

**A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PARADIGMS FOR
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN PACIFIC ISLAND
COUNTRIES**

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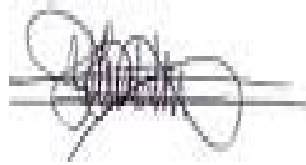
**This thesis is presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melchior Mataka', written over a horizontal line.

Melchior Mataka

ABSTRACT

Solid waste management (SWM) in the Pacific Islands has not progressed much over the past four decades. For example, its technical and functional aspects can be succinctly described as being primarily concerned with the collection, disposal and open burning of wastes in landfills (most of which are dumps). The current state of SWM is posited to be underpinned by the paradigms informing SWM. Paradigms model problems and rationalise the course and types of actions taken to resolve problems within any practical field. Consequently, this study critically assessed prevailing paradigms of SWM at the global and regional levels, and examined if there was a need for an alternative paradigm for SWM in Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

The two overarching paradigms of solid waste management recognised globally are public health and environmental protection. The latter is at present the core paradigm for solid waste management, and it also has a number of derivatives which are also considered by their adherents as paradigms in their own right. In PICs, both overarching paradigms underpin SWM with public health protection showing overall dominance because of the historical association of SWM and public health, and the existing legislations and institutional arrangements.

The impacts and influence of these overarching paradigms were examined in detail using a set of indicator wastes within the context of Honiara, the capital of Solomon Islands. Although prevailing paradigms were relevant, they exacerbated SWM problems, limited management

options and alienated the biophysical and socioeconomic conditions of Honiara from SWM. Consequently a systems based paradigm was proposed and tested on a set of indicator wastes in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands. At the operational level, the systems paradigm advocates for the expansion of SWM interventions across its three sub-systems: (a) material system, (b) consumer system and (c) solid waste system. The systems paradigm offered a fresh perspective on SWM in PICs, and stands out as a potential paradigm for SWM in PICs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	I
ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF TABLES	IX
LIST OF FIGURES	X
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	XI
GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS	XV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	XVIII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background	4
1.2. Rationale, Aim and Research Questions	6
1.3. Scope	7
1.4. Structure of the thesis.....	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1. Incommensurability of paradigms	10
2.2. From Public Health Protection to Environmental Protection	11
2.3. Environmental Protection Paradigm	15
2.4. SWM Paradigms – Deumling (1998)	17
2.4.1. Dominant Paradigm	20
2.4.2. Material Flow Paradigm	22
2.5. Derivatives of the DP and MFP	25
2.5.1. Japanese Reduce-Reuse-Recycle (3R) Paradigm	25
2.5.2. Zero Waste Paradigm (ZWP)	27
2.6. Paradigms of SWM in PICs	28
2.7. The Pacific Region in Brief	31

2.8. Regional Cooperation and SWM	33
2.9. SWM in Urban Centres.....	35
2.9.1. Technical and Functional Aspects	36
2.9.2. Legislative Aspects.....	37
2.9.3. Financial Aspects	39
2.9.4. Municipal SWM Stakeholders.....	40
2.9.5. Municipal Solid Waste Characteristics.....	41
2.9.6. Waste Minimisation	44
2.10. Some strategic problems of SWM in PICs.....	45
2.10.1. Independent institutionalisation of two paradigms	46
2.10.2. Landfilling–the ultimate SWM solution?.....	46
2.10.3. Limited recycling and organic material recovery.....	47
2.10.4. Import of goods without end-of-life plans.....	48
2.10.5. Lack of differentiated SWM approaches	49
2.10.6. Failure to ‘leap-frog’ developed countries ‘mistakes’	49
2.11. Summary	50
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH.....	53
3.1. Mixed Methods Approach	53
3.1.1. Philosophical Perspective.....	57
3.1.2. Study Design	58
3.1.3. Study Site	59
3.1.4. Desktop Study Methods.....	61
3.1.5. Field Study Methods.....	62
3.1.6. Systems Framework of Investigation.....	64
3.1.6.1. Solid Waste System (SWS)	65
3.1.6.2. Material System (MS)	66
3.1.6.3. Consumer System (CS).....	66

3.1.7. Field Study 1: Investigation of MS	67
3.1.8. Field Study 2: Investigation of CS.....	67
3.1.9. Field Study 3: Investigation of SWS	69
3.1.9.1. Household Wastes.....	72
3.1.9.1.1. Household Waste Audit Procedure	74
3.1.9.2. HCM Wastes.....	75
3.1.9.2.1. HCM Waste Audit Procedure:	77
3.1.9.3. WEEE and AI cans.....	79
3.1.9.3.1. Wastes Audit Procedure (WEEE & AI cans).....	80
3.1.9.4. Stakeholders and Legislation	80
3.1.10. Synthesis Methods	85
CHAPTER 4: SYSTEM ANALYSIS OF SWM IN HONIARA.....	86
4.1. Material Management in MS.....	87
4.2. Material Management in the CS	90
4.3. Material Management in the SWS	91
4.3.1. SWS Operations in Honiara.....	93
4.3.2. Financing SWM operations.....	97
4.3.3. Impacts of paradigms embedded in SWS legislations	99
4.3.3.1. Policy versus Operational Perspectives	109
4.3.3.2. Collaboration amongst Government Agencies.....	112
4.4. An Evaluation of Stakeholders' Performance	114
4.5. Summary	117
CHAPTER 5: ADDRESSING CAPACITY GAPS IN HONIARA.....	120
5. 1. Capacity building for solid waste audits.....	120
5.1.1. Rationale of a capacity building process.....	122
5.1.2. The Process	122
5.1.2.1. Situation Analysis.....	123

5.1.2.2. Characterisation of Capacity Gaps	125
5.1.2.3. Skills Development Program (SDP)	126
5.1.3. Training Activities	129
5.1.3.1. First Classroom Component	129
5.1.3.2. Field Component.....	131
5.1.4.1. Second Classroom Component	133
5.1.4. Evaluation of Participants' Skills Uptake.....	135
5.1.5. Summary	137
5.2. Innovating HCC's Advocacy Programmes.....	137
5.2.1. Context and Issue.....	138
5.2.2. Revised Advocacy Model	139
5.2.3. Application of Revised Advocacy Model.....	141
5.2.3.1. Issues arising from the first meeting	142
5.2.3.2. Follow-up meetings and waste bins	145
5.2.4. Summary	146
CHAPTER 6: WASTE COMPOSITION AND GENERATION	147
6.1. Household Wastes.....	147
6.2. HCM Wastes	161
6.3. EEE and WEEE at the national level	164
6.4. Aluminium cans at the national level.....	169
6.5. Recycling Industry	171
6.5.1. Recyclers.....	172
6.5.2. Itinerant Waste Pickers and Landfill Scavengers.....	174
6.6. Households' Perspectives on SWM in Honiara	176
6.6.1. Households and Organic Waste Flows.....	178
6.6.2. Households and WEEE Flows.....	180
6.6.3. Households and Aluminium Can Flows	185

6.7. Summary	187
CHAPTER 7: SETTING A COURSE FOR SWM IN HONIARA	191
7.1. SWM problems exacerbated by prevailing paradigms.....	191
7.2. Systems Paradigm.....	194
7.2.1. Elements of Systems Paradigm.....	195
7.3. Applying the Systems Paradigm.....	198
7.3.1. Primary Effects and Implications for SWM.....	198
7.3.1.1 Management Implications for WEEE	203
7.3.1.2. Management Implications for HCM wastes.....	206
7.3.1.3. Management Implications for Organic HW	209
7.3.1.4. Management Implications for Aluminium Cans.....	211
7.4. Summary	212
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	215
REFERENCES	219
APPENDICES	231
Appendix 1. Human ethics approval	231
Appendix 2. Consent Form.....	232
Appendix 3. Questionnaire for HCC-EHD officials.....	233
Appendix 4. Questionnaire for HCC-WD official	235
Appendix 5. Questionnaire for MEMC-ECD officials.....	237
Appendix 6. Questionnaire for MHMS-EHD officials.....	238
Appendix 7. Questionnaire for households in Honiara.....	239
Appendix 8. Questionnaire for Recyclers.....	243
Appendix 9. One-way ANOVA of mean waste composition values across housing estates	245

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of paradigms identified by Deumling (1998)	18
Table 2. A comparison of household waste generation rates	42
Table 3. Key characteristics of this study to justify the use of MMR	57
Table 4. MS sources of data and measurement methods	71
Table 5. SWS methods of gathering data and information.....	82
Table 6. Legislations and the goals and roles of stakeholders.....	101
Table 7. Influence of legislation on outcomes and key problems.....	106
Table 8. Evaluation of key stakeholders' legislated obligations	115
Table 9. Officials' evaluation assessment of the process.....	136
Table 10. Household waste composition across three 3 studies	150
Table 11. Summary of data used in the determination of waste disposed ...	154
Table 12. Estimated coverage of HCC's waste collection service.	157
Table 13. Diversion rates and wastes disposed.....	159
Table 14. The composition of the HCM waste stream	162
Table 15. Quantity of wastes generated at the HCM	163
Table 16. Values of EEE imports and exports 2002-2007	168
Table 17. Key demographics and perspectives on SWM in Honiara	177
Table 18. Presence of EEE in households.....	181
Table 19. Observed Impacts of prevailing paradigms.....	193
Table 20. Paradigm elements: specifications and functions	194

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Forecasted total WEEE for Fiji from 2004-2020.....	43
Figure 2. Schematic of Three Major Research Paradigms	55
Figure 3. Schematic of the Research Process.....	59
Figure 4. Systems Framework of Investigation	65
Figure 5. Floor plan of Honiara Central Market.....	77
Figure 6. Systems Framework of Analysis.....	86
Figure 7. A Scheme to analyse key stakeholders involved in SWM	110
Figure 8. Schematic of Capacity Building Process	123
Figure 9. Typical Solid Waste Receptacles.....	124
Figure 10. Scattered Wastes at the HCM	125
Figure 11. HCC Model of Advocacy.....	139
Figure 12. Revised Advocacy Model.....	140
Figure 13. Waste Trends across Housing Estates.....	148
Figure 14. Aluminium can flow in and out of the Solomon Islands.....	170
Figure 15. Disposal Pathways of Organic Wastes in Honiara.....	179
Figure 16. Disposal Pathways of WEEE	184
Figure 17. Aluminium Can Flow at Household Level	186
Figure 18. Typical SWM transitional model in developed countries.....	188
Figure 19. Scenarios of EEE/WEEE Management	204
Figure 20. HCM Products/HCM Waste Management	207
Figure 21. Organic Produce/Organic Wastes Management.....	209
Figure 22. Aluminium Can Management.....	212

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

3R: Reduce-Reuse-Recycle

Al: Aluminium

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance

ASW: Average Specific Weight

AusAID: Australian Agency for International Aid

CEI: Community Effect Index

CLGF: Commonwealth Local Government Forum

CS: Consumer System

CS>SWS: materials exported from CS to SWS

D4S: Design for Sustainability

DfE: Design for Environment

DP: Dominant Paradigm

DSP: Discard Separation Paradigm

EEE: Electric and Electronic Equipment

EP/IR: Extended producer (importer) responsibility

EU: European Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HCC: Honiara City Council

HCC-EHD: Environmental Health Division of Honiara City Council

HCC-WD: Works Division of Honiara City Council

HCM: Honiara Central Market

HW: Household Wastes

IE: Industrial Ecology

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ISDF: International Sustainable Development Foundation

JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency

LCA: Life Cycle Assessment

LHS: Left Hand Side

LP: Local Production

m³: Cubic metre

M1: Materials accumulated in MS

M3: Materials accumulated in SWS

M2: Materials accumulated in CS

Mimp: Materials imported from overseas and locally

Mlp: Materials derived from local production

Mcs: Materials exported to consumer system

Msws: Materials exported to solid waste system

Mcsr: Materials imported from consumer system

Mswsr: Materials imported from solid waste system

MEMC-ECD: Environment and Conservation Division of Ministry of Environment, Meteorology and Conservation

Mex: materials exported outside the boundary

MFP: Material Flow Paradigm

MHMS-EHD: Environmental Health Division of Ministry of Health and Medical Services

MMR: Mixed Methods Research

MS: Material System

MSW: Municipal Solid Waste

NGOs: Non government organisations

NGOS: Ngossi housing estate

NSWMS: National Solid Waste Management Strategy

ODA: Overseas Development Aid

OR: Other Recyclers

PACAM: Panatina Campus housing estate

PAJBM: Panatina and JBM housing estate

PET: Polyethylene Terephthalate

PICs: Pacific Island Countries

PUV: Purpose, Use and Value

RHS: Right Hand Side

SD: Sustainable Development

SDP: Skills Development Programme

SICED: Solomon Islands Customs and Excise Division

SPREP: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

SWM: Solid Waste Management

SWMSPR: Solid Waste Management Strategy for the Pacific Region

SWS: Solid Waste System

SWS>CS: materials exported from SWS to CS

TAS: Tasahe housing estate

TV: Television

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

V1S: Vura 1 towards Vura school housing estate

VEK: Vura East and Kiviloko housing estate

VIUP: Value in Use Paradigm

Wd: Waste disposed

Wdiv: Waste diverted

WEEE: Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment

Wg: Waste generated

WH (1 & 2): Whiteriver housing estate (number indicate the two sampling days)

WHO: World Health Organisation

WWF: World Wildlife Fund

ZWP: Zero-Waste Paradigm

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Cleaner Production: “the continuous application of an integrated, preventive environmental strategy applied to processes, products and services in pursuit of economic, social, health, safety and environmental benefits” (Jackson 2002).

Design for Environment: “is an approach companies use to make business decisions that consider environmental impacts along with traditional business considerations of cost and performance” (US EPA 2002b).

Design for Sustainability: “is also referred to as sustainable product design, is a globally recognized method for companies to improve profit margins, product quality, market opportunities, environmental performance, and social benefits. Companies can achieve this win-win situation for shareholders, consumers, and the public by improving efficiencies in the products and services they design, produce and deliver” (UNEP Division of Technology Industry and Economics).

Dump: is a landfill which does not isolate landfilled wastes from the environment and meet the three criteria of a sanitary landfill (see definition of a sanitary landfill).

Extended Producer/Importer Responsibility: “this principle advocates for producers/importers to bear a degree of responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products. It includes upstream impacts

arising from the choice of materials and manufacturing process and downstream impacts from the use and disposal of products. The principle encourages producers and importers to consider the entire life cycle of their products. It is especially useful for products not easily recovered from the waste stream. It encourages businesses to prevent wastes at source, design products to be environmentally friendly and set up take back and recycling schemes” (Solomon Islands Environment and Conservation Division 2008).

Life Cycle Assessment: “is an environmental management tool increasingly used to understand and compare how a product or service is provided ‘from cradle to grave’. The technique examines every stage of the Life Cycle, from raw materials acquisition, through manufacture, distribution, use, possible reuse/recycling and then final disposal” (Navia and Ross 2009).

Paradigm: is a set of concepts that model (a) key solid waste management problems and (b) rationalise the courses and types of action taken to resolve key problems.

Sanitary Landfill: is a landfill which the landfilled wastes are isolated from the environment until wastes are rendered innocuous through biological, chemical and physical processes of nature. To meet the above stipulation, a sanitary landfill must satisfy the following criteria: (a) compaction of wastes, (b) daily covering of wastes and (c) control and prevention of negative impacts on public health and on the environment (Diaz et al. 2005).

Solid Waste Management: the management of solid materials without immediate purpose, use or value using a variety of appropriate technical and non-technical approaches in processes prior to and after materials have lost their purpose, use or value.

Solid Waste: any solid material which has lost its original purpose, use and value to its holder.

Waste Hierarchy: The hierarchy ranks waste management options according to their environmental benefits. Waste avoidance and Waste minimization through reduction, separation at source, reuse and recycling prevents the creation of waste and reduces the quantity and the impacts of the waste that is generated. The waste hierarchy emphasizes the need to concentrate on waste avoidance and minimization and reduce the importance of final disposal (Fiji Department of Environment 2008).

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife and sons for being there for me, and in memory of my late mother Rosina Manongifiriiteraki.