undertaken by authorities, and roles played by other policy actors. Particular attention was given to Presidential Orders, Reports from the Congress, Law Histories, program proposals, and governmental programs of presidential candidates.

In addition to that, academic literature, expert documents and think tanks reports have been also examined to understand the debate on the issues addressed by the policies whose implementation is analyzed in this article.

IMPLEMENTING THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT MODERNIZATION POLICY

A previous step in the analysis of the PMMP implementation is to clarify it conceptually, categorize it and differentiate it from related concepts. According to Barzelay et al (2003: 20) “Public Management Policies are government wide institutional rules and routines … (which) … relate not only to people, organizations, and procedures but also to planning, execution, auditing, and review of public expenditures … (These) policies fall into the following categories: expenditure planning and financial management, civil service and labor relations, procurement, organization and methods, and audit and evaluation.”
In turn, state reform and public management modernization are two related concepts though different. State reform would refer to a change process aimed at a politically defined end, which demand an intense and deep action on one or more areas of the State, and where this intensity also characterize the administrative functioning of the State (Pollit and Bouckaert 2004). Public management modernization instead would be related to bounded changes in the State functioning, included in government agendas, oriented to a physical, organizational or technological rejuvenation (Garretón y Cáceres 2003).

For the Chilean case, Olavarría et al (2011: 115) argue that “the concept of state reform would refer to politically deliberate changes in the ends pursued by the State, in one or more areas of activity, with the purpose of recognizing new social realities or influencing on them, given the leading role that the State has on society.” For these authors, public management modernization would be associated to “changes restricted to structures and procedures in public sector organizations aimed at improving the effectiveness of the State functioning.”

Characterization of the Public Management Modernization Policy

The Chilean PMMP has been a governmental policy, involving a wide variety of public organizations, focused on improving the functioning of the administrative apparatus of the State. Its implementation has been an incremental process, whose landmarks have been the management control system, the procurement system, the civil service and the merit-based selection system of high public managers, transparency and citizen access to public information, and the program called Chile Gestiona (Chile Manage).

The management control system was the first initiative implemented directly focused to the modernization of public management. Its implementation formally begun by mid 1990s with the creation of the Inter-Ministry Committee for the Modernization of Public Management –
under the administration of President Frei Ruiz-Tagle – and after President Aylwin stated, in his last address before Congress, that “it is necessary to dignify public function, speed up procedures, stimulate merit and initiative and set strict parameters of responsibility (Aylwin 1993). According to the Chilean Budget Office, the objective of the management control system is to contribute to the efficient allocation of public resources to different programs, projects and organizations and stimulate improvements in public management (Guzmán 2005: 16). It includes the following instruments: performance indicators, comprehensive evaluation of expenditures of programs and organizations, the management-improving program, and the integral management balance (Guzmán 2005: 16).

The setting of the procurement system as well as the civil service and the merit-based selection system of high public managers rose as a consequence of the “Political-Legislative Agreement for the State Modernization, Transparency, and Economic Growth Promotion” reached between President Lagos and the opposition. This agreement, signed in January 2003, was the way to solve a political crisis produced by several corruption scandals during the first part of President Lagos administration (Olavarría et al 2011, Navia 2004).

The Chilean Civil Service was created with the mission of “promoting and contributing to the State modernization and public management improvement, through advisory to public organization and government authorities in the strategic management of the public personnel” (Servicio Civil 2014). Its duties are organized in two main areas: the Council for the High Public Management and the Office for Personnel Development.

The Council carry out the selection process of public managers in charge of implementing public policies, proposes between three and five candidates to the political authority who has the legal capacity to appoint the public manager, prepares the performance agreement to be signed between the political authority and the public manager, and follows up the
fulfillment of that performance agreement. The nominee is appointed for a three years term and the appointment may be renewed as much as twice.

The Office for Personnel Development advises public organizations in the design, implementation and upgrading of their policies on public personnel development; generates, upgrade and disseminates a code of good labor practices among public organizations; and gives the Annual Award for Excellence in Public Management, which involves a monetary incentive for the personnel of the winning organization. This Office increasingly has taken the role of mediation between the unions of public workers and the Ministry of Finances, which has increased its legitimacy, and because of that has taken the role of validating two components of the management-improving program: public personnel training and performance evaluation (Cortázar 2011).

The transparency and citizen access to public information was enacted through the law 20.285, which declares that acts, decisions of public organizations and their supporting or complementing documents, the procedures followed for making the decision, every information elaborated with public budget and any other information in hands of a public organization are public, except that a law specifically declares otherwise (Chile 2008, art. 5). This law creates the Council for Transparency to promote transparency in the public administration, to monitor the fulfillment of norms on transparency and publicity of information of public organizations as well as to guarantee the citizen right of accessing to public information (Chile 2008, art. 32). The Council begun its operation on April 29, 2009 and since then it has undertaken the task of implementing the policy.

The Chile Gestiona Program focuses on the role fulfilled by every undersecretary in implementing coordination mechanisms in his/her domain, similar to those used by a CEO of a holding, with the purpose of delivering integral strategic reports to each interested party involved in the management control system (MINDHA 2012). The Program also requires
Chief of public organizations to deliver accountability reports (every month and trimester) on the main activity indicators used in the day-to-day management. According to the Program, every undersecretary should monitor the management of public organization under his/her authority, promote actively the using of relevant indicators of the main activity of those organizations, monitor periodically the fulfillment of the individual performance agreement of public managers appointed through the High Public Management System, foster the improvement and standardization of human resources information systems, and establish practices of periodical accountability report.

**The Collected Evidence**

Implementation of PMMP has been a long-term endeavor. In it, several stages can be distinguished, which correspond to the policy landmarks mentioned in the previous section. The first initiative launched in the context of PMMP was the management control system by mid 1990s, the procurement system as well as the civil service and the merit-based selection system of high public managers was enacted in January 2003, transparency and citizen access to public information law was put in practice in April 2009, and the program called Chile Gestiona (Chile Manage) started operations in May 2011. This characterizes the PMMP as an incremental policy effort in which these initiatives can be seen as sequential steps or rungs of a same ladder.

In this process, Hasenfeld and Brock (1991) identification of five driving forces domains helps to understand the implementation efforts of these initiatives. Table N°2 express the vision of the interviewees of the relative importance of each driving forces domain on the implementation of the Chilean PMMP, based on the recurrence they address these forces domain in the interview.
Table N°2. Relative Importance of Driving Forces Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driving Forces Domain</th>
<th>Role of Interviewee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nº of Sentences</td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Nº of Sentences</td>
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<td>Nº of Sentences</td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Nº of Sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Public Officials</td>
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<td>Advisors &amp; Public Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23,36%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17,65%</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>20,92%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization-Policy Environment Fit</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21,17%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24,51%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12,50%</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>21,68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic Discretion &amp; Adaptation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17,15%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10,78%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56,25%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17,09%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Relation</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16,79%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10,78%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18,75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15,31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Competence</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>21,53%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36,27%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12,50%</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>25,00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>100,00%</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100,00%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100,00%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>100,00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s calculations

As table 2 shows, in the overall, interviewees identify leadership and competence as the main factor in implementation, followed by organizational policy fit, rationality, and bureaucratic discretion and adaptation. Power relation seems to be less important than the other four driving forces domain. However, high public officials pay most attention to rationality, followed by leadership and competence, and organizational policy fit. Advisors and public managers mainly concentrate their view in leadership and competence and then pay attention to organizational policy fit. And public worker union’s leaders, congressmen, and experts and scholars are more concerned, by far, with bureaucratic discretion and adaptation factors.
Results of table Nº2 are not surprising. They report main concerns of different stakeholders of the PMMP implementation process. While high public officials focus their attention on the transformation of policy goals and purposes into activities, and capacities of the person heading the process; advisors and public managers are more concerned in how to mobilize groups and/or the organization towards the policy goals and purposes, and what organizational adjustments have to be done consequently. Union’s leaders, congressmen, and experts and scholars main concern instead is how public management modernization affects public employees roles, status and organizational routines. Chilean congressmen did not involve with PMMP because they perceived that it was a technocratic initiative, not directly related to people’s demands, and even the center-left Concertación was not in favor to the initiative on “High Public Management”2 – a very important modernizing initiative – because they felt it was a rather rightist plan that would affect public workers who very mainly vote for them (Olavarría et al 2011).

An interesting point is that leadership and competence, rationality, and organizational policy fit are factors that rather represent a top-down perspective of implementation, which coincide with the expected perspective of those interviewees developing a role of high public officials, advisors or public managers. On the other hand, bureaucratic discretion and adaptation as well as power relation are factors consistent with a bottom-up perspective, which – as explained above – concerns principally to public employee’s representatives, congressmen and scholars.

Leadership is seen as a set of qualities of the person heading a group or organization in charge of implementation and competence mainly refers

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2 The center-left coalition “Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia” was in power from 1990 to 2010, backing Presidents Aylwin, Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Lagos and Bachelet. Notwithstanding that during Frei Ruiz-Tagle administration “High Public Management” was an initiative included in the modernizing efforts, it could not be implemented due to a lack of political support within the Concertación. It would be enacted in the following administration, that of President Lagos, in the context of a severe political crisis and as part of the negotiation with the opposition to solve that crisis (see Olavarría et al 2011).
to the domain of technical knowledge. According to interviewees, key qualities of an implementing leader are self-motivation, capacity to motivate others, and commitment to the policy. An expert that worked implementing PMMP in a public organization explains: “yes, we had very bold leaders. Speeches of the one heading my organization were very motivating. He was very capable; we joined the public service because he sold us the idea, we were seduced by the motivation he had, he was convinced, one listened his speeches, his discussions and one concluded he was very clear about the orientation of the policy implementation, and he also had a capacity to listen.”

Though motivation is seen important, it is not an extended characteristic among public managers. On this, a key advisor of the Minister leading PMMP implementation explain “we concluded that what was happening is that a fraction of the high public managers were self-motivated, had a high professional level and fulfilled the goals but they were a notorious minority.”

In addition, according with interviewees, motivation goes hand by hand with commitment to the policy being implemented. On the impetus of the modernization, a top manager of a regulatory agency points out that “this has very much to do with the vision of the Chief of the public organization … has very much to do with his/her commitment and that may make the difference … having motivated and committed leaders things go well.” Similarly, a presidential advisor explains that those public organizations that modernized did it because “they had leaders that took risks, made organizational changes, improved performance, work environment and salaries, and stayed long time leading them… (and) that allowed them to have political support and generate legal changes. That made the whole difference.”

On the risk taken, one ex public manager recognized as highly effective in implementing PMMP points out “(authorities) were angry with me because they said I was a very conflictive person but effective. They
also saw that my organization went further in modernization. Then, of course, when things resulted they took the successes of my organization as their own but before they saw me as a menace because they thought they may loose votes.”

On the other hand, since competence is seen associated to expert knowledge, competent leaders prefer that implementation be guided by technical and legal criteria, and because of that they claim autonomy and no political interference. A public manager that implemented PMMP in his organization express “internal leadership is very important” and adds “not politicizing public organizations is also very important, you may appoint people that some politician asked to do, make decision based on politics and, of course, you may do that and be very popular for few months but at the end of the day the quality of implementation would not be good.” An ex public manager recognized for having been an effective leader in implementing PMMP states “I made a couple of questions to Ministers related to my area of work and they gave me a wide autonomy to make decisions based purely on criteria of legality, equality before the law, and hardness when was required. Then, because I got those guaranties I accepted the job.”

Public managers interviewed coincidentally express that the message they receive from their authorities to implement PMMP is “do what you can do but do not make problems,” which seem to be in accordance with the autonomy they claim. One of these public manager adds “I myself set the goals I pursued as Director; nobody told me what I had to do, neither the President nor the Minister.”

According to the overall collected testimonies, leadership, competence, motivation and commitment appear to be key factors in PMMP implementation. Coincidentally a presidential advisor points out that “despite all the complexities, a good public manager makes the difference and may make a lot of things; I see that every day.” A reputed
public manager adds “the leadership of the number one is required, of course, but it is also required to have a team in the second line.”

Leadership and competence appears associated to the pursuit of rationality. Leaders and their close aides are highly concerned in organizing implementation to be effective in the fulfilling the policy mandate they have received. In doing this, the focus of attention is put on the design and its coherence with the problem addressed and goals expected, the business model and the strategic planning to implement the policy, and the setting of indicators with which a follow up of implementation would be done.

In this context, an advisor from the Ministry impelling PMMP explains “we try to make that an ex-ante evaluation be done, a proper and coherent design that allows you to make a good ex-post evaluation.”

Concerns of those in charge of implementing PMMP were to set a clear route to follow, which identified the works that should be done. The managerial tools chosen were the building of business model and strategic planning. The top Chief of a regulatory agency explains “we hire a consultancy firm to explicit our business model.” A functional manager from a regulatory agency mentions “(to implement the law) we set management models in public organizations we regulate, we intervene in how they should organize, how to improve the fulfillment of the law, how they internal statutes should be, how to assign roles, how to define channels to serve the users.”

Strategic planning appears to be an important tool to achieve an extended involvement of members of the organization in charge of implementation and the identification of stakeholders. A top public manager express “the first thing we did was a process of strategic planning, in which all the executive team and the key personnel participated. Our concern was to set orientation for short, mid and long term.” A top manager from an organization created in the context of PMMP implementation explains, “We did a workshop to design our strategic map
and identify our clients.” A manager from a regulatory agency adds, “We did a strategic planning process with the purpose of having an objective map about what we had to do. In it, we set our fundamental strategic declarations, our vision, mission, strategic goals.”

The setting of indicators had the purpose of establishing goals to public organizations as well as to push them to fulfill the committed goals. Indicators also allowed the leading implementers to realize the real situation of public organizations and what had to be done to go ahead with the modernizing efforts. An advisor from the Finance Ministry, the one heading PMMP efforts, points out: “from our perspective, we want that public organizations set themselves relevant indicators, demanding goals, we cannot be the only one pushing for this.” Later she adds “when arriving, we thought that we not only had to look at program design but also management and, more specifically, results.” Another advisor from the same Ministry adds, “we introduced the ‘Improvement Management Program (IMP),’ which was mainly a set of performance indicators. The IMP became a ruling instrument. By 1998 we analyzed issues linked to performance indicators but we got evidence showing that it was being difficult to go further in that because of the precarious development of public organizations and IMP had to evolve in the decade of 2000.”

As indicators showed that modernization of public management could not go faster, those heading the process realized that PMMP implementation would be a long-term endeavor that had to be done through several stages. A key advisor of the Finance Ministry explains, “We implemented the policy gradually; it did not begin with everything. We went step by step because we wanted to make sure we were in the right track. This has taken us 10 years so far.”

According to the testimony of interviewees, organization-policy environment fit appears to be linked to leadership and competence, and to the pursuit of rationality. In fact, the organization fit to the policy environment seems to be a rational action of those heading the
implementation efforts to achieve effectiveness in their policy endeavor. Strategic planning, adjustment of organizational structure and the design of procedures to better achieve the policy goals appears to be both the chosen tools to put in practice the plan and rational decisions consistent with policy goals.

A key element of this driving force seems to be the organizational adjustment to the policy goals. An expert working on implementing PMMP in her organization points out “first, it was a change of infrastructure, then a change of structure and a change of the organizational face.” One Director interviewed explains “I hired a consultant to help me with the organizational design (because) we needed a more flexible organization, one that was more appropriate to what the government was asking us to do.”

Implementers thereupon are also concerned with the coherence between the strategic definitions and the organizational design. An expert who played a key role in implementing PMMP in his organization explains, “we begun setting our fundamental strategic declarations, our procedures, and we identify our organizational structure according the strategic goals and procedures we had defined.” A manager from an autonomous agency adds, “a key moment, linked to the strategic planning we had done, was the design of the process map we need to implement the policy.”

Another key step in adjusting organization to the policy goals is to institutionalize mechanisms created by PMMP. A top advisor from the Finance Ministry states that “from the year 2000 this started to take a more institutionalized shape, the division of management control was created, procedures begun to be defined, and mechanism to put in practice recommendations from evaluations were designed. The idea was to create institutional mechanism to follow up the results of evaluations and make evaluated programs to respond the recommendations, internalize them and improve its performance.”
Bureaucratic discretion and adaptation driving force seems to be a hard meeting point between the rational efforts of those heading the implementation and the reaction of employees toward the new organizational design. An advisor from the Ministry impelling PMMP explains “we were supported by an international expert that help us to set a protocol to train key personnel in public organizations in the method of the logical framework.” An ex first line advisor of the Director of a public organization adds “(in implementing PMMP) we did a change management project and that was very innovative in the public sector; we are talking about an organization of four thousand workers where we had to develop a new language first, make the workers to get new competencies, install a new management model, and persuade and seduce the workers (to accept the change).”

Despite these efforts to seduce workers about the benefit of the new organizational design, their reaction may be seen as an obstacle that PMMP had to overcome. On this, an expert explains “the modernization project implied we redesigned the technological model, procedures to better serve our users and that was very resisted by groups of personnel.”

To reduce employees’ resistance to the new working methods, implementers designed monetary incentives for those achieving goals set in the modernization plan. A leader of a public worker union explains, “about 40% of our salaries is variable and associated to indicators of quality performance and user’s satisfaction; then when our indicators are less than expected our salary reduces.”

The analysis of the power relation driving force shows, on the one hand, nucleus of power within government and, on the other, tensions and conflicts with interest coming from outside, even in such a technocratic policy as the PMMP is. Two main sources of power appear to be critical in PMMP implementation: the presidency and the Finance Ministry. According to a presidential advisor, “success has to do with the presidential priority on the issue, in other words with the political support
and clear and precise empowerment to those responsible for the policy because, at the end of the day, any unit has a responsibility to fulfill.” A high official of the Ministry Secretariat of the Presidency points out, “the presidential empowerment is relevant for anything that has to do with generating some type of stimulus to get a work be done.” A presidential advisor adds, “the engine of modernization, on issues about the improvement of public management, is commanded by the president and the center of government.”

However, despite the presidential support to modernization efforts, political capacity of public high officials to implement PMMP appear to be important to achieve the policy goals. An advisor from the Ministry Secretariat of the Presidency explains, “the president empowered undersecretaries, through the Program Chile Gestiona, to get better indicators of effectiveness of their own Ministry and their dependent services, but those with political trajectories very often got better management results.”

The Finance Ministry appears to be a key source of power because both they command modernization efforts and manage the government resources. A head of an employees’ union of a public organization express, “finally who command is the Budget Office (of the Finance Minister), it centralize everything, it is a situation somewhat Stalinist, it has an awful state centralism ... when one negotiate, negotiate with an undersecretary or minister with no real power, then who finally decide is the Budget Office, (the Budget Office) it is necessary, it does its job, but the criticism is that concentrate too much power, too much influence; then when there are problems (the Budget Office) it suddenly says ‘this year I am going to do a cut (in your budget)” but we had a law, then it happens absurd thing of this type.”

Given this expected reaction not only from union’s leaders – who often are stimulated by public organizations where they work – but also from Ministers, Undersecretaries and other high public officials, the
Ministry of Finance seek to make sure it has enough power for its decisions. A Finance Ministry advisor points out that “in any implementation problem we face, we designed a strategy, first of all we asked whether we had political capacity, the Ministry of Finance is risk averse, except that political conditions change. When a high official of the Finance Ministry signed something, it was because it had political power to do it, it was not a wile or a Minister whim, nothing was done without being politically backed.”

On the other hand, political parties and public employees’ unions were among those that mostly push for their interests or views to implementers. An ex Chair of the Civil Service states, “political parties were our stone in the shoe because they were accustomed to send list of people to be appointed as head of public services, without any consideration of merit, ... sometimes one does not realize but the pressure is enormous.” Later adds, “Ministers had to negotiate with political parties appointments (in public organizations) to get approbation of laws in Congress, then if you are giving certain positions in government to some political party, you are compromising that party that when you send a bill the party has to support you.” A head of a public workers’ union explain, “in the origin the Civil Service is somewhat a consequence of the demands of the National Association of Fiscal Employees (NAFE)3.”

Besides leadership, rationality, organizational fits and bureaucratic appropriation, PMMP implementation also reveals itself as an arena of tension and conflicts, which is clearly expressed in words of a highly reputed top manager who lead one of the most effective modernization efforts: “without conflict there is no transformation ... ours was a story of success but also a story of conflicts: conflicts with employees, many strikes, fights, occupation of our facilities by employees, conflicts with the Finance Ministry, with the Budget Office, with Congress.”

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3 In Spanish its name is Asociación Nacional de Empleados Fiscales (ANEF).
Given the conflicts arisen in PMMP implementation, a natural reaction among those heading modernization efforts in public organization was to seek for political backing. The testimony of one of these modernizers explain how s/he got it: “the fights were always with the Concertación (the coalition in power by then), they criticized me a lot, and I thought, well, here nobody protects me, I am going to have to join a political party. I joined the less demanding party, the one having no requisites to join it. Thus, next time I got a conflict, at least, the party defended me. But, it always was an instrumental relationship; I participated in just a few party meetings because they were so boring to me. I got support from the party, which was in my interest, and the party was interested in having well qualified members, doing a good job in government to get good image in public opinion. Therefore, we mutually use each other.”

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the main forces domain allows realizing what are the most influential factors in the implementation of a particular policy. The analysis of Hasenfeld and Brock (1991: 463), based on 37 studies on social policy issues in the US, led them to identify that power relation is a major force, followed by bureaucratic adaptation, which they see as “another manifestation of power relations, especially among lower-level staff.” Technical rationality might also be considered as an influential force, according to these authors.

Instead, the analysis presented in these pages, based in 67 interviews to stakeholders on PMMP implementation, identify leadership and competence, organization-policy environment fit and rationality as mayor forces influencing implementation efforts. Although less often cited, bureaucratic adaptation and power relation are of no less importance, considering the testimony of interviewees.
What can explain different results gotten by these two analyses? Certainly, one explanation is the difference in methods employed by each study: Hasenfeld and Brock’s is a survey of 37 previous studies, while this is empirical qualitative analysis based on 67 interviews to people involved in policy implementation as high public officials, public managers and advisors, congressmen, union leaders as well as experts and scholars. Thus, while the burden of proof in the Hasenfeld and Brock’s work is in the perception of the writers of those 37 studies, this work rests on the testimony of 67 interviewees.

But beyond method, a major explanation would be related to the characteristics of each type of policies analyzed. Social policy deals with demands for improving the well-being of different groups from population, which makes it as a kind of redistributive policy. Lowi (1995) characterize redistributive policies as a tense and conflictive policy area. Ripley and Franklin (1982, cited by Hasenfeld and Brock 1991: 452) additionally characterize social policy as the one having “the highest degree of conflict and the least generally accepted implementation routine of any type of policy”.

Thus, given the degree of conflict characterizing social policy initiatives, it is not surprising that power relation and even bureaucratic adaptation – a kind of power relation, according to Hasenfeld and Brock – be the forces domain driving policy implementation in this area of government activity.

PMMP, instead, is seen as a kind of endogamy and technocratic initiative not directly related to people’s demand or politician’s interest. Its focus is the improvement of government effectivity, which usually requires an expert knowledge on managerial models, and the activity concentrates inside the public administration. So, it does not directly process population demands for social services. Then, this would imply that modernization be less conflictive than social policy and would mean that
abilities needed to implement it be rather associated with leadership and technical capacities.

On the other hand, given that social policy is a more conflictive area a bottom-up approach would be more suitable to understand its own dynamic of implementation, while a technocratic policy might be better appreciated through a top-down approach because modernization initiatives are usually launched from the top level of government and/or organizations.

This let see difficulties that attempts of formulating a comprehensive theory of policy implementation should face. And it would imply that these types of efforts might rather concentrate in policy areas because implementation expresses a type of dynamic and interaction among policy actors, which varies across areas of government activity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis of driving forces domains allows realizing how they influence policy implementation. Thus, policy implementation can be seen as an arena of interaction among these forces and the way these factors interacts determine outputs and outcomes of the policy efforts.

Major forces domains driving PMMP implementation, according the testimony of 67 interviewees, are leadership and competence, organization-policy environment fit, and rationality. These results would be consistent with a top-down perspective of policy implementation, which, in turn, would be also consistent with the technocratic characteristics of the public management modernization policy.

These results are different from those gotten by Hasenfeld and Brock (1991), who found that major forces domains driving implementation of social policy in the United States would be power relation and bureaucratic adaptation. The fact that these forces domain be the ones that mainly explain implementation of social policy appear to be consistent with the
dynamic of interactions in social policy area, which has been characterized as conflictive and difficult to put in practice work routines.

Then, what this contrast would be expressing is that characteristics of the area of government activity would drive the forces domain that would be significant to explain policy implementation.

REFERENCES


