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O L L S C O I L   L U I M N I G H

'Culture eats Strategy for Breakfast'? An Examination of Performance Management in the Civil and Public Service.

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Bachelor of Arts in Politics and International Relations

'Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast'?

An Examination of Performance Management in the Civil and Public Service.

A Final Year Project Presented

by

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Correction Sheet

Abstract

The performance of public sector organisations has been a central issue for governments internationally for the last three decades. This is demonstrated by the shift away from the traditional model of public administration towards the practices of New Public Management and greater attention to outputs and outcomes. Performance management reforms constitute a significant element of these new initiatives with greater attention to measurement instruments. The Irish situation in this regard reads somewhat differently as its history of rather un-sustained public sector reform demonstrates. Emerging from the crisis the Irish public sector performance reflects these inconsistencies and this requires further study. This paper asks does Ireland have significant shortcomings in the implementation of performance management reforms and whether cultural factors have an influence on their effectiveness, as is the case internationally. The research undertaken uses a mixed methods approach through interviews and an online survey with members of the civil and public service to explore this question. The findings reflect a culture in the political-administrative system which hinders reform strategies and the purposeful integration of performance management practices. This supports Ireland's classification as a 'Performance Administration' by the Rhodes et al (2012) framework which lacks the cultural change necessary to instil sustainable performance management reform.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified and fully referenced both (in-text) and in my completed reference list / bibliography. This body of work has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit / grade. I fully understand the ethical implications of my research, and this work meets the requirements of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

List of Abbreviations

BSC	**Balanced Scorecard**
C&AG	**Comptroller and Auditor General**
CSRP	**Civil Service Renewal Plan**
DBG	**Delivering Better Government**
ECB	**European Central Bank**
EU	**European Union**
FCPS	**Fixed charge Processing System**
HSE	**Health Service Executive**
IMF	**International Monetary Fund**
IPA	**Institute of Public Administration**
MAC	**Management Advisory Committee**
MAT	**Mandatory Alcohol Testing**
MIF	**Management Information Framework**
NESC	**National Economic and Social Council**
OECD	**Organisation for Economic and Community Development**
PMDS	**Performance Management and Development System**
PSOR	**Public Service Organisation Review**
PSRP	**Public Sector Reform Plan**
SCB	**Serving the Country Better**
SMI	**Strategic Management Initiative**
VFMPI	**Value for Money Policy and Policy Initiative**

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Context: Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast

The last decade in Ireland has been a turbulent one in which the country has endured significant crises and the performance of the political-administrative system has been put into the spotlight. Since 2011, the Irish Government has embarked on a programme of civil and public sector reform to remedy the identified deficiencies in Irish governance (MacCarthaigh 2017; Hardiman 2012). Ireland's history of reform is acknowledged as being laggard, lacking coherence and the political-administrative will for its effective implementation (McCarthaigh 2017; Hardiman 2012). The economic crisis, according to MacCarthaigh (2017) heralded 'a new era of public sector reform that was unprecedented in both scale and scope' (p.54). The Fine Gael/Labour Programme for Government in 2011 recognised that maximising the performance of the public sector was vital for the effectiveness of reform strategies and introduced a variety of performance initiatives. Performance related reforms have been international in scope and have accounted for much of the public sector reform agenda in the last three decades. Performance management is an activity that involves different actions to establish the level of performance of a public organisation, policy or individual (Hughes 2017: Peters 2017; Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach 2011; Talbot 2007).

A prominent example of these performance practice reforms are the changes to the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) established in 2000 as part of the Strategic Management Initiative reforms. This system was deemed ineffective and cumbersome (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2012; Boyle 2011). It was also argued that managers using PMDS were rationalising incremental pay increases without proper consideration of productivity and the actual performance of individual civil servants concerned (OECD 2008). In 2010, less than half of 1% of civil servants were attributed as non-performing and similar results have been reported over the course of its time in operation (RTE 2012; Department of Finance 2009). Thus one of the strategies of the new government's reform plan was to modernise the system to ascertain a more accurate level of performance and underperformance (O' Carroll 2012). System alterations took place in 2012 and again in 2016 following further external consultation. In 2017, an article in Sunday Times reported that the new PMDS recorded a near perfect score for the performance of the Irish civil service in 2016. Released under Freedom of Information Act, it stated that the recently reformed two-grade PMDS showed that 0.25 percent of staff had underperformed overall in

individual assessments, receiving an 'unsatisfactory grade'. Under the previous system a year earlier, which was deemed overlong, costly and most importantly ineffective, the underperformance level was 0.33 percent. This is the equivalent of 119 civil servants in 2015 and 93 in 2016 within a service of over 36,000 civil servants. Many departments of state received a one hundred percent rating and the lowest was score received was 98% (Coyle 2017). Dr Eddie Molloy, a management consultant, who comments regularly on public sector productivity and has sat on a number of public sector review panels, states that the near perfect PMDS scores are not a credible representation of civil service performance. Molloy attests that within the Irish political-administration lies a deep rooted malaise that needs to be fervently disassembled through strong leadership and a change in culture (Molloy 2017).

The phrase 'culture eats strategy for breakfast' is one that has been used on many occasions to explain the Irish system of governance. It is a phrase that was originally credited to management consultant Peter Drucker meaning that culture (attitudes, behaviours and values) can thwart an attempt to apply a plan that is incompatible with the culture of that organisation (Cave 2017). Dr Molloy has referred the phrase in speeches at Magill Summer School and his view of a 'culture of impunity' in the political-administrative system (Molloy 2017). The former Garda Commissioner Noreen O' Sullivan in her final appearance at the Policing Authority used the phrase when discussing the slow pace of Garda Síochána reform measures in light of a number of reports detailing Garda mismanagement and poor governance (Policing Authority 2017). European Ombudsman Emily O' Reilly in her previous role as the Irish Ombudsman, in an Oireachtas Committee in 2012 quoted the phrase in relation to two reports detailing repeated dysfunctions of a serious nature by the Department of Health. O' Reilly commented that 'a culture within the department appears to stick, irrespective of who is there' (Kildare Street 2012). O' Reilly in response to deputies at the committee commented that any reform strategies that do not put the exploration of culture at its core will not work (ibid). Strategies, reform plans and performance reports continue without abatement with the insistence that performance is improving so that Ireland will never again will repeat the failings of the past (De Buitléir 2016; Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach 2014). However the public sector approach to performance management requires additional examination. Performance management in Ireland, the context and culture in which it is practiced including its shortcomings, will be the subject of this project.

1.1 Project Aim

The purpose of this research is to examine performance management in the Irish civil and public service to discover if shortcomings exist in the implementation of performance management and whether contextual or cultural factors have had an influence on its effectiveness.

1.2 Structure of the Project

Chapter two will conduct a critical and evaluative account of literature published in the area of performance management internationally. The chapter provides an overview of the historical development of performance management, its identified shortcomings and the importance of context and organisational culture for the effective implementation of these practices.

Chapter three sets out the methodology used to conduct research for the project which asks: *Does Ireland have significant shortcomings in the implementation of performance management?* The chapter will also examine whether contextual or cultural factors have had a bearing on performance management practices. The project has utilised desk and mixed methods research; qualitative and quantitative analysis in the form of one-to-one interviews and an online survey with Irish civil and public servants. The chapter will also outline any limitations in the research.

Chapter four will examine literature in relation to Ireland's historical approach to performance management in the civil and public service. Additionally there will be an examination of the context and level of performance management using the Rhodes et al (2012) framework for analysing performance regimes.

Chapter five summarises recent performance reforms and formulates an initial analysis from the literature. This will be followed by the results and findings from the original project research.

Chapter six will draw together conclusions arising from the research findings and relevant literature.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Over the past three decades the performance of public organisations has emerged on the political agenda as countries have sought to make the public sector more managerial, responsive, efficient, effective and cost less through the measurement and management of performance (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008; Hughes 2012). This chapter examines the relevant literature pertaining to performance management (PM) in public sector organisations internationally. Specifically there will be a definition of the key concepts and theories of performance, management, organisational culture, performance management and why it is meaningful. The proceeding section will summarise the historical development of performance management through the lens of public sector reform. The chapter will then summarise how performance management reforms have occurred and what challenges public sector organisations have encountered. Lastly the review will articulate the importance of organisational culture in the implementation of performance management and present a framework from the literature which is useful for analysing performance in different countries.

2.1 What is Performance?

The word 'performance' is explained as 'the action or process of performing a task or function'. For the purposes of this research, 'performance' also means 'a task or operation seen in terms of how successfully it is performed' (Oxford Dictionary 2017). Bovaird and Gregory (1996) describes performance as 'not a unitary concept, within an unambiguous meaning, it must be viewed as a set of information about achievements of varying different stakeholders' (p.147). Similarly, Dubnick (2005) characterises performance as a concept that represents 'intentional behaviour either individual or organisational' (p.392). His four perspectives presented in table

Does the perspective imply quality of achievements?			
		No	Yes
Does the perspective imply quality of actions?	No	Performance as production (P1)	Performance as good results (P3)
	Yes	Performance as competence/capacity (P2)	Performance as sustainable results (P4)

Table 2.1 How performance can be understood. Source: Dubnick 2005 and Van Dooren et al 2010

2.1 above, on how performance is understood, discuss whether there is consideration taken for the quality of actions and/or quality of achievements. Performance can be relatively neutral in nature or it can contain a value judgement. For example, performance can be understood as a task being carried out by the performing body e.g. a student presentation or a police officer on the beat– success is not being considered which is presented in 'P1' of the table. Performance can also be understood as implying quality – has the performing body competence/capacity to complete the task? (P2). Consideration of just the results of the activity without any indication of the quality of the performance is shown in 'P3'. Additional added value would ask does the performing body imply both quality of actions and quality of achievements –outputs and outcomes. Consideration of both actions and achievements can effect 'sustainable results' as shown in P4 (Van Dooren et al 2010; Dubnick 2005 p.392). An example of the measurement of both outputs and outcomes in public health services considers both patients' medical outcomes as well as the amount of surgeries a hospital completes.

The most common way to define performance and frame it in the context of the public sector is in the production process model which is presented in figure 2.1 below. The model was originally developed in the private sector as inputs, activities and outputs but the model was redefined by scholars due to its ineffectiveness in the complex environment of the public sector. In the private sector, maximisation of profit is the overarching goal and requires a narrower performance model (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, pp.16-17). The public sector must consider a broader range of factors such as the socio-economic system, public service effectiveness and the outcomes for citizens and service users. This model plots performance from: (1) socio-
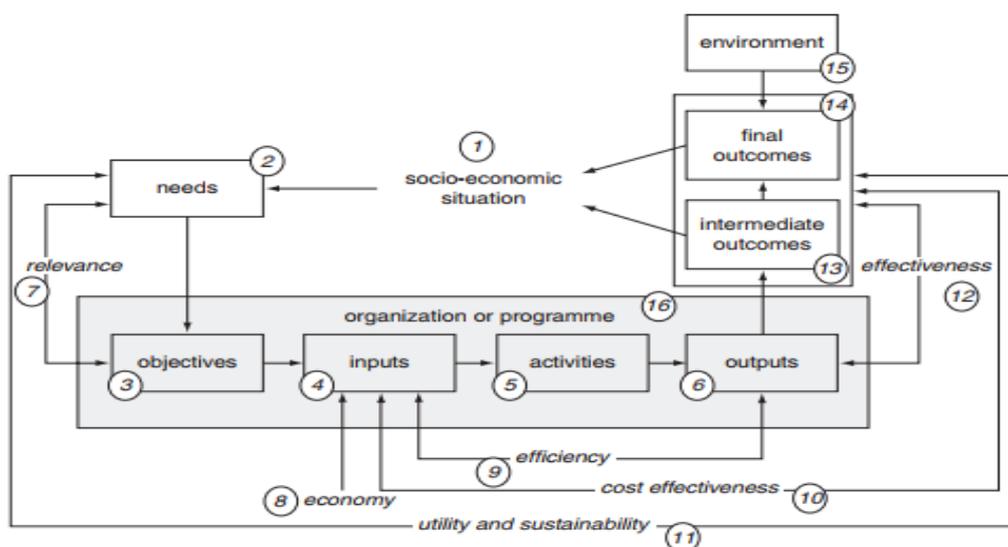

Figure 2.1 Production Process Model of Performance, Source: Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011).

economic situation whereby an issue prompts; (2) a need for the public sector to take action; (3) the objectives of the action are defined; (4) the inputs or allocations are provided to begin; (5) activities involved; (6) Outputs of the activity are realised. Furthermore (13-14) represent the outcomes of the public activity taking into consideration steps 7-12 which include efficiency, economy and effectiveness (Van Dooren et al 2010 pp.19-21). Good outcomes are the real key results in public sector activity: outcomes for citizens, service users, patients, students, new-born babies etc. (Van Dooren and Thijs 2010).

Another way of framing performance management is articulated by Talbot (2007). He distinguishes three areas in which performance is applied in a public sector body. These are *organisational* performance, the performance of *programmes or policies* and *individual* performance by public servants. Performance focused on organisations refers to managerial accountability and financing systems that are built around organisational structures. Performance focused on policies and programmes refers to activity based performance like *cost benefit analysis* and *Value for Money & Policy Review Initiatives* (Talbot 2007, p.5; IGEES 2017). The analysis of policies and programmes are beneficial as they cross government departments, agencies and public bodies. This is due to the fact that many programmes are developed with the involvement of a variety of those different actors (Talbot 2007). Finally individual performance relates to the framework around the contribution of individuals and/or teams to the strategy or objectives of the organisation such as performance appraisal or performance development systems (Talbot 2007). Performance is also categorised as an agenda. It is presented as a programme of 'change and improvement' (Van Dooren et al 2010). This is evident in public sector reforms of the last three decades which distinctly emphasise the importance of performance monitoring methods as a tool for improving the organisation and management of public services. Performance now permeates public bodies and is pivotal in management and public sector reform. (Peters 2017; Bouckaert and Van Dooren 2016; Taylor 2014; Talbot 2007; OECD 1997). The next section will define management and explain it in the context of the public and private sectors.

2.2 What is Management?

Management is defined as 'coordinating and overseeing the work activities of others so that their activities are completed efficiently and effectively' (Robbins and Coulter 2009, p.22). Furthermore Naylor (2004) defines management as 'the process of achieving organisational objectives, within a changing environment, by balancing efficiency, effectiveness and equity,

obtaining the most from limited resources, and working with and through other people' (pp.6-9). Put more simply, management is articulated as 'getting things done through others' and the 'achievement of results and taking personal responsibility for doing so' (Naylor 2004; Koontz and O' Donnell 1955). The functions of management include planning, organising, leading and controlling. Planning articulates goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Organisation requires management to arrange and structure the work to achieve the defined objectives. Working through others requires leadership and motivation for the accomplishment of organisational goals and finally the controlling function requires that managers assess whether the objectives are being achieved by matching performance to set targets (Robbins and Coulter 2009, p.24). Classical management theory is characterised by Taylor's scientific management and Weber's bureaucracy. These were routinely used in the public and private sector organisations during the twentieth century. In the private sector these methods became outdated and gradually replaced with new managerial techniques that incorporated more effective and efficient management functions (Hughes 2012; Robbins and Coulter 2009). Public sector organisations which were characterised as 'statist, bureaucratic, hierarchical and centralised remained largely unchanged until the 1980s when economic circumstances and an ideological shift within governments were an impetus for change (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015; Dunsire 1999).

Contemporary management practices must take into account a myriad of different factors such as strategic planning, risk management, organisational culture, human resources, leadership, ethics, IT advancements, globalisation, gender equality, and generational change in employment behaviour as well as the precarious nature of many sectors (public and private) since the global economic crisis 2007. The pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness has remained a principle of management practices. Performance management has become an instrument to realise these values (George and Jones 2015; Taylor 2014; Sanger 2008). The next section will define public sector performance management, its dimensions and why it is meaningful.

2.3 What is Performance Management?

Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) provide a broad definition of performance based public management as 'taking/allocating responsibility for the performance of a system and being accountable for its results' (p.2). Moreover, performance management is defined as 'a type of management that incorporates performance information into decision making' (Van Dooren et al 2010, p.1). Similarly, Curristine (2005) defines performance management as 'a management cycle under which programme performance objectives and targets are determined, managers

have flexibility to achieve them, actual performance is measured and reported, and this information feeds into decisions about programme funding, design, operations and rewards or penalties' (p.131). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines performance management as a process that 'covers performance information, evaluation, performance monitoring, assessment and performance reporting' (OECD 2006, p.185). Performance management is not a singular activity but one that is characterised by different dimensions in a process. Similarly it should not happen in isolation from the rest the organisation (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008, p.2).

The full process of performance management includes measurement, incorporation, and use of collected data in the management system to help achieve the organisational goals of efficiency and effectiveness (Van Dooren et al 2010). The performance measurement stage of the cycle is defined as a 'bundle of deliberate activities of quantifying performance which result in performance information' (Van Dooren et al 2010 pp.25-30). Both terms *measurement* and *management* have been used interchangeably in the debate on performance, however they are different (Fryer et al 2009; De Bruijn 2002). Scholars now distinguish performance measurement as one aspect of the performance management process (Taylor 2014; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Fryer at al 2009). Radnor and Barnes (2007) differentiates measurement as 'quantifying, either qualitatively or quantitatively the input, output or level of activity of an event or process. Furthermore performance management is action, based on performance measures and reporting which can result in improvements in behaviour, motivation and processes and promote innovation' (p.393).

Why then, is managing the performance of public sector organisations meaningful? Performance is a crucial element of public management because monitoring activity can show where change is required and can in turn produce the desired behaviour to improve public delivery (Fryer et al 2009). The United States Interagency Working Group (Halachmi 2011) which makes recommendations to the President on government programmes concluded that performance has an ability to demonstrate the results of program activities; to show how these results support programmatic and organizational goals to determine what works and what does not, and to promote accountability and justify resource allocation (Halachmi 2011, p.27). Another rationale for performance argues that if measurement and management of performance does not occur, then an organisation cannot see either success or failure therefore cannot learn, will repeat mistakes and waste resources in the process (ibid).These arguments can be related back to Dubnick's (2005) understanding of performance and the achievement of sustainable

results – measurement and management can contribute to results. The OECD (1997) paper *'In the Search of Results'* drew on the experience of ten countries to articulate three broad objectives of performance management reforms: (1) The desire for improvement and continuous improvement, (2) Improving mechanisms to distribute and clarify responsibilities and control, and (3) fiscal restraint and the realisation of savings by shrinking activities, budgets and increasing efficiency (pp.11-20). More specifically, Van Dooren, Bouckaert and Halligan (2010) describe three features of PM use; – to learn, to steer and control, and to give account. It provides examples of instruments of performance such as risk analysis for learning, management scorecards for organisational steering as well as citizen charters and annual reports to account for services provided. This is presented in Table 2.2 below.

	To learn	**To steer & control**	**To give account**
Key Question	How to improve policy or management?	How to steering or control activities?	How to communicate performance?
Focus	Internal	Internal	External
Orientation	Change/future	Control/present	Survival/past
Exemplary instruments	Strategic planning, benchmarking, risk analysis, business process reengineering.	Monitors and management scorecards, performance pay, performance budgeting.	League Tables, citizen charters and annual reporting, performance contracts.

Table 2.2 Three features of performance management Source: Van Dooren et al (2010)

Additionally, Jan De Bruijn (2002) describes performance management as a powerful tool of communication with regard to public accountability (p.4). Firstly, accountability requires information from those professional organisations and performance management reduces that information to its essence, thus making poor performance detectable and actionable (ibid). Secondly, an organisation has the ability to learn from the transparency created by performance management– which indicate the shortfalls in organisational activity. Thirdly, performance measurement can contribute to organisational and individual performance-based appraisals. Lastly, appraisal may be proceeded by sanction, either positive or negative sanction depending on the performance reporting, whereby a punishment is applied for poor performance (De Bruijn 2002). Talbot (2007) observes a number of arguments in favour of performance management: to assist and promote accountability, transparency, user choice, customer service, efficiency, effectiveness, evidence based resources allocation and creating public value.

Performance management can 'restore citizen trust in government by making its activities (service efforts and accomplishments) more transparent, open to public scrutiny and demonstrative of real value to taxpayers' (Sanger 2008; Grossi et al 2016). Similarly, Peters (2015) argues that performance indicators (PIs) enable citizens to assess standards and quality in a given institution, e.g. which schools to send children to or which hospital to attend for elective surgery (p.135). The next section will define culture and how it can impact on organisational change or reform.

2.4 Organisational Culture

Schein (2010) argues that realising the dynamics of culture helps organisations understand the behaviour of people and the difficulty therein to orchestrate change. Culture can be defined as 'the attitudes and behaviour characteristic of a particular group (Oxford 2018). Schein defines culture as 'a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid therefore can to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Taylor 2014, p.9; Schein 2010, p.18). Furthermore, organisational culture is explained as 'what is important to an organisation and what determines how organisation members feel and behave' (Schein 2004; O' Reilly and Chatman 1996). Culture gives organisations ' a sense of identity and determines, through the organisation's legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and language, the way in which things are done around here' (Schein 2010; Boyle and O' Donnell 2008). Schein describes three levels of organisational culture which are pertinent to understanding the adoption of performance management and public sector reforms. These are: artefacts (surface level phenomena which can be seen or heard such as the physical environment, language, technology, stories told, list of values etc); espoused beliefs and values (ideals, values, goals, aspirations such as strategies); and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious, taken for granted beliefs and perceptions about the organisation, its work, the people, rewards and punishments which are the ultimate source of values and actions (Schein 2010; Boyle and O' Donnell 2008). Literature suggests that there is a link between organisational culture change and public sector improvement, for example organisations that contain an internal process culture may demonstrate resistance to reforms which support innovation. Accordingly, culture can either facilitate or inhibit transformation depending on the existing culture being aligned with the goals of the proposed change (Boyle and O' Donnell 2008; Zalami 2005; Boyne 2003).The next section will provide an overview of the historical development of performance management through the lens of the

traditional model of public administration and the expansion of performance activity within New Public Management (NPM) reforms.

2.5 Historical Development of Performance Management

2.5.1 Context

Debate around the performance of politicians, governments and public organisations is ubiquitous (Van Dooren et al 2010; Talbot 2007; Talbot 2000). While there has been a surge or revolution in performance management activity in the last few decades, performance related activity in the public sector is evident throughout the twentieth century (Fryer et al 2009; Talbot 2007; Radnor and McGuire 2004). Research into the development of performance articulates waves of performance throughout history (Radnor and McGuire 2004; Kaplan and Norton 1993). Van Dooren et al (2010) present eight different waves from the 1900s to 2000s. This commenced with the use of social surveys in the early part of the twentieth century whereby 'social reformers' in the UK required factual information about social issues such as poverty – the 'what, when, why and how?' (p.45). The proceeding movements included scientific management, cost accounting, and social indicators in the 1970s. Economic circumstances brought the next performance movement to the fore; New Public Management of the 1980s-2000s, in which significant changes to how governments and public bodies functioned and delivered services occurred utilising the private market in the provision of services, rationalised public sectors, cutbacks and performance based budgeting and measurement of public activity. The last movement referenced is 'evidence based policy' of the 1990s-2000s which originated in the UK health sector and has become significant in all policy areas. The rationale being that information on outcomes and performance should influence decision making and policies rather than the other way round. (Van Dooren et al 2010, p.44). Public sector organisations have been characterised by two main paradigms in the last century through which performance activity can be analysed: (1) the traditional model of public administration and (2) New Public Management (NPM) and these will be summarised in the proceeding sections.

2.5.2 The Traditional Model of Public Administration

According to Hughes (2017) administration is defined as following instructions and providing service while management is about the achievement of results and managers taking personal responsibility for those results. Furthermore public administration is the 'creation and delivery of public services and the structures and people through which that is done' (Dunsire 1999

pp.360-365). The epitome of public organisations for most of the twentieth century in many countries (especially English speaking countries) was that of administration not management (Hughes 2012). The traditional model is defined by the theoretical principles of Max Weber's bureaucracy, Frederick Taylor's principles of scientific management in addition to Woodrow Wilson's theory of politics-administration dichotomy. The latter in particular prescribed the impartiality of civil servants as a solution to the systems of patronage that existed up to the end of the 19th century (Zia and Khan 2015; Lynn 2001; Dunsire 1999). This type of administration represents an 'old orthodoxy, 'bureaucratic paradigm' 'classic' or 'traditional model' of administration when the public sector reforms of the 1980s and onwards are taken into consideration (Hughes 2012; Lynn 2001; Hood 1991). Performance in traditional administration was equated with bureaucratic and centralised monopolies following laws and regulations which set out standard procedures and rules for the delivery of services (Page 2005, p.714). The assessment of public performance was input focused and results were thought to follow from strict adherence to the processes laid out. Hughes (2012) states that performance measurement 'was arbitrary and ad hoc' and that the general evaluation of programmes were 'rare and unsystematic' (p.66).

While traditional administration had served countries well for the majority of the twentieth century, by the mid-1970s there was great dissatisfaction with the size and cost of government bureaucracy, its lack of effectiveness in dealing with economic crises. Additionally there were problems with the principles upon which administration operated such as the 'one-best way' theory (made redundant in the private sector by this time) and the lack of accountability and responsibility of the 'neutral' civil servant which was unrealistic given the active role public administrators play in public services (Hughes 2012). Accountability is defined as 'the obligation to explain and justify conduct' (Bovens 2006). Conceptions of accountability include political accountability to national parliament, legal accountability through the courts and administrative and managerial accountability within the public sector. The perception was that the traditional model did not provide sufficient accountability for the actions of public servant (Hughes 2012; Bovens 2006). Robert Behn (1998) summed up very succinctly the problems of traditional administration by articulating the thinking of the champions of New Public Management: 'the traditional method for organising the executive branch of government is too cumbersome, too bureaucratic, too inefficient, too unresponsive, and too unproductive' (p.132). Furthermore, Litton (2006) notes that the bureaucratic structures favoured within public administrations can lead to cultural traits that limit performance. With the election of

right wing ideological governments in the United Kingdom and United States from the 1980s which championed neo-liberalism, politicians set about the modernisation (managerialism), privatisation and shrinking of public administration (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015; Hughes 2012; Dunsire 1999).

2.5.3 New Public Management

New Public Management (NPM), was the phrase coined to describe the 'paradigm shift' from the traditional model of public administration to a managerial approach to public services whereby public managers were responsible for results. All countries who pursued management principles approached them differently and NPM is considered an 'umbrella' or 'shopping basket' of reform options (Hughes 2017; Enders and Westerheijden 2014 Christensen 2012). Countries such as the United Kingdom embraced public sector reform with zeal, whereas others in Europe approached private sector practices with caution, for example Germany, whereby many reforms have been developed from within the public sector (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). The adoption and implementation of reforms have differed according to contextual, institutional and cultural factors (Wollmann and Kuhlmann 2014; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011)

In many jurisdictions, the measurement of public sector performance were a central feature of NPM reforms, beginning with the UK, US and New Zealand (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Bouckaert and Halligan 2008; Christensen and Yoshimi 2001). The surge of performance management initiatives was a way of ensuring the objective of the three 'Es' of *Economy, Efficiency* and *Effectiveness* doggedly pursued by many 1980s governments (Burton 2013; Dunsire 1999). The OECD recognised performance management as 'key factor in public sector reform in many countries; an increased focus on results is the key objective of reforms' (2016; 2006; 1997). The key difference between the traditional and public management in essence, is accountability. The delivery of results require ways for these results to be shown (Hughes 2017; Page 2005; Dunsire 1999). Public organisations and officials whom had previously administered (following instructions) shifted to management techniques in the delivery of public services (Hughes 2017; Christensen 2012). While NPM has been attributed with modernising and introducing competition to the public sector, it has been criticised for exacerbating accountability deficits and failing to tackle the problems of the old model of administration (Peters 2017; Zia and Khan 2015; Christensen 2012; Hood 1991). The negative effects of New Public Management have seen the emergence of 'post-NPM reforms' or New Public Governance (NPG). The NPG approach seek methods to counteract the problems of

disintegration or fragmentation caused by the various elements of NPM such as the creation of agencies (agencification) and arms-length public bodies to deliver public services (Overman and Van Theil 2015; Christensen 2012; Osbourne 2010). The purpose of this new wave is to create 'joined-up government' or whole of government approach lost in the era of NPM (Christensen 2012, p.3). The next section will elaborate on the dimensions of performance management and provide examples of different instruments and how it has been applied in practice.

2.6 The Dimensions of Performance Management

The first dimension in the performance management cycle is *measurement*. An ideal typical model of performance measurement includes five steps that prioritises quality of action at each step (Van Dooren et al 2010; Fryer et al 2009). These are (1) Targeting -what to measure? (2) Indicator selection – what performance indicators to select? Indicators of performance cuts across the production process model; indicators on inputs, outputs and outcomes. Indicators must be precise and sensitive to change to capture the broad scope of performance data, for example customer satisfaction survey using yes/no questions which do not capture variations of satisfaction. They also need to be easy to understand (3) Data collection involves methods of collecting data, e.g. surveys/self-assessments from external or internal sources. (4) Analysis to transform data into information. (5) Reporting to the target groups such as citizens, media, public officials, and parliament in the format of annual reports, government website, news article, press conference and budget. (Van Dooren et al 2010; OECD 2009) An example of a measurement instrument is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) previously developed in the private sector and adopted for use in public sector organisations such as police services in Australia and Scotland. Indicators for the Scottish framework were divided into four categories- service response, public reassurance & community safety, criminal justice and tackling crime, and sound governance & efficiency. Indicators under each category are then subdivided into outcomes, activities, inputs and context for comparison across the whole of the police service (Fryer et al 2009, pp.481-482).

The next dimension in the performance management process is *incorporation*. This is the incorporation of collected data into the management and policy systems. Without this activity, the process of performance management is incomplete. Performance information from any stage of the production process (inputs, outputs and outcomes) can be incorporated into the management system, for example the application of performance information into the policy

process, performance budgeting or human resource management (Taylor 2014; Van Dooren et al 2010; Bouckaert and Halligan 2008). The final dimension of performance management is *use*. Using performance information supports the features learning, steering/controlling and giving account of actions. These can be categorised as ranging between hard and soft use. Performance for learning is soft use. Performance for steering goes that bit further and giving account for performance is hard use. For example, a performance system that imposes sanctions for not reaching a performance target would come under hard use (Van Dooren et al 2010, p.94). Van Dooren et al (2010) provide forty four potential uses for performance information in the areas of policy and management which include strategic planning, results-based budgeting and communication between managers (p.98).

The application of performance management, as with other public management reforms, has occurred differently internationally. Australia according to OECD has been more committed to performance management than other countries with an elaborate and comprehensive approach that has been refined since the 1980s. Beginning with the Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP) in 1987, there was joined up approach between budgeting, implementation and performance of programmes. An outcomes/outputs framework has helped improve the quality of financial information and the development of explicit indicators (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008).The context in which these reforms took place was based on a suspicion by the political system that public administrators had become a 'law unto themselves' and that political direction had to be reasserted. This occurred over successive governments and across party lines (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). In the United Kingdom Thatcher government reforms were tasked with delivering 'better value for money' using programmes such as the Financial Management Initiative (FMI). The three Es were at the core of the reforms with a significant element of FMI based upon the achievement of objectives, and measuring output and performance. By the late 1980s government departments had developed nearly two thousand performance indicators (Van Dooren et al 2010). Efforts in recent years have involved creating more joined-up working across government such as the public service agreement framework which placed considerable political pressure on departments to meet their agreements. Comparing performance against targets in annual reports has provided the UK parliament with a valuable tool for scrutinising departmental performance (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008). The next section will look at performance management in practice including the challenges and shortcomings of performance systems.

2.7 Performance Management in Action

The literature argues that performance management is a worthwhile exercise for the public sector and will continue to be a feature of public sector organisations (Hughes 2017; Peters 2017; Taylor 2014; Pollitt and Dan 2013; Halachmi 2011; Van Dooren and Thijs 2010; Sanger 2008; Talbot 2007; Bouckaert and Peters 2002; De Bruijn 2002). However the literature points to a number of challenges that have arisen in the practice of performance management. These include shortcomings, dysfunctional elements, perverse consequences and the 'paradox' of performance management (Peters 2015; Van Dooren 2011). Performance measurement has been termed an 'Achilles heel' of performance management (Peters 2015; Bouckaert and Halligan 2008; Bouckaert and Peters 2002). This arises because of the difficulty organisations have in developing appropriate performance measurements and indicators. The argument has been made that outcomes are the most salient when it comes to managing performance yet outcomes are very difficult to measure (Van Dooren and Thijs 2010, pp.13-18). De Bruijn (2002) explains the difficulty of measuring performance in a complex environment such as the public sector –public services are disaggregated and are coordinated in association with third parties stakeholders. These services must do justice to different values such as equity and fairness. How therefore can institutions like the justice system be appraised on the number of judgements it passes or the number of fixed penalty notices a police officer serves given the intricacies involved? Measurement, De Bruijn says, reduces these complex activities to a single dimension (2002). Performance outcomes face attribution problems: have the outputs pursued led to the objective outcomes and can they attribute to the end result? For example, is improved efficiency in a certain public body a result of new practices or are they in response to an external factor not considered? (Talbot 2007).

The literature (Peters 2017; Taylor 2014; Van Dooren et al 2011; Fryer et al 2009; De Bruijn 2002) highlights a number of perverse effects of performance measurement. Measurement stimulates strategic behaviour also known as 'gaming', whereby, for example, a police unit have a performance indicator for crime prevention. Ways may be discovered to misreport or re-categorise crime figures to achieve their targets. In these scenarios the performance exists on paper only and not in real terms which threatens the quality of the information and the proceeding policy decisions (Peters 2017; Taylor 2014; Fryer at al 2009; De Bruijn 2002). Manipulation and deception of performance information can support a culture of cynicism and amoral behaviour which can damage public confidence (Talbot 2007, p.13).

Peters (2015) has also described the paradox of performance management through the use of performance standards in NPM. While policy makers may intend to improve policy implementation by establishing targets and standards, they may actually cause a reduction in the capacity of the programme as implementers find ways to reach targets, sometimes at the expense of the programme (pp.94-95). Furthermore, due to the proliferation of stakeholders in a performance management process, often organisations end up with multiple performance activities which become a form filling activity rather than a useful learning and improvement process (Fryer et al 2008 p.489; Radnor and McGuire 2004). Halachmi (2011) argues that performance measurement has instead of being a means for improving management has become an end in itself. The application of performance management measures following a controversy or exposure of maladministration reflect a manipulation rather than the pursuit of efficiencies or waste prevention (pp.27-35). Similarly Radnor and Radnor and McGuire (2004) reflect on a performance management framework that research implies behaviour of 'working the system' or 'ticking the boxes' in order to comply with required objectives. Sanger (2008) writes that most performance management efforts begin with the development of performance measurement systems but flounder at the use of those systems for day-to-day management (pp.255-256). Taylor (2014) highlights the inconsistent use of performance information as a considerable shortcoming in performance management. Public agencies fail to use performance information beyond reporting and that in turn will have an implication on decision-making and the effectiveness of chosen policies. Desired behaviour of performance management is not always reflected in actual behaviour. Instead of evidence-based policy making, public officials use performance information for 'policy-based evidence' to justify already decided policies (pp.9-12). The next section examines the role of culture as an explanation for the shortcomings and paradoxes of performance management practices.

2.8 Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast

A significant amount of the literature on performance management places a strong emphasis on the context of performance related reforms indicating that many of the perverse consequences or shortcomings can be attributed to organisational culture (Askim 2015; Taylor 2014; Pollitt and Dan 2013; Haines III and St-Onge 2012; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Van Dooren et al 2011; Halachmi; 2011; Bouckaert and Halligan 2008; Sanger 2008; Bednar and Page 2006). Taylor (2014) argues that culture can influence people's view on the validity and salience of performance measurements and how the performance information collected is used in policy making or management systems. In the analysis of the inconsistent use of performance

information in performance management regimes, Taylor identifies that the various levels of culture (artefacts, espoused values and underlying basic assumptions) and the extent of their alignment within an organisation can determine the scope of performance information use. Symbolic performance management occurs when a public body is explicit that the purpose of performance information is for learning (espoused use) yet fails to put in place the mechanisms (artefacts) to do so or managers remain dubious about the value of the information (Taylor 2014, p.18). Culture is not singular nor is it flat – different cultures can exist in various public organisations. Furthermore subcultures or 'silos' can be found within the same organisation which can create different barriers to using performance information. (Taylor 2014; Schein 2010) In their research into performance-oriented management reforms of New Public Management, Pollitt and Dan (2013) discovered that the impacts of such reforms are regularly illusive and fragmentary. For a performance-oriented system to work there needs to be consideration of contextual and cultural conditions – 'would be reformers need to look rather hard at several dimensions of the local context before they decide how New Public Management/ performance management reforms are the answer to their problems' (pp.24-26). Similarly in a study by Haines III and St-Onge (2012) in Canada on performance management effectiveness, they underscore the relevance of three contextual variables–culture, climate and the strategic integration of human resource management. Consideration of those elements can lead to positive performance management outcomes. Additionally, Bednar and Page (2006) write that the performance of an institution depends on how the wider community responds to it as culture affects institutions and vice versa

When performance management works well, there has been consideration given to contextual elements, systems and organisational culture. Moullin's (2017) analysis of the Public Sector Scorecard, an integrated performance management system used in different countries has had a lot of success in a number of different organisations as in the UK Ethnic Minority Employment Taskforce. Critical to success was staff engagement at all levels, performance focused on outcomes, the importance of getting cross departmental cooperation right, and developing a culture of improvement, learning, openness, trust and an assumption that public officials 'want to do the right thing' (p.450). Fryer el al (2009) articulate key features of a successful performance management system. These include an alignment of systems in the organisation, strong leadership, a culture that recognises good performance and helps improvement, full organisational involvement and a continuous cycle of measurement, incorporation and use of information in management, policy and decision making (p.490). To

transform a bureaucratic organisation into a results-based management system argues Sanger (2008), 'bold and sustainable leadership of cultural change, not only structural change (pp.620-623). The OECD (2008; 2016) put a strong emphasis on the development of a 'performance culture' in public bodies. A performance culture is defined as 'a system that engages, develops, and inspires a diverse, high performing workforce by creating, implementing and maintaining effective performance management strategies, practices and activities that support mission objectives'. A high standard that differentiates levels of performance of staff, supports regular feedback and connects individual performance to organisational goals is critical to its success (United States, Office of Personnel Management 2018). The next section will present a performance management framework from the literature for understanding systems and context relating to performance.

2.9 Performance Management Ideal Types

Performance management literature has developed a useful framework for comparing the evolution of performance management in different countries and it is presented here using work from a number of scholars (Rhodes et al 2012; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Bouckaert and Halligan 2008). This framework combines contextual factors such as organisational culture and the dimensions of performance management (measurement, incorporation and use). These
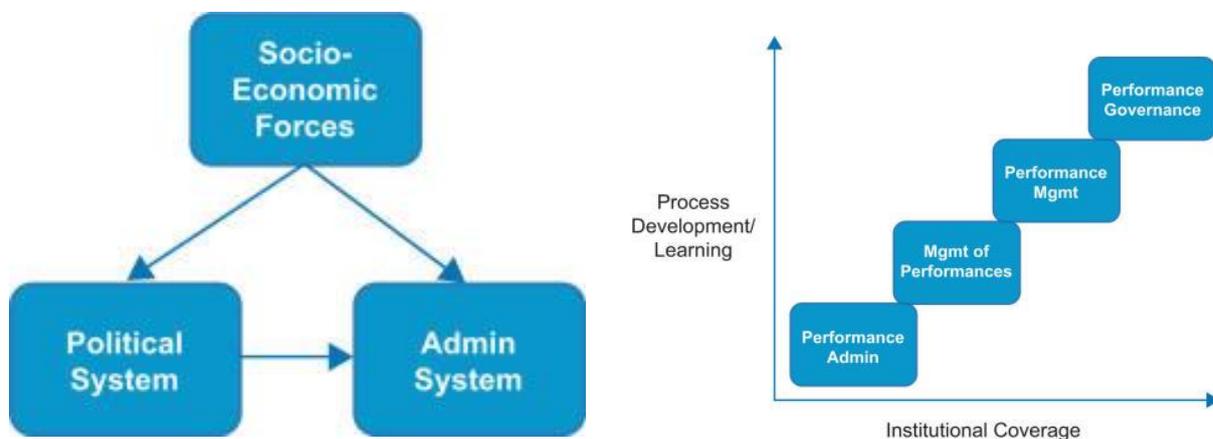
Figure 2.2 Elements of Context affecting Performance Management   Figure 2.3 Performance Management Types. Source: Rhodes et al 2012

dimensions also represent a level of integration of performance management: measurement being the starting point; and use being a fully integrated performance management system (Rhodes et al 2012; Bouckaert and Halligan 2008). The authors consider four different ideal types for classifying the integration of performance management: performance administration; management of performance; performance management; and performance governance. A starting point termed traditional or *pre-performance* acknowledges performance objectives

recognised in the generic sense can be identified in most systems but is regarded as pre-modern management that is generalised and diffuse (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008 p.36).

The first ideal type is *Performance Administration* which is based upon the traditional Weberian administration focusing on inputs and following rules. Measurement is expected but it is an administrative procedure which is disconnected from improvement activities and there is very limited use of performance information. *Management of Performances* occurs in systems that have engaged in measurement and make efforts to link the performance information with different management systems. *Performance Management* features further integration of performance information as part of a performance management strategy (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008). *Performance Governance* is indicative of New Public Governance and the range of actors involved in the public sector and policymaking process whereby collaborators from inside and outside the public sector are governed by performance mechanisms (Rhodes et al 2012). Figure 2.2 above depicts the level of integration against dimensions *Process Development/ Learning* and *Institutional Coverage*. *Institutional Coverage* encapsulates the types of measurements used, level of government activity and outcomes addressed, and the degree of integration across government, agencies and bodies. *Process Development/Learning* involves the dimensions of performance; measurement, incorporation and use (Rhodes et al 2012) Furthermore there is extensive emphasis on the importance of the management context within which performance management is utilised. The context alluded to involve the *socio-economic forces* (population of country, demographics, socio-economic policies) the *political system* (location of political power, degree of centralisation), and the *administrative system* (administrative culture, public sector reform agenda, management culture, the sources of ideas, minister/mandarin 'bargain' (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008; Rhodes et al 2012). These are illustrated above in figure 2.3 above. This framework when applied to different countries indicates that administrative culture is of significant importance to public sector reform and performance management trajectories (Rhodes el al 2012). See appendix I for an overview of performance types in a number of countries.

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion this literature review has provided an overview of the concepts and literature on performance management in the public sector. The chapter has given an overview of the reasons why performance management has grown in popularity and what uses it has for the

public sector. There has been a summary of the development of performance management through the lens of the two main paradigms of public sector organisations; the traditional model of public administration and New Public Management. There has been an explanation of importance of performance outcomes as well as inputs and outputs. The different dimensions of performance management have also been analysed: measurement; incorporation; and use. Each dimension has its specific functions in creating an effective performance management system. Performance management practice has highlighted a number of consequences and shortcomings. These include technical deficiencies such as vague performance indicators, weak targets, ineffective incorporation of measurements into management systems and not using the performance information for better management and policymaking. Furthermore, perverse consequences of performance management can arise, such as 'gaming' the figures and 'box ticking' which can have an undue effect on service delivery, efficiency and effectiveness. What has emerged in the literature is that organisational culture may be significant factor in in creating those shortcomings and consequences. Leadership on performance is especially salient in cultivating a 'performance culture'. The Rhodes et al (2012) framework has demonstrated a way of analysing the performance management regimes, taking into account the context and culture of the particular system. This framework will be useful in analysing Ireland's development of performance management practices.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter lays out the methodology used to conduct research for this project. The purpose of the research is to investigate Ireland's approach to performance management in the civil and public service. The research question is:

Does Ireland have significant shortcomings in the implementation of performance management reforms?

The literature review has established that the contextual elements of an organisation have an influence on performance management activities and therefore to explore this question further in the Irish context, it is appropriate to conduct human subject research with members of the civil and public service to investigate their experiences, observations and understanding of their organisation at this time. This process involves the collection of qualitative and quantitative data using (1) semi-structured one-to-one interviews with civil and public servants, and (2) an online survey directed at civil servants. In preparation for conducting the research I consulted a two main resources: *Public Administration Research Methods: Tools for evaluation and evidence based practice (*Robinson et al 2013) and *Research Methods in Education* (Cohen and Manion 2000).

3.1 Desk Research

This project involved a wide ranging research process which included the study of primary sources such as the reform blueprints (Devlin and Serving the Country Better) as well as reviewing store library literature. There was also a broad review of secondary literature undertaken such as academic articles on public management which related specifically to performance related reforms internationally utilising the library database.

3.2 Interview Process

The development of interview questions involved drawing from the international and Irish literature on performance management. Questions related to the technical elements of performance (systems and measurement), the features of performance (learning, accountability and steering/controlling); individual performance appraisal/management, reform implementation, and the context/culture around performance in the civil service (Rhodes et al 2012; Van Dooren at al 2010). For the purposes of obtaining participants for interview I made

contact with a number of government departments and agencies using the www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie website including the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Department of Education & Skills and Irish Aid (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) in Limerick. I also contacted a number of public sector agencies. For each interview I researched the area in which the participant worked in order to be familiar with their role. Seven interviews took place between 6th and 20th February 2018.

3.3 Online Survey

For the online survey, I drew from the international and Irish literature to formulate questions in four sections: *Performance management activities* which relate to the dimensions of performance (measurement, incorporation and use) as well as the features of performance (learning, accountability and steering/controlling); *PMDS (Performance Management and Development System)* in which there are questions relating to the current and previous PMDS; *Reform* which asked participants about the current civil service reform plan; and the final section; *Performance Factors* asks questions about the factors influencing/barriers to developing a performance culture in their organisation (Ireland Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2016; Rhodes et al 2012; Van Dooren et al 2010). These questions were then assembled on the online survey tool *Survey Monkey.* To recruit participants for the survey I emailed the press office of every government department and a number of public bodies under their aegis. Furthermore, I consulted www.whodoeswhat.gov which provides contact details for civil service officials at principal officer grade and above, to recruit additional participants. A total of 37 surveys were completed between the 31st January and the 14th February 2018. All questions are contained in Appendix II and III.

3.4 Limitations

There are limitations which should be acknowledged regarding the qualitative and quantitative research. The interviews were recorded using hand written notes which did not capture the fullness of respondent views however shorthand was utilised and notes were revised immediately after interview. The online survey contains a number of questions which could have benefitted from better formatting which on reflection limit the results collected.

3.5 Ethics Application

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Reference: 2017-10-06-AHSS).

Chapter 4 Performance Management in Ireland

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the historical development of performance management practices in Ireland, framed using dimensions from Rhodes et al (2012) to examine performance management regimes. Firstly, the chapter will look at the key elements of context with an overview of Ireland's political-administrative system. Secondly, there will be an analysis of the literature on performance management reforms since the 1960s and how Irish performance practices identify with the Rhodes et al (2012) ideal types: *Performance Administration, Management of Performances, Performance Management* and *Performance Governance.* The chapter will highlight shortcomings in Ireland's implementation of performance related reforms which have their roots in the political-administrative culture. Furthermore the chapter will represent a 'what if?' scenario of performance reforms plans had they been effectively implemented. The chapter will conclude with an overview of Ireland as a *Performance Administration* and look forward to the research into recent performance practices.

4.1 The Characteristics of Ireland's Political-Administrative System

Ireland's political-administrative system is influenced by many factors, a number of which will be discussed here. Firstly there has been a strong influence of British rule on the Irish system. The institutions of the state are based on the 'Westminster model' of government: a parliamentary democracy with a specific separation of powers vested in the legislature, executive and judiciary under the Bunreacht na hÉireann (the Irish Constitution). At the birth of the Irish Free State in 1922, an effective civil service bureaucracy already existed in Ireland. Following independence, the bureaucracy remained and was part of the foundation of the state's new government. Komito describes independence as 'more a change in regime than a revolution' which kept Irish politics 'conservative, stable and constitutional' (1985).There is also a distinct lack of a strong left-right ideology in the Irish political system that is present in other European systems which has contributed to this stability (Coakley and Gallagher 2010; Adshead and Tonge 2009; MacCarthaigh and Hardiman 2008). It is noted that the former British regime had built up a significant administrative infrastructure before 1922 which served the state well. There was a strong conservative profile in Irish leadership and past experience of Westminster politics and administration had deep roots in Ireland (Coakley and Gallagher 2010; MacCarthaigh 2005). Under the 'Westminster model' the legislature elects the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and Ministers (14) to Cabinet who act as a collective authority responsible for

the Departments of State. The Irish civil service closely followed British traditions and the traditional model of public administration: the Weberian model organised along bureaucratic and hierarchical principles; impartial, apolitical, anonymous, generalist, appointed on merit, permanently employed and adhering to the political/administrative dichotomy serving every government equally (Coakley and Gallagher 2010; Collin et al 2007). Despite their political impartiality, Chubb (1992) argues that many Irish civil servants were 'distinctly conservative' not just due to their Catholic education but by virtue of the Department of Finance's (DoF) inherited British Treasury model. The primacy of the DoF was established early on creating a highly centralised administration which played a pivotal role in policymaking and decision making post-independence (p.219).

Secondly, the influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland has meant a deference on behalf the political system to religious institutions in relation to, not just social issues but the drafting of the Irish Constitution (Ferriter 2005). The Catholic Church has shaped Irish values and behaviours with particular influence on the political-administrative system with the Church's overt and tacit power over policymakers for decades, e.g. Dr Noel Browne's Mother & Child Scheme and Irish policy on contraception. Furthermore the Irish state relied significantly upon religious orders to provide health and education services to its citizens (Ferriter 2005; Adshead and Millar 2003). Thirdly, Ireland's electoral system of proportional representation, the single transferrable vote (PR-STV) in multi-seat constituencies places an emphasis on the individual candidate rather than political party. This creates internal party political rivalry as party colleagues compete for constituency seats. Local issues regularly take priority for public representatives, regularly indulging in 'pork-barrel politics' as they broker support from constituents and voters (Suiter 2010; Komito 1993) Irish political culture privileges a high level constituency service with a large proportion of their time dedicated to local issues rather than parliamentary or ministerial duties (Litton 2014; Hardiman 2012; Coakley and Gallagher 2010).

Fourthly, the political-administrative relationship is defined by the 'collective authority' principle in the Irish Constitution and the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924. Ministers under this act are designated the 'corporation sole' of their department meaning they are the sole legal entity under which responsibility for the actions of the department rest. This is underpinned by the *Carltona Principle* which states that acts of civil servants are one in the same or synonymous with that of the minister (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2014a).This has resulted in a culture of 'protecting the minister' and cautiousness, in civil

service actions as well as an ambiguity in civil service accountability. Furthermore the political-administrative relationship is also said to have contributed to a lack of coordination and joined up thinking in policymaking (McInerney 2014; Collins et al 2007). Traditional political accountability and more contemporary managerial accountability mechanisms are regularly identified as deficient in a system where 'no one is responsible for anything' (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2014a). Despite efforts to amend and clarify the 1924 Act to define civil service and ministerial responsibility more explicitly such as the Public Service Management Act 1997 and the Mullarkey Report 2002 recommendations, there has been little change (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2014; Rabbitte 2010; Connaughton 2006). All these characteristics underscore the culture of political-administrative system which contribute to Ireland's scant record on performance related reforms.

4.2 Performance Management Practices in Ireland

This section will provide an overview of Ireland's organisational and performance initiatives commencing with the Devlin report in 1969. Three decades prior to this, the Brennan Commission (1932) found the Irish system of administration required no reform and was satisfactory. The report itself is considered 'highly conservative' focusing more on recruitment rather than organisational matters (MacCarthaigh 2017; Adshead and Tonge 2009; Lee 1989).

4.2.1 Ireland from the 1960s-1980s: The Devlin Report

When the Secretary of Finance T.K. Whitaker published the influential Government paper 'Economic Development' in 1958, Ireland embarked on a radical reform of its protectionist economic policies of previous decades. This led to rapid economic growth as trade liberalisation, export-oriented production and foreign direct investment were prioritised (Ashead and Tonge 2009). The Public Service Organisation Review Group (PSORG) chaired by Liam St. John Devlin was established as a response to the view that the structure and quality of the Irish civil service was ill-equipped to deal with the new responsibilities related to the changing economic trajectory (O' Malley and MacCarthaigh 2012; Adshead and Tonge 2009). The 'Devlin Report' identified a lack of strategic capacity and a poor coordination of activities across government departments. It was recommended that departments be restructured into Policy (Aireacht) and Executive units as well as the creation of a Department of the Public Service (O' Malley and MacCarthaigh 2012; Collins et al 2007). Other recommendations included the creation of a Director of Procurement for standardising public service purchasing within a new Central Procurement Office, as well an acknowledgement that increments of

salary were too readily given and should not be granted where the standard of performance has not been certified as fully satisfactory (PSORG 1969, p.435; p.177).

Whilst a number of departments separated into policy and executive divisions and the Department of the Public Service (DPS) was established in 1973 to reorganise the civil service using the Devlin formula, the report was largely unimplemented due to the lack of political support across a series of governments and resistance to change from public servants. There was difficulty with the concept of the Aireacht-Executive Units which were recognised as the 'most radical and difficult area' of the reform plan to implement (Stapleton 1991). Assistant Secretary Noel Browne, six years after the report had been published commented that despite a lot of activity there was little evidence of fundamental reform. Furthermore it was said that many officials and politicians wished to see the report 'buried' and public sector unions only supported the measures that enhanced the positions of their members (MacCarthaigh 2017; Adshead and Tonge 2009; Collins et al 2007; Stapleton 1991; Browne 1982). The creation of the DPS transferred public management functions and staff from the Department of Finance and experienced relative stability until 1987. It was abolished due to the Fianna Fáil minority led government's prioritisation of cost savings, service delivery and less on administrative structures due to the unsustainable levels of government borrowing and growing unemployment (Ward 2017).

This period places Ireland at the level of *Pre performance* as interpreted using Rhodes et al framework. The Devlin reforms, had they been implemented, represented a significant reorganisation of the Irish civil and public service – placing planning, finance, coordination and personnel at the forefront of departments with an emphasis on management, evaluation, measurement and appraisal of the public bodies under departmental control. The report also emphasised the need for equity along with efficiency and effectiveness which demonstrates a consideration of societal outcomes (PSORG 1969; Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011). The recommendations would have placed Ireland firmly on the path towards the *Performance Administration* type and would have demonstrated elements of *Management of Performances* and *Performance Management* in terms of the coordination and evaluation of the functions and activities of public bodies (see table 3.1 at the end of this chapter for a depiction of reform plans/performance types). Other seminal documents of that decade include the Buchanan Report (1968) and Kenny Report (1973) which provided a roadmap for strategic spatial planning and land development which are 'four decades on a shelf' (Ruane 2018; Colm Farrell 2016). A lack of political leadership and parochialism ensured that little or no action was taken

to implement those reforms. As the debate around the new National Planning Framework takes place, these reports are still discussed with reference to the failure of the political-administrative system to effect balanced national development (Ruane 2018). This period also represented a fundamental shift economically and politically as Ireland applied to enter the European Community along with the United Kingdom, officially doing so in 1973.

4.2.2 The 1980s-1990s: Serving the Country Better

Before the DPS was abolished, and its functions reabsorbed into the Department of Finance, a new government White Paper was developed in 1985 entitled *Serving the Country Better* (Ward 2017; Adshead and Tonge 2009). This White Paper focused on the improvement of management of the public service (but more specifically the civil service) which included actions such as statements of aims/objectives for government departments, decentralisation from central departments (Taoiseach's and Finance) to line departments, improvement in service delivery to the public (courteous and prompt), focusing on the achievement of results and also a renewed attempt to establish policy and executive divisions originally recommended in the Devlin Report (Litton 2012; Adshead and Tonge 2009; Collins et al 2007). According to Collins et al (2007) the reforms of the 1980s 'could have been taken from a catalogue for reforming administrations: expenditure programming for all departments; an Ombudsman; and more competition for top civil service posts' (p.26). At the time the Minister for the Public Service, John Boland, described *Serving the Country Better* (SCB) as 'an important landmark' for the civil service' as it recognised that changes to administration had been 'generally incremental and ad hoc responses to immediate needs' (SCB 1985). The paper acknowledged that the 'characteristics of the role of the civil service and some of the qualities it demands predispose it towards certain defects' such as 'the lack of concern with the cost and delivery of service, departments placing a high priority on avoiding mistakes which would embarrass the Minister rather than on giving the customer (all who interface with officials) the best possible service' (SCB 1985).

A significant element of the White Paper was 'Managing for Results' which realised the need for 'financial and total management systems' to address concerns that the full cost of programmes were not known. There was a lack of clarity regarding who was responsible for resources, there was a not enough emphasis put on results as distinct from activities, and the systems in place did not give individuals a feeling of personal responsibility for results. (SCB 1985; Stapleton 1991). The features of the total management system as envisaged were that:

performance should be monitored against plans and budgets, the practical contribution of each individual manager should be clearly identified and his or her performance systematically assessed' (SCB 1985). However, the White Paper changed little and was largely unimplemented except for a number of managerial innovations. There was 'cost containment' by the Department of Finance and a greater emphasis placed on caution rather than managing for performance or results. Reform became more associated with shrinking the civil service during times of austerity rather than improvements to structures and operations (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2014a; O' Malley and MacCarthaigh 2012; Adshead and Tonge 2009; Collins et al 2007; Connaughton 2006). Developments that did occur such as the Top Level Appointments Committee and the office of the ombudsman (1984) ironically were already underway and acknowledged in the White Paper (Stapleton 1991).

Serving the Country Better, supported managing for results, emphasising those results over the activities undertaken as well as articulating the importance of clear objectives and criteria for managers under various programmes (Stapleton 1991). This clearly aligns with the *Management of Performances* type under the Rhodes et al framework however its lack of implementation meant that Irish public sector performance remained closely in a space between *Pre-performance* and *Performance Administration* at this period, as elements of managerialism were adopted but occurred at very slow and incremental pace. Political crises and instability meant that administrative reform was not effectively prioritised (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2010; Collins et al 2007). Culturally conservative and cautious attitudes meant the rationalisation of services the side-lining of managerial reforms including abolishment of what was expected to be the driver 'managing for results': the DPS. The centralised control held by the DoF was fully re-established which meant little or no reform took place. The next section considers the emergence of NPM and performance oriented reforms in Ireland in the 1990s.

4.2.3 The 1990s -2000s: Reforming Performance

Efforts to modernise the civil service in Ireland revolve around the importation of ideas as Ireland, according to Litton, does not 'do ideas' (2012 p.31). A characteristic of Irish political culture and bureaucratic organisations, one of anti-intellectualism, is particularly prevalent in the civil service and Litton argues that the approach taken to reform in Ireland is not necessarily a bad thing as learning from established practices has its advantages (Litton 2012; Chubb 1992). The shopping basket of New Public Management reforms led to the development of the *Strategic Management Initiative* (SMI) in 1994 within the civil service itself (initially a

group of assistant secretaries) whereas in other countries it was the politicians' consternation at civil service performance, ideological position and prolonged fiscal crises that drove reform (O' Malley and MacCarthaigh 2012; Collins et al 2007; Christensen and Laegreid 2003). Strategic Management can be defined as the 'process through which organisations determine their purpose, objectives and desired level of attainment; decide on actions for achieving these objectives in an appropriate timescale, and frequently in a changing environment; implement the actions; and assess progress and results' (Collins et al 2007, p.35; Thompson 2001). SMI drew much of its reform from the Devlin Report and *Serving the Country Better* but according to the OECD this was the first time that an Irish reform programme was supported by civil service officials and politicians (OECD 2008 p.77). SMI represented a departure for the Irish public sector whereby 'strategic planning' was brought to the forefront of organisation and policy-making. This initiative endeavoured to enhance the contribution of the public service to national development; the provision of top quality services in an effective and timely manner, and use available resources effectively (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008).

The 1996 White Paper entitled *Delivering Better Government* 'set out the vision for the civil service' expanding on the framework in the SMI seeking the 'achievement of an excellent service for the Government and for the public as customer' and to counter the inadequacies in the rules governing the relationship between ministers and civil servants set out in the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924 (O' Malley and Martin 2010; Collins et al 2007; PA Consulting 2002;) This culminated in the Public Service Management Act 1997 which articulated a significant managerial role for departmental secretary, now 'secretary general', establishing greater lines of accountability and answerability by the civil service to the Oireachtas. The formulation of strategy statements sought to define the key objectives of the department in question (O' Malley and Martin 2010; Adshead and Tonge 2009; Public Service Management Act 1997; Delivering Better Government 1996). Secretaries general as managers of their departments were expected to provide leadership in the areas of policy management and delivery as well as producing business plans in accordance with strategy statements (Connaughton 2012).

Another element of *Delivering Better Government* (DBG) was envisioning the civil service as a 'high performance, open and flexible organisation operating to the highest standards of integrity, equity impartiality and accountability' and 'making use of effective human resource management systems to ensure that each person who works in the civil service can develop to his/her maximum potential in contributing to the attainment of stated goals' (Collins et al

2007). To that effect, through the use of information technology, human resource management systems, the support of gender equality policies and the launch of the *Performance Management and Development System* (PMDS) in 2000, many internal reforms were activated which were underpinned by NPM principles and 'people management' ideas (Collins et al 2007). The PMDS presented a framework supported by senior managers to manage and develop individual performance bringing together the departmental strategy statement, divisional business plan and the individual civil servant to engage with them in different phases to plan and manage performance on an ongoing basis (Ireland, Department of Finance 2000). As part of the response to the performance related reform demands in SMI, the Department of Finance commissioned the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) to produce a detailed guide for public managers on how to develop performance measurements, indicators and assess policy development (Boyle 1996). Other developments included: the management advisory committee (MAC) originally recommended in the Devlin Report; the Report of Working Group on the Accountability of Secretaries General and Accounting Officers in 2002 (Mullarkey Report) which set down clarity and rules for those senior roles. This report specifically outlined the importance of the completion of the Management Information Framework (MIF), use of performance management systems and the SMI framework to improve accountability and governance (Connaughton 2012; Mullarkey 2002) The next section will provide an evaluation of Irish performance reforms from the relevant literature.

4.3 Evaluating Ireland's Performance

The global context for NPM and emphasis on efficiencies in performance and greater public accountability provided the baseline for SMI but the initiative neglected to adopt a clear 'whole of government approach' and concentrated more on reform for the public services' constituent parts (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008). On the effectiveness of SMI, Hardiman (2012) wrote that while SMI adopted many of the objectives of NPM, it was not 'accompanied by any real commitment to using market mechanisms to achieve measurable performance targets and lacked coherence' due to an absence of strong political drivers (p.222). Similarly, SMI targets were 'soft' and attracted no sanction if they were not met (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008). Despite there being many reforms during the period such as the Freedom of Information Act 1997 and improving the scrutiny available to Oireachtas committees, many of these changes relate to recommendations emerging from various Tribunals of Inquiry (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008). In its assessment of reforms and civil service modernisation, the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in 2007 found that the achievement of results were

'incremental' and that 'there was a need to review the extent to which the modernisation is impacting on value in the form of improved services or more efficient processes' (Office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General 2007; Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008).

This period of modernisation took place against the backdrop of social partnership agreements between government, employers, trade unions and the farming industry on remuneration levels in the public and private sectors which were initiated in 1987 in a series of three year agreements up until its 2009 (O'Malley and MacCarthaigh 2012; Adshead and Tonge 2009). The introduction of performance appraisals were part of the social partnership agreements however these were not conditional on performance. Bonus payments were paid to senior public administrators despite there being no performance benchmark to measure performance against (Finn and Hardiman 2012). MacCarthaigh and Boyle write that 'in practice, these reforms were soft in nature, with no real budgetary disciplines or devolution of spending or management authority. Performance-related pay bonuses were rarely withheld, and accountability for performance failures remained limited' (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011). Moreover these agreements were labelled as a 'mechanism for sharing wealth, rather than a process for seeking solutions' (Stafford, 2010). The analysis also corresponds with the reviews of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) which showed that appraisal systems expend a lot of resources and management time yet have very little positive impact on performance. However they can be very beneficial for providing feedback by involving staff in the departmental work and for learning and development opportunities (Boyle 2011 Department of Finance 2010). PMDS has attracted a lot of criticism for being overly cumbersome, having a limited impact on performance, and being ineffectual in identifying good and bad performers (Boyle 2011). The OECD report (2008) questioned the purpose of PMDS and implied that the system was used to pay wage increases: 'In Ireland, the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) is used on an annual basis to review the performance of individual staff concerning salary increments and promotion…ensuring that it [PMDS] is a meaningful process rather than rubber-stamp for salary increases and promotions will depend on how well the individual performance objectives identified actually do tie-back into and cascade down from overall organisational objectives in the strategy documents.' (p175). McGeough (2014) argues that the PMDS could have been the vehicle for developing a performance culture but instead has become a process of justifying pay increases which has led to the formulation of non-specific statements of purposes rather than hard-hitting targets.

The Department of the Taoiseach, which coordinated the SMI (renamed *Public Service Modernisation Programme)* requested the OECD conduct a review of the Irish public service in 2006.The OECD recognised Ireland's approach to reform was not based on a strong philosophy or ideology regularly found in other countries, but was one based on pragmatism. This institutional feature has remained and is possibly reinforced by the career system leading to cautiousness and resistance to change in senior management (MacCarthaigh 2017; OECD 2008). The 2008 report concluded that despite Ireland adopting many of the reforms associated with NPM and performance related improvements it contained minimal 'benchmarked or output based performance monitoring and management functions such as task allocation, performance sanctioning and outcome assessments were poorly developed (Finn and Hardiman 2012, p.122). The OCED recognised Ireland's actions to develop framework for 'collecting performance information' such as: evaluations e.g. Value or Money and Policy Reviews; and performance measures e.g. departmental Output Statements and PMDS at individual level. However the report could point to very few instances whereby performance information was being used as an 'input' into management, decision making, the allocation of resources and planning (OECD 2008 pp.30-31).

The OECD report also articulated that there was a need for the Irish public service to develop a 'performance culture' that is based on achieving outputs and outcomes rather than compliance with processes (2008). Common across many OECD countries and identified in the Irish report was that performance related activities suffered from poor quality performance information and unclear performance indicators. Remedying these elements requires the development of systems and a definition of needs so that objective information can be collected about the performance of the public sector via 'outputs, outcomes and evaluations' (OECD 2008 pp.32-33). Both SMI and DBG were drafted as a remedy to the perceived absence of good planning, strategy and capacity in the public sector with the goal of 'joined-up government' through three year strategy statements across government departments and agencies however what occurred was, according to MacCarthaigh and Boyle (2011) was 'un-strategic fragmentation' (p.216). Strategy statements were developed but often they amounted to very little detail of how the plans would be developed other than listing various committees set up by government departments to address various issues (ibid). Though consistent with the NPM style of disaggregation of public services and competencies, Ireland made un-strategic choices which led to a mushrooming of public sector agencies during the 'Celtic Tiger' boom from the 1990 to 2008. These agencies had many weaknesses: unclear policy parameters, insufficient political

oversight, politicised boards, and accountability deficits (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011, p.217).

Despite the initiatives to join up government, line departments tended to gravitate back to 'silos' – as reviews of cross departmental activities were seen as the lead department reviewing the participating ones (ibid). Another element of fragmentation was the 'decentralisation' project – a relocation of public servants outside of Dublin without the accompanying devolution of authority away from the centre in Dublin (ibid). According to MacCarthaigh and Boyle (2011, p.219) the lesson here was that structural reorganisation requires 'clear change management process' that raises challenges of 'vision, leadership and motivation'. All these elements contribute to developing a 'performance culture' and there must be efforts to develop performance dialogue between government and their agencies (OECD 2008). Another significant element highlighted in the analysis of Ireland's public administration is the role of the MAC in each government department. Boyle and MacCarthaigh (2012, p.45) argue, following research into UK public management teams (Whitehall boards) that the best functioning boards are those that focus on managing performance and meet regularly with their minister to discuss strategy goals. A public manager liaising with department minister is vitally important in terms of policy development, implementation and the relationship between ministers and their officials (Parker at al 2010). The next section will summarise the causes of Ireland's economic crash before providing an overview of Ireland as a *Performance Administration* following the SMI/DBG reforms.

4.4 Ireland's Economic and Fiscal Crisis

The origins of Ireland's economic crisis lie in the pro-cyclical policies taken by successive governments from the 1990s to mid-2000s. The attitude of one Minister for Finance was 'If I have it, I spend it' and the run up to elections in 2002 and 2007 saw a dramatic increase in fiscal stimulus causing inflationary pressures. The Irish economy experienced a 'triple crisis' in banking, public expenditure, and competitiveness (Bergin et al 2011; Dellepiane and Hardiman 2012). Ireland was one of the worst effected countries of the global economic crisis in 2008. Declarations that there would be 'soft landing' for the economy by the Department of finance in the 2008 budget were not based on tested evidence or thorough analysis (Keane 2015; Bergin et al 2011). By November 2010 following a turbulent political and economic period Ireland entered into an €85 billion Troika (European Union/ European Central

Bank/International Monetary Fund) rescue plan so as to save the country from economic collapse (McDaid 2016).

The assessment of Ireland's performance up to the crisis has revealed critical failures of governance, regulation, oversight, management practices and accountability (Ireland, Houses of the Oireachtas 2013; Ireland, Central Bank of Ireland 2010; Regling and Watson 2010; Wright 2010; Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011; Hardiman 2012). One of the many absences during this period, especially in public expenditure, acknowledged by the OECD and other commentators, was performance budgeting whereby the performance information of public activities (outputs and outcomes) are incorporated into the budgetary process. Accordingly, the allocated resources are based on evidence collected (Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011; OECD 2008). An excerpt from the *Independent Review Panel of the Department of Finance* (Wright Report) illuminates this point clearly: 'Over the ten year period of review, the Programme for Government and Social Partnership Processes helped overwhelm the Budget process. Instead of providing an appropriate fiscal framework for prioritisation of competing demands on the Government's overall agenda, the Budget essentially paid the bills for these dominant processes. Relatively clear advice to Cabinet in June on the risks of excessive spending and tax reductions was lost by the time of December Budgets' (Wright 2010, p.25; Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011). To their credit, the Troika plan was followed assiduously by the Irish government over the period and Ireland exited the EU-ECB-IMF programme in December 2013. The government were regularly praised for their commitment to the programme which saw reform measures but more significantly dramatic cuts to public spending and public sector pay. Furthermore new and increased tax measures such as the Universal Social Charge were established (Keane 2016; Bergin et al 201; Worth 2013).

Table 4.1 Ireland's Performance chart 'What If?'

Performance Type:	Performance Administration Input and process Limited reporting	Management of Performances Disconnected performance management systems	Performance Management Integrated performance inputs >outcomes	Performance Governance Linking public sector to private, not-for-profit, non-governmental.
Reform Programme: Devlin Report 1969		Key importance of planning, finance, personnel and coordination sections Aireacht-Executive units may have resulted in disconnected management functions however the focus on coordination/planning may have resolved this.	Report recognises societal considerations (outcomes) must be balanced with efficiency and effectiveness. Coordinated government policy & delivery from central departments across public sector/semi-state bodies. Measurement & appraisal sighted as actions	Provision of public services is diverse – education and health. 'Street level' performance governance.
Actual: no implementation due to lack of political will and public sector resistance. remained at pre-performance type				
Serving the Country Better 1985		Limited public sector reforms indicative of a disconnected approach to performance which places SCB in between this type and Performance Management.	'Managing for results 'indicative of this performance type. Activity (inputs) and results based (outputs/outcomes). White Paper prescribed clear objective and criteria for managers and department planning;	Provision of public services is diverse – education and health. 'Street level' performance governance.
Actual: very little implementation, ad hoc managerial/customer service initiatives. Remained at pre-performance type				
Strategic Management Initiative 1994 / Delivering Better Government 1996 / Mullarkey Report up to 2011	Actual: Ad hoc/incremental, performance did not inform policy choices, individual performance was not adequately benchmarked against targets/productivity. A lot of performance reporting but very little information use. Programmes such as MIF launched but not fully implemented.		Reforms replicated plans Linking strategy statements/business plans/individual PMDS public sector Management Information Framework (MIF) Indicative integrated approach of measurement, incorporation and use – Indicators, targets, focus on outcomes.	Social partnership benchmarking indicative of performance involving corporatist governance Evident in Non-profit/public sector settings yet there are many challenges

4.5 Conclusion: Ireland as a 'Performance Administration'?

Table 4.1 on the previous page of this chapter presents Ireland's performance chart entitled 'What if?' What if the reform plans introduced had the political and administrative leadership they demanded? The table presents each reform plan and interprets the corresponding performance level that Ireland would have reached upon implementation. It can also be deduced that Ireland remained at a *pre-performance level* until the late 2000s when many reforms were reinvigorated. The actions from Devlin, SCB, SMI and DBG would have normatively placed Ireland far ahead in terms of monitoring and managing performance given the scope and depth of reforms. Reforms recommended in the 1969 report were still on the drawing board in 2011 e.g. Office of Government Procurement (PSORG 1969; Office of Government Procurement 2014). The Devlin report would have been far reaching in terms of managing performance practices in the public sector. Ireland had the potential to reach the *Performance Management* level in the 1990s and this corresponds with literature of public sector reform. Hardiman (2009) has written that 'there is something a bit dispiriting about this talk of public sector reform. It was meant to have kicked in with the Devlin report in 1970, then again with the Strategic Management Initiative in the mid-1990s… and now we have the 2008 OECD Report. We still haven't really got to grips with these issues of public sector productivity and efficiency after all this time' (p.11). Similarly the Wright report (2010) noted that 'progress on Public Service Modernisation generally has been very disappointing' (p.38). As an observation, table 4.1 also identifies Ireland at the level of *Performance Governanc*e as evidenced by the provision of services such as health and education by religious orders (Rhodes et al 2012; Ferriter 2005).

Rhodes et al (2012) concluded from their analysis that Ireland's public sector was at the level of *Performance Administration*. This type describes the Irish level of performance management as 'measurement level of input and process, with disconnected incorporation of measurement into systems and limited performance information use (Rhodes et al 2012). This is largely based on the two periods of change that began in the mid-1990s with Strategic Management Initiative /Delivering Better Government actions, and further performance improvements from the Mullarkey Report reforms as well the relaunch of various programmes such as PMDS being 'pursued with renewed vigour' and the 'Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative' (VFMPRI) which 'really never got going' (Rhodes et al 2012, p.251). The research notes that a lot of the SMI/DBG reform programme focused on 'outward facing' areas such as customer service and regulatory reform whereas the required changes to internal management did not

occur until the mid-2000s. Further action was required on human resource management and the Management Information Framework (MIF) to provide a more balance and evaluated approach to resource allocation across the public sector (Rhodes et al 2012). The research noted both the OECD (2008) and C&AG in 17 reports on 'Value for Money' that the public service did not apply performance information effectively and systems to measure and deliver more effective services were absent (Rhodes et al 2012). That overarching analysis placed Ireland in the position of *Performance Administration* moving towards *Management of Performance* (ibid).

This chapter has provided an overview of performance management practices in Ireland. Throughout the period analysed, Ireland's political-administrative culture had a significant impact on the depth of performance strategies. This was caused by a number by a number of factors which created a largely dysfunctional system of managing performance as understood through the broad scope of the performance model (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Ireland's bureaucratic and conservative culture contributed to the dearth of, and was an impediment to change. The centralised nature of government rolled back any impetus to reform meaning a more joined up and coordinated up approach to performance was never fully pursued. The nature of Irish accountability, the limitations of constituency minded politician coupled with a lack of left/right ideology and a policymaking deference created an overall disconnect in governance. The next chapter will analyse performance practices in Ireland since 2011 and conduct qualitative and quantitative research to further understand performance management practices and reform in the public sector.

Chapter 5 Analysis, Results and Findings

5.0 Introduction

It is appropriate that firstly the chapter will provide a critical overview of performance management practices in Ireland since 2011. Secondly the results, findings and analysis of the mixed method research with civil and public servants will be presented. The literature and original research will demonstrate that whilst public sector reform is undergoing there is an absence of fundamental change in behaviours and attitudes of senior management especially in their engagement with the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). There is also evidence that civil servants are not provided the necessary leadership or motivation in which to cultivate a 'performance culture' and to achieve the objectives of reform strategies.

5.1 Performance Management Reform Since 2011

The 2011 Fine Gael/Labour Programme for Government identified the need to change the emphasis from performance reporting to performance management through the use of 'concrete mechanisms to improve performance, using a range of external standards and benchmarks, and to deal with persistent under-performance'. High level strategic goals were to be identified and reflected in individual goals in a new PMDS system for civil servants along with other HR initiatives such as staff recognition schemes, team awards and avenues for staff to contribute the improvement of service delivery, efficiency and organisational effectiveness. Furthermore the programme sought a 'radical overhaul' of the way politics and government worked as government was too centralised and unaccountable (Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach 2011). To coordinate reform the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform was established in 2011, which transferred reform functions from the Department of the Taoiseach and expenditure divisions from the Department of Finance. The Government Reform Office was tasked with addressing the promises made in the programme for government. The mantra in government became 'never waste a good crisis' (MacCarthaigh 2017; Ward 2017; Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2014a).

A consultation paper on *Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance* which sought to formulate a plan to implement the 'far reaching' commitments in the programme for government regarding performance and accountability was published in 2014. The paper states that 'stronger accountability goes hand in hand with improved performance' and that 'a strong

culture of assessment and performance' is a prerequisite to realise a responsive and capable public sector. The options for consideration were wide ranging: legislative reform, changes in structures and frameworks, and a re-evaluation of public service ethos and values (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2014a). Many of the submissions received focused heavily on improving civil service performance management and the importance of performance dialogue as articulated by the OECD report in 2008 and by a paper from the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) in 2012 on the delivery of quality services through performance (Litton 2014; McGeough 2014; NESC 2012; OECD 2008). Litton notes 'schemes for evaluation that are tailored to the tasks reduce the inertia of routine, identify failures while prompting, and informing, the learning that guides improvement. The question is how this learning can be encouraged and integrated into wider organizational settings remains unanswered' (2014). In conjunction with the consultation, a panel of relevant persons was appointed by the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform to advise on reforms. The *Report of the Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance* (2014) recommended specific changes to the organisation of the civil service including:

1. An Accountability Board to 'review and constructively challenge senior management performance and monitor progress in delivery of agreed priorities'.
2. Appoint a Head of the Civil Service to 'provide leadership of the civil service, to oversee implementation of priorities and manage performance of Secretaries General'.
3. Improving human resources management to tackle poor performance.

The Chairperson of the independent panel, Kevin Rafter, writing in relation to the recommendation of a head of the civil service stated that such a position could 'take ownership of a performance management system that should examine the performance of both policy and service delivery within departments' (Rafter 2014). Furthermore, Rafter argued that by 'clarifying the leadership' there would be an individual tasked with 'representing civil service ethos and values such as impartiality, honesty' and importantly speaking the 'truth to power' (ibid). Following the consultation and development process, the *Civil Service Renewal Plan* was launched in 2014 to drive tangible change through twenty five actions in four key areas: unified, professional, responsive, and open & accountable. It aimed to maximise performance and change the culture to an environment of continuous learning, improvement, open to challenge and debate. Whilst recommendations such as the accountability board, management board and the reform of performance management systems were adopted, the recommendation

to establish a head of the civil service was not endorsed (Ruane 2014; Ireland Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2014b).

As part of a broader public sector reform agenda the *Public Service Reform Plan 2011-2016* (PSRP) sought to modernise and innovate in the delivery of public services by: placing the customer at the core of the service, maximise new and innovative service delivery channels, radically reduce our costs to drive better value for money, leading organising and working in new ways, and placing a strong focus performance management implementation and delivery (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2011). There were actions in many public sector areas such as health, education, justice and local government. These included the *Special Delivery Unit* in the health sector to reduce waiting times and improve patient experience. There was a focus on building on innovative ways to deliver services more efficiently and effectively such as the Public Services Card (ibid). There were actions to address 'Government level' performance management, organisational performance and leadership/individual performance. Many of these measures are a repeat of previous reform actions which advised public bodies to draft Statements of Strategy and Annual Output Reports (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2011; Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach 2008; OECD 2008; DBG 1996). A number of significant legislative acts and reforms have occurred since 2011 such as the regulation of lobbying; Protected Disclosures Act (whistleblowing); Freedom of Information Act; Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013; Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012; ethics; and open data (Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2018).

5.2 Performance Analysis: Culture Eats Strategy Again?

Further shortcomings in performance have been identified in literature in the intervening years since 2011 which are an important accompaniment to the project research: weak political commitment; poorly integrated systems; goal misalignment; 'gaming' the system; and cultural deficiencies (Messabbah and Arisha 2016; Ward 2015; McGeough; 2015; McGeough 2014; Ireland, Department of Justice 2014; Garda Síochána 2017). Francis McGeough conducted research in relation to performance information reporting comparing Irish public sector organisations to those in the UK (2014). The research discovered that Irish public bodies in their annual reports produced less performance information than their UK counterparts, with ten out of forty-two organisations providing no targets in their statements. This indicates a gap between the importance placed on performance measuring and management in government

reporting compared with the information supplied. In addition to this, the majority of indicators used were not compared to any targets (McGeough 2014). A lack of relevant reporting according to McGeough is indicative of weak accountability (p.203). The report asks how can there be judgement on performance without the corresponding information and following from this there will be less pressure for public managers to improve (ibid). The analysis also conveys that when the public bodies did produce targets these related more to operational matters as opposed to financial performance, quality and efficiency (ibid). The article argues that a lack of targets may result in reduced performance and reduce the 'depth of accountability'. Furthermore the report argued that Irish public sector organisations were hesitant about producing performance targets and have no incentive to produce then. A key issue is the lack of political will to demand the performance information by Irish parliamentarians (McGeough 2014, p.203).

Ward (2015) in his analysis of Irish parliamentary scrutiny of performance reports discovered that practice did not match the rhetoric in relation to annual reports securing greater accountability and performance especially with regard to having an impact on budgetary decision making (p 160). According to Ward, Oireachtas committees spent the same amount of time analysing budgetary estimates in 2011 during the first year of the Troika bailout as they had spent in 2009. Ward (2015) identifies barriers to parliamentary engagement with performance management such as resources, the quality of the information provided, the attention paid to constituency work by politicians and the importance the media places on performance reporting (p.158).In additional research in this area, McGeough (2015) showed that PSO targets had dropped in 2012 compared to 2007 with the average number of targets in annual reports (19 organisations) decreasing from 9.1 (2007) to 6.7 (2012). Four years on from the 2008 OECD report and the intervening economic crisis there had been no improvement in target setting despite the continued rhetoric from the Irish government (p.8).

In a research paper on performance management practices in the Health Service Executive (HSE) Mesabbah and Arisha (2016) analysed the development of multiple strategies and reforms for healthcare over a ten year period. Over this time the HSE has adopted systems such as balanced scorecard (BSC). The researchers found that measurement and reporting were inconsistent and there was a lack of corrective actions/learning. Furthermore, it was found that targets were enforced without appropriate alignment between Department of Health objectives, HSE targets and the resultant acute hospitals' delivery. The 'top down' approach by management meant there was a misalignment of goals between the various organisational

levels. The BSC approach in the HSE required cultural change to ensure its success (pp.220-225). Critical to the success of the BSC in the UK were considerations of context, and the development of a culture of learning and cross departmental cooperation. This was absent in the HSE plan (Moullin 2017; Mesabbah and Arisha 2016). This misalignment on performance is also identifiable in the recent discourse on the HSE national service plan 2018 between senior officials in the Department of Health and the Director General of the HSE. Furthermore, the Secretary General of the Department Health requested that the HSE focus more on the positive developments in the plan rather than negative forecasting (Wall 2018).

The administration of justice in Ireland has undergone immense controversy as the operation and oversight of the Garda Síochána have demonstrated significant shortcomings. Dysfunctional elements of performance management in the Gardaí were highlighted in the O'Sullivan Report (Garda Síochána 2017) and the Crowe Horwath report to the Policing Authority (2017b) on the inaccuracy and 'gaming' of figures for Mandatory Alcohol Test (MAT) checkpoints nationally. This follows on from previous Garda reports in relation to the misuse and mismanagement of the Fixed Charge Processing System (FCPS) (Garda Inspectorate 2014). The *Report of the Independent Review Group on the Department of Justice and Equality* (Toland Report) into the management of the Department of Justice and Equality uncovered fundamental weaknesses in the department's accountability and performance management structures (Ireland, Department of Justice and Equality 2014). The report observed a 'closed, secretive and silo culture which has inhibited the capacity of the organisation to question, challenge, learn and adapt'. The report noted that despite the existence of a high level Statement of Strategy in line with standard guidelines from previous reform plans (SCB, SMI and DBG) the strategy lacked prioritisation and did not measure performance against outcomes (ibid). The report made recommendations (over a two year timeline) which coincided with many of the 'strengthening accountability and performance' objectives of the time. Three years on, Dáil debates, parliamentary questions and the proceeding political crisis regarding the DOJE's role in providing documents to the Charleston Inquiry suggest evidence that the Toland reforms have not been fully embedded or completed and that the 'culture' has countered any real significant change in governance (Kildare Street 2017).This analysis complements the original qualitative and quantitative research in the following sections.

5.3 Research: General Information

This section provides general information about the online survey and interview respondents. The following sections present results, findings and analysis based on themes relating to performance management practices. The first theme is based upon technical elements of performance management systems and their effectiveness. The second theme is based upon the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). The final theme is based upon public sector reform strategies and their effectiveness.

5.3.1 Online Survey Information

Question 1. The 35 to 44 age profile had the highest amount of respondents at 39% (14) and the 44-54 age profile represented the second highest at 31% (11).
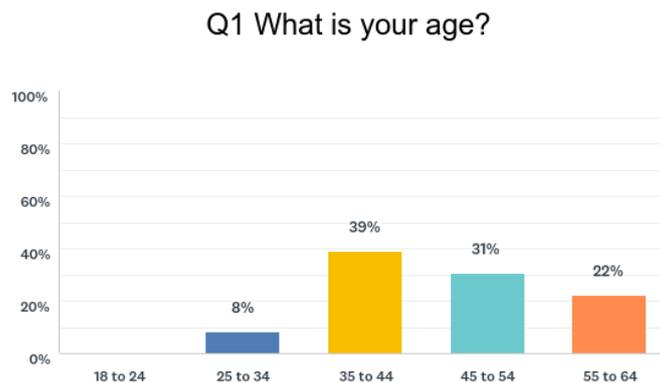
Figure 5.1 Q1

Question 2. 41% (15) of respondents were in the civil service between 10 to 20 years followed by 19% (7) working for 30-40 years.

Q2 How long have you worked in the civil service?
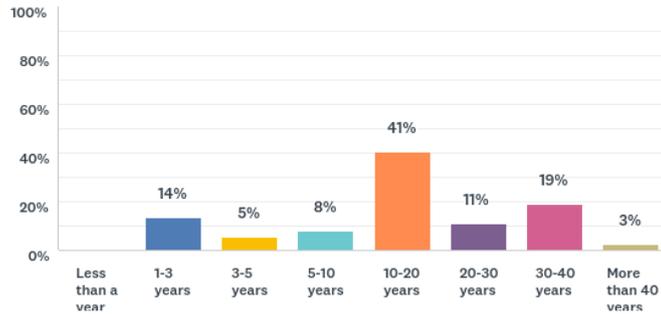
Question 3. There were 37 respondents from 7 different grades. The top three grades presented are Assistant Principal at 27% (10), Principal Officer at 24% (9) and Higher Executive Officer at 24% (9).


Q3 What is your grade?
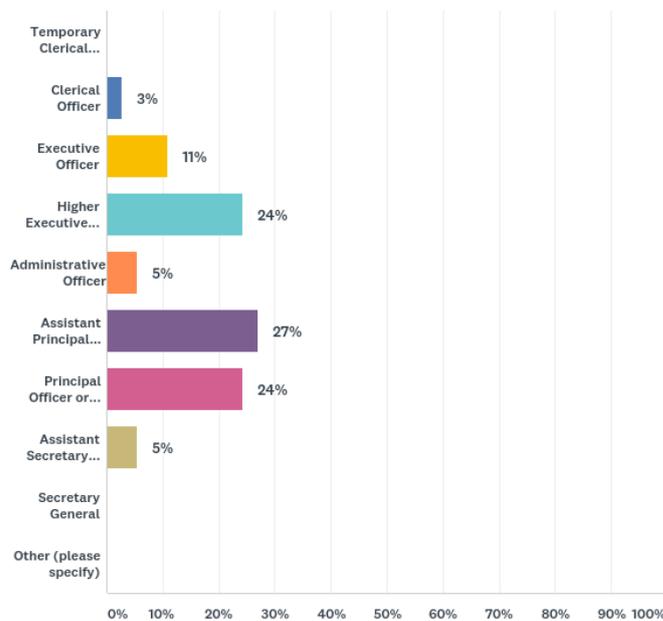
Question 4. Area of the Civil Service in which you work? (Department etc) Optional

There were 31 respondents to this question. The departments included the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Department of Education and Skills, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, Department of Health and the Department of Finance.

Question 5. What is your role in the civil service?

46% of respondents (17) have a role in policy and 35% (13) have a role in operations. 19% (7) have a role in a combination of both or in specific roles such as performance management, learning & development, employee assistance service and corporate services.

5.3.2 Interview information:

Out of 7 respondents, 1 was male and 6 were female. One of the female respondents was a public sector worker in the community. All other respondents work in the civil service. The transcribed commentary can be viewed in Appendix IV.

5.4 Theme 1: Performance Management Systems

This section pertains to performance management systems/dimensions: measurement, incorporation and use, respondent observations of their effectiveness and how the systems contribute to the organisation. The following interpretive findings can be made:

Finding 1: Performance systems have dysfunctional elements which weaken their effectiveness

The majority of interview respondents found that measurement systems were inconsistent and dysfunctional in many circumstances. These findings are comparable to what has emerged in the international literature on performance management systems. It highlights measurement systems which are poorly developed, lead to duplication, excessive process and cynicism amongst users. There is evidence of the manipulation/politicisation of performance information such as there was in the HSE service plan and there is a misalignment of strategy and business plans which weakens the effectiveness performance activities. (Wall 2018; Messabbah and Arisha 2016; McGeough 2015; Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008; Sanger 2008; Talbot 2007; Radnor and McGuire 2004; De Bruijn 2002). Performance measurement which is compromised cannot assess successes/failures (Halachmi 2011).The respondents commented that:

Respondent A

> *'Some targets tend to rely on the sexier stuff -to look good on the report…some meaningless KPIs/targets which do not reflect the reality of the work involved…you*

cannot say that staff shortages are a reason for not reaching target/lack of project completion even if it is the reality'.

Respondent B

'Certain systems are a hindrance...there is a lot of duplication...with too many steps in the processes...often it seems the more processes used, the better the manager is'.

Respondent C

'Business plans are very ad-hoc and inconsistent... with no link of organisational performance and personal accountability'.

Respondent F

'The measurement systems are not well developed... but are improving...metrics are revised regularly but they are not standardised across the system...there is often more concern with measurement and getting the numbers in rather than focusing on the citizen outcomes'

'We are counting activity that is not important... and not recording other important details... so there is inconsistency...and other workers will record more than others...cohorts of service users are not fully measured effectively... so the data collected is inaccurate'.

When asked if performance management systems changed too frequently over half (54%) of survey respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed (see figure 5.4 on next page). This can be interpreted as the reaction by staff to the improvement in many systems that measure performance.

Q8 Performance management systems are changed too frequently

- Strongly disagree 11%
- Disagree 43%
- Neutral 30%
- Agree 16%
- Strongly agree
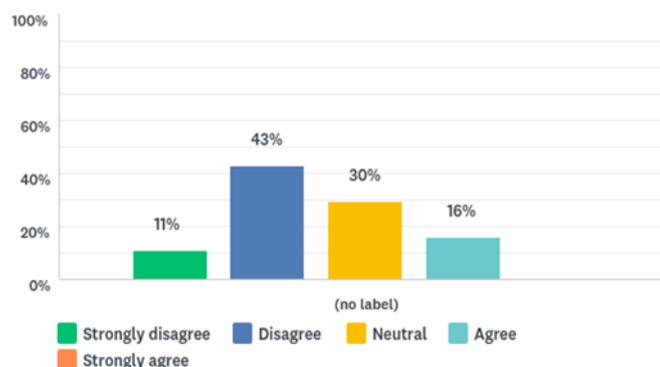
Figure 5.4 Q8

Finding 2: There is an undue focus on measurement and compliance with process

59% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that compliance with procedures and processes characterise the core of PM (see figure 5.5). 46% of respondents view *performance measurement* as 'most evident' in performance management systems compared to *incorporation into systems* and *information use* (see figure 5.6). This is in accordance with recent literature regarding a continued existence of 'compliance culture', with an undue adherence to rules and process, and the definition of Irish public management as a 'Performance *Administration'* (McGeough 2015; McGeough 2014; Rhodes et al 2012; OECD 2008). The lack of performance use in the Irish case can be interpreted as corresponding with the literature on organisational culture and its influence on performance management practices. The use of performance information is dependent on the alignment between the different subcultures or the 'silos' within organisations (Taylor 2014).

Q9 Compliance with procedures and processes characterise the core of performance management in the Irish civil service.
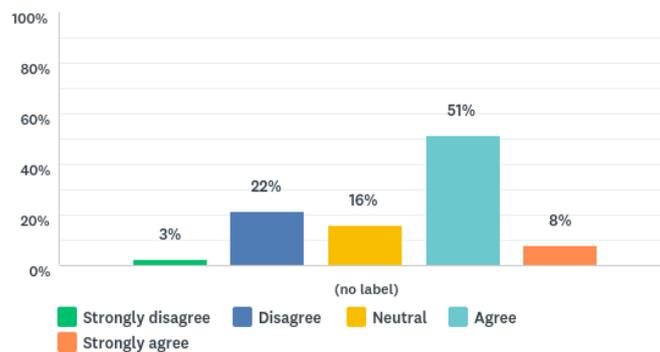

Figure 5.5 Q9

Q7 For performance management to be effective there must be measurement, incorporation and information use. In your experience, Which of these is least evident and which is of these is most evident? Rank from 1 (least evident) to 3 (most evident)
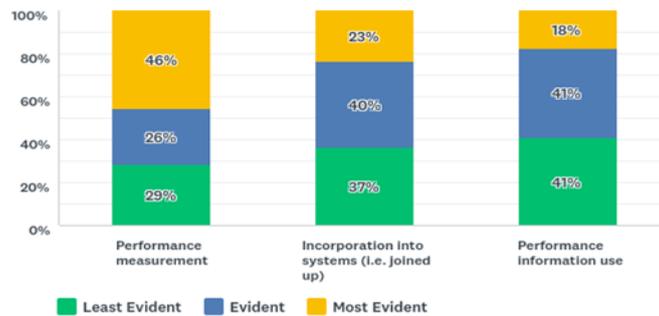
Figure 5.6 Q7

The interview respondents correspond with this finding:

Respondent A

> *'The measurement aspect of performance is most evident .... the use of performance information is least evident but improving… there is still a silo approach however there is more cross learning'.*

Respondent C

> *'Delivery is still measurement focused…outcomes are not sufficiently focused on' [in authorising voted public expenditure].*

Respondent E

> *'Rules do dominate processes'.*

Finding 3: Organisational learning is the weakest feature of performance management.

43% (15) of respondents declared organisational learning as the weakest feature of performance (see figure 5.7) with a high percentage of respondents identifying with the *controlling/steering* feature. *Accountability* is the second weakest feature according to survey participants. Interview respondents indicate a significant lack of organisation learning in performance practices. This is relevant when considering Ireland's historical weakness in planning and coordination. Learning can contribute to strategic planning or improving policy or management activity (Van Dooren et al 2010). The culture of 'minding' of 'protecting the minister' or a lack of 'speaking truth to power' will exacerbate these learning deficiencies (McInerney 2014; Rafter 2014).

Q6 Which feature of performance management is weakest and which feature is strongest in your view? Rank from 1 (weakest) to 3 (strongest)
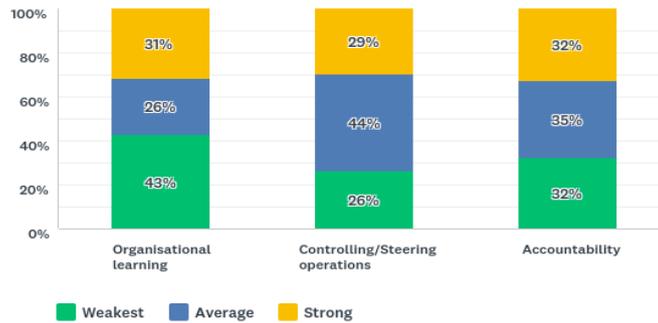
Respondents commented that:

Respondent A

'The feature 'steering/controlling' is strongest which kept focus on the tasks at hand and the weakest is 'organisational learning' as there is not enough recognition of limited resources … the reasons for incomplete projects is not necessarily learned from year to year'.

'Planning is poor…yielding to pressure by lobbying…many sectoral views to be considered…people can lose their nerve and not stick to plans… ministers want the big announcements…which can mean programmes get launched before they are ready'.

Respondent B

'There is little learning from the feedback given on those systems'.

Respondent C

'Performance steering is strongest… learning from performance measurement is the weakest…often if information is used it is seen as a bonus'

Respondent D

'Accountability is the weakest feature of performance management… there are no repercussions for actions'.

Respondent E

'Incorporation of information is strong…as is learning but not always in a timely manner'.

5.5 Theme 2: Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)

This section pertains to PMDS (old and new) and its effectiveness in managing performance.

Finding 4: There is a culture of 'management avoidance' in the civil service.

Finding 5: PMDS reporting is not reflective of actual individual performance.

The responses from both the online survey and interviews are overwhelmingly negative with regard to the PMDS and the desire of managers to cultivate a 'performance culture'. This finding provides an explanation for literature and commentary about the inaccuracy of performance figures. Despite multiple system changes (twice since 2011), results are the unrealistically high – figures of 98%-100% in most public bodies (Molloy 2017; Walsh 2016; McGeough 2014; Ireland, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2016; 2012). The data collected can be interpreted as a distinct 'management avoidance' culture in their attitude to individual performance. Staff members are moved, isolated or worked around. Only 32% of survey respondents thought that the new PMDS would make a positive contribution to a high performing civil service while 68% remaining neutral or disagreed (see figure 5.8). Whilst 53% of respondents strongly disagree/disagree (see figure 5.9) with the statement that changing the system will do little to tackle underperformance many of the comments provided indicate an unwillingness of managers to manage. These responses may be interpreted as s substantial indication of 'box ticking' or 'gaming' performance appraisals (Fryer et al 2009; Sanger 2008; OECD 2008; Radnor and McGuire 2004).

Q10 The new PMDS (since 2016) will make a positive contribution to a high performing civil service
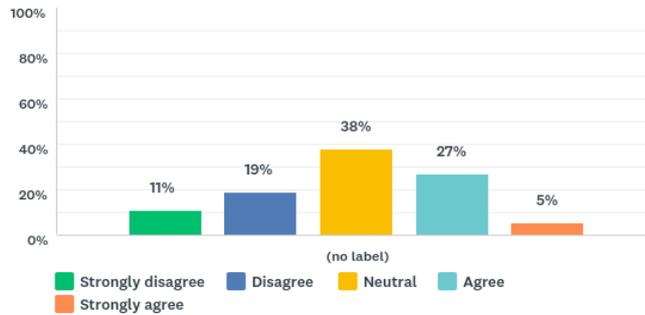

Figure 5.8 Q10

Q12 Changing the system will do little to tackle underperformance
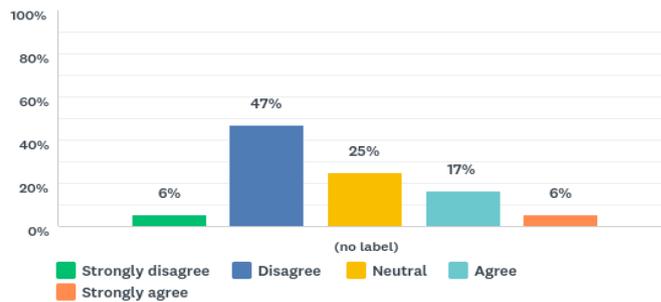
Figure 5.9 Q12

The interview respondents provide an insight into how managers use the system:

Respondent G (senior official in a central government department)

> *'There is a lower tolerance for underperformance now …but the data shows the new PMDS is not working properly… hopefully the new reform plans will deal with this...it's a culture thing...the lack of leadership is a barrier to performance'.*

Respondent A

> *'There is a problem with manager monitoring of probation…often managers don't know how/what action to take....and so recordkeeping can be poor…it can be easier to work around underperformers…everyone has to produce something for PMDS.. .it can drive change but you need buy-in from managers'.*

Respondent B

> *'PMDS is useful for dialogue… people can get lost and it acts as a guide helps job satisfaction…but the reporting is not reflective of actual performance…it is not used to manage performance…personnel are moved out of unit instead of developing their abilities'.*

> *'Managers want to get in and out… it's largely a box ticking exercise…every department has a dumping ground for staff that cannot be managed…there is no leadership...it is easier to move people than manage… managers are not consistent in their approach which undermines the process… staff are expected to come up with their own objectives and timeframe for completion so there isn't much measurement by managers'.*

> *'The new process is more vague...staff will be less involved in the new process because it is less motivating…the actual culture of not managing performance is not reflected in the reform plans'.*

Respondent E

> *'The system doesn't capture performance or underperformance…good performance is also not effectively recognised…there are not enough incentives'*

Respondent C

On underperformance this respondent mentions two factors:

> *'The figures are just not realistic…the reluctance to tackle underperformance is a cultural and structural problem within the civil service. Cultural in that traditionally it has not been addressed effectively and there has not been an appetite to address underperformance, staff have been ignored or moved…isolate the problem person…get them out early'.*

'Structural in that there are few or no actual (like non paper) structures available to managers to understand and effectively address underperformance such as training, checklists, support structures via HR & senior management'.

## Q11 Underperformance is sanctioned appropriately
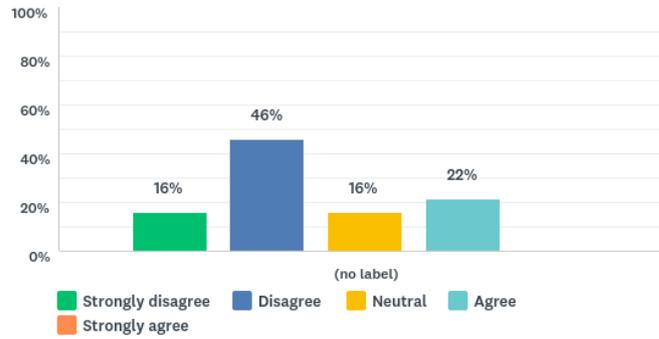
Q13 Managers are reluctant to tackle underperformance
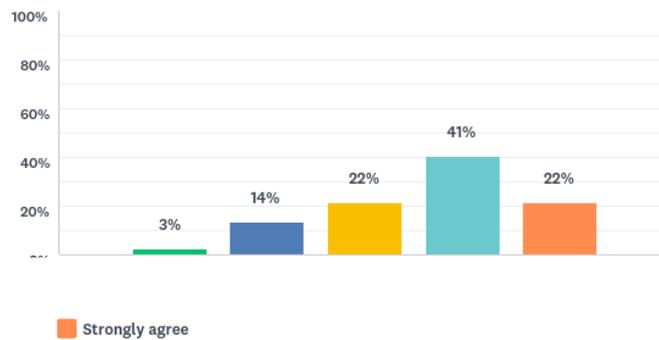
## Q14 Managers have the required skills to manage performance/underperformance
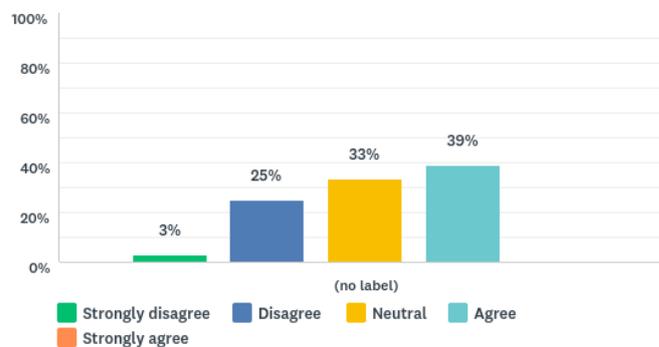
The survey indicates that only 22% of respondents think that under performance is sanctioned appropriately (see figure 5.10 on previous page) while 63% of respondents think that managers are reluctant to tackle underperformance (figure 5.11). Furthermore just 39% of survey respondents think managers have the required skills to manage underperformance/performance (figure 5.12).

Many of the comments from the survey indicate that managers are reluctant to deal with underperformers for fear of being disliked:

> *'I believe there is a culture sometimes where managers don't want to be seen as 'the bad guys' and so passed people as satisfactory on the PMDS system so as not to cause tension or upset'.*

> *'Managers don't want to manage staff. Hopefully new training being rolled out will change this'.*

> *'Fear of being disliked'*

> *'They are reluctant but there are reasons for this. Primarily, addressing underperformance will add to the manager's workload; will probably put strain on the working relationship with the jobholder and may also sour the atmosphere in the workplace'*

> *'Yes afraid of the awkward conversation at times'.*

> *'It is not rocket science. You will know if someone is underperforming. You need to have a difficult conversation with such individuals. Most managers don't want to have this conversation'.*

The senior grades who took part in the survey made these comments in relation to managing underperformance:

> *'I have never even been told what the policy is for dealing with poor performance'.*

> *'It's too time demanding, no real upside'*

> *'Tackling underperformance is extremely time consuming'.*

> *'We are too busy and we have no faith in getting an outcome'*

'Nobody even touches underperformance because it is too time consuming. Poor performers are rarely told or managed'.


Q15 The PMDS motivates staff effectively
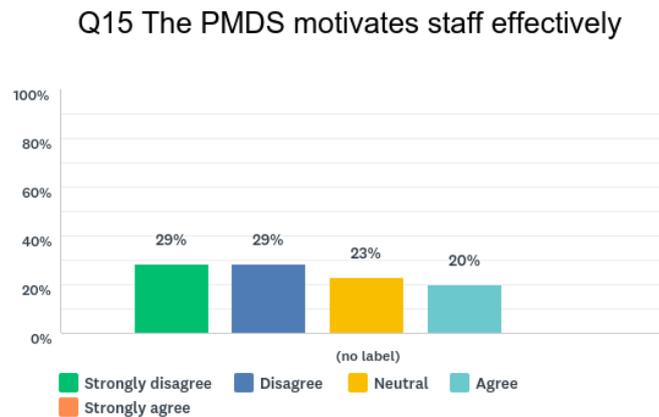
Figure 5.13 Q15

The interview and survey respondents highlight a lack of culture in management willing to deal with underperformance as well as poor motivation of staff and lack of recognition/no rewards for good performance. Just 20% of survey respondents thought the PMDS motivated staff (see figure 5.13). The interview respondents commented that:

Respondent B

> *'The new process is more vague...staff will be less involved in the new process because it is less motivating...the actual culture of not managing performance is not reflected in the reform plans'.*

Respondent C

> *'I've not seen a performance culture anywhere...there's a 'no rocking the boat' attitude...also there are boundary issues which are broken...a line manager may be attempting to manage an underperformer but that person has drinks with an assistant secretary...leadership is a barrier to a more effective system and culture...there is a lack of genuine implementation of plans to improve performance'.*

Respondent E

> *'And staff are not receiving the necessary motivation...there needs to be a more holistic approach to dealing with underperformance'.*

Similarly the respondent answers above and comments provided in the online survey bring up a number of points relating to a lack of support from senior management, lack of training/skills and a lack of HR support:

> *'HR do not support managers on the ground but want them to make the hard decisions'.*

> *'While there is a dependency on managers to manage, where support is given from local management and HR, underperformance is tackled'*

> *'It is easier not to tackle it plus they lack the skills and training'*

> *'There is also the strong possibility that they will not be supported in their course of action by either their own manager and/or HR Division'.*

> *'They are not trained to deal with it correctly - although this is slowly changing'*

> *'Culturally, there has been a reluctance to deal with underperformance. Many managers feel that any efforts to deal with it will not be supported at the more senior levels. They also believe that the process to deal with underperformance is too cumbersome'.*

One difference which was noted was the community based public servant who had a very different experience in relation to performance appraisal:

Respondent F

> *'Performance appraisal is a very useful process…is an important and valuable exercise…we receive regular feedback as a group and individually…the collected metrics go towards your performance appraisal…underperformance is dealt with quickly and professionally…my area of public service is very open in relation to maladministration/poor practice but the wider sector is not'.*

The public service approach (at street bureaucrat level) to performance management/appraisal albeit one example demonstrate the difference the presence of performance dialogue, feedback and measurement make to the process (OECD 2008).

5.7 Theme 3: Performance management reform

This section relates to reform and factors that influence or constrain the development of a performance culture.

Finding 6: Reform actions are having an impact

From the survey data and interview findings there is evidence that the various reform actions are having an impact on the effectiveness of performance and accountability as was the direction from the Programme for Government (2011). Many of these actions are repeated from previous reform plans and are indicative of the label given to Ireland as a public sector 'moderniser' (Rhodes et al 2012; MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011; Connaughton 2010). 51% of survey respondents found that the CSRP had made a difference to performance and accountability (see figure 5.14 on next page). The three most effective reforms included the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey, reform of HR practices and learning and development services (L&D). The least effective actions according to respondents were the Civil Service Accountability Board and the PMDS. Survey respondents (see figure 5.15) also believe that the CSRP is a fundamental change to previous reform plans (62%). Some of the comments from the survey stated that:

'There is sponsorship of change by the Management Board'

'First time for a joined up approach with all stakeholders participating'

'Establishment of CSMB and appointment of CS HR Officer are key drivers'

'Constant reporting back to CSMB on issues in Plan'

'Many aspects of the plan are not new'.

Q16 Have the actions in the Civil Service Renewal Plan (CSRP) made a significant difference to civil service accountability and performance?
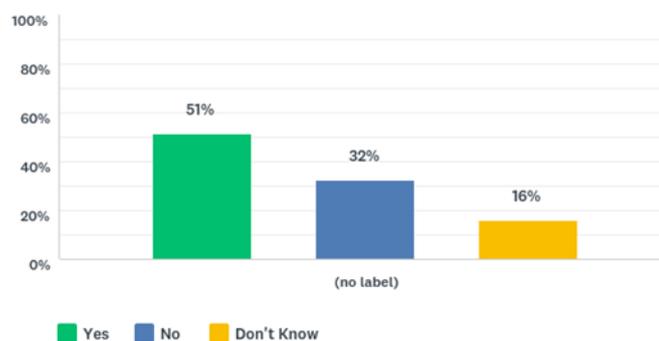
Figure 5.14 Q16

Q18 The CSRP is a fundamental change in the approach to civil service accountability and performance compared to previous plans?
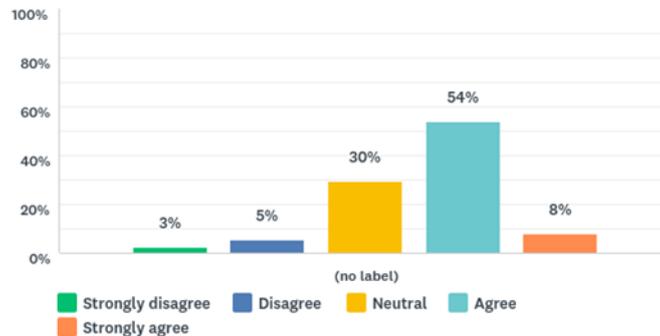

Figure 5.15 Q18

In relation to the CSRP, interview respondents commented that:

Respondent A

> *'The plan had no bearing on me until I was looking at promotional options and had to read up on it…well they are always renewing the civil service…It started in the 80s when John Boland told civil servants that we had to give out your name over the phone'* [in relation to reform].

Respondent B

> *'The plan has moved performance onto the agenda… it is reiterated at meetings…its strengths are that there is more openness/transparency with regard to answering PQs…you don't want to get caught on the hop…there is a better mind-set about providing information'.*

Respondent E

> *'It has impacted in terms of new practices such as mobility… but the values need to be clearer… they are poorly communicated and are not deliberate… you have to ask yourself if the goals are matched with the organisation and do they feed down into the different offices effectively'.*

'It has been promoted by senior managers but often line managers might not feel its tangible or what it actually means'.

A number of survey questions reflect the overall attitudes of management and their approach taken to espousing the goals and objectives of the organisation. 57% of respondents believe there is an alignment between the objectives of senior management and line managers; 54% believe that the value of performance is demonstrated by leadership; 67% believe that the Statement of Strategy is espoused by leaders in their organisation (see figure 5.16, 5.17 and 5.18 on next page).

Q19 There is an alignment between the objectives of top civil service management and line management
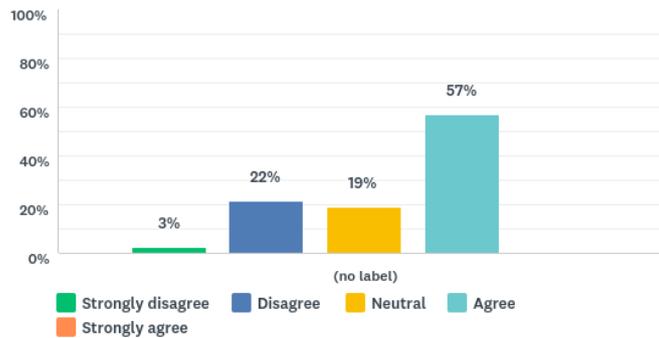
Figure 5.16 Q19

Q20 The value of performance is demonstrated regularly through leadership and organisational commitment
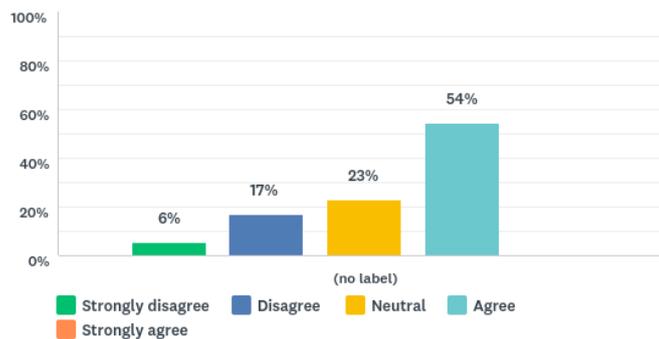
Figure 5.17 Q20

Q21 The Statement of Strategy is articulated and espoused by leaders in your organisation
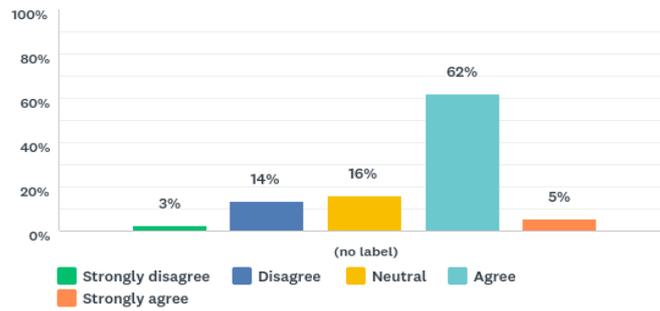
Figure 5.18 Q21

Finding 7: Performance Management supports public service values

Questions 22 and 23 sought to discover whether performance management had a positive or negative influence on public service values and the results demonstrate that they do not (see figure 5.19 and 5.20). The literature on performance has often contested whether performance supports these traditional values such as equity and integrity (Talbot 2007).

Q22 Performance management promotes public service values
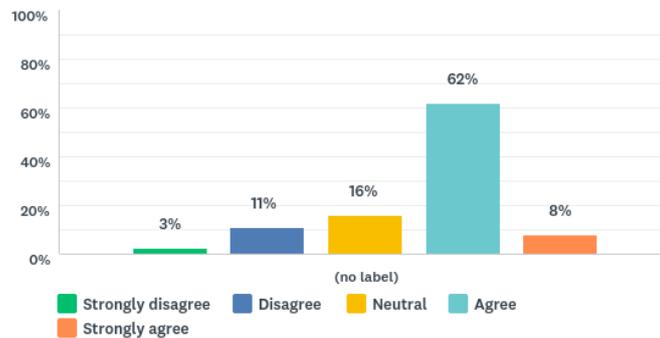
Figure 5.19 Q22

Q23 Performance management undermines public service values
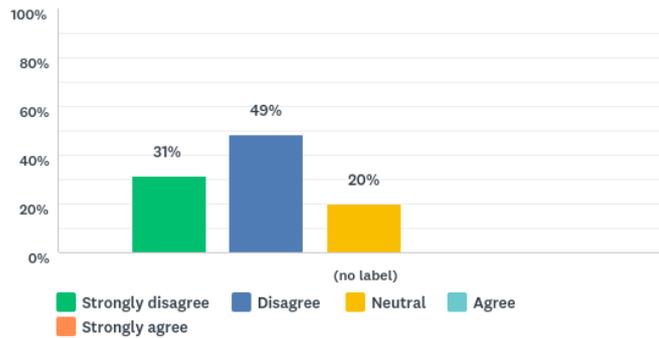
Figure 5.20 Q23

Finding 8: There is little evidence of a 'performance culture'.

What stands out from the respondent data is the distinct lack of evidence that managers are managing their staff effectively or that there is a desire to develop a performance culture in the civil service despite espousal and rhetoric of reform plans. The evidence from the PMDS research demonstrates the reality of managing performance. Motivating staff and providing vision does not feature on the agenda particularly strongly. A performance culture requires commitment and leadership and an alignment of attitudes and behaviours with the espoused goals (Taylor 2014; Taylor 2014; Fryer et al 2009; Sanger 2008; OECD 2008). When the respondents observations of systems, attitudes and behaviours are juxtaposed with definition of performance culture presented in chapter two there is a distinct absence of: a differentiated level of staff performance (also evident in rating scores across the civil service); regular feedback, and the link of individual performance to departmental goals (United States, Office of Personnel Management 2018; OECD 2016). The interview respondents commented that:

Respondent A

> *'Certain departments are particularly slow to change…whereas DFA is outwards looking and high performing in general… vision and leadership is required… we could do with a few more TK Whitakers…EU membership has helped change in attitudes/practices over the years'.*

Respondent B

> *'A lot of activity is tick box…conversations have to be relevant and motivation is a problem'.*

Respondent E

> *'The communication of values and the part they play in the organisation is important…feedback on individual performance needs to happen more regularly…communication trumps everything… the difference is big when there is effective dialogue'*

Respondent C

> *'A significant barrier is leadership…we need to have more discussions around accountability… evidenced based policy must be supported… the attitudes of some senior managers in the service are surprising… what will help is training and development plans and professionalised recruitment in certain areas…this is part of HR improvements...openness and transparency [DPER] has improved'.*

Respondent D

> *'Individual goals must be meaningful for effective performance and motivation'*

On the role of ministers in performance management, this respondent stated that:

Respondent G

> *'There is no interest from ministers or politicians on performance management…we run government departments and manage the service…ministers are off doing different things… that's not a problem'.*

When asked about the five main barriers to developing a high performance environment in the organisation, survey respondents listed: (1) poor leadership; (2) poor IT infrastructure; (3) insufficient training/resources; (4) weak commitment from management; and (5) poor regard for the value of performance management. Also when asked what factors were influencing a high performance environment the respondents stated that (1) leadership; (2) involvement in decision making; (3) resources/training/L&D; (4) strong ownership of responsibility; and (5) management commitment. This can be interpreted as an organisation that is experiencing change with both questions demonstrating leadership/management commitment or lack thereof as a factor in the development of a high performance organisation. The next chapter will conclude with summary of the research.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The aim of this final year project was to examine performance management in the Irish civil and public service to establish if shortcomings exist in the implementation of performance management and whether any contextual or cultural factors have an influence on performance practices. The first chapter provided the context for analysing performance management in Ireland with the phrase 'culture eats strategy for breakfast' and identified the perception that Irish strategy is susceptible to the underlying culture of the political-administrative system which resists change. In the second chapter the project defined the concept of performance as a value and agenda for public sector improvement and change. The performance model was reviewed which articulated the scope of performance from the emergence of a social issue to the action undertaken towards achieving a policy/citizen outcome. This was followed by an analysis of the different dimensions of performance: measurement, incorporation and use, as well as the features of performance which contribute to organisational accountability, learning and control. There was an examination of the development of performance management internationally through the lens of the two main paradigms in public administration; the traditional model and New Public Management, highlighting the differentiation in the level of performance between the two paradigms.

Effective performance management is dependent on a number of factors such as an accurate measurement system. However organisational culture is particularly salient. Many of the negative and perverse consequences of performance management such a 'gaming' or the lack of performance information use requires consideration of the cultural and contextual factors in a public body. Performance goals and objectives can be espoused by management yet unless the public body is aligned along the other levels of culture then these systems may be ineffective and lead to poor outcomes for the organisation and for the citizen. Cultural awareness and sustainable leadership is essential. To understand the Irish development of performance management, in the fourth chapter, a framework by Rhodes et al (2012) was applied to Irish performance practices with an overview of the political-administrative system. Ireland's history of implementing performance reforms has been a missed opportunity which is demonstrated in the 'What if?' performance chart. Significant shortcomings have been identified and although reform plans have not been in short supply, a lot of the actions either remain on the paper or haphazardly implemented. Resource allocation was not linked to performance against targets and a box ticking attitude to individual performance was observed. The OECD has recognised the need for a performance culture in Irish public sector. The

political-administrative culture underpins the public sector relationship with managing performance. The absence of significant political and administrative accountability and the culture of protecting the minister directly impacts on how valued performance is to public officials, as well as influencing the level of innovative policymaking and joined-up thinking.

The research presented in the fifth chapter sought to observe performance management practices in Ireland since the economic crash. The desk research shows in number of cases that despite structures and systems being in place the rhetoric of reform does not match reality on the ground and significant fault-lines remain. Reputable systems utilised in other jurisdictions (BSC) were poorly applied in the HSE and there was little alignment between the different levels of governance. Furthermore there is evidence that performance targets have decreased and that the parliamentary scrutiny required for a functioning performance system is lacking. The experiences and observations of the research respondents highlighted an unmistakable lack of leadership in managing individual performance whereby people who are deemed underperforming are worked around or moved. Yet as public information and the research data on PMDS has shown, civil service management on a system wide scale are not reflecting actual performance levels in their reporting. Civil service management box tick the underperformer 'satisfactory' yet treat them as pariahs. Performance as De Bruijn (2002) stated is beneficial for transparency, appraisal, and the application of sanction. None of these features are being embedded in the Irish case. It is a system that does not recognise underperformance nor does fully recognise or award good performance. In both scenarios, motivation of staff is absent. This depicts a culture of 'management avoidance' and a civil service that resides in an administration mind-set of process focused performance practice. Also importantly performance management is recognised as contributing considerably to organisational learning or strategic planning (Van Dooren et al). If the organisation is not seeing its success or failure how can it learn, and if the public sector does not recognise its failures it will repeat the same mistakes. This depicts Irish governance as a very peculiar creature. However, the capability and professionalism of public servants should not go unnoticed. They require motivation and bold leadership from the political-administrative system to create the culture of performance at organisational, policy and individual level with the citizen at its core. A less politicised senior management and one that can shout stop will help cultivate that performance. Has the culture changed? On paper, yes. However, it may yet be realised that a good crisis was wasted, once again.

Appendix I

Country	Socio-economic factors	Admin culture	Political system	Status of reform efforts	Level of performance management
Brazil	Large country – pop: 190 mil Programme of public sector reform focused on currency stabilization and privatisation in 1990s; strong economic management after 1980s; percap inc: $11.3K (10); Gini 56.7 (2005); debt = 59% GDP (10); deficit = 4.2%	Weberian, with elements of patrimonialism and managerialism	Decentralised/federal structure; under military dictatorship until mid 1980s; strong presidency since 1990s; three branches – Exec/Legislative/Judicial	Reform programme was quite ambitious beginning in 1990s and Brazil has been very successful with economic policy	Hit and miss affair; main focus has been on PM reform (i.e. privatization) and depts. Left to do what they think best in PerfMgmt; 2007 plan set out X-dept PM monitored with traffic light system; Evidence of the collection of measures for some departments/programmes – mostly budget/financial – little evidence of reporting/use *Management of performances*
Ghana	Med country – pop 25 mil; Per capita income (PPP) $2,500; unemployment 11 per cent (00); Gini 39.4 (05/06); deficit 7.6 per cent; debt 34 per cent GDP	Neither Weberian, nor public interest, though closer to the latter than the former. Self-interest is significant feature	Centralised, but volatile; only became democracy in 1992 after seizure of power by dictator in 1982 (but same leader was elected for next eight years)	Reform programme underdeveloped, elements of managerialist reform in policy, but implementation weak. Lack of commitment from politicians	PM at top level (depts.) with focus on personnel and targeted objectives trickling down to local level; new approach proposed but not yet passed. No evidence of use, weak commitment from executive levels and political considerations outweighing perf. mgmt *Rhetorical*
Ireland	Small country – pop = 4.7mil; per cap inc: $37.3K; Unemploy = 13.6 per cent; Gini 29.3 (09); deficit 32.4 per cent GDP; debt 95 per cent GDP (10) – but note that debt was only 65 per cent GDP in 09. Major fiscal/banking/economic crisis in 08	Neo-Weberian, but some features of public interest, as well as corporatist orientation	Centralised/coalition govt, led by single party for 20 years; interesting aspect is partnership process involving multiple stakeholders from business, community, labour, voluntary, etc.	Reform programme underway since mid 1990s, emphasis on Financial reforms and "outward-facing" customer quality, regulation and transparency	Perf Measures wide ranging in type, mostly at department and programme levels. Little integration; latest is revamped VFMPRI programme to further embed PIs across depts. Lots of collection and reporting in evidence, but relatively little use. Recent efforts (e.g. VFMPRI and further application of MIF) may improve on this *Management of performances*

(continued)

Appendix 1 Rhodes et al 2012 Countries' level of performance

Online Survey Questions

Section 1:
General Information.

1. What is your age?
18 to 24
25 to 34
35 to 44
45 to 54
55 to 64

2. How long have you worked in the civil service?
Less than a year
1-3 years
3-5 years
5-10 years
10-20 years
20-30 years
30-40 years
More than 40 years

3. What is your grade?
Temporary Clerical Officer
Clerical Officer
Executive Officer
Higher Executive Officer or Equivalent
Administrative Officer
Assistant Principal Officer or Equivalent
Principal Officer or Equivalent
Assistant Secretary General or Equivalent
Secretary General
Other (please specify)

4. Area of the Civil Service in which you work? (Department etc) Optional

5. What is your role in the civil service?
Policy
Operations
Other (please specify)

Section 2: Performance Management Activities
The following section has questions relating to Performance Management in
Policy & Operations. The questions vary in format.

6. Which feature of performance management is weakest and which feature is strongest in your view?
Rank from 1 (weakest) to 3 (strongest)
Organisational learning
Controlling/steering operations
Accountability

7. For performance management to be effective there must be measurement, incorporation and information use. In your experience, which of these is least evident and which is of these is most evident?
Rank from 1 (least evident) to 3 (most evident)
Performance measurement
Incorporation into systems (i.e. joined up)
Performance information use

8. Performance management systems are changed too frequently
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

9. Compliance with procedures and processes characterise the core of performance management in the Irish civil service.
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Section 2: PMDS
The following statements concern the role of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS). Please tick the option which is closest to your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement and provide a brief reason for your answer in the relevant boxes.

10. The new PMDS (since 2016) will make a positive contribution to a high performing civil service
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

11. Underperformance is sanctioned appropriately
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please give a reason for your answer

12. Changing the system will do little to tackle underperformance
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please give a reason for your answer?

13. Managers are reluctant to tackle underperformance
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please give a reason for your answer?

14. Managers have the required skills to manage performance/underperformance
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

15. The PMDS motivates staff effectively
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Please give a reason for your answer?

Section 3: Reform
This section has questions relating to Civil Service Reform. The questions vary in format.

16. Have the actions in the Civil Service Renewal Plan (CSRP) made a significant difference to civil service accountability and performance?
Yes No Don't Know

17. Which actions of the CSRP have had the most effect in your view?
Rank THREE from 1 (least positive) to 3 (most positive).
Reform of HR practices
Civil service accountability board
PMDS
Civil service management board
Civil service Excellence awards
Civil service employee engagement survey
Learning & Development programmes

18. The CSRP is a fundamental change in the approach to civil service accountability and performance compared to previous plans?
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

19. There is an alignment between the objectives of top civil service management and line management
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

20. The value of performance is demonstrated regularly through leadership and organizational commitment
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

21. The Statement of Strategy is articulated and espoused by leaders in your organisation
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please explain your answer?

22. Performance management promotes public service values
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please explain your answer?
23. Performance management undermines public service values
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please give reason(s) for your answer?

Section 4: Performance Factors
This section has questions relating to the factors effecting performance management.

24. What are the BARRIERS to developing a high performance environment in your view? Rank FIVE from 1 (least evident) to 5 (most evident)

Poor IT Infrastructure
Poor leadership
Insufficient resources/training
PMDS
Weak political involvement
Poor communication of strategy and goals
Underlying views of reform programmes
Poor regard for the value of performance management
Lack of 'public interest' values
Weak commitment from management
Minister/civil servant relationship
Weak ownership of actions
Closed to ideas
Closed decision making
Too few performance targets
Too little focus on citizen outcomes
Weak gender diversity in decision making

25. What are the factors INFLUENCING a high performance environment in your view? Rank FIVE from 1 (least evident) to 5 (most evident)
IT Infrastructure
Leadership
Resources/training/learning & development
PMDS
Improved political involvement
Effective communication of strategy and goals
Strong ownership of responsibility
Commitment to 'public interest'
Commitment from management
Management training
Openness to ideas & Innovation
Involvement in decision making
Rigorous performance targets
Strong programme of civil service reform
Diversity & inclusion

26. If you have any other comments regarding the questions asked, any observations or experiences of performance management in the civil service please make them here:

Your participation and time is very much appreciated. Thank you.

Appendix III

Interview Questions Sample Sheet

Interview	
Date:	
Consent form	

General Information:

Gender	
Time in Service	
Grade	
Department/Office	
Policy/Operations or Other?	

Section A	Technical/ PM Mechanisms

A1. Could you provide an overview of the type of performance management systems (besides PMDS) you encounter in your role?

A2. What is your experience of those systems? Are they well developed? Appropriately focused on outcomes? Rigorous? Achievable?

A3. Are they well developed in your view? Do they measure the activity (policy/programme) effectively etc?

A4. Performance Management features include <u>learning, controlling/steering and to give account</u>. Which of these is strongest?

A4.1. Which of these is weakest?

A5. Performance Management involves the dimensions: measurement, incorporation & Use. Which of these is most evident?

A5.1. Which is least evident?

A6. Is there sufficient scrutiny of performance reports/annual reports by parliament?

A7. Any other comments?

Section B	Performance Management Development System PMDS

B1. What is your experience of the PMDS as a line manager/otherwise?

B1.1. PMDS Strengths?

B1.2. PMDS Weaknesses?

B2. Are the weaknesses mentioned long-running? Which weaknesses previously articulated have been addressed in the new system?

B3. Is underperformance sanctioned appropriately?

B3.1. Can you give reasons for yes/no?

B4. What are the barriers to a more effective PMDS?

B4.1 Are they changing/static?

B4.2. if so, what has driven that change?

B5. Any other comments?

Interview Data

5.5.2 Theme 1 (Performance Management Systems) Interview Findings:

Respondent A

1/3. In relation to performance management systems and their effectiveness a deputy director in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFA) stated that:

'In general there is a good approach to performance systems, involving high level goals and thorough strategies… the targets however tend to rely on the sexier stuff -to look good on the report…some meaningless KPIs/targets which do not reflect the reality of the work involved… you cannot say that staff shortages are a reason for not reaching target/lack of project completion even if it is the reality'.

2/3. On the features of performance that were strongest the DFA official states that

'The feature 'steering/controlling' was strongest which kept focus on the tasks at hand and the weakest was 'organisational learning' as there is not enough recognition of limited resources … the reasons for incomplete projects is not necessarily learned from year to year'.

3/3. On the dimensions of performance the official stated that:

'The measurement aspect of performance is most evident whereas the use of performance information is least evident but improving… there is still a silo approach however there is more cross learning'.

'Often there too a high volume of information to deal with and incorporating it can be challenging'

Many systems are not joined up despite reforms (HR has three different systems) which can be challenging also…however there has been improvements in standardised information systems'.

Respondent B

1/2. An Executive Officer in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) stated that:

'The measurement systems (auditing process) are essential for someone in a new role… especially if you have little experience of the division you are going into…however certain systems are a hindrance...there is a lot of duplication…with too many steps in the processes'.

2/2. The respondent added that:

'There is little learning from the feedback given on those systems…often it seems the more processes used, the better the manager is'

Respondent C

1/2. An Assistant Principal in DPER with experience of a number of departments stated that that:

'Business plans are very ad-hoc and inconsistent… with no link of organisational performance and personal accountability… information is tracked and measured but not used to its full potential… service level agreements (SLAS) are reported on…but not used'.

2/2. The respondent added that:

'Performance steering is strongest… learning from performance measurement is the weakest…often if information is used it is seen as a bonus…but there is a different culture in DPER… performance is expected…change is evident with regard learning…but delivery is still measurement focused…outcomes are not sufficiently focused on [in agreeing voted public expenditure].

Respondent D

1/1 Another DPER official in a HR role found that management systems:

 'Provide action plans that are focused and achievable…. accountability is the weakest feature of performance management… there are no repercussions for actions'.

Respondent E

1/2. A former civil servant in a central government department found that:

'The performance systems used drove the weekly work, weekly meetings informed utilising dashboards (similar to balanced scorecards) with rigorous targets…. teams conducted with a project management philosophy…however there was a certain element of filling out the sheet.'

2/2. The respondent continued:

'Incorporation of information is strong…as is learning but not always in a timely manner…rules do dominate processes'.

Respondent F

1/3. A community based public servant's experience of performance management systems was that:

'The measurement systems are not well developed… but are improving…metrics are revised regularly but they are not standardised across the system…there is often more concern with measurement and getting the numbers in rather than focusing on the citizen outcomes…we are counting activity that is not important… and not recording other important details… so there is inconsistency…and other workers will record more than others…cohorts of service users are not fully measured effectively… so the data collected is inaccurate'.

2/3. In addition, the respondent stated that:

'We operate in a very open and positive environment with achievable goals and objectives... area meetings are collaborative…with criteria to be discussed and issues are flagged and discussed'

3/3. On the features and dimensions of performance the respondent commented that:

'The biggest issue is not being able to count important information…which can help the service user… a lot of the metrics is about ticking boxes…learning does occur but there is repetition of mistakes…then when new tools or processes are added, often we don't get the required training in time and are expected to use them'.

5.6.2 Theme 2 (PMDS) Interview Findings

Respondent A

1/2. On their experience of PMDS the respondent stated they have:

'Mixed experience…it has become more useful for planning…There is a lack of vision on how to use people effectively…a lot of people see no value in it…are the objectives set in the PMDS worth performing?...it is very time consuming and as a manager you are set targets.. .no less than 80% must receive a positive rating…no more than 20% must receive a negative rating'.

2/2. In relation to underperformance the respondent said that:

'There is a problem with manager monitoring of probation…often managers don't know how/what action to take....and so recordkeeping can be poor…it can be easier to work around underperformers…everyone has to produce something for PMDS.. .it can drive change buy you need buy in from managers'.

Respondent B

1/3. On their experience of PMDS the respondent said that:

'PMDS is useful for dialogue… people can get lost and act as guide and promote job satisfaction…but the reporting is not reflective of actual performance…it is not used to manage performance…personnel are moved out of unit instead of developing their abilities'.

2/3. On management approach to PMDS and underperformance the respondent stated that:

'Managers want to get in and out… it's largely a box ticking exercise…every department has a dumping ground for staff that cannot be managed…there is no leadership...it is easier to move people than mange… managers are not consistent in their approach which undermines the process… staff are expected to come up with their own objectives and timeframe for completion so there isn't much measurement by managers'.

3/3. On the recent changes to PMDS the respondent stated that:

'The new process is more vague...staff will be less involved in the new process because it is less motivating…the actual culture of not managing performance is not reflected in the reform plans'.

Respondent C

1/2 On underperformance the respondent mentions two factors:

'The figures are just not realistic…the reluctance to tackle underperformance is a cultural and structural problem within the civil service. Cultural in that traditionally it has not been addressed effectively and there has not been an appetite to address underperformance, staff have been ignored or moved…isolate the problem person…get them out early'.

'Structural in that there are few or no actual (like non paper) structures available to managers to understand and effectively address underperformance such as training, checklists, support structures via HR & senior management'.

2/2 On the approach to performance overall the respondent stated that:

'I've not seen a performance culture anywhere…there's a 'no rocking the boat' attitude…also there are boundary issues which are broken...a line manager may be attempting to manage an underperformer but that person has drinks with an assistant secretary…leadership is a barrier to a more effective system and culture…there is a lack of genuine implementation of plans to improve performance'.

Respondent D

1/1 On their experience of PMDS as a new member of the civil service:

'PMDS is a tick box exercise…but can be valuable exercise for many…it requires engagement…but there is not enough feedback…everything takes 100 years to change…people are very cynical about new processes...there is change fatigue'.

Respondent E

1/2. On the changes to PMDS the respondent said:

'The change was good…it was difficult to tell people when it was a 1-5 rating system…divisional managers also felt the pressure to keep the % ratings high…and the new system is a good opportunity to sit down and identify skills/education gaps'.

2/2 On the shortcomings of PMDS the respondent stated that:

'The system doesn't capture performance or underperformance… good performance also not effectively recognised…there are not enough incentives...and staff are not receiving the necessary motivation…there needed to be a more holistic approach to dealing with underperformance'.

Respondent F

1/1. This community based public servant stated that:

'Performance appraisal is a very useful process…is an important and valuable exercise…we receive regular feedback as a group and individually…the collected metrics go towards your performance appraisal…underperformance is dealt with quickly and professionally…my area of public service is very open in relation to maladministration/poor practice but the wider sector is not'.

Respondent G

1/1 A senior official in a central government department when discussing PMDS commented that:

'Absenteeism is ongoing concern…there is a lower tolerance now for underperformance …but the data shows the new PMDS is not working properly… hopefully the new reform plans will deal with this...it's a culture thing...the lack of leadership is a barrier to performance'.

5.7.2 Theme 3 (Reform and Performance Culture) Interview Findings:

Respondent A

1/3. On the Civil Service Renewal Plan the respondent stated that:

> 'The plan had no bearing on me until I was looking at promotional options and had to read up on it…well they are always renewing the civil service…It started in the 80s when John Boland told civil servants that you had to give out your name over the phone…the public sector would benefit from more attention' [in relation to reform].

2/3. In relation to certain structural changes that the linked to CSRP the respondent said:

> 'The management board works very well…I am not familiar with Irish Government Economic Evaluation Service (IGEES) at all'.

3/3. With regard to developing a performance culture and acting in the 'public interest' the respondent said that:

> 'Planning is poor…yielding to pressure by lobbying...many sectoral views to be considered…people can lose their nerve and not stick to plans… ministers want the big announcements…which can mean programmes get launched before they are ready…we were once told that our main customer is the minister… there is a minding the minister behaviour and civil servants do not shout stop'

> 'Skills matching is not evident yet… there needs to be a more coordinated/strategic approach to mobility…certain departments are particularly slow to change…whereas DFA is outwards looking and high performing general… vision and leadership is required… we could do with a few more TK Whitakers…EU membership has helped change in attitudes/practices over the years.'

Respondent B

1/3. On how the CSRP has impacted on the service the respondent commented that:

'The plan has moved performance onto the agenda… it is reiterated at meetings…its strengths are that there is more openness/transparency with regard to answering PQs…you don't get caught on the hop…there is a better mind-set about providing information'.

2/3. On the plans weaknesses the respondent stated that:

'There is still poor skills matching' [people to roles].

3/3. On the challenges of developing a performance culture the respondent stated that:

A lot of activity is tick box…conversations have to be relevant and motivation is a problem'.

Respondent C

1/1 on developing a performance culture the respondent stated that:

'A significant barrier is leadership…we need to have more discussions around accountability… evidenced based policy must be supported… the attitudes of some senior managers in service are surprising… what will help is training and development plans and professionalised recruitment in certain areas…this is part of HR improvements...openness and transparency [DPER] has improved'.

Respondent D

1/2. On the CSRP the respondent commented that:

'There will be a lot of progress on gender equality, diversity and inclusion over the coming years with lots of staff engagement which is very positive'

2/2. On developing a performance culture:

'Individual goals must be meaningful for effective performance and motivation'

Respondent E

1/3. The respondent commented that the CSRP:

'It has impacted in terms of new practices such as mobility… but the values need to be clearer… they are poorly communication and are not deliberate… you have to ask yourself if the goals are matched with the organisation and do they feed down into the different offices effectively'.

2/3 On the CSRP being promoted and espoused by management the respondent stated that:

'It has been promoted by senior managers but often line managers might not feel its tangible or what it actually means'.

3/3 On the challenges of a performance culture the respondent stated that:

> 'The communication of values and the part they play in the organisation is important…feedback on individual performance needs to happen more regularly…communication trumps everything… the difference is big when there is effective dialogue'.

Respondent F

1/2. On Public Sector Reform (2011-2016) and the PM actions associated with it, the respondent commented that:

> 'I had no awareness of the reform plan and the sectoral actions… it did not filter down to us'.

2/2. On developing a performance culture

> 'We operate at a high standard and we have to…failings in data collection means we are missing information on service users which affects outcomes... a more strategy approach to different groups of service users would help'.

Respondent G

1/1 On the role of ministers in performance management the respondent stated that:

> 'There is no interest from ministers or politicians on performance management…we run government departments and manage the service…ministers are off doing different things… that's not a problem'.

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