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Public Accounts Committees in the Pacific Region

Introduction

In spite of the fact that the PACs in the Pacific region operate in very small jurisdictions, they have been the subject of several studies.

There have been, in fact, at least two waves of studies of PACs in the Pacific Region. The first wave of studies was produced in the mid-1980s, while the second wave was produced in the first decade of the 21st century.

All these studies lamented that the PACs (and legislatures) in the region were underperforming, though they invoked different reasons to explain why the performance of PACs (and legislatures) was suboptimal. For instance, studies from the first wave claimed that PACs could not work because of a ‘genetic’ reason: they were not local solutions to local problems, they were designed to operate in very different settings, were not ‘owned’ by the stakeholders and, as a result, could not possibly work.

Studies from the second wave argued instead that the performance of PACs in the Pacific region was (negatively) affected by a variety of reasons. For instance Rawlings argued that PAC performance was detrimentally affected by what Stapenhurst (2011) defines as the external factors and facilitating conditions—namely the presence of other oversight bodies, the nature of the relationship between the PAC and the other oversight institutions, the availability and the quality of staff and the access to information. By contrast, Pelizzo (2010) found that the performance of PACs in the Pacific region was detrimentally affected by the range of formal powers at their disposal.

While it has been argued that the suboptimal performance of PACs may in general be ascribed to absence of facilitating conditions (such as the absence of qualified staff), to the absence of external factors (such an effective relationship with the AG), or to the range of powers at the disposal of PACs, it is however important to keep in mind that there is considerable variation in the region in terms of performance, oversight capacity or the range of powers and organizational characteristics.¹

In this chapter we review each of these aspects and then we try formulate some conclusions as to what affects the performance of PACs in the Pacific region. In doing so we will employ the data collected by CPA in collaboration with WBI in 2009 when the two organizations teamed up to draft and administer a survey on PACs in several Pacific Island nations.

Specifically, CPA and WBI gathered information from 8 PACs from the Pacific region: Bougainville, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon islands, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. The survey asked respondents to answer 87 questions on the power and responsibilities, membership and leadership, processes and working practices, and access to resources and support. By re-analyzing some of the data that have been analyzed before and the wealth of the survey data that

¹ The PEFA reports produced for the countries in the Pacific region show not only considerable variation across countries but also across time. For instance, the legislative scrutiny of the external audit reports was given a score of A in Samoa in 2006, of C+ in the Solomon islands in 2008, of D in Vanuatu in 2006 and of D+ for Samoa in 2010.. See Ecorys (2006, 2008) and Linpico (2006).

were neglected by previous analyses, we believe that we will be able to provide a finer understanding of the organization, the mandate, the responsibilities, the functioning and the overall performance PACs from the Pacific region.

The literature on public accounts committees

The publication of the study of McGee (2002) ignited a new wave of studies on public accounts committees. Some studies were case studies, some were regional comparative analyses, while other covered the Commonwealth. Some studies relied on survey data, other relied on evidence generated by field work, but all of them sought to identify the conditions that make PAC work effectively.

There are three basic answers as to what make PAC work effectively. A stream of research, that originates with McGee, holds the view that the success of PAC depends on their organizational characteristics. Specifically, McGee (2002) suggested that the size of a PAC, the partisan affiliation of the PAC Chairperson and the size of the staff at the disposal of a PAC are largely responsible for its success. Building on the work by McGee (2002), Pelizzo (2011) suggested that the partisan composition of the PAC membership, that is whether opposition forces are adequately represented in the committee, is very important.

A second stream of research has suggested instead that the success of PACs depends on institutional features such as the way in which PAC are institutionalized (created) and the range of powers at their disposal.

While a third stream of research (McGee, 2002; Stapenhurst et al.,2005) suggested the success of PAC depends on the way PAC members act and interact with one another.

Do these organizational, institutional and behavioral approaches provide us with a proper framework to understand the functioning of PACs in the Pacific region? Before we proceed to answer this question, we will discuss the organization and institutional characteristics of PACs in the Pacific and then we will show which of them provide the best explanation for how these committees work in the region.

The organizational characteristics of PACs

With regard to the organizational characteristics of the PACs, the Pacific region displays considerable variation. McGee (2002) said three were important organizational features are the size of the committee, the partisan affiliation of the Chairperson and the size of the staff. To this list Pelizzo (2011) added a fourth organization feature, that is the proportion of opposition members serving in the committee.

Let's review each of these features. With regard to size, the data gathered by CPA and WBI show that it varies from a minimum of 3 MPs in Kiribati and Tuvalu to a maximum of 14 MPs in Papua New Guinea (PNG), with a mean of 7.12 MPs per PAC. In the majority of cases MPs serving on a

PAC do not serve on other committees, with exceptions of PNG and Tuvalu (while Bougainville did not provide any evidence in this respect).

In the Pacific region, the data at our disposal reveal that there is limited variation in how well opposition forces are represented on the PAC itself. In fact while two legislatures (Fiji, Solomon Islands) reported that the opposition controls 33 per cent of the seats in the PAC, two legislatures (Samoa, Vanuatu) reported that the opposition controls 43 per cent of the seats, while Bougainville, Kiribati, PNG and Tuvalu did not provide any indication of whether and how the opposition is represented on the PAC.

While opposition forces control, on average, only 41.2 per cent of the seats in Pacific PAC, they control 50 per cent of the PAC Chairpersons. In fact, while in Bougainville, Kiribati, PNG and Samoa the PAC is chaired by a government member, in the remaining cases (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) the PAC is chaired by an opposition member.²

Since the literature has long stressed that one of the most important organizational features of a PAC are its size, the partisan affiliation of the Chairperson and the size of the staff, table 1 presents some information also with regard to whether and how well PACs are staffed in the region. In doing so, we provide evidence not only with regard to the total staff at the disposal of the committee but also with regard to the dedicated staff at the disposal of the committee.³ In terms of dedicated staff, the data indicate that their number varies from a minimum of 0 in Kiribati and Tuvalu to a maximum of 4 in Samoa. In terms of total staff, this value ranges from a minimum of 2 staffers in Kiribati, Vanuatu and Tuvalu to a maximum of 6 in PNG. Further details are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Organizational characteristics of PACs

| country | Size of the PAC | Can members serve on other committees? | Percentage of opposition members | Chairperson is an opposition MP | Dedicated staff | Total staff |
|--------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Bougainville | 5 | n.a. | 0 | No | 2 | 4 |
| Fiji | 12 | No | 36.4 | Yes | * | * |
| Kiribati | 3 | No | 33 | No | 0 | 2 |
| PNG | 14 | Yes | n.a. | No | 3 | 6 |
| Samoa | 7 | No | 43 | No | 4 | 4 |
| Solomon | 6 | No | 33 | Yes | 1 | 6 |
| Vanuatu | 7 | No | 43 | Yes | 1 | 2 |
| Tuvalu | 3 | Yes | 100 | Yes | 0 | 2 |
| average | 7.125 | | 41.2 | 50 | 1.57 | 3.71 |

Legend: n.a. =not answered; * = Vanuatu responded that all the parliamentary staff assist all committees including the PAC.

² In Samoa, the Chair is not simply a member of the government party, he is actually the Associate Minister for the Ministry of the Prime Minister.

³ Total staff refers not to the number of dedicated staff, staff shared with other committees, staff provided by government departments, staff provided by the AG and staff provided by other institutional sources.

Powers, responsibility and functions of the PAC in the pacific region

The questionnaire designed by CAP and WBI asked respondents to provide information with regard to the powers the responsibilities, the functions and the mandate of PACs in the region. The evidence generated in these respects by the survey administered by CPA and WBI is important for two reasons. The first is that it enables us to map the capacity of PACs in several jurisdictions, assess strengths and weaknesses, detect variation in the region. The second is that several of the studies inspired by the work of McGee, and the work of McGee itself, reported a view that was nearly unanimously shared by PAC chairpersons in the Commonwealth, namely that a broad mandate was a necessary and essential condition for the successful performance of a PAC. Hence, the survey data generated by CPA and WBI allow us to assess the breadth of the mandate that PACs have in the region and to test whether PAC activity and performance in the Pacific region is in fact related to the range of powers, responsibilities and functions that PACs have in the region or not.

Before we proceed any further in describing the data, it is worth recalling that that the powers, responsibilities and functions were grouped into three distinct sets of powers dealing respectively with the right of access, the accounts and operations and the relations with the AG or other SAI.

Right of access

As some of the essays included in this collection make it clear one of the problems that PAC are or may be confronted with it, is represented by the possible limitations or constraints imposed on the access rights enjoyed by PAC. And, since access rights are a significant component of the powers of a PAC and since the scope of powers has traditionally been regarded as a significant determinant of PACs' ability to effectively perform their oversight function, constraints of the right of access may be viewed as an obstacle to effective PAC performance as the case of the British Isles seems to suggest.

But what is the capacity of Pacific PACs in terms of right of access? Is their right of access subject to strict limits an restrictions? And do these restrictions affect PAC performance in the region?

The right of access refers to the number and type of government organizations or public entities to which PACs have either unconditional, conditional or no access. The survey administered by CPA and WBI asked respondents to indicate whether they had unconditional, conditional or no access to the following entities: Government agencies within the finance portfolio, Government agencies outside the finance portfolio, Statutory authorities, Government owned corporations, Local government authorities, Parliament (and its expenditures), Parliamentarians' expenditures (eg. Staff), Government service providers, Government funded non-government organizations. The data concerning the right of access in the Pacific are displayed in Table 2.

The data presented in table 2 make it quite clear that PACs in the Pacific have a fairly unconstrained right of access. They have access to virtually all the entities included in questionnaire and their access is generally unconditional. Not surprisingly, Jacobs, Pelizzo and Stapenhurst (2013) reported that the PAC from the Pacific region have a more unconstrained right of access than their

counterparts in the British isles, South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, the Caribbean and Africa.

Table 2. Right of access in the Pacific

| | Bougainville | Fiji | Kiribati | PNG | Samoa | Solomon | Vanuatu | Tuvalu |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Government agencies within the finance portfolio | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | Unconditional |
| Government agencies outside the finance portfolio | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | Unconditional |
| Statutory authorities | NO | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | Unconditional |
| Government owned corporations | NO | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | Unconditional |
| Local government authorities | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | Unconditional |
| Parliament (and its expenditures) | conditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | NO |
| Parliamentarians' expenditures (eg. Staff) | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | NO |
| Government service providers | unconditional | NO | NO | conditional | unconditional | unconditional | - | Unconditional |
| Government funded non-government organizations | conditional | unconditional | NO | conditional | unconditional | unconditional | NO | unconditional |

All the PACs from the Pacific region have an unconditional access to government agencies within and outside the finance portfolio and local government authorities; 87.5 per cent of the PACs (all the PACs except the one in Bougainville) have unconditional right to access to statutory authorities and government corporation. Furthermore 87.5 per cent of the PACs in the Pacific (which means all of them except Tuvalu) have an unconditional right of access to Parliamentarians' expenditures, whereas only 75 per cent of the PACs in the region have an unconditional right to access to Parliaments expenditures. The PAC in Tuvalu does not have this right and Bougainville enjoys it conditionally. With regard to the right of access to government funded NGOs, PACs in the Pacific enjoy this right unconditionally in 50 per cent of the cases (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Island and Tuvalu), 25 per cent of them enjoy it conditionally (Bougainville, PNG) and 25 per cent of them lack it altogether (Kiribati, Vanuatu).

Accounts and Operations

The evidence presented in this section concerns the activities performed by a Pac, namely whether it can examine accounts; consider budget estimates; assess the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of a given policy; the efficiency and the economy of policy implementation, the effectiveness of policy implementation, and whether it has the power to undertake self-initiated inquiries. PACs can enjoy these powers unconditionally, conditionally or not at all. The evidence is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Accounts and Operations

| | Bougain. | Fiji | Kiribati | PNG | Samoa | Solomon Islands | Vanuatu | Tuvalu |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Examination of accounts and financial affairs | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional |
| Consideration of budget estimates (other than Audit Office) | NO | NO | NO | NO | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | NO |
| Efficiency, economy and effectiveness of government policy | unconditional | NO | NO | unconditional | unconditional | NO | - | unconditional |
| Efficiency and economy of policy implementation (value for money) | unconditional | unconditional | NO | unconditional | unconditional | NO | - | unconditional |
| Effectiveness of government implementation (delivery of outcomes) | unconditional | NO | unconditional | unconditional | unconditional | NO | - | unconditional |
| Undertake self-initiated inquiries | unconditional | - | NO | unconditional | NO | NO | NO | unconditional |

The data presented in Table 3 suggest some considerations. The first is that while PACs in the Pacific region are very well endowed in terms of rights of access, they are considerable less so in terms of their ability to oversee accounts and operations. In fact, while all the PACs in the region unconditionally enjoyed several rights to access, the only power that all Pacific PACs enjoy unconditionally is that of examining accounts and financial affairs. All the other powers are enjoyed unconditionally by fewer PACs. Only 37.5 per cent of the PAC examine budget estimates, 42.8 per cent of them have the right to undertake self-initiated inquiries, 57.1 per cent of them oversee the efficiency economy and effectiveness of government policy 71.4 per cent of them have the power to assess value for money and delivery of outcomes. In other words, except for the power to oversee accounts and financial affairs, all the other powers are enjoyed from a minimum of a little more than one-third of the PACs to a maximum of slightly less than three-quarters of the PACs in the region.

The second consideration is that while PACs in the Pacific outperform the PACs of all other regions, except South Asia, in terms of right of access, they are among the weakest in terms of their power to oversee accounts and operations. In fact, as Jacobs, Pelizzo and Stapenhurst (2013) have

shown in their work, the Pacific PACs along with Caribbean are outperformed by the PACs from all the other regions in terms of their ability to oversee accounts and operations.

The third consideration is that these data do not simply indicate an institutional weakness of PACs in the region, but they also show that these PACs depart in significant ways from the archetypical PAC.

Yamamoto (2007) suggested that PACs are only found in Westminster countries, that they are a reactive institutions in the sense that they act upon and therefore react to reports brought to their attention by the SAI/AG, that they lack any ability to initiate inquiries or to instruct the AG to conduct some inquiries and, last but not least, that they oversee the budget ex post but not ex ante. They oversee whether money is spent for the purposes for which it had been appropriated, but they are not involved or consulted in the drafting of the budget and that they do not assess budget estimates.

PACs in the Pacific region depart in significant ways from the archetype described by Yamamoto: nearly 38 per cent of them look at budget estimates and nearly 43 per cent of them have the power to launch their own inquiries: they can exercise ex ante oversight and can initiate the inquiry process.

Relationship with the AG

The third set of powers concerns PACs' ability to examine various types of Auditor General's reports or to bring matters to the attention of the Auditor General. The three powers that belong to this category are the power to perform an examination of Auditor General compliance reports, an examination of Auditor General Performance reports and, finally, the power to refer matters to the Auditor General for investigation. PACs can enjoy each of these powers unconditionally, conditionally or may not enjoy it at all.

Tab.4. AG Reports

| | Examination of AG compliance report | Examination of AG performance report | Power to refer matters to the AG |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| bougainville | NO | NO | conditionally |
| fiji | unconditionally | NO | unconditionally |
| kiribati | unconditionally | NO | unconditionally |
| png | unconditionally | unconditionally | unconditionally |
| samoa | NO | NO | NO |
| solomon isl. | unconditionally | unconditionally | unconditionally |
| vanuatu | unconditionally | unconditionally | unconditionally |
| tuvalu | unconditionally | unconditionally | unconditionally |

In four (PNG, Solomon islands, Vanuatu, Tuvalu) of the eight cases, the PACs unconditionally enjoy these three power. In two cases (Fiji, Kiribati) the PACs unconditionally enjoys two powers (to examine the compliance reports and to refer matters). In one case (Bougainville) the PACs lacks the power to examine both the compliance and the performance reports drafted by the AG, while it

enjoys conditionally the power to refer matters to the AG. In one case (Samoa), the PAC lacks all of these powers.

The evidence presented so far can be used to measure the range or amount of formal powers at the disposal of PACs. Specifically we assign a score of 1, 0.5 and 0 to PAC that respectively enjoy a power unconditionally, conditionally or not at all. By adding the score that a PAC receives for each of the powers, we can construct an additive scale. Since the maximum score that a PAC may receive for right of access, accounts and operations and AG reports is respectively 9, 6 and 3, it is clear that the maximum value that the formal power index may take is $9+6+3=18$. PACs in the pacific region score from a minimum of 11 in Kiribati to a maximum of 16 in PNG.

PAC Activity

The survey questionnaire administered by CPA and WBI was designed to gather information on the level, the amount and the type of activities performed by PACs in the Pacific region.

PACs were asked to indicate how many meetings and hearings had held in each of the previous three years, how many inquiries they had been able to complete, how many reports had been able to release. Information was also gathered with the regard to the sources of PAC activity.

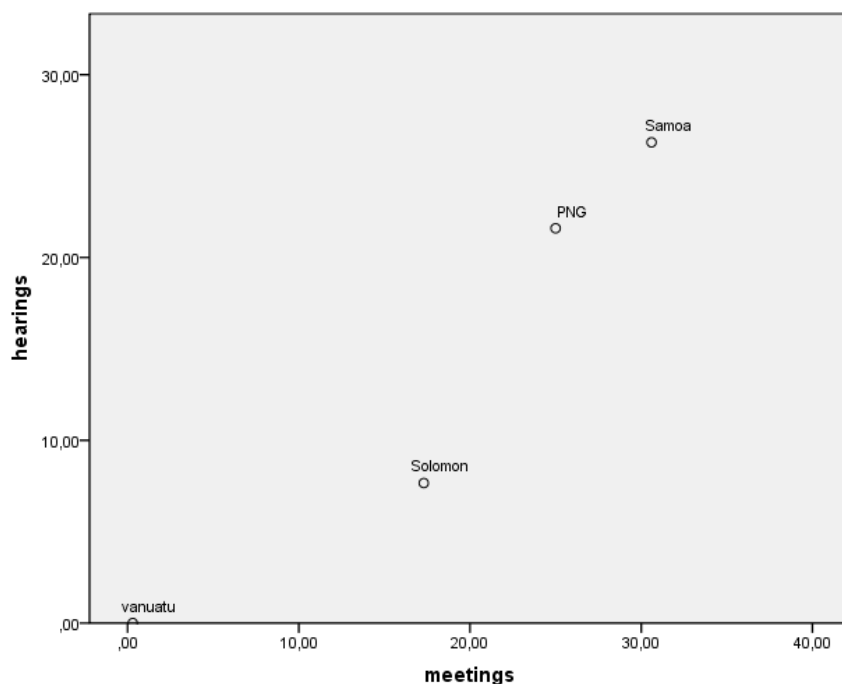
With regard to the number of meetings held there is a considerable variation. Vanuatu reported holding 0 (zero) meetings in 2006-07 and in 2007-2008, while Fiji reported holding 87 meetings in 2005-06, 41 in 2006-07, and daily meetings in 2007-08. If instead of looking at yearly values, we consider yearly averages, the data display considerable variation. The average number of meetings varies from a minimum of 0.3 meetings in Vanuatu to more than 30 meetings a year in Samoa and to the nearly 83 meetings held on average in the Fiji.

Interestingly, the responses provided by the Pacific PACs display two main trends. In some countries (PNG, Solomon) the number of meetings held by the PAC increased every year, in some countries it first declined and then bounced back higher (Fiji, Samoa), while in a third group of countries after the first year the number of meetings held remained constant (Vanuatu, Tuvalu).

With regard to the number of meetings, several PACs (Bougainville, Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu) did not provide any evidence. The remaining four did provide some evidence that suggests great variation and different temporal trends. In terms of number of hearings, the average varies from a minimum of 0 (zero) in Vanuatu to a maximum of 26.3 in Samoa, whereas the PAC holds respectively 21.6 and 7.6 annual hearings in, respectively, PNG and Solomon Islands. The data reported in Figure 1 make it clear that there is a very strong relationship between the average number of meetings held and the average number of hearings held. PAC that hold more meetings, also hold more hearings and viceversa.

In terms of temporal trends, the data display four different patterns: there are stable in one case (Vanuatu), they increase first and then decline later in another case (Solomon), they decline and then bounce back higher in a third case (Samoa) while they increase constantly every year in the fourth case (PNG).

Figure 1 Scatterplot. Number of meetings and hearings



With regard to the number of inquiries completed by the PAC, the data suggest that there is considerable variation in the region. On average the number of completed inquiries varies from a minimum of 0 (zero) in Vanuatu to a maximum of 22.6 in PNG.

The survey data collected by CPA in collaboration with WBI also shed some light on the sources of PAC activity. Matters referred by the Auditor General were responsible for generating 57.5 per cent of the inquiries and reports. No PAC reported receiving work from individual members, but 32.5 per cent of the PACs reported to have received work from Parliament, 1.25 per cent of them reported to have received work from a Minister and 8.75 per cent of the PACs indicated that self-initiated inquiries had been responsible for PAC activity.

These aggregate data conceal however the variation in the importance of the sources of PAC work and activity. For instance the Auditor General is responsible for all the work carried out by the PAC in Tuvalu, for 70 per cent of the work carried out by the PAC in the Solomon Islands, for 60 per cent of the work carried in PNG and for 0 per cent of the PAC work in Samoa. Parliament is responsible for all the PAC work in Samoa, for none of the PAC work in Tuvalu, for 20 per cent of the work in the Solomon Islands and for 10 per cent of the PAC work in PNG. Ministers are responsible for 5 per cent of the PAC work in PNG, but for no PAC work anywhere else in the region, whereas self-initiated inquiries account for 10 per cent of the work in Solomon islands and for 25 per cent of the PAC work in PNG.

Most of the indicators of PAC activity employed here are not affected either by the range of the powers at the disposal of the committee or by the organizational characteristics. While most measures of activity are not affected by most measures of organizational capacity or institutional power, we do find some rather strong relationship. For instance, the data presented in figure 1 make it clear that, as far as the Pacific region is concerned, countries where PACs had a broader right of access, PACs produced more reports.

Figure 1. Right of access and number of reports

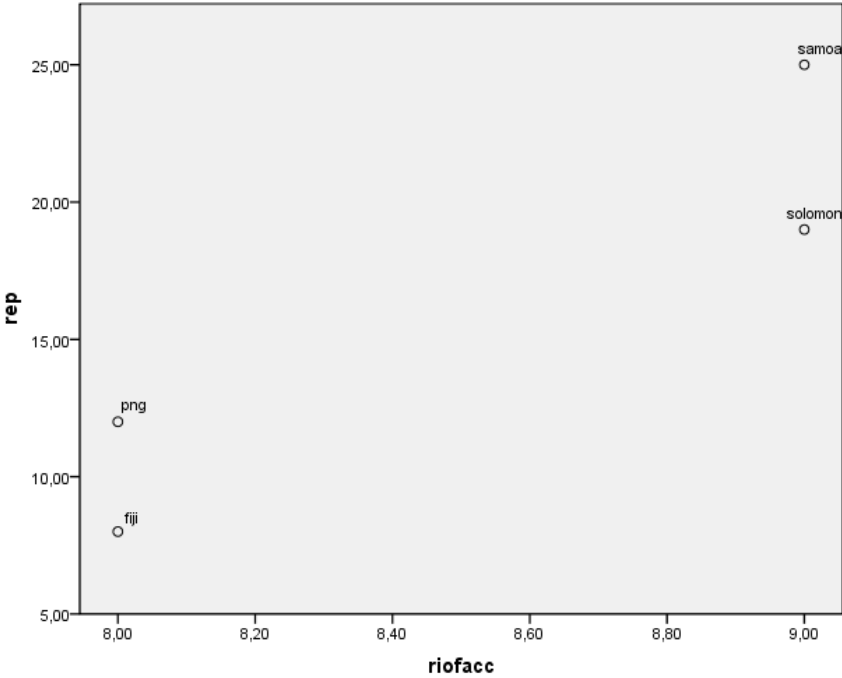


Figure 2. Opposition chair and number of reports

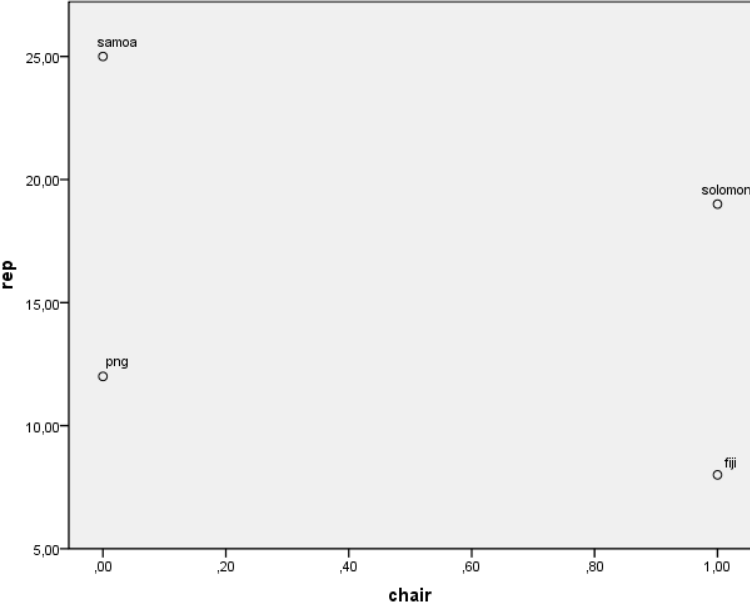


Figure 2. Opposition chair and number of hearings

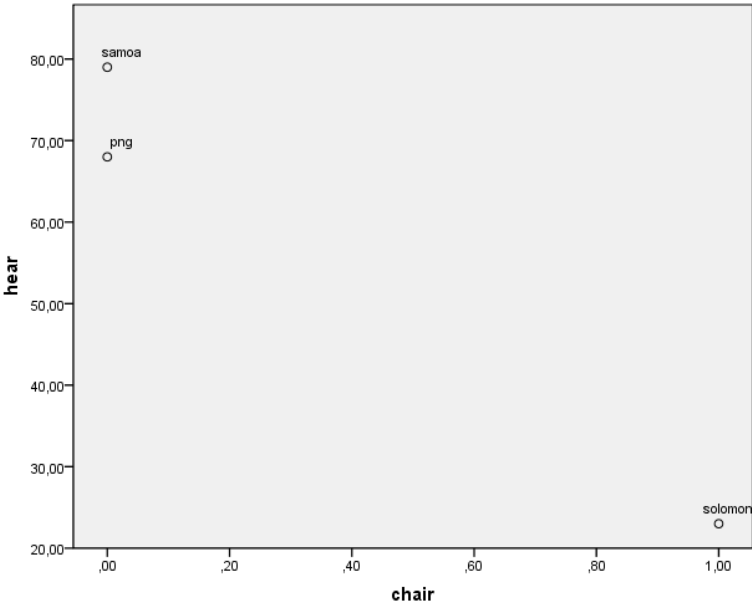
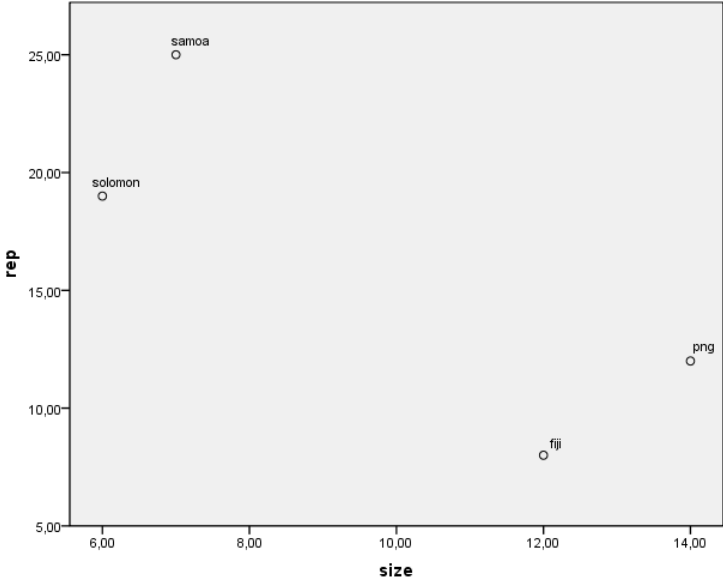


Figure 4. Size and number of reports



PAC performance seems to be linked to the organizational characteristics of the PACs themselves, though some of the evidence generated by analyzing the data at our disposal is somewhat at odds with claims previously advanced in the literature.

First of all, the number of the dedicated staff is not significantly related to any of our measures of PAC activity.

Second, the proportion of opposition MPs serving on the PAC is strongly related, though not always significantly, related to number of inquiries, number of reports and number of hearings.

Specifically, where the opposition is better represented, the PAC is more active in terms of hearings, inquiries and reports. Hence, while this conclusion may not hold elsewhere, in the Pacific it is clear that one way to improve the output of PACs is to ensure good representation of opposition forces on the committee.

Third, while the size of the committee seems to have little to no impact on the other measures of activity, it has a strong, negative impact on the number of reports. Visual inspection of figure 4 makes it clear that, as the size of a PAC increases in the Pacific region, the number of reports produced by the PAC declines. Hence, while this conclusion may not hold in other regions, it is clear that the productivity of PACs in the Pacific region could be boosted by downsizing the committees.

Fourth, the presence of an opposition chair is negatively related to all the indicators of activity. As figures 2 and 3 illustrate, the presence of an opposition chair is associated with fewer committee meetings, fewer inquiries and fewer reports.

The data analyzed here suggest quite clearly what the way forward should be. If the productivity of PACs in the Pacific region is to be enhanced, it is better to have smaller committees, with a larger proportion of opposition members and with government chairpersons than having, as previous studies instead claimed bigger committees (McGee, 2002) and opposition chairpersons (McGee, 2002).

From Activity to Performance

Our discussion so far has suggested that the powers at the disposal of a PAC along with some of the organizational characteristics of the PACs are clearly associated with the output or the level of activity of these committees. And one could even be inclined to argue that what we are witnessing is not so much an association or a correlation, but a clear causal link. This means that it is not by accident that PACs with more opposition members perform more activities than those PACs that have fewer opposition members, but it is precisely because their opposition forces are better represented that the PAC does more.

One question that has however perplexed scholars, legislative studies specialists and practitioners is whether it is appropriate to use levels of output (activity) as proxies for the successfulness in delivering the outcomes (performance).

Some studies assumed that it was appropriate to do so, other studies decided to inquire as to whether the levels of output (meetings, hearings) were actually related to frequency with which PACs were able to achieve policy relevant results (Pelizzo, 2011), while other studies (Bianchi, 2012) equated the success of PACs with their ability to save public money.

Here we adopt a slightly different approach to inquire into the nature of the relationship between PAC activity and performance. PEFA, as we noted above, has conducted an assessment exercise on the expenditures and financial accountability of several countries including some Pacific island nations. In one of the sections of the PEFA assessment reports, the evaluators were asked to evaluate the oversight performance and capacity of oversight committees. The reports generated for three (Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) of the eight Pacific island nation included in the present study, show that there is a clear, direct, positive correspondence between the amount of activities performed by the PACs and the assessment of their performance. In other words, the PACs that do more (as indicated by our measures of activity), are the ones that PEFA regarded as better performing.

Conclusions

The purpose of the present chapter was very straightforward. The paper initially provided some descriptive information about the organization, the powers, the functions and the responsibilities of PACs in the Pacific region. The paper also provided some information on the type and amount of activity performed by PACs in the region.

Building on this descriptive information, the chapter presented the results of two sets of analyses. The first set of analyses attempted to assess the impact of organizational characteristics, such as the size of the committee, the size of the staff at the disposal of the committee, the presence of an opposition chairperson and the proportion of opposition MPs on the committee, on the amounts of activities performed by the committee. The second set of analyses attempted to assess the impact of the range of powers at the disposal of a PAC on its performance.

By doing so we found that broader rights of access, smaller committee size, better representation of opposition forces on the committee and government chairpersons are associated with higher levels of activity, while all the other powers and organizational characteristics have no impact on the level of committee activity.

On the basis of this evidence, we formulated some suggestions as to how the level of PAC activity could be stimulated in the Pacific region. We also showed why stimulating activity is important. By comparing the data at our disposal with the data generated by PEFA it becomes immediately apparent that where committee do more (as per our measures) it is where they perform better (as per PEFA measures) and viceversa. This means that by following the recommendations formulated here, PACs in the Pacific will do more and will work better, they will be more active and more effective.

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