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Sterl Carpenter
Honors Program, sterlwcarpenter@my.uri.edu

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LEAN Government Initiatives and the Origins of Administrative Reforms: *Rhode Island's adoption of the LEAN initiative and what it means for theories of policy diffusion.*

Sterl Carpenter

Abstract:

Government has both tremendous power and responsibility in modern American society. Throughout history, the role of government has shifted with the emergence of new programs and policies. Beginning in the late 1800's, the role of government expanded with the mass production of railroads and rapid economic development. With this expansion of government, scholars such as Woodrow Wilson turned their attention to the performance of our national bureaucracy, arguing that administration of public policies could be more successful if reforms were instituted. The trend of administrative expansion accelerated into the 20th Century while conducting two major wars and in responding to the Great Depression. The expansion of the administrative state meant that scholars, policymakers, and citizens now had to respond to a more powerful national government that was expensive to maintain. Conservatives adopted a narrative, most successfully advanced by the Reagan Administration, that American government had grown too large and inefficient, causing confidence in the federal government to diminish among American citizens. This lack of confidence still poses significant challenges to policymakers who seek to use government in more positive ways. Recognizing that Republicans were capitalizing politically on the American electorate's lack of confidence in the federal government, Bill Clinton, a "New Democrat," responded by adopting many of the administrative reform proposals that were part of the "reinventing government" movement. This movement ultimately influenced a practice known as the LEAN government initiative. In 2015, Governor Gina Raimondo (D-RI) issued an executive order adopting LEAN across Rhode Island state government. This paper provides an overview of administrative reforms and the reinventing government movement as precursors to the current LEAN government initiatives. From here I will answer: What explains the translation of these past policies into adoption of LEAN in Rhode Island? I hypothesize that this could be explained through theories of policy diffusion. Not only do I discover what led to LEAN in Rhode Island, but I demonstrate how LEAN may affect Rhode Island politics and public policymaking in the future.

Introduction:

Government has both the tremendous power, and responsibility to 'do good'. The role government plays in our society, and the responsibilities it assumes has changed over the course of history. Numerous government programs and public sector ideas have proved remarkably successful, while others have not. One thing that seems to have remained constant however is the consistent struggle for the public's confidence and trust. When elected officials become responsible for managing the government, they struggle to shake the notion that they are unable to reform bureaucracies. For policymakers and political actors who believe that government has the power to change lives in a positive manner, this reputation is a hurdle that must be confronted.

With this problem in mind, entrepreneurs throughout history have tried implementing reforms to renew confidence in government. Numerous states, cities, municipalities, and federal agencies have initiated and implemented innovative reforms that seek to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery. These goals are rooted in an administrative philosophy that aims to modify and reform government by treating residents as customers, and focusing on the ultimate product, or output of a government service. The public sector, of course, has a unique role in society and does not measure its bottom line through profit maximization. This does not mean however, all practices in the private sector should remain outside of the public sector as well.

In a time of economic strife, public sector spending cuts, and tight budgets, increasing the quality of government services seems like an elusive goal. The funding of desired and necessary services with a limited revenue stream has been even more challenging since the 2008 financial crises. This predicament often leads to longer wait-times, delays, or back-ups in services such as:

application processing, tax returns, permit approvals, social welfare benefits and other transfers, and more.

In light of compounding budget deficits and other fiscal challenges that must be solved, delays in government services and the functioning of government administration day-to-day are usually not the first issues addressed. Both these larger-scale fiscal challenges must be addressed, and smaller-scale administrative innovations have been achieved, for example, in Rhode Island.

In 2011, Rhode Island faced a $6.8-$9 billion unfunded pension liability (the first figure used public accounting rules, while the second used private accounting rules) (Raimondo, G. 2011). Then-Treasurer Gina Raimondo acknowledged this as a significant fiscal challenge and impending disaster in her now-famous "Truth in Numbers" report. After making her report public she crafted and advocated for legislation that reformed the pension system by reducing unfunded liabilities, and placing the system on firmer fiscal ground. After solving this large-scale challenge, more day-to-day departmental issues could be addressed. For example, there was a nine-hundred case backlog in the Crime Victim's Compensation Fund at Treasury (Hill 2014). This backlog was cleared after Raimondo adopted an effort referred to as the LEAN government initiative. This initiative provided a mechanism by which to identify and solve problems in the public sector. After serving as Treasurer, Raimondo was elected governor in 2015. That following spring, she issued an executive order adopting LEAN across state government.

This paper aims to determine what influenced and ultimately led to the adoption of LEAN across Rhode Island government. Yet, it would be impossible to identify the origin of these reforms without first understanding the historical evolution and diffusion of administrative reform in America. With the historical movement of "making government work" in mind as one of these influencers, and the prior adoption of LEAN initiatives in other states a reality, I

hypothesize that Rhode Island's adoption of the LEAN initiative can be explained through theories of policy diffusion.

LEAN Components and Origins:

LEAN initiatives are grounded in the Kaizen philosophy of *continuous improvement*, the idea that processes and practices can be modified over time to maximize productivity and effectiveness. In technical terms, LEAN aims to streamline processes, reduce wait-times, and empower employees to identify innovative solutions to problems (Davis 2010). This practice originated in manufacturing, notably with the Japanese car manufacturing company, Toyota. It migrated to engineering from there, and is now prevalent throughout the private sector (Davis 2010). As previously noted, it has now become increasingly common in the public sector as a means by which to modify government administration.

Past reform efforts have achieved incremental progress by fixing specific processes in an organization. However, these incremental reforms "fall short of real and lasting transformation" within the agency because there is not a comprehensive reform of the workplace environment. Alternatively, LEAN management processes seek to address both specific areas that are needed for improvement and encourage fundamental changes in the work environment. The global consulting firm McKinsey explains this in a publications as "changing how managers manage and workers work" (Gebre, et.al. 2012). These two aims differentiate LEAN from previous reform initiatives. In terms of the public sector, LEAN alters the broader agency-wide environment and employee morale, and focuses on individual practices, regulations, or methods of business. In practice, processes can be streamlined by identifying both specific causes and larger problems. Ken Miller (2009) explains this in his publication *Lean Government's Promise of Going 'Lean.''*. He further delves into LEAN in his book *We Don't Make Widgets:*

Overcoming the Myths That Keep Government from Radically Improving. He highlights five main areas of change that can occur with LEAN: increased process efficiency and effectiveness, management system reforms, adjusted mind-sets and behaviors, and changes to organization and skill (Miller 2009). Ultimately, LEAN *continuous improvement* philosophy empowers employees, improving morale and fostering an environment of innovation that in-turn encourages workers to think innovatively about better, more efficient, and productive ways to conduct tasks.

Origins and Evolutions of Administrative Reforms

The origins of administrative reforms trace back to Woodrow Wilson's 1887 article *The Study of Administration*. He begins his article by arguing that political theory has been focused entirely on just that, politics. In this he means, philosophers have for centuries focused on the type of government, such as monarchy or democracy, and the resulting framework of government, the division of powers, and the responsibilities within each division. From here, Wilson argues that the study and theory of *administration*, the actual day-to-day functioning of government, has historically been forgotten. At the time of his publication, this reality persisted in the United States but had been rectified in continental Europe, notably in Germany and France. These differences can be explained by the historical formation of the countries at that point in history.

The United States had been founded as a democracy "of the people" with a system of federalism that strongly discouraged the centralization of power. Furthermore, American government had not yet had to hold an active administrative role due to the realities of ample land, employment opportunity, and resources in the new world and newly founded nation.

Wilson argues that the United States was "long exempted from the need of being anxiously careful about plans and methods of administration" and therefore it had "naturally been slow to see the use or significance of… the ways and means of conducting government which the presses of Europe have been sending to our libraries" (Wilson 1887 pg. 8). However, since the early history of the United States, the role of government has changed and with it the administrative role must change as well.

Conversely, German and French politicians resisted challenges to their power and reformed their administrative institutions. In order to maintain power, they had to "perfect the art of government administration." Doing so allowed them to ensure stability, order, and management of the country to ultimately resist large-scale political reforms. By perfecting the administration of government, those who were in power could appease citizen desires and make government indispensable by "becoming paternal." Individuals in power did this by becoming "too efficient to be dispensed with, too smoothly operative to be noticed, too enlightened to be inconsiderately questioned, too benevolent to be suspected" and from this "too powerful to be coped with" (Wilson 1887, p. 8). This analysis of the historical formation of the governments in France and Germany provides insight into the possible origins of the strength of the welfare-state and the strong role government plays in those countries as compared to the role of government in the United States, but that is a topic that ought to be explored in-and-of-itself.

Ultimately, after laying out the historical landscape of administrative reforms, Wilson (1887) argues that "the time for more careful administrative adjustments and larger administrative knowledge has come." (p. 9) while he argues that the administrative practices of the Germans and Frenchmen ought to be studied, he also warns against the close relationship between politics and administration that is present in those countries.

Wilson (1887) begins by arguing that administration is "the most obvious part of government" because it is "government in action" (p. 3). As the role of the government in the United States has undergone change, so, too, must the administrative role it plays in our society. This might be accomplished by adopting a "science of administration" that will "straighten the paths of government". Also, however, responsiveness to change must also be seeded in administration. Wilson (1887) explains this in an analogy saying "If we are to put in new boilers to mend the fires which drive our governmental machinery, we must not leave the old wheels and joints and valves and bonds to creak and buzz and clatter on as best they may at bidding of the new force" (Wilson 1887 pg. 21). In this case, the old wheels and joints would be outdated departments, regulations, or roles in government that would necessitate changing with the adoption of a modern method of a governmental administration. He expands on this idea, stating that "we must put in new running parts wherever there is the least lack of strength or adjustment" (p. 21). He argues that adopting a science of administration could "straighten the paths of government, to make its business less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its organization," arguing it is necessary because of "the poisonous atmosphere of city government, the crooked secrets of state administration, the confusion, sinecurism, and corruption ever and again discovered in the bureaux at Washington" (Wilson 1887, p. 6). He especially decried the control of party machines and the system of political patronage, arguing instead for a separation of politics from government administration.

Ultimately, arguing for the adoption of an art of administration that embraces the ability to change, and the divorce of politics from government administration that encouraged a more "businesslike" government, Wilson largely sparked the discussion of government reform.

Despite this aim and the changes that have come about since Wilson's 1887 publication, Americans lack of trust or confidence in government continues to challenge those who believe in the power of government to 'do good'. This led to the *Reinventing Government* movement that emerged in the 1990's. Many of the ideas of the movement are summarized in the book *Reinventing Government* by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. Osborne and Gaebler (1993) reinforce Wilson's ideas of the need for administration to adjust to the changing role of government as time progresses. For example, they explain that "At one time, government armories manufactured weapons, and no one would have considered letting private businesses do something so important" (Osborne and Gaebler 1993, p. XVI) and compares this to today's alternative reality in which private enterprise manufactures weapons, not the government (p. XVI). They, like Wilson in 1887, also note historical differences between the United States and Europe with respect to the role of government. They explain that at one point in history, government was not expected to care for the poor or to ensure social welfare through a benefits program. Yet, in the 1870's this changed with the adoption of social welfare programs in Bismarck's Germany. Fast forward to the 21st century and nearly every developed nation has a vast social welfare system, with the exception being the United States, where the welfare system dwarfs in comparison to those of Europe.

From here, Osborne and Gaebler make five important notes to the readers. The first being that they believe in both the necessity of government and ability of it to 'do good'. They acknowledge that there are societal problems that only government can fix and that "civilized society cannot function effectively without effective government" which is an even more compelling reason to make government more effective (Osborne and Gaebler 1993). Thirdly, they believe that the current system and framework of government is the problem, not

necessarily those who serve in the institutions. Their reform efforts are neither traditionally conservative nor liberal, because ideological views of government are "too narrow" (Osborne and Gaebler 1993). Finally, they argue that the reinventing government movement aims to better enable equality of opportunity in American society.

Reform movements of the 1990's were not confined solely to the public sector however. Parallel movements that would influence reform tactics in the public sector were also occurring in the private sector and being disseminated in business schools. Michael Hammer and James Champy argued in their 1993 book *Reengineering the Corporation* that in order to adapt to a changing world, businesses needed to reimagine the ways they organize and operate. They focused their criticisms on the decentralized way that businesses assigned tasks, and argued that it was necessary to "reunify" these tasks into a larger vision. While both reinventing government and reimaging the corporation used these reinventive terms, the intent behind the words were different. Reimaging the corporation focused more on a new structure to business that "didn't just tinker outside the edges with incremental change" (Hammer and Champy 1993 pg. 31). Reinventing government focused more heavily on reinventing *the image of government* through improved services, efficiencies, and delivery, not by altering government's role in society. With that in mind, it is important to note the similarities and differences between the reform movements in the public sector and private sector that emerged in the 1990's in order to understand how they may have influenced one another.

From Reinventing Government to LEAN

The most effective methods by which to provide improved government services are still much-discussed today, and new practices, such as LEAN have been adopted as reform strategies. Having now been provided with a thorough grounding in the history of administrative reform

practices, I will turn now to an analysis of LEAN. In order to understand why the Raimondo Administration adopted LEAN in 2015, I will conduct a case study analysis to understand the factors leading up-to its adoption.

Case Study Methodology

Through case study analysis, I will test two theories of policy diffusion; policy learning and the leader-laggard model. Case study analysis is unique in its ability to provide in-depth research and analysis due to its ability to focus on and test a single real-world topic or policy, which explains why I employed this method in my analysis of LEAN (Yin 2004 p. 1). To determine if policy learning or the leader-laggard model were strong theories by which to explain the adoption of LEAN in Rhode Island, I searched through newspaper articles, publications and material on relevant websites (such as the sites of the agencies and businesses I analyzed), and press releases and videos of press conferences on LEAN. To determine the presence of either theories, there had to be strong evidence to establish causation. In this case, the dependent variable is the adoption of LEAN by Governor Raimondo in April 2015. The independent variables can be drawn from theories of policy diffusion and are the explanatory factors that led to the adoption of the LEAN Initiative. I determine if any of these variables present in the case of LEAN are variables that support the theory of policy learning and/or the leader-laggard models. In order to make these determinations, I will first review the two theories of policy diffusion that I will test, followed by the case study analysis.

Policy Diffusion Theory

While the vast majority of policies "marginally modify existing programs or practices" by building on past policies and practices, new or *relatively new* policies, distinct

from existing ones, come about as well. The term *relatively new*, means that a policy is entirely

new to the government adopting it, but has been adopted elsewhere (usually recently). In order to

explain this phenomenon, policy theorists Frances Stokes Berry and William D. Berry (2014)

explained that there are methods by which a new or relatively new policy 'diffuses' to a new

government. In other words, new policies move from venue to venue. These venues are most

commonly state and local governments or other political institutions. Berry and Berry (2014)

also stress that policy diffusion most commonly occurs between organized political systems,

such as between states in the United States or countries in the European Union. Therefore, when

one government adopts an innovative policy, the likely explanation as to why this occurred is

that the policy was already adopted elsewhere. There are various mechanisms by which policies

diffuse, two of which I hypothesize may explain the adoption of LEAN.

Policy Learning

The first theory of policy diffusion I will discuss is *policy learning*. This theory

hypothesizes that governments adopt policies from other institutions when they *learn* of the

success of the policy. Berry and Berry (2014) explain this adoption of a new policy as occurring

when "Policymakers in one jurisdiction derive information about the effectiveness or success of

a policy from previously adopting governments" (p. 310). In this instance "success" is measured

in numerous ways, both "in meeting policy objectives" or "achieving political goals like winning

reelection or higher office" (Berry, F. S., & Berry, W. D. 2014 pg. 310). Berry and Berry explain

that this perception of success causes other policymakers to adopt and institute the successful

policy in their own institution.

If policy learning is a strong policy diffusion theory by which to explain the adoption of

the LEAN initiative in Rhode Island, then I should expect to find a channel in which the idea of

LEAN moved from another jurisdiction or entity to the governor. Additionally, to truly demonstrate policy learning, LEAN must have been proven to be successful politically or from a policy standpoints.

Leader-Laggard Model

Another model of policy change, the Leader-Laggard Model, argues that "certain jurisdictions are pioneers in the adoption of a policy and that other jurisdictions emulate these leaders" (Berry, F. S., & Berry, W. D. 2014 pg 318). Essentially, the leader-laggard model argues that there are individuals who implement new, innovative policies, acting as the "leader" in this policy area. This new policy "diffuses" to other governments when they hear of the policy and wish to implement it in their jurisdiction as well. This might sound familiar, that is because it can relate heavily to policy learning. Berry and Berry explain that "Policymakers in some governments may be more risk acceptant than officials in other jurisdictions, making the former government's most likely to be leaders who are willing to adopt a new untested policy" (Berry, F. S., & Berry, W. D. 2014 pg 318). This observation about risk aversion is important to note as the key difference between policy learning and the leader-laggard model. Additionally, this model is "compatible with imitation" as well, a theory that argues policies are adopted when an official "in one jurisdiction may be more highly regarded by their peers than other jurisdictions" with the earlier official's policy being adopted by others (Berry and Berry 2014, p. 318). With the necessity for other theories to also be at place in the leader-laggard model, it is therefore difficult to prove its presence in most situations. Additionally, Berry and Berry acknowledge that the leader-laggard model is "virtually untestable" because it often fails to identify which jurisdictions are the "pioneers" and fails to specify the order in which other jurisdictions adopt a policy after the pioneering jurisdiction does.

If there is support for the Leader-Laggard model as a theory of policy diffusion, then I expect to see a number of elements of that theory present through my analysis of the LEAN case study. If there is support for the Leader-Laggard model, then I expect to see the following elements in my case: 1) an obvious policy leader or pioneer, 2) an order of policy adoption by which LEAN moved from the first jurisdiction to Rhode Island, 3) strong evidence to find that this diffusion is not the result of policy learning, and 4) cause for Rhode Island to have looked to this leader specifically, not the policy alone.

To determine if either of these two theories are at play here, I will now conduct the case study.

LEAN at VIBCO Vibrators and the RI Department of Environmental Management

The story of LEAN in Rhode Island begins in 2011, when the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) implemented the LEAN program in its agency. After being appointed Director of DEM in 2011, Janet Coit had observed inefficiencies and other instances of dysfunction throughout the department (Grey 2015). According to Terrence Grey, the Associate Director for Environmental Protection at the DEM, "the agency was seen as a barrier to economic growth" that did not adequately protect "Rhode Island's beautiful natural assets" (Grey 2015). Frustrated with the negative public image of the department, Director Coit directed her leadership team to develop a strategy to reverse this image, improve customer service, and to make the agency function better overall. One of the team leaders reached out to Karl Wadensten, the president of VIBCO Vibrators, a manufacturer of truck vibrators for construction vehicles.

Wadensten was a member of the state Commerce Corporation and had been employing LEAN practices in his business for years. Furthermore, his company's practices gained much attention across Rhode Island throughout the years. He was interviewed about how he used

LEAN at his business on The Lean Enterprise Institute in 2009, and he hosted his own broadcast on 790 AM-WPR (also available online) called *The Lean Nation with Karl Wadensten* from 2010 to 2012. In February of 2010, his broadcast was also featured on *The Lean Blog*, a blog that compiled various LEAN stories from across the nation (Lean Enterprise 2009 and Karl Wadensten Linkedin). In 2012, he discussed the possibilities of adopting LEAN in the healthcare industry with Megan Hall, a health care reporter for RI National Public Radio. More recently, in April 2016, he spoke to the University Of Rhode Island College of Business about LEAN and the years of success utilizing the practice (Hall 2012).

Ultimately, Wadensten had a track-record of promoting LEAN and being actively involved in the Rhode Island community, so when asked by DEM, he suggested LEAN as a solution to its inefficiencies. DEM began implementing LEAN's holistic approach to reforming the work environment. The first step involved training employees to deliver better customer service. Secondly, the approach required establishing a "management dialogue to ensure full alignment throughout the department on strategic priorities and implementation" (Grey 2015). As is common in LEAN programs, DEM partnered with Amica Insurance to develop its training program. Over the course of thirteen months, more than 392 employees were trained. Next, DEM focused on specifics and identified that its hunting permit application process needed improving and so it modernized its hunting permit application process by making it available online. Today, Grey (2015) argues that overall customers are aware of and appreciate the agency's continuous improvement philosophy, employees feel valued and empowered, and that permit processing times have decreased.

Governor Gina Raimondo's Career and LEAN at Treasury

In order to understand what may have influenced Governor Raimondo's political beliefs, especially in the potential of LEAN in state government, we must first understand her career influences. Prior to being elected Treasurer, Raimondo was a founding partner at a venture capital firm called Point Judith Capital. Therefore, prior to her public service she had a career in the private sector. Furthermore, Point Judith Capital invested heavily in biotechnology companies and other innovation sectors.

In 2010, Raimondo decided to run for Treasurer after she "grew tired" of seeing library hours cut short, RIPTA bus lines cut, and other budget cuts to vital social services as a result of the state's exploding pension obligations. Therefore, she ran for office as a reformer from the beginning, with the stated goal of solving the pension crises. After her success in passing the Rhode Island Retirement Security Act of 2011, she continued to solve problems at Treasury by adopting LEAN strategies.

She utilized LEAN to clean-out a nine-hundred case backlog in the Crime Victims Compensation fund. LEAN methods were used to review the steps in the process and determine which steps to eliminate. This effort ultimately cleared a backlog of nine hundred cases, meaning nine hundred people had their claims processed after original delays. When discussing the LEAN initiative she had undertook at Treasury during a news conference on statewide in the Spring of 2015, then-Governor Raimondo stressed that it could have real-life impacts and tangible value to the daily lives of Rhode Islanders, stating "Because that's a young woman, a mother, a victim of a crime [that deserves that money] and our process changed her life" (Vibco Vibrators 2015).

When Raimondo ran for governor in 2014, she focused primarily on "turning around Rhode Island's economy" and creating jobs, and used her experience in the private sector as evidence that she could do so. Her achievements with pension reform were a much-discussed topic in the campaign and she highlighted her work to clear out the backlog in the crime victims' compensation fund (using LEAN) in a campaign ad, and during gubernatorial debates.

LEAN Statewide

After Raimondo was elected she issued an executive order to implement LEAN across all "executive branch departments and quasi-public agencies" on April 9th, 2015. A year later at the anniversary of the adoption of LEAN, Raimondo stated that they aimed to "have effective, efficient, action-oriented government," the last point echoing Woodrow Wilson's beliefs of administration being *government in action*. Furthermore, she stated that "The people of Rhode Island are depending on [state employees]" to get the services they need, which also related to the rhetoric of Wilson and the proponents of reinvention in the 1990s (Vibco Vibrators 2015).

Since her order, more than fifty "process reviews" have occurred or are occurring and more than 1,600 state employees have received LEAN training. While there are many more years ahead for LEAN in Rhode Island, after more than a year, there have already been improvements to state government (Pina 2016).

Analysis

There appears to be a clear channel of policy diffusion within Rhode Island, with the practice of LEAN originating with VIBCO Vibrators before moving to other sectors in Rhode Island eventually making its way to the public sector at DEM and Treasury. One may argue that Wadensten is a pioneer in the "leader-laggard" model of diffusion. With numerous cases of

individuals turning to him for guidance, this could certainly be supported. But, as previously mentioned, definitively proving that the leader-laggard model explains this situation is difficult. Was it Wadensten's reputation that ultimately convinced stakeholders? Or was it the success of the policy? This is where the evidence points strongest in support of policy learning. It can be argued that the success of LEAN in previous cases convinced stakeholders to adopt LEAN in their own jurisdictions. Through the case study, we found that Governor Raimondo specifically pointed to the prior success of LEAN at VIBCO Vibrators, DEM, and Treasury in her announcement adopting LEAN across state government in 2015, thoroughly demonstrating policy learning. Additionally, the announcement was made at VIBCO Vibrators in Richmond, establishing the business as the physical starting point of LEAN in Rhode Island at VIBCO. Additionally, Governor Raimondo highlighted the work she had already done with LEAN as Treasurer through campaign advertisements and her discussion of the initiative during gubernatorial debates, making the case for LEAN prior to being governor and ultimately foreshadowing her adoption of LEAN statewide in 2015. Therefore, LEAN was considered a "success" in both policy objectives and political objectives, having been one of the issues she ran on.

It is important to note the uniqueness of policy learning in this case because policy diffusion typically occurs within the public sector; from state to state or government to government. In this case, LEAN originated in the private sector and moved to the public sector. Having moved from the private sector to the public sector herself, Governor Raimondo's personal experiences suggest that diffusion may have occurred from private to public sector as well.

The possible diffusion of LEAN from the private to public sector is depicted below.

VIBCO Vibrators → DEM → Treasury → Governor's E.O.

Conclusion

As is evident from this paper, LEAN can trace its theoretical origins back to the reinventing government movement. This movement occurred in response to growing doubts about the ability of government to deliver for the American people. It can be argued that the focus of these initiatives to make government more efficient, less-bureaucratic, and more responsive to customer-needs, are influenced by the private sector. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that LEAN is heavily influenced by the private sector as well. Theories of policy diffusion are typically applied to relationships between public sector entities, but it is for this reason that policy diffusion in the case of LEAN is unique. It is entirely possible that other government reform methods have 'diffused' from the private sector to the public sector. From here, reform initiatives such as LEAN can diffuse between public sector institutions - which may have occurred between DEM and Treasury. Although, as previously mentioned Raimondo

herself may have been responsible for bringing private sector ideas directly to the Treasury and not through DEM.

Public sector diffusion may also explain the adoption of LEAN in Rhode Island, but in order to determine this, further research must be conducted on cases of LEAN in governments outside of Rhode Island. For the point of this paper, I chose to focus on the internal forces possible behind the adoption of LEAN as I felt the in-state factors would have the most influence on the governor's action. Additionally, I felt that a focus on the possible diffusion of policy from the private sector to public sector cast additional light on theories of policy diffusion and spark discussion on the relationships between the private and public sector moving forward.

While the theory of policy learning is the most likely theoretical explanation behind the adoption of the LEAN initiative, it became apparent through the research that another theory might also explain this administrative reform, particularly policy feedback theory, which argues that policies affect political attitudes and behavior. Policies made today may alter political coalitions and citizen opinions regarding certain policies and the role of government. By altering political realities, future public policies could also be affected. Ultimately, therefore, policies affect politics which then affect future policies.

One can argue that the reinventing government movement influenced a future class of political leaders. Especially in the case of Governor Raimondo and other Democratic reformers who sought to make government work as a means to renew confidence and trust in the institution. In the case of LEAN, one may argue that the past politics supporting government reform initiatives was influenced by the political views of Governor Raimondo and others to the possible effectiveness of LEAN. Having specifically stated that a goal of LEAN was to resolve issues that frustrated Rhode Islanders and to improve customer service, both these aims have the

potential to alter the future opinions of Rhode Islanders regarding the effectiveness of state government. Therefore, government reform initiatives such as LEAN have the potential to renew confidence in government. Ultimately, a more positive view of government has the potential to change political opinions on numerous issues and once again usher in an expanding role for government in American society.

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