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Serving the market or serving society? The evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities 1997-2019

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UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

**Serving the market or serving society?
The evolution of strategic planning in
Irish universities 1997-2019**

Orla Banks

PhD Thesis

University of Limerick

Supervised by Dr Chris McInerney and Dr Bernadette Connaughton

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Abstract

Serving the market or serving society?

The evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities 1997-2019

Orla Banks

Strategic planning has become a cornerstone in the management of Irish universities, responding initially to the 1997 Universities Act and more recently to a national and international policy environment. Irish universities are increasingly required to deliver government policy objectives, particularly those related to social and economic development. How they do this is articulated through their strategic plans. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the universities' approaches to strategic planning have evolved since 1997. Specifically, it assesses the degree to which strategic planning processes have been driven by the New Public Management (NPM) model at the expense of emerging approaches such as Public Value Management, which, it is argued have the potential to embrace a more holistic approach to public management. This thesis examines the main public sector management and strategic planning theories, how these have evolved within the context of political, economic and social development and how they are reflected in Irish public management and in the management of Irish Higher Education. It details the process of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in Irish universities since 1997 through a detailed content analysis of the universities' strategic plans and Elite Interviews with senior leaders and commentators in the university sector. The research finds evidence of an NPM approach to strategic planning which has 'hardened' as a consequence of economic austerity, the creation of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, launched in 2011. Thus, strengthening hierarchical and centralised control, increased regulation and heightened accountability are clearly visible. There is very little evidence of movement beyond NPM, with Public Value Management or other emerging approaches largely absent, though the research suggests that Public Value Management may have potential to add value to strategic planning in Irish universities.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis is the work of the candidate alone and has not been submitted to any other University or higher education institution in support of a different award. Citations of secondary works have been fully referenced.

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Acronyms

CEE – Central European Countries
DCU – Dublin City University
DES – Department of Education and Skills
DoF – Department of Finance
DPER – Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
ECF – Employment Control Framework
EU – European Union
FDI - Foreign Direct Investment
FEMPI – Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest
HE – Higher Education
HEA – Higher Education Authority
HEI – Higher Education Institution
HRB – Health Research Board
IoT – Institute of Technology
IRC – Irish Research Council
IPA – Institute for Public Administration
IUA – Irish Universities Association
IUQB – Irish Universities Quality Board
KPI – Key Performance Indicator
NPM – New Public Management
NUIG – National University of Ireland Galway
NUIM –NUI Maynooth/Maynooth University
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA – Public Administration
PAC – Public Accounts Committee
PRTL I – Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions
QQI – Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RGAM – Recurrent Grant Allocation Model
STCB - Serving the Country Better
SFI – Science Foundation Ireland
SIF – Strategic Innovation Fund
SMI – Strategic Management Initiative
SMT – Senior Management Team

TCD – Trinity College Dublin

TU – Technological University

UCC – University College Cork

UCD - University College Dublin

UL – University of Limerick

UMT – University Management Team

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Purpose of the study

This research project examines the evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities since the Universities Act (1997). It is concerned with understanding the process of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in Irish universities during the period 1997 to 2019 and to what extent strategic planning in Irish universities is driven by New Public Management as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach.

This research is set against the changing national politico-administrative and economic climate from 1997-2019. It is located in a context where international ranking according to criteria dominated by research citations, international ‘reputation’ and the need to attract research funding became the lead priorities for policy makers and university leaders (Barber *et al.* 2013). It is mindful of the growing emphasis from government on competitive relevancy, value for money and on the strength of the focus on research impact, particularly impact that supports economic development. Within this broader landscape, this research is focused on Irish universities’ approaches to strategic planning.

Central Research Question

This research will seek to answer a central research question, namely: To what extent is strategic planning in Irish universities driven by New Public Management as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach?

This central question will be supplemented by two key sub questions, namely:

- How visible are managerialist/New Public Management approaches within Irish universities strategic planning processes?
- Can Public Value Management contribute to renewing approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities?

Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims:

- to document and critically analyse approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities since the Universities Act (1997)

Building on this aim, this research will achieve a number of related objectives.

It will:

- Examine whether there is a tangible footprint of New Public Management approaches to policy and planning in Irish Higher Education (HE)
- Trace the evolution of approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities since 1997 and situate this in the context of the rise of managerialism/New Public Management approaches to public sector planning
- Assess whether there may be a case for adopting an alternative Public Value Management approach to strategic planning in the university sector in Ireland.

Description of Central Concepts

The central research question underpinning this thesis is premised on two contrasting public management approaches. These concepts are explained briefly below.

New Public Management

New Public Management is the term used to describe public management reforms which emerged in the early 1990's as a new model of public management (Hughes 2003). Abbreviated to NPM by Hood (1991) 'this new management paradigm emphasises results in terms of 'value for money', to be achieved by management by objectives, the use of markets, competition and choice, and devolution to staff through a better matching of authority, responsibility and accountability' (OECD 1998, p. 13).

Public Value Management

Public Value Management emerged from the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, USA, which began in the early 1980's. The Public Value Management approach was first articulated in Mark Moore's *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Moore 1995). Moore's approach focused on three key elements that compose the Strategic Triangle of Public Value Management which need to be aligned to create public value. These are the public value outcomes, the authorising environment, and the operational capacity context. Kelly *et al* (2002) described the concept of public value as the contribution made by the public sector to the economic, social and environmental well-being of a society or nation.

Background of the Researcher

The researcher is a senior manager with 21 years' experience in a university-level Irish HEI. As a member of the Executive Team of the institution, her responsibilities include the delivery of executive and governance level operations, including guiding and facilitating the development, implementation and monitoring of institutional strategy, policy and related developmental initiatives. She has represented the institution at Strategic Dialogue Meetings with the HEA and high level meetings with the Department of Education and Skills. This PhD research coupled with her professional background has provided the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of management, governance and strategic planning in university-level HEI's and how it has evolved since the Universities Act (1997).

Context of the Study

'Globalisation, internationalisation, the drive for quality, expectations surrounding new modes of teaching, rankings, the growing importance of research and innovation within the economic development agenda and above all the difficult economic environment have induced many reform processes in higher education' (Bennetot Pruvot et al. 2014, p. 5).

The Irish Universities Act (1997) is the starting point for this study, as it was the first major policy driver of strategic planning in Irish universities. Section 34 (1) of the Act set out the requirement for the governing authority (GA) of each university to prepare a strategic plan for not less than three years (Universities Act 1997). In addition to setting out a regulatory framework for the introduction of strategic planning, the Act also set out new structures for the governance and management of the universities. It was the catalyst for the expansion of academic councils, the appointment of newly composed GAs, the introduction of systems relating to quality, equity of access, and the development of equality policies. It ended the appointment of 'lifetime' elected Presidents, requiring instead universities to have a 'Chief Officer' called the President or Provost, appointed for 10 years, who would be responsible for the management and direction of all of the activities of the university and accountable to the GA. The objects of the Act (ibid) include teaching and learning, research, contribution to society, fostering of the Irish language and culture, facilitating the attainment of national economic and societal goals, training professional, technical and managerial personnel, lifelong learning, gender balance and equality of opportunity. These objects reflect a broad ambition for Irish

universities and they have been reflected consistently in the strategic priorities of all of the Universities for the past 22 years.

In 1997, 102,441 students participated in Irish HE, over half of which (54%) were in universities, 37% were in institutes of technology (IoTs) and 8% in colleges (HEA 1997). Funding was provided through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to the seven universities and four other Higher Education Institutions¹ (HEIs). This research project commenced in September 2015. By then, enrolments had more than doubled to 210,000 students, over half of which (54%) were in universities, with 40% in IoTs and 6% in colleges. In 2015, the HEA provided annual public funding to the seven universities, 14 IoTs, and five colleges. There were 10 ‘other’ publicly funded HEI’s funded directly by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). In 2019, participation rates in HE in Ireland are at an all-time high at 231,710 students, 57% of which are enrolled at universities² and 43% in the IoTs (HEA 2018b).

As a consequence of the implementation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt 2011) (henceforth the Hunt Report), at the time of writing (2019) the number of publicly funded institutions³ has been reduced from 36 to 22. The Technological Universities Bill (2018) which will re-constitute the Institutes of Technology into four Technological Universities (TUs) was passed into law in March 2018. Three IoTs in Dublin merged to form the first Technological University (Technological University of Dublin - TUD) on 1 January 2019.

There has also been significant change in the Teacher Education landscape with 19 discrete education providers now re-organised into six centres of teaching with many of the Teacher Education Colleges becoming incorporated into the Universities. St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Church of Ireland College of Education, and Mater Dei Institute have merged into Dublin City University (DCU). Froebel College of Teacher Education has merged into NUI Maynooth (NUIM) and St Angela’s College, Sligo has been incorporated into the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG).

The global financial crisis of 2008 had a serious impact on state investment in Irish HE with a 38% reduction in funding, falling from €2bn in 2009 to €1.3bn in 2016 (HEA

¹ Funding for the 14 Institutes of Technology was provided through the Department of Education.

² the ‘University Sector’ also includes four ‘Colleges’ Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; National College of Art and Design; Royal College of Surgeons; St. Angela’s College of Home Economics, Sligo

³ The higher education institutions (HEIs) with whom the HEA works under statute or who are in receipt of core public funding

2017d). Student enrolments in the same period increased by 25% (34,000) and the number of staff employed in the publicly-funded higher education (HE) sector fell by 13% with 4,000 staff having left the system since 2007/08. Increases in student contributions⁴, along with general reductions in overall state funding, resulted in a steady reduction in the proportion of total exchequer funding for core activities of HEIs funded by the State falling from 78% of total income in 2008 to an estimated 64% in 2016. This compares to an OECD average of 68% (Boland 2015, Cassells 2015). Government funding of the HE system increased to €1.5bn in the Budget of 2018 (up from €1.3bn in 2016) which the Irish University Association (IUA) suggests falls short of the amount that is required (IUA 2018).

The national and global economic crisis of 2008 and continuing austerity has presented challenges to the Irish HE sector to cope with continuing to deliver national objectives with fewer resources. This is a time of disruption, change and re-configuration in Irish HE. Now more than ever, it is important that the universities are clear on their mission and their purpose in the Irish HE landscape and that they articulate this in their strategic plans.

Strategic Planning

Between 2000 and 2010, all seven universities engaged in strategic planning in the absence of a national strategy. Research conducted by Lillis *et al* (2013) commented on the homogenous nature of strategic planning in the Irish HE system between the years 2000 and 2010. They observed that ‘One of the biggest issues with planning in (Irish) universities is you could take six or seven university plans, take the names off them, shuffle them and you wouldn’t know the difference between them’ (Lillis and Lynch 2013, p. 9). This research examines the strategic plans of the seven universities before and after the implementation of the Hunt Report in order to document the drivers and trends in the strategic priorities of the universities and the evolution of their strategic planning processes given the ‘unprecedented level of policy activity’ (Clancy 2015, p. 272) in the Irish HE sector since 2011.

In exploring reform and the processes of strategic planning in public sector organisations such as Irish universities, a number of theoretical platforms could have been employed to explore the phenomenon of interest. These include Institutional Theory, which aims to

⁴ Student contributions increased from €825 in 2007/08 to €3,000 in 2015/16, in the same period, total state-funded income per student decreased by 20 per cent.

further the understanding of how organisational models are established as conceptual blueprints and paradigms of public management reform (Reiter and Klenk 2018, p. 3). Institutional theories take different approaches, including new institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, empirical institutionalism, sociological institutionalism or constructivist institutionalism (Peters 2019). However, rather than conducting an institutional analysis, this research sought to explore strategic planning in Irish universities as part of the wider public sector. As strategic planning is anchored in management literature, it was deemed more appropriate to choose traditional public administration, New Public Management and emerging competing interpretations of public management including Network Governance and Public Value as the theoretical lenses for this research. These models represented the best theoretical platform for explicating the phenomenon and provided more scope to investigate the strategic planning experience in Irish universities.

Why Public Value Management?

Public Value Management is the approach that has been selected for this study to contrast with the prescriptions of NPM. It has been selected because it ‘explicitly searches for better social value through accelerating public managers capacity to innovate’ (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 68). With its roots in practice, Moore explored its application through case studies of public management in governmental organisations in the USA in his publications *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Moore 1995), *Public Value, Theory and Practice* (Benington and Moore 2011) and *Recognising Public Value* (Moore 2013). Public Value Management frameworks have been applied in organisations such as the BBC and NHS in the UK and have been used as a tool of empirical research (Horner *et al.* 2006, Collins 2007).

Williams *et al* observe that ‘the public value framework does not derive from a particular research tradition and there is little by way of empirical research to support the claims made for it... the task for future researchers must therefore be to define the central concepts and arguments that make up public value and subject these to empirical investigation and testing’ (Williams and Shearer 2011, p. 15). Public Value Management is a theory about human agency ‘in institutional, organisational and whole system contexts’ (Hartley *et al.* 2016) which has the potential to work in the agentified space and in arms-length public bodies like universities. It emphasises the alignment of three distinct processes, which are necessary for the creation of public value. The first of these

is defining the public value outcomes that the organisation wishes to produce. The second is to create the authorising environment necessary to achieve required support to take action. The third is to build the operational capacity to achieve the desired outcomes by identifying the resources that the organisation needs to develop to deliver the desired results.

Given that a wide authorising environment of stakeholders is a key characteristic of the Public Value Management approach to strategic planning, this research will explore the current practice of stakeholder identification, engagement and consultation by the universities in order to ascertain how they identify and engage with key stakeholders in order to manage the ‘very complex changes and tough challenges now facing governments and communities in a period of profound political and social restructuring’ (Benington and Moore 2011, p.2). It will also examine how the universities establish the operational capacity in terms of support and resources to deliver their strategic plans. It will assess whether there may be a case for adopting an alternative Public Value Management approach to strategic planning in the university sector in Ireland, therefore exploring its applicability in the ‘real world’.

Relevance of the research and contribution to the field

‘Research on higher education in Ireland plays a minor role in the overall (education) research landscape. From 2000 to 2014, of almost 1700 peer-reviewed documents pertaining to education in the national research repository, www.rian.ie, 685 relate to higher education... with only 58 connected in some way to higher education policy. This accounts for huge gaps in our understanding of developments within/affecting Irish higher education, but also the twin drivers of internationalisation and globalisation. It also explains why, with the exception of ESRI and other commissioned work, there has been virtually no research conducted on issues surrounding the crisis and their impact on higher education.’ (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1351)

This research will build on the limited existing empirical research on strategic planning in Irish HE. By examining in detail the process of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in Irish universities over a 22 year period it will provide a comprehensive

review of strategic planning in Irish universities since the passing of the 1997 Universities Act. It will meet the challenge put forth in the literature which states that Public Value Management needs to be explored in the real world (Williams and Shearer 2011, Shaw 2015, Hartley *et al.* 2016) and whether it can contribute to renewing approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities. As noted by Williams *et al.* ‘The most striking feature is the relative absence of empirical investigation of either the normative propositions of public value or its efficacy as a framework for understanding public management’ (Williams and Shearer 2011, p. 8). Shaw states that the lack of research to analyse ‘the potential empirical consequences of the new post-NPM analytic of government...needs to be addressed before the dual promises of more decision-making autonomy for public managers and greater civil society involvement in that decision making are realised’(Shaw 2015). This research will make a new contribution to knowledge by exploring the relevance of Public Value Management to strategic planning in Irish universities and its potential to expand planning horizons. This research is of interest to national education policymakers and agencies such as the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the HEA, the Irish Universities Association (IUA), and the seven Irish Universities, as well as international education agencies.

Thesis Structure

The focus and questions to be addressed in this research study are set out here in Chapter 1. The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows:

Chapters 2 and 3 comprise a review of the literature drawn on in this research which establishes the theoretical framework to address the central research question.

Chapter 2 provides the detail of how the theory, themes and characteristics of the main public sector management approaches have evolved within the context of economic and social development over the past half-century. It details the key elements of traditional public administration, NPM and emerging competing interpretations of public management including the Neo-Weberian State, New Public Governance, Network Governance and Public Value Management. It examines the democratic theory and groundings of each concept and the cultural element of each politico-administrative context, which resulted in different manifestations of public management in each ‘era’.

The implications for strategic planning across the chronological development of public sector management theories are discussed in Chapter 3, which examines the evolution of

corporate strategic planning and the strategic management and performance management models associated with the neoclassical economics of the mid-20th century. It presents the key characteristics associated with traditional public administration, NPM and emerging approaches to strategic planning. It examines the public and private sector management dichotomy and provides an understanding of the mechanisms of idea-transfer from one sector to another and how strategic planning has evolved within public organisations. In particular, it looks at the NPM typology of approaches to strategic planning that capture the characteristics of neoliberal approaches to policy prioritisation and strategy development and how they have influenced public sector planning.

Chapter 4 establishes the historical context for organisation and planning in Irish public administration and HE from 1922-2019. It looks at the effect of public service reform on Irish education and describes Irish education policy. It discusses planning in Irish public administration, how it was introduced, the effects of the politico-administrative regime on planning and the impact of the Strategic Management Initiative (1994) (SMI) which brought NPM type reform to the Irish public service and how these reforms filtered into Irish HE. It explores the influence of neoliberal policy on HE, the structural developments that took place in the sector in the period 1997-2019, during which time the Universities Act (1997) was introduced, the economic crisis of 2008 took place and the Hunt Report (2011) was introduced. It examines how all of these developments affected approaches to strategic planning in the universities.

Chapter 5 sets out the research design and methodology that was used to answer the overarching research question. It presents the operational framework that was developed to guide data collection for this study. It describes the data collection methods where the primary data sources were a desk-based detailed content analysis of the 29 strategic plans published by the seven universities during the period 1997-2018 and Elite Interviews conducted with 20 leaders and experts in the field of Irish HE. It details the data analysis methods where all data were analysed in NVivo 12 using the Newell and Burnard coding framework (2006).

Chapter 6 presents the findings of this research. It details the findings of the content analysis of the universities strategic plans and the findings of the anonymised Elite Interview data. These data were analysed through the operational framework, which related the five key pillars that emerged from the literature as key dimensions of strategic planning to four public management approaches to strategic planning. The five key

themes that act as pillars for the operational framework are: Pillar 1 - Drivers of and influences on strategic planning, Pillar 2 - The Planning Process, Pillar 3 – Key visible characteristics of the plans, Pillar 4 – Implementation and resourcing, Pillar 5 Review and evaluation.

Chapter 7 provides an analysis and discussion of the findings in the context of the wider theoretical literature and the operational framework. It tests the approaches of Irish universities to strategic planning in accordance with each of the pillars of the operational framework and in the process it identifies which public management approaches dominated strategic planning, establishing a clear connection between the theoretical aspects and the empirical components of the work. By viewing Irish universities' approaches to strategic planning through the lenses of different public management approaches, this enabled the theories of Public Value Management to be explored 'in the real world'. The analysis discusses the extent to which there is a tangible footprint of New Public Management approaches to planning in Irish HE.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusions arising from the research project and its context within the relevant literature. It answers the central research question and two key-sub questions. It sets out the original contribution of this research study to new knowledge and identifies areas for future research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review: Public Sector Management Theories

The literature review for this research project is set out over two chapters, locating the research within the broad context and framework of existing published work relating to the main public sector management theories, strategic planning and governance. The literature underpins the development of a theoretical framework to address the central research question: To what extent is strategic planning in Irish universities driven by New Public Management as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach?

This chapter focuses on three main public sector management theories and how they have evolved within the context of political, economic and social development over the past half century. It is divided into three parts:

Part 1 - Traditional Public Administration

Part 2 – New Public Management (NPM)

Part 3 – Emerging competing interpretations of public management

Part 1 Traditional Public Administration

The salient literature on traditional public administration presents three dominant theoretical models through which traditional public administration can be understood. The three main theorists in this area are Wilson, Weber and Taylor. This section will provide a review of these three models as they underpin the model of traditional public administration, which was the main public management model in Ireland from the foundation of the state to the 1980's.

Woodrow Wilson's 'The Study of Administration' (1887) is recognised as being a seminal text relating to American public administration and beyond (Bozeman 2007, Shafritz *et al.* 2013, Noordegraaf 2015). It stated that the purpose of public administration was to supply 'the best possible life to a federal system' (Wilson 1887, p. 221) situated in a concept of 'public good' (Bozeman 2007). Wilson saw public administration as the way of improving the efficiency of government, separating administration from politics, and building 'strong trust in government as an agent of good for all' (Bryson *et al.* 2014, p. 445). He saw the role of public servants as being responsible for the implementation of policy, motivated by the public interest, acting on instructions from politicians who in

turn, were responsible for policy and strategy making. This model evolved in the context of the evolving political, economic and social conditions in the USA in the late 19th century and were prevalent for most of the 20th century (Hughes 2003, Bryson *et al.* 2014). These included ‘the challenges of industrialisation, urbanisation, the rise of the modern corporation, faith in science, belief in progress, and concern over major market failures’ (Bryson *et al.* 2014, p. 446).

Echoing some of Wilson’s principles, Weberian democracy was characterised by rational / legal authority in which organisational effectiveness was achieved through hierarchical organisational structures, systematic division of labour, procedural correctness, risk avoidance, equality of treatment, strict adherence to rules and regulations and full-time employment, where continuity of service and promotion on merit was the norm. (Hughes 2003, Stoker 2006a, Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2011). Weber proposed that ‘developed nations would be governed by similar modes of legal-rational thought through hierarchic rule-based bureaucracies’ (Chandler 2014, p. 229).

Taylor’s scientific management principles (1911) set out to enable management to ‘define and control what tasks workers would perform and in what way they would approach it’(Morley *et al.* 2004, p. 4). These provided a mechanism for the implementation of Weber’s bureaucratic theory and Wilson’s political control. Taylor’s scientific management principles saw managers being responsible for the organisation and delegation of work where tasks were assigned to the workers to which they were best suited and that workers were trained to perform tasks in ‘one best way’ in order to standardise and predict job performance. In turn, work performance was monitored by managers to ensure that procedures were followed correctly and that results were achieved. (Morley *et al.* 2004)

The principles proposed by these three architects of traditional public administration clearly underpin the Westminster system of government⁵. These include:

- A clear relationship between accountability and responsibility in the politico-administrative system, where public servants are technically accountable, through the hierarchical structure of the Department to the Line Minister, to the Cabinet, and eventually, to the people

⁵ Countries whose governmental practices are based on the Westminster/Whitehall system include the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Chandler 2014)

- A strict separation between matters of policy, which are formally the province of politicians and matters of administration, which are left to the public service
- Within the public service, each department or agency has two roles; to advise the political leadership on the development, review and implementation of policy and to manage its own resources so that policy can be implemented
- Public Servants remain anonymous⁶ and neutral
- In return for acting impersonally and objectively, public servants receive benefits such as security of employment and a pension
- The government controls its financial resources and initiates spending measures
- An emphasis on public interest and ‘pragmatic administrative action’

(Hughes 2003, p. 26, 168, 245, MacCarthaigh 2012b, p. 5).

These characteristics of traditional public administration, especially the relationship between politicians and administrators as set out above, represent the foundation of the normative ideal traditional public administration model in western society (Hansen and Ejersbo 2002). This model is said to have experienced its ‘Golden Age’ from around 1920 to the beginning of the 1970’s (Hughes 2003). It provided a framework for governments to meet the challenges of the time. Bryson *et al* state that ‘mostly successful experience with government responses to World War 1, the Great Depression and World War 2 helped solidify support for traditional public administration’ (Bryson *et al.* 2014, p. 447).

Table 1 below summarises the dimensions of traditional public administration, which was embedded by governments to rebuild their economies through an efficient public service after World War 2. Politically and economically, this was delivered through the post-World War 2 new world order constructed through the Bretton Woods agreements and the establishment of institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the United Nations, which stabilised international relations and were themselves key elements of an international public administration infrastructure. From 1945 until the 1970’s, public state-owned organisations provided a broad range of utilities and services through the welfare state as a way of fostering social well-being (Rothgang and Schneider 2015). It was accepted ‘that the state should focus on full employment, economic growth, and the welfare of its citizens, and that state power should be freely deployed, alongside of or if necessary, intervening in or even substituting for market processes to achieve these ends’

⁶ i.e. not publicly identified with the advice they give to Ministers (Hughes 2003, p. 26)

(Harvey 2005, p. 6). In order to achieve these aims, Keynesian fiscal and monetary policies, namely that governments have to invest and spend public money during economic downturns in order to revitalise economies, were used as the method of regulating the economy (Harvey 2005, Chatson 2011, Noordegraaf 2015). The Keynesian approach, coupled with the stability offered by the World Bank and the IMF, delivered high rates of economic growth in the advanced capitalist countries (such as the UK, USA, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal) (Harvey 2005).

Traditional policy making where ‘a process instigated by a decision of politicians, involves work by government civil servants; produces a policy which then leads to action by government’ (Joyce 2015, p. 75) was the planning mechanism associated with traditional public administration. This approach was not focused on long-term planning or interests, as political systems tended to focus on short-term results and operated at departmental level rather than focusing on a whole-of-government approach and long term objectives (OECD 2008). The traditional model of public administration prevailed in much of Western Europe from the end of World War 2 to the 1970’s, with full employment, relief from poverty, and the development of public services the priority for governments on both sides of the Atlantic (Monbiot 2016).

Dimensions	Model: Traditional Public Administration
Cultural /environmental element of the politico-administrative context	Welfare state
Primary theoretical and epistemological foundations	Political theory (Wilson & Weber), scientific management (Taylor), pragmatism
Role of politicians	Elected representatives of the people
Role of citizens	Voters, clients, constituents
Decision Making	Traditional policy making ‘rowing’
Finance	Incremental budget making
Organisational character	Departmental (‘silos or stovepipes’)
Organisational issue	Too much red tape
Civil service expertise	Drafting legislation, formulating bureaucracy
Civil service values	Honesty and fairness
Focus of civil service capability development	Professional development of individuals
Engaging with the public	Electoral support as a basis for government mandate, public servants accountable to politicians
Rational model of human behaviour	Rational-legal authority, ‘administrative man’ universalism, equity
Interaction between politicians and senior public managers	Principal-Agent theory – politicians provide policy goals, implementation conducted by public servants overseen by bureaucratic and political oversight
Approach to planning	Focus on short-term results rather than long term planning

Table 1 - The dimensions of Traditional Public Administration.

Adapted from (Blaug et al. 2006, MacCarthaigh 2012b, Bryson et al. 2014, Joyce 2015).

Traditional Public Administration under pressure - the advent of neoliberalism

The high inflation and high unemployment of the 1970's challenged the post WW2 Keynesian fiscal and monetary model and in turn focused attention on the operation of traditional public administration. The size and scope of government and financing of the welfare state 'increasingly brought countries face-to-face with the issue of affordability' (Holmes and Shand 1995, p. 559). The advent of technological advances in computers and telecommunications, coupled with the growth of multinational corporations accompanied by significant global and economic turbulence in the 1970's were driving forces for public sector restructuring (Olssen and Peters 2005, Ravenhill 2011, Mercille 2014, Rothgang and Schneider 2015). Key features of the traditional public administration model used by government to deliver public services faced increasing criticism. Wilson's separation of politics from administration did not reflect the reality, which was that they were 'necessarily intertwined' (Hughes 2003, p. 33). The assumption of Taylor's 'one best way' of working was also challenged, with the reality being that there were a number of ways of achieving results and that managers were increasingly being given autonomy and responsibility to do this, indicating a move away from procedural correctness towards more creative solutions to solve problems. Weberian bureaucracy became a synonym for inefficiency (Hughes 2003, p. 34). Changes in the political, social, cultural and economic landscape 'signalled a new era in public service development... characterised by an emphasis on greater awareness of management practice and explicit reform of the public service' (MacCarthaigh 2012b, p. 9). Bureaucracy became a derogatory term used to describe a public service which was inefficient and ineffective (Hughes 2003, Chatson 2011, Noordegraaf 2015).

By the end of the 1970's, the traditional model of public administration was no longer deemed fit for purpose (Aucoin 1990, Hughes 2003). Governments took a 'neoclassical' economic approach to capital controls where rather than expanding public services to deal with economic problems; a more restrictive approach was taken. Large, bureaucratic public services were seen as causing, rather than alleviating, economic problems, and instead of allocating resources according to public need, the market took primacy. The role of the state as an employer changed, with 'the orientation towards efficacy as the dominating principle of public administration challenged by New Public Management and amended to efficiency' (Rothgang and Schneider 2015, p. 41).

This neoclassical approach embraced a 'neoliberal' ideology which was advocated by US academic Milton Friedman of the Chicago School (Clarke 2005). It represented a seminal challenge in terms of the political economy to post-war Keynesianism. Friedman held the view that governments' involvement in any provision of (public) services should be minimised. This neoclassical approach emphasised reducing government, balancing budgets and advocated free markets. In the UK, the neoclassical approach was embraced by Thatcher, whose 'New Right' Conservative government took power in 1979 and was 'committed to reducing the proportion of GDP that was represented by public spending' (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p.313). Adopting the principle that profit was the only acceptable business motive, this led to the privatisation of several public services in the UK including electricity, gas, water and telecommunications in the 1980's. The role of the public servant changed from being a bureaucratic, impartial actor delivering services to citizens with very limited discretion, to one who delivered public services inspired by private sector customer service principles with wide discretion allowed (Bryson *et al.* 2014, Rothgang and Schneider 2015). In the USA, a similar neoclassical approach was taken by the Reagan administration in the 1980's although it should be noted that market-based government was already more embedded in the USA. Performance budgeting was introduced by the Hoover Commission of 1949 and in 1954 experimental strategic planning on behalf of the State was conducted on its behalf by organisations like the RAND Corporation. Hence, the USA was much further along the capitalist continuum than the UK.

This neoclassical economic approach aimed to make markets more competitive and more attractive for foreign investors by placing an emphasis on 'reducing government, balancing the budget and letting market forces find a desirable economic equilibrium' (Hughes 2003, p. 168). Market based economic theories were proposed as a solution to solve the economic crises of the 1970's and as a successor to traditional public administration. The neoliberal ideology which emerged to replace the welfare state 'maintained fundamentally different premises at the level of political and economic theory, as well as at the level of philosophical assumption' (Olssen and Peters 2005, p. 314). The key characteristic of neoliberalism is said to be a revival of classical economic liberalism associated with early liberals such as John Locke and Adam Smith and in the 20th century, the political theorist, Hayek (Clarke 2005, Olssen and Peters 2005, Thorsen and Lie 2006). Liberalism is defined as 'a political programme or ideology whose goals include most prominently the diffusion, deepening and preservation of constitutional

democracy, limited government, individual liberty, and those basic human and civil rights which are instrumental to any decent human existence’(Thorsen and Lie 2006, p. 7). Classical economic liberalism is ‘the belief that states ought to abstain from intervening in the economy, and instead leave as much as possible up to individuals participating in free and self-regulating markets’ (Thorsen and Lie 2006, p. 2).

Key characteristics of classical economic liberalism are: the self-interested individual ‘economic man’, free market economics i.e. that the market is the most efficient and effective mechanism for allocating resources and opportunities, *Laissez-faire* economic policies, minimal state interference and a commitment to free trade and open economies. (Olssen and Peters 2005, Thorsen and Lie 2006). A group of political theorists led by Hayek in the period immediately after World War 2 are said to have made efforts to ‘reinvigorate classical liberalism ...and redefine liberalism by reverting to a more right-wing or *laissez-faire* stance on economic policy issues, compared to the modern, egalitarian liberalism of Beveridge and Keynes’ (Thorsen and Lie 2006, p. 9).

Hence the term neoliberalism, may be differentiated across two key periods. The first is the post-World War 2 era, where Hayek (1944) and Röpke’s (1944;1945) work and that of organisations such as the Mont Pelerin Society and Chicago School (whose members also included Milton Friedman) challenged the welfare state which was emerging at the time. There is some mention of neoliberal influences on post war West Germany’s ‘social market economy’ where Röpke’s work served as an inspiration for ‘ordoliberalism’ where capitalism was regulated by state control (Thorsen and Lie 2006, Venugopal 2015). The second period is in the 1970’s when the term began to be used again, this time as an ideology which proposed that ‘human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state was to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate for these practices’ (Harvey 2005, p. 2).

The overarching ideology of neoliberalism influenced the rise and prominence of the ‘New Right’ whose determination to make government more efficient and effective turned the tide away from the welfare state towards a ‘neoclassical’ approach in order to provide economic growth. By the 1990’s neoliberalism was described as the ‘defining political-economic paradigm of our time’ (Bessant *et al.* 2015, p. 419). Two key paradigms which emerged from neoclassical theory and steered governance and

management in the public sector towards a more ‘neoliberal’ agenda were public choice theory and managerialism.

Public Choice Theory and Managerialism

Public Choice Theory, associated with the Chicago School ‘focused on the need to re-establish the primacy of representative government over bureaucracy’ (Aucoin 1990, p.115) in order that politicians could assert their authority over officials, offices, and budgets in order to control decision making processes. Public Choice Theory argued that politicians and public servants acted in their own interest instead of behaving like Weberian bureaucrats who worked for the common good out of service to the state. The welfare state type bureaucracy was deemed inefficient, and Public Choice Theory held that the economy would benefit by a reduction in the supply of as many public services as possible by the government by downsizing, privatising and deregulation (Niskanen 1971, Aucoin 1990, Hughes 2003). Following the theory of Adam Smith, the markets were seen as a more efficient way of allocating resources rather than the bureaucratic, traditional model of public administration.

Niskanen was a leading public choice theorist and his work *Bureaucracy and Representative Government* (1971) advocated reducing government and reducing bureaucracy. A member of Reagan’s Council of Economic Advisors in the 1980’s, his work was also influential in the UK, where Thatcher sought to devolve authority back to political leaders and politicians (the corporate executive) by establishing offices of executive government where politicians had primacy over bureaucrats. By doing this, control of power was created by contracting external people (such as special advisors) to staff key positions and by promoting public servants who were attached to the political elite to create a model of centralised decision making, which coordinated policy and budgetary matters, and controlled public service staffing levels. This changed the model of traditional public administration from one where people worked for the common good, to one where bureaucracy was no longer relevant (Aucoin 1990). Public Choice Theory assumed the need for a more entrepreneurial approach and asserted that governments got more value using less resources by adopting results-based management into the public service (Hughes 2003, Blaug *et al.* 2006). The change in the nomenclature of public administration to public management demonstrated the shift towards public sector managers taking responsibility for results and efficiencies.

Managerialism was one mechanism which was used to empower public managers in order to 're-establish the primacy of managerialist principles over bureaucracy' (Aucoin 1990, p.115). Two key principles of managerialism were:

- Decentralisation - where flatter hierarchical structures were put in place with line managers in close contact with their superiors were empowered to 'manage operations and people rather than to administer processes and systems' (Aucoin 1990, p. 122), and get things done;

and

- Deregulation - where line managers were given the autonomy to select those best suited to completing tasks and delegate in accordance with 'clearly defined and coherent missions' (Aucoin 1990, p. 124) in order to make objectives clear, manageable and achievable.

These principles enabled managers to achieve results in accordance with clearly defined missions and objectives. This type of public management reform was designed to make 'deliberate changes to the structure and processes of public sector organisations with the objective (in some sense) to run better' (Bozeman 2007, p. 8).

By the 1980's, inflation and rising unemployment were commonplace and divesting the government of responsibility for the burden of managing and sometimes subsidising state assets by privatising them was an acceptable alternative to raising taxes or borrowing money. The deregulation of financial markets and the large flows of capital between countries encouraged by 'light touch' regulation as well as the application of strong political pressure to maintain economic growth, resulted in a 'neoliberal turn' away from Keynesian economics and towards an individualistic, capitalist approach to managing public services (Molyneux 2008). Many Western countries adopted business-like management models such as Public Choice Theory in order to deliver more efficient public services that used less of government resources. Within this neoliberal climate, 'centralised state steering of the public sector is known as New Public Management or new managerialism' (Bessant *et al.* 2015, p.419). Ultimately, Public Choice and managerialist approaches formed the basis of what has become the dominant paradigm of public administration and public management, New Public Management.

Part 2 New Public Management

Within the traditional public administration model 'democracy gave the goals and bureaucracy delivered the technical efficiency required for their implementation' (Blaug *et al.* 2006, p. 15). New Public Management (NPM) set out to 'focus politicians on strategy and strategic decisions, while looking to delegate the implementation of operational detail to managed agencies' (Haynes 2012, p. 7). Hood (1991) relates the rise of NPM to four international administrative 'megatrends' namely:

- The need to reduce the size of government
- A move towards privatisation and agentification of public services
- A move towards the use of IT systems in the organisation and delivery of public services
- A move towards a more international, cooperative and collaborative style of public management

There are a number of theories as to why NPM took hold as it did. One which Hood (1991) holds is that it emerged as a set of principles for redesigning public and non-profit organisations in the 1980's as a rational response to a drive for greater efficiency in the public sector following the economic crises of the 1970's. An OECD report in 2001 stated that most OECD countries had engaged in public management reform in the preceding 10-15 years largely in response to dissatisfaction with governments' performance. This report named the key drivers of public management reform as:

- the level of taxation and the budget deficit
- failure of government programmes to achieve their objectives and/or represent value for money;
- public administration was not sufficiently responsive to the needs of clients including ministers;
- 'government was too big and too intrusive' (Keating 2001, p. 142)

This report also recognised NPM as being the model which enabled a paradigm shift in public management in OECD countries combining 'modern management practices with the logic of economics, while still retaining core public service values' (Keating 2001, p. 145). Pollit and Bouckaert state that NPM was the 'original reaction against traditional bureaucracy and 'big government'...the new model was to be business. Management was

the key skill. Markets and incentives were the key mechanisms' (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 23). Deem and Brehony suggest that new managerialism / neoliberalism is an ideology with NPM as a cognate process and that both 'phenomena have led to considerable deliberate organisational and cultural change in public service organisations in the West' (Deem and Brehony 2005, p. 217). NPM is variously characterised with one commentator stating that the 'only common point among various conceptions on NPM is a deep respect for the use of market discipline in governance' (Bozeman 2007, p.76). According to Noordegraaf (2015) NPM was heralded as a 'no nonsense' movement, associated with a less bureaucratised style of management in favour of organisations adopting a more business-like, and 'professional' approach to operations in an effort to appear more accountable, efficient and effective.

NPM did not replace traditional public administration, but was seen as a way of adopting new managerial techniques in the public service in order to provide a more efficient and effective public service which cost less. The basic elements of traditional public administration persisted through NPM but the emphasis was on 'steering' – where public service managers became responsible for the achievement of results, rather than 'rowing' which was associated with traditional public administration. (Hughes 2003, Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008, Chatson 2011, Bryson *et al.* 2014). NPM also introduced strategic planning into the public sector to emphasise the need to achieve results.

Drawing heavily on Public Choice Theory where a more entrepreneurial approach to governance was assumed (Blaug *et al.* 2006), NPM was a 'strongly developed theory of managerial change, where modern business practices influenced by Public Choice Theory were adopted into the public sector' (Dunleavy *et al.* 2006, p. 470). Dunleavy *et al.* saw NPM as comprising of three key characteristics. The first was disaggregation, where large public sector organisations were broken up into smaller agencies⁷ at arm's length from politicians and league tables measured their performance; work was sub-contracted to private providers; and IT solutions were introduced to increase efficiency. The second was competition, where competitive practices were introduced to replace hierarchical decision making: e.g. in the allocation of resources, procurement, outsourcing and deregulation. The third was incentivisation, where performance was rewarded for the

⁷ Agentification – an organisation that is (i) structurally disaggregated from the government and (ii) operates under more business-like conditions than government bureaucracy' Van Thiel, S. (2011) 'Comparing Agentification In Central Eastern European And Western European Countries: Fundamentally Alike In Unimportant Respects?', *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, (Special Issue), 15-32.

achievement of service objectives; there was light-touch regulation; and public private partnerships were introduced.

Thus, the NPM model was introduced into public service organisations ‘in the quest to modernise, reduce spending costs and improve efficiency, effectiveness and excellence - to institutionalise commercial values in their systems’ (Deem and Brehony 2005, Bessant *et al.* 2015). Table 2 illustrates the contrast between the dimensions of traditional public administration and the NPM reforms which introduced a new approach into public sector management from the early 1980’s onwards.

Dimensions	Traditional public administration	New Public Management
Politico-administrative context	Welfare state	Rise of the 'New Right' in Anglo Saxon countries, globalisation and internationalisation
Primary theoretical and epistemological foundations	Political theory (Wilson & Weber), scientific management (Taylor), pragmatism	A rise in neo-liberal ideology, a strong belief in market mechanisms as the most efficient way of managing public services
Role of politicians	Elected representatives of the people	Elected 'Governors' who determine policy objectives at arm's length from public managers
Role of citizens	Voters, clients, constituents	Customers
Decision Making	Traditional policy making 'rowing'	Empowered public managers – 'steering', strategic planning
Finance	Incremental budget making	Decentralised 'one line' budgets and techniques such as 'top-slicing' - 'do more with less'
Organisational character	Departmental ('silos or stovepipes')	Disaggregation, Agentification, arm's length from government, light-touch regulation
Organisational issue	Too much red tape	Creating competition by taking an entrepreneurial approach to governance - contracts and public tendering
Civil service expertise	Drafting legislation, formulating bureaucracy	Managing resources, accountability
Civil service values	Honesty and fairness	Efficiency, effectiveness, responsibility
Focus of civil service capability development	Professional development of individuals	Incentivisation, rewards for achieving service objectives, a shift in management focus from input and process to output, more measurement and quantification, especially through performance indicators
Engaging with the public	Electoral support as a basis for government mandate, public servants accountable to politicians	Electoral support as a basis for government mandate, public services delivered in a market-driven environment where the market decides what consumers require, rather than an aggregation of individual self-interests
Rational model of human behaviour	Rational-legal authority, 'administrative man', universalism, equity	Individualistic, 'economic man', efficiency
Interaction between politicians and senior public managers	Principal-Agent theory – politicians provide policy goals, implementation conducted by public servants overseen by bureaucratic and political oversight	Principal agent theory - politicians provide policy goals, implemented by managers with autonomy to manage outputs efficiently
Approach to planning	Focus on short-term results	The use of strategic planning to achieve results.

Table 2 - The dimensions of traditional public administration and the NPM reforms which introduced a new approach. Adapted from (Hood 1991, Blaug et al. 2006, Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008, MacCarthaigh 2012b, Bryson et al. 2014, Joyce 2015)

In summary, the key directions of change as a result of NPM reforms were:

- Incentivisation of performance for the achievement of service objectives
- A shift in management focus from input and process to output
- More measurement and quantification, especially through performance indicators
- Empowered public managers ‘steering’ – responsible for results, accountability
- Disaggregation from the centre and a preference for more specialised arms-length agencies – agentification as well as light-touch regulation
- Decentralised budgets and techniques such as top-slicing ‘doing more with less’
- Creating competition by using public tendering to award contracts
- Much wider use of markets and market-like mechanisms for public service delivery
- Shift in value priorities away from universalism, equity and security towards efficiency and individualism
- A ‘whole of government’ approach to reforming public management
- Efficiency, effectiveness, responsibility
- The use of strategic planning to achieve results

Patterns of NPM reform

NPM was not uniformly implemented across OECD countries. A study by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) revealed that a number of features influenced the degree to which NPM was implemented in different cultural and politico-administrative contexts. The first was the state structure and the degree to which authority is centralised or decentralised across different levels of government and correspondingly, the separation of tasks and the distribution of responsibility across those levels. The second was whether the political system operates according to a majoritarian or consensus-oriented principles. The third related to the relationships and dynamics between ministers and senior civil servants and the dominant administrative culture within the public sector. The fourth was the degree of diversity / homogeneity among the main influencers of public management reform (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

It is held that the Anglo-heritage countries of the OECD, including the UK, Australia and New Zealand were the most radical implementers of NPM (Bozeman 2007, Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, Van Thiel 2011, Peters 2013, Martin and Spano 2015, Rothgang and Schneider 2015). Pollitt and Bouckaert’s (2004) typology of ‘trajectories of reform’ distinguished four types of trajectories associated with the

implementation of NPM, where countries were categorised into the following groups: maintainers, modernisers, marketisers or minimisers in accordance with the degree to which they adopted NPM. Taking agentification as a key indicator of the adoption of NPM, Van Thiel (2011) focused on the agentification patterns of countries, and refined and expanded Pollit and Bouckaert's typology, leading to five trajectories which help to illustrate the pattern of NPM implementation in the Western world. These trajectories are:

Maintainers - countries that adopted few, if any, NPM practices. They included Germany, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Japan and Turkey. Characterised by a 'very legalistic administrative tradition, complex federal systems and a strong hierarchical civil service system' (Van Thiel 2011, p. 19), agentification was not common in the maintainer countries, and government continued to hold a strong role in the delivery of public services.

Modernisers – countries that held that the state had an important role in the delivery of public services but saw that there was a need for 'fundamental changes in the administrative system...such as budget and personnel reforms, extensive decentralisation and devolution'(Van Thiel 2011, p. 19). Pollit and Bouckaert held that modernisers included Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden and called them the continental European modernisers (2011). Van Thiel (2011) added Austria, Denmark, Portugal, USA and Ireland to this group. The pace and type of reform was different amongst the modernisers, with the Nordic countries of Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden giving 'their modernisation efforts a stronger citizen oriented, participatory flavour than the central Europeans' (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Therefore Van Thiel divided the modernisers into three categories as follows:

Modernisers I - Decentralised modernisers -the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Ireland⁸. Van Thiel's categorised these countries together, as she found a 'longstanding tradition of agentification, with a high degree of autonomy and agencies of different types. Recent reforms not aimed to reduce the number of agencies, but reshuffling of types of agencies' (Van Thiel 2011, p. 22).

⁸ This was based on pre-austerity (2008) classification

Modernisers II – Centralised corporatists – Southern European countries with a Napoleonic tradition – Portugal, France, Italy, and Belgium. Van Thiel found that in these countries, there was a strong role for government who led ‘comprehensive reform programs...favouring corporatisation and decentralisation over agentification’ (Van Thiel 2011, p. 20). When compared with the core NPM group, the modernisers I⁹ and II ‘shared a more positive attitude towards the future role of the state and a less sweepingly enthusiastic attitude towards the potential contribution of the private sector within the public realm’ (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 118)

Modernisation with a twist – Modern minimisers – the Central European Countries (CEE) where following the fall of communism, agentification was common. Prior to the fall of communism, the public administration system in CEE countries was ‘the state’. The difficulty these countries faced when transitioning to a post-communist public administration system was that the traditional public administration system, which NPM set out to reform, did not exist. New political democracies were formed, many of which tended to follow a neo-liberal ideology (Drechsler 2005, Randma - Liiv 2008, Chandler 2014). Looking to other countries in the West, their administrative model represented a ‘mix of the Weberian rational –legal model and NPM initiatives’ (Chandler 2014, p. 159). The case has also been made that CEE governments could be ‘marketisers’ rather than modernisers’ (Randma - Liiv 2008, p. 4).

Marketisers – countries, which underwent radical reform, where the role of the state was ‘rolled back’ and minimised, with a shift of control moved from public administration to public management. Disaggregation, agentification, competition and incentivisation were market type mechanisms used to reform public service delivery in marketiser countries which included the UK, Australia, New Zealand, referred to as the core NPM group by Pollit and Bouckaert (2011).

Minimisers – countries who minimised the role of the state to that of ‘night watchman’ status. This theoretical construct was the most extreme form of adoption of NPM with extensive privatisation and ‘downsizing public sector organisations...creating agencies at the furthest distance from the government as possible, financed by fees rather than public budgets and operating in (internal) markets’ (Van Thiel 2011, p. 20). Pollit and Bouckaert

⁹ This is the category where Van Thiel places Ireland

(2004) found that while their minimiser typology was promoted in the marketiser countries (UK, Australia and New Zealand) it did not exist in practice.

Pollit and Bouckaert conducted a comparative analysis of the impact of austerity on their typology of ‘trajectories of reform’ in 2017 and noted that Ireland had become a member of a highly vulnerable group that was subject to ‘outside-in’ pressures¹⁰ (Pollit and Bouckaert 2017, p. 119). This group also included Greece, Poland, Japan and Portugal. It noted that austerity in these countries had the potential to present a number of possible trajectories including a revival of the ‘directing’ state where government would try to take greater control of the economy and develop central strategies for effecting change, seen as a modernising response. Another was that government could hollow-out and allow businesses to take over large parts of the public sector, seen as a minimising response. Another was that an emphasis would be placed on working with the community to develop local solutions and ‘self-help’, seen as a decentralised New Public Governance Model and the last was where governments would struggle on, placing huge pressure on public servants doing more with less, seen as a maintaining strategy (Pollit and Bouckaert 2017).

While Van Theil held that the USA was a moderniser, NPM was not as prevalent in the discourse relating to reform there. The USA had a long-held commitment to market based governance and a small welfare state (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008). Under the Reagan administration, privatisation and ‘contracting out’ were implemented in the 1980’s. Improving the efficiency of the public service in the USA continued to be a priority of the Clinton administration, where Osborne and Gaebler’s book ‘Reinventing Government’ (1992) set out to create a set of ideas for public management that would appeal universally. Separating politics from administration and offering ‘decentralised, flexible and entrepreneurial management for the public sector within constraints of accountability, requiring managers to secure the goals set for them by politicians acting on behalf of the citizens who elect them’ (Chandler 2014, p. 238). This entrepreneurial government style can be likened to NPM, but the ideals of market based governance, long embedded in the USA, were in sharp contrast to European Governments who were transitioning from ‘a democratic socialist tradition and from a welfare state that was much more extensive than that ever experienced in the United States’ (Bozeman 2007, p. 77).

¹⁰ Outside-in pressures included the financial vulnerability of the state, the impact of demographic change, and the likely consequences of climate change.

'Reinventing Government' (1992) was influential in the National Performance Review (NPR) conducted by US Vice-President Al Gore in 1993. This review sought to reduce bureaucracy and improve efficiency in US government by adopting the following four principles in the running of government services: cutting red tape (reducing bureaucracy), putting the customer first, empowering managers to get results and cutting back to basics - contracting out – in order to produce 'better government for less'. (Hughes 2003, Hood and Peters 2004, Greener 2009, Shafritz *et al.* 2013, Chandler 2014).

Despite organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank favouring NPM during the 1980's and 1990's, studies prove that there was great variety in the degree to which it was implemented (Keating 2001, Hughes 2003, Pollit and Bouckaert 2004, Van Thiel 2011). The challenge of evaluating NPM was raised by the OECD in 2001, where it was noted that the consequences of the implementation of NPM were only learned 'by doing', and as the reforms were so new at that point (2001), it was premature to predict their eventual impact. Some analysis of the implementation of NPM identified the unintended consequences of the practical application of NPM practices. These included that disaggregation and agentification led to a weakened relationship between the state and civil society as well as an erosion of accountability and increased risk taking and that competitive tendering processes were expensive to implement and did not always produce cost savings (Hood and Peters 2004, Blaug *et al.* 2006, O'Flynn 2007).

Christensen *et al.* (2019), when examining international university governance systems observed that there has been a shift in 'the balance and blend of the European university, as a community of scholars, a representative democracy, an instrument serving the public interest or a service enterprise embedded in the competitive market'. He saw that the latter two have gained strengths, reflecting how NPM reforms have 'increased their influence in universities' (Christensen *et al.* 2019, p. 4). Examples of these changes include a move away from the academic internal decision-making systems towards a model that includes administrators and external society representatives, as well as 'a rehierarchization with more power to the top leaders, and more closed and exclusive decision-making processes' (*ibid.*). Other changes included university administrations' becoming larger and more influential than academic staff and also that universities were playing closer attention to students' needs than before, 'ranging from new teaching methods and more feedback to providing more and better services and facilities' (*ibid.*). These changes to university structures, coupled with the institutions themselves becoming more embedded in social

systems, where they are engaging with community stakeholders, collaborating with industry, fundraising via philanthropy, and creating new knowledge through research, reflects the OECD (1991) findings that the consequences of NPM reforms are ‘learned by doing’. One significant change and consequence is that there are now many non-academic influences in university life, which need to be facilitated by a professionalised administration, in order that universities can present themselves as fit-for-purpose enterprises that can compete in the market.

The paradigm of NPM shifted throughout the three decades in which it prevailed. In the 1990’s Dunleavy (2006) saw Digital Era Governance (DEG) as offering an opportunity to government to reverse some of the complexity which NPM brought to the public service through technological improvements through IT systems which ‘aimed to make more use of the newest technologies to improve the relations between the state and its citizens’ (de Vries 2010). Dunleavy proposed that DEG would reverse the ‘hollowing out’ the strong centre of the public sector which had occurred during the disaggregation phase and provide a more ‘joined up’ government (Dunleavy et al. 2006). Others argued that DEG efforts to reconnect citizens with government were just another version or ‘wave’ of NPM (de Vries 2010, Curry 2014). Twenty two years after Hood’s influential ‘A Public Management for All Seasons?’ (Hood 1991) the OECD acknowledged that (NPM) ‘reforms produced some unexpected results’ (O’Flynn 2007 p. 357). In the same OECD report, it was acknowledged that NPM failed ‘to understand that public management arrangements not only deliver public services, but also enshrine deeper governance values’ (O’Flynn, 2007 p. 358). Economically, NPM did not deliver governments that worked better and cost less, as government expenditure as a per cent of GDP in the UK rose from 33.5% in 1965 to 49.7% in 2004; from 33.1% to 46.8% in the EU and from 25.6% to 31.3% in the USA (Chatson 2011, p. 18). In 2013, government spending as a per cent of GDP in Ireland was 39.7%, 44.9% in the UK and 38.8% in the USA (OECD 2013).

As part of the NPM ‘rolling back’ of the state, financial markets were deregulated and there were large flows of capital between countries. Many governments were influenced by strong political pressure to maintain economic growth, resulting in ‘light touch’ regulation which resulted in over-aggressive financial markets. This contributed to vulnerability of the contemporary global financial system. The international banking crisis of 2007 precipitated an economic and fiscal crisis which created a global recession

in 2008. What followed was long period of austerity in many OECD countries including Ireland. This austerity involved ‘major reductions in public sector spending accompanied by a massive restructuring of the nature and quantity of public services being delivered...senior managers in public organisations faced the ‘mission impossible’ task of responding to pressure from politicians to sustain services delivery but with much reduced resources’ (Chatson 2011, p. 61). Almost immediately, a focus was placed on a reduction in number of ‘quangos’ and the assimilation of smaller agencies. Governments, through public service agencies placed an even greater emphasis on measurement, monitoring, accountability, value for money, outputs, contracts as coordinating devices, efficiency, reductions in staffing, short term employment contracts and metrics. Interestingly, some of the ‘Marketiser’ countries including Australia, Canada and New Zealand were largely unaffected by this recession.

The economic contraction and resulting recession demonstrated the vulnerability of the contemporary global financial system. The neoliberal and NPM agenda which had taken hold ‘was now being called into question by civil society and national governments’ (Osborne 2010). The OECD ‘Government at a Glance 2011’ report attributed failures in public sector regulation and supervision as being the key causes of the financial crisis with public administration being inextricably linked to the overall governance of national economies (OECD 2011). By the mid-2000’s, NPM ‘increasingly met with criticism of its limitations and damages’ (Denhardt and Denhardt 2015, p. 665). These included: ‘the success of NPM was based on the administrative capacity of government; that NPM did not pay sufficient attention to politics, law and culture; that it did not deliver the efficiencies expected of it; that there was a disconnect between theory and practice; that legislative and judicial constraints were overlooked and that NPM eroded accountability to citizens and civil society’ (ibid).

In recent years, neoliberalism has been credited as being ‘the ideology at the root of all our problems’ (Monbiot 2016). Thorsen and Lie observe that ‘an initial mystery facing anyone who wants to study neoliberal ideology in more detail is that there does not seem to be anyone who has written about neoliberalism from a sympathetic or even neutral point of view. ‘Practically everyone who writes about neoliberalism does so as part of a critique of neoliberal ideology’(Thorsen and Lie 2006, p. 2). In that vein, neoliberalism is blamed for ‘the momentous shift towards greater social inequality and the restoration of power to the upper class’ (Harvey 2005) and for government taking ‘an active role in

supporting business needs while the forces of the market are reserved for workers and the marginalised' (Mercille 2014, p. 11).

The weaknesses of government and its inability to cope with the resulting political, social and economic consequences of market failure led to a discourse which suggested the need to move away from the NPM, neoliberal market based model, towards a better, more democratic approach to public governance which restored trust in government and in political leadership (OECD 2011, Curry 2014).

Part 3 Beyond NPM - Emerging competing interpretations of public management

The keynote speech at the June 2009 meeting of the OECD Working Party of Senior Budget Officials explored the state of NPM from the perspective of current political theory. The keynote speech discussed whether Dunleavy's assertion that NPM was 'dead' (Dunleavy *et al.* 2006) was the case (de Vries 2010). It analysed Dunleavy's Digital Era Governance (DEG) theory and proposed that DEG was an aspect of NPM which on its own, was rigid, and that other 'avenues of thought' were emerging in public management theory as emerging competing approaches. Sometimes referred to as post-NPM, these emerging approaches sought to connect public services with each other horizontally and vertically to central government, reversing the disaggregation and agentification of NPM. Post NPM approaches sought to 'bring about stronger integration between the state and the private sector and civil society and increase central government capacity' (Christensen 2012, p. 2). Reiter and Klenk (2019) describe post-NPM as a 'shopping basket of selected reform elements...which pay attention to a holistic management style, boundary-spanning skills and joined-up targets and aim to improve the steering capacity of the centre' (Reiter and Klenk 2019, p. 4). In contrast to NPM, the role of the civil servant is no longer a business manager and instead is envisaged as a 'network manager and partnership leader' (*ibid.*). Post-NPM approaches sought to enhance the political accountability of public services to service users who were considered as citizens rather than clients or customers (Reiter and Klenk 2018).

Imagined as 'layers' of change which have supplemented NPM these emerging approaches include the Neo Weberian State, New Public Governance, Network Governance and Public Value Management. Each of these approaches are explored below.

Pollit and Bouckaert (2011) identified that the Neo Weberian State approach was a summary description of what they observed as common denominators in the reform patterns and records of six continental European states¹¹ as compared with the core NPM countries¹². The Neo Weberian State was a modernised version of traditional bureaucracy which sought to be more professional, efficient and, importantly, citizen friendly. While NPM reforms were implemented through market type mechanisms, the Neo Weberian State was implemented through hierarchies and reflected a more positive and confident attitude towards government. Table 3 compares traditional Weberian elements with Neo-Weberian elements and demonstrates the change in emphasis between the two approaches.

Dimension	Weberian	Neo-Weberian
Politico-administrative context	A reaffirmation of the state as the provider of solutions to 21 st Century issues such as globalisation, technological change, shifting demographics and environmental threat	Shift to an externally orientated bureaucracy towards meeting citizens needs and wishes by creating a professional culture of quality and service in the public sector
Role of politicians	A reaffirmation of the role of elected representatives with a mandate to govern as the legitimating element within the state apparatus	Supplement the role of representative democracy with mechanisms for consultation with citizens which enable their views to be represented in policy making
Rational model of human behaviour	Reaffirmation of the role of rational / legal authority	Shift towards a greater achievement of results rather than procedural correctness which could include an element of performance management
Focus of civil service capability development	Preservation of the idea of a public service with a distinctive service and culture	Professionalisation of the public service whereby in addition to being an expert relevant to their work, the bureaucrat is also a professional manager, oriented to meeting the needs of the citizen
Approach to planning	Focus on short-term results rather than long term planning	Focus on achievement of results by integrating the lines of accountability to become more responsive to citizens and society

Table 3 - The change in emphasis from Weberian to the Neo-Weberian State (adapted from Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 118, 119)

Neo Weberian State was not ‘Weber plus NPM’ as it did not follow the disaggregation + competition + incentivisation = NPM formula. Instead, it was seen as a defensive strategy by Germany, France, the Netherlands and Sweden to try to protect the ‘European social

¹¹ Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Italy

¹² Pollit and Bouckaert (2011) referred to UK, Australia, New Zealand and the USA as the core NPM group

model'...from global neoliberalism' (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 120). Neo Weberian State was limited to some of the 'Maintainer'¹³ and 'Moderniser'¹⁴ countries (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). 'Trust us, we can modernise and become both efficient and citizen friendly' was the key message of Neo Weberian State (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 120). A shift towards the achievement of results in the Neo Weberian State approach brought strategic planning into the frame by integrating the lines of accountability at the core of the bureaucratic, hierarchical, principal-agent system to become more competent and responsive to citizens and society (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

New Public Governance approaches emphasise 'the steering of society through networks and partnerships between state organisations and 'private' organisations... as the key to providing effective and sustainable solutions to public problems' (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 149). New Public Governance had its origins in Network Theory, which emerged in response to the contracting out, agentification and privatisation which occurred under NPM. New Public Governance sought to 'handle the many 'cross-cutting issues' which go beyond the jurisdiction of any one department' (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 59). While NPM was implemented through market-type mechanisms and Neo Weberian State was implemented through hierarchies, New Public Governance reforms were negotiated through networks, which were seen as being a solution to meet the challenges of managing the multi-level system of governance which emerged during the era of NPM. New Public Governance placed the politico-administrative system as part of a network where it 'share(d) power with other social actors in a range of informal ways' (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 124) rather than the arms-length approach of principal-agent theory of NPM. Strategic planning under New Public Governance emphasised the importance of the engagement with stakeholders including third-sector organisations and citizens to help to guide strategy in order to deliver public services of public value (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, Bryson *et al.* 2014, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

Network Governance

Network Governance was seen as a way of reversing some of the hollowing-out that had occurred under NPM, by tapping in to the knowledge that voluntary and non-governmental actors on how policy really worked 'on the ground'. It enabled federal government to 'tap in to community based knowledge' (Phillips 2006, p. 13) and at the

¹³ Maintainer countries – Germany, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Japan, Turkey

¹⁴ Moderniser countries – Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden

same time, integrate lines of accountability, making non-governmental actors accountable back to the centre through enhanced collaboration and shared goals.

By developing ‘a framework upon which these complex relations can be understood on a policy and public administration context’ (Curry 2014), Network Governance focused on stakeholder engagement in policy development and delivery of public services as a way of ‘fine tuning’ existing contracting out practices to ensure that services are evaluated beyond financial criteria and towards the public good. In contrast to NPM, where public managers were encouraged by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) to think like owners and to ask ‘if this were my money, would I spend it this way?’ (Denhardt and Denhardt 2015, p. 668) the emerging, competing ‘post-NPM’ models of Network Governance and Public Value Management saw the need for a ‘vastly increased enhanced capacity for citizen involvement in the policy process’ (ibid).

A version of Network Governance was implemented in Canada as a ‘shared governance’ approach (Phillips 2006, p. 3). The Government led ‘Service Canada’ project was part of the ‘Government On-Line and Modernising Services for Canadians’ initiative. This project aimed to provide a single point of access for Canadians for all federal programmes and services through an online portal and a single telephone number. Government agencies joined up their services with the public service infrastructure using networked rather than hierarchical governance processes. The implementation of this programme led to large-scale public sector reorganisation, which by 2009, had over 22,000 staff conducting nearly 1 million transactions daily. A study of the Service Canada project found that it improved the ability of government to ‘design an integrated set of service strategies for specific groups of people, such as the elderly or youth, and thus provides citizens with greater access to government services’ (Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011, p. 19). A critique of Service Canada observed that the approach was not as networked as it may have appeared, due to particular challenges associated with the ‘Canadian way’ of governing that limited the power that federal government would share with other non-governmental actors (Phillips 2006). These challenges included an ‘all-consuming concern with accountability’ (ibid, p. 4) where rather than an approach that would operate through networks based on trust, that the NPM-type contractual principal-agent basis of the relationship was reinforced. Also, Service Canada did not enable non-governmental actors to become governing partners, rather the view was that their role was to provide

services and consequently, the policy capacity required to participate in governance rather than purely to implement it, was not built (ibid).

‘Glocalisation’ theory builds on the Network Governance approach, where public management connects government systems to each other, international bodies, and other non-governmental actors as the interconnectedness of the increasingly globalised world impacts on public administration and the policy making process. With a 33% increase in global trade as a percentage of GDP since 1995, and with 49% of world trade in goods and services taking place in global value chains (WTO 2015), governments are now required to balance local, regional, national and supranational needs in developing economic policies.

The Network Governance approach reflects the shift away from the legal-rational model of public administration towards a model of collective decision making for the common good. Some of the literature points to the potential of Network Governance ‘to achieve more effective policy at reduced cost’ (Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011, p. 23) as long as networks are ‘solution focused, creative compromises can be sought, package deals can be made, wins and losses can be exchanged’ (Noordegraaf 2015, p. 171). Network Governance saw public managers as ‘network managers and partnership leaders instead of being the pure business managers suggested by the NPM model’ (Reiter and Klenk 2019, p. 4). Aiming to operate public services through processes of collaboration and shared leadership, Network Governance saw the role of government as serving rather than steering, where public servants built coalitions through networks to meet ‘mutually agreed upon needs’ (Denhardt 2000, p. 554). Critics of the Network Governance approach raised some issues regarding whether politicians in Westminster systems would actually give up their primacy (Rhodes and Wanna 2007). Others highlighted the practical difficulties of regulating, enforcing and managing the compliance of a multiplicity of stakeholders and networks that are present in a global politico-administrative system to be responsible, accountable and trustworthy in delivering effective governance (Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). However, a Network Governance approach is seen as being a beneficial public management approach to public service provision, where trust-based collaboration, partnerships and mutual learning are outcomes which can emerge, thus ‘strengthening the responsiveness and democratic accountability of public sector organisations (Reiter and Klenk 2018, p. 2).

Building on the potential of the Network Governance approach and the acknowledgement that public management goes beyond efficiency and outputs, Public Value Management emerged as an holistic approach which offered a solution to ‘the need to give more recognition and legitimacy to a broad range of stakeholders’ and to offer ‘a new paradigm and a different narrative of reform. Its strength lies in its redefinition of how to meet the challenges of efficiency, accountability, and equity and...rests on a fuller and rounder vision of humanity than does either public administration or NPM’ (Stoker 2006a, p. 47, 56).

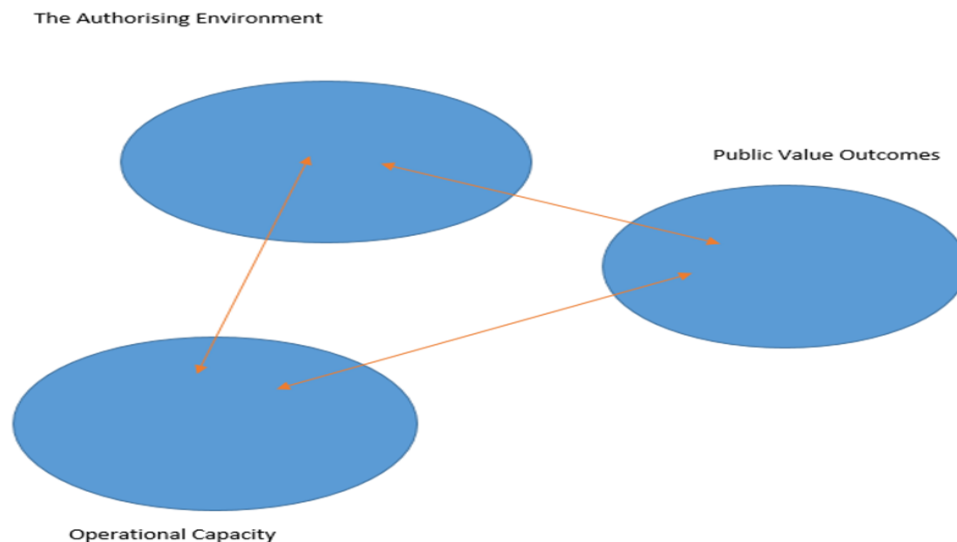
Public Value

Public Value Management emerged from the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative established in the early 1980’s at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, USA. It sought to develop a theory to use in the teaching of executives in public sector management and leadership and ‘to build a strategic management framework for public sector managers’ (Moore and Khagram 2004). The Public Value Management approach was first articulated in Mark Moore’s *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Moore 1995). Kelly *et al* (2002) described the concept of public value as the contribution made by the public sector to the economic, social and environmental well-being of a society or nation. Public Value has been described as ‘a comprehensive approach to thinking about public management and about continuous improvement in public services’ (Williams and Shearer 2011, p. 5).

Moore’s approach focused on three key elements: the task / value environment, the authorising environment, and the operational context. It emphasised the alignment of three distinct processes that are necessary for the creation of public value. The first of these is defining the public value outcomes that the organisation wishes to produce. The second is to create the authorising environment necessary to achieve required support to take action. The third is to build the operational capacity to achieve the desired outcomes by identifying the resources that the organisation needs to develop to deliver the desired results.

Figure 1 - The strategic triangle of public value

(Benington and Moore 2011, p.5)



The strategic triangle of public value management is illustrated in Figure 1. This approach sought to focus public service managers on three key issues before they chose a course of action for their organisation:

1. The task – was it aimed at creating something of public value?
2. The authorising environment – would this task be legitimate enough to gain the support of citizens, political agents and other stakeholders?
3. The operational capabilities – what resources would the organisation require in order to deliver the results?

The challenge for the public manager was to maximise the degree of alignment between the three elements and ‘to identify and press for the most valuable purpose drawing on a ‘value-seeking imagination’ (Alford and O’Flynn 2009, p. 174). In his book ‘Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government’ (1995), Moore does not define Public Value Management as one fixed concept, rather the strategic triangle and the relationships between the three dimensions are explored through case studies of public management in governmental organisations in the USA.

Seen as ‘a new narrative for Network Governance’ (Stoker 2006b), the intellectual roots of Public Value lie more in applied public management than in ‘political science or economics’ (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 68). It goes beyond NPM ‘command and control market models’ (Williams and Shearer 2011, p. 8). It seeks to mobilise public managers

to innovate and create entrepreneurial public services, using the strategic triangle as well as corporate strategic planning tools including the Resource Based View and Value Chain Analysis to develop and mobilise the distinctive capabilities of public services to widen their competence and increase their public value (Williams and Shearer 2011, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

Moore differentiated between the public and private manager. He noted that for many public managers, the authorising environment was the only source of funds and therefore they were drawn into a political role that private sector managers were not. Commentators have noted that Public Value Management is unique because it brings politics into public management beyond the role of initial input, setting performance standards, KPI's and focusing on outputs. While traditional public administration and NPM 'seek to confine politics to the role of initial input and final judge...in public value, politics breathes life into the process'(Stoker 2006b). It is said to provide a framework that balances democracy and efficiency (Stoker 2006a, Alford and O'Flynn 2009). Moore emphasises the public manager is the 'strategic decision maker who sits at the intersection between the three imperatives¹⁵ and is accountable upwards through institutional and political structures, downwards through management and operational lines, and outwards to the public' (Williams and Shearer 2011). The engagement of public managers with citizens and politicians emphasises the differences in accountability that managers of public bodies have to their counterparts in the private sector. Public Value Management is offered as a mechanism for managers to move beyond NPM towards a more collectivist approach to strategic planning, built through a deliberative process of consultation, engagement and accountability to and with citizens.

Further to this, Williams and Shearer (2011) presented Moore's Public Value Management as a series of propositions which were that:

- Public Value aims should be understood, articulated and reviewed by public service organisations and those that work in them on a continual basis
- Management practices and strategic planning should aim to generate and demonstrate public value
- Monetary outputs should not be used as examples of public value benefit

¹⁵ The authorising environment, operational capability and the public value outcomes

- The authorisation of public value aims by political and other stakeholders in a consultative process is essential
- That the opportunity cost of redeploying resources from one service to another and the capacity of a public service organisation to deliver public value outcomes must be considered prior to the pursuit of any objectives
- Managers should apply flexible and innovative thinking and work towards the alignment of the three points of the strategic triangle to create public value and measure performance on that basis
- ‘Within these constraints, a pragmatic, innovative, flexible and non-dogmatic approach to delivering public value should be adopted’ (Williams and Shearer 2011, p. 7)

Public Value has been described as a framework by Moore (1995), a concept and a performance measurement framework by Kelly et al (2002), a story by Smith (2004), a narrative by Stoker (2006a), a normative theory by Barzelay (2007) and a paradigm by Alford and O’Flynn (2009).

The resourcing of strategy by putting in place the operational capacity that is required to deliver the plan is a key characteristic of Public Value Management. Public value is said to be created when citizens understand the value of the opportunity cost of providing one service over another; when stakeholder support is secured democratically through a wide authorising environment; and when the authorising environment agrees what services are prioritised over others and where resources are best used (Moore 1995, Kelly *et al.* 2002, Talbot 2009, Talbot 2010, Benington and Moore 2011, Moore 2013, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

The broadening of the authorising environment to develop a network of key stakeholders (including citizens, politicians and government officials) to work together and collectively determine through deliberation what outcomes are of public value is another key characteristic of Public Value Management. Where the rational model of human behaviour associated with traditional public administration is one of rational-legal authority ‘people need rules to follow’ and NPM is individualistic, ‘economic man’, Public Value Management takes a cooperative perspective where collective decision making takes place beyond narrow self-interest. ‘The bonds of partnership enable things to get done; the key is a learning exchange and mutual search for solutions between public

officials and stakeholders' (Stoker 2006b, p. 52). NPM efficiency, effectiveness and responsibility is supplemented by democratic values which are subject to change and involve a flow where the public manager is checking 'on a continuous basis that activities fit a purpose valued by the public' (Stoker 2006b, p. 52). Accountability is rounded with public managers and organisations facing citizens and politicians taking 'an adaptable and learning-based approach to the challenge of public service delivery' (Stoker 2006b), p. 49. Evaluation is a key component of Public Value Management where the 'ideal manager is engaged in a process of continuous evaluation and learning with an emphasis on challenge and change' (Stoker 2006b, p. 49). Denhardt and Denhardt (2011) observed that NPM 'oversimplified accountability' and saw the post-NPM models as acknowledging both the responsibility and accountability of public servants. In rejecting the three key aspects of NPM accountability of: performance management in place of profit; public agencies operating as businesses accountable to customers; and an emphasis on privatisation in order to be cost effective, they saw the post-NPM models as offering a more holistic vision of public services which sought to serve the public, rather than steer public services to be run as businesses. Instead of NPM-type accountability, the post-NPM models acknowledged that public service is a 'calling', which requires expertise (ibid, p. 134). This is in keeping with Moore's assertion that public value is a theory of human agency and those interested in public value are 'looking around society and constantly assessing both their own situation, as well as that of others to see whether there is anything they can imagine doing that would improve conditions for them and others' (Moore 2019).

Rhodes *et al* challenge Moore's vision of the public manager as 'Platonic guardians deciding the public interest' (Rhodes and Wanna 2007, p. 406) who can engineer consensus amongst a wide range of stakeholders including the political system. They put forward Public Value Management as an American ideal-model that places politics as part of the authorising environment as opposed to politicians being 'significant initiators of policy choices' (Rhodes and Wanna 2007, p. 414). They see this approach as being problematic for Westminster systems where there is no place for public managers acting as 'bureaucratic entrepreneurs' in public service, stating that 'disloyalty (to the Minister) is simply not tolerated...one person's initiative is another's disloyal act' (ibid). Ultimately, they state that that PVM 'misdiagnoses the function of management in the modern public sector and invents roles for public servants for which they are not appointed, are ill-suited, inadequately prepared and, more importantly, are not protected

if things go wrong' (Rhodes and Wanna 2007, p. 406). So rather than the alternate view that Public Value Management allows 'politics breathes life into the process' beyond the inputs and outputs of NPM, Rhodes *et al* argue that 'ultimately the politicians remain responsible and accountable for whatever outcomes are attempted' (Rhodes and Wanna 2007, p. 419).

Table 4 compares the dimensions of traditional public administration with NPM and Public Value Management to highlight the key characteristics of the three approaches.

Dimensions	Traditional Public Administration	New Public Management	Public Value Management
Politico-administrative context	Welfare state	'New Right', globalisation	Network governance, a reversal of the 'hollowed out' state, joined-up government with a high level of responsiveness to citizens
Primary theoretical and epistemological foundations	Political theory, scientific management.	Neo-liberal ideology	Democratic theory, belief in citizens knowing what constitutes public value
Role of politicians	Elected representatives of the people	Elected 'Governors' at arm's length from public managers	Determining policy objectives through consultation and deliberation informed by evidence
Role of citizens	Voters, clients, constituents	Customers	Overseers of government, users of services, funders, problem-solvers, co-creators of what is valued by and good for the public
Decision Making	Traditional policy making 'rowing'	Empowered public managers. 'steering'	Public Manager acting as convenor, catalyst and collaborator, sometimes steering, rowing, partnering
Finance	Incremental budget making	'Do more with less'	Consideration of the opportunity cost of redeploying resources
Organisational character	Departmental ('silos or stovepipes')	Agentification, disaggregation - arm's length from government	Public services working closely with stakeholders to deliver outputs that are of public value
Organisational issue	Too much red tape	Entrepreneurial governance, competition, using contracts and public tendering	Consultation with stakeholders to determine which ethos is appropriate to each public service - user satisfaction is critical
Civil service expertise	Drafting legislation, bureaucracy	Managing resources, accountability	Making sure that what is valued by the public is put in place
Civil service values	Honesty and fairness	Efficiency, effectiveness, responsibility	Efficiency, effectiveness, responsibility alongside democratic values
Focus of civil service capability development	Professional development of individuals	A shift in management focus to output	Manager as flexible and innovative thinker
Engaging with the public	Public servants accountable to politicians	Public services delivered in a market-driven environment	Emphasis on responding to citizen and service user preferences
Rational model of human behaviour	Rational – legal authority	Individualistic, "economic man"	Collective decision making, belief in public spiritedness beyond narrow self interest
Interaction between politicians and senior public managers	Principal-Agent theory, bureaucratic and political implementation oversight	Principal agent theory - implementation by managers with autonomy	Rounded accountability, organisations face citizens and politicians
Approach to planning	Focus on short-term results	Strategic planning determines objectives	Working towards the alignment of the three points of the strategic triangle to create public value and performance measured on this basis

Table 4 – A comparison of the dimensions of traditional public administration with NPM and Public Value Management to highlight the key characteristics of the three approaches.

Adapted from Hood 1991, Kelly et al. 2002, Blaug et al. 2006, Dunleavy et al. 2006, Stoker 2006a, Bozeman 2007, Pollit 2003 in Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008, OECD 2008, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, Christensen 2012, MacCarthaigh 2012b, Bryson et al. 2014, Joyce 2015, Noordegraaf 2015)

Table 4 illustrates the different manifestations of public management in each ‘era’ and contrasts the differences between traditional public administration, NPM and Public Value Management. It illustrates how a public value approach to public management represents a move away from principal-agent theory towards a more collective decision making approach where organisations face citizens as well as politicians, working towards the alignment of the three points of the strategic triangle to create outcomes that are of public value and performance is measured on this basis. Public Value Management focuses not just on policy design but on key aspects of policy delivery. It consciously identifies the role of stakeholders as part of the authorising environment and it clearly focuses on the role of the public manager, an issue that is central to understanding strategic planning in a HE context. Despite its critics, Public Value Management has ‘emerged as an increasing powerful idea in both academic and policy circles internationally (especially in the UK, Europe, the USA, Australia and New Zealand and more recently in South and Sub Saharan Africa)’ (Benington and Moore 2011, p. 2). The inclusion of the core NPM states in this grouping indicates that the Public Value Management framework has some potential to provide an alternative, more holistic approach to public management as well as to planning within administrative systems. This research will test whether there is any evidence of the presence of Public Value Management in Irish universities approaches to strategic planning and whether there may be a case for adopting such an approach in the future.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the detail of how the theory, themes and characteristics of the main public sector management approaches have evolved within the context of economic and social development over the past half century. It sought to provide an account of the key elements of each concept, the democratic theory and groundings of each concept and the cultural element of each politico-administrative context, which resulted in different manifestations of public management over time.

Part 1 explored the development of traditional public administration, its key dimensions and its place in public management in OECD countries from post WW2 to the 1970’s. The literature review revealed that the traditional public administration model provided a reliable and effective system for public administration, particularly during the Welfare State era. However, the economic crises of the 1970’s challenged the ability of public administration to be able to respond quickly to the many economic, social and political

challenges of the time. The advent of technological advances in computing and telecommunications as well as globalisation and internationalisation were driving forces for public sector restructuring. Bureaucracy, a key element of traditional public administration, became a derogatory term used to describe a public service, which was inefficient and ineffective. In response to this, governments chose to move away from the Keynesian economic model towards a neoclassical approach where they worked towards minimising their involvement in the provision of public services. This neoclassical approach embraced a neoliberal ideology, which was a market-based approach to the management of public services. The key characteristics of neoliberalism, its underpinnings in liberalism, and its influence on the politico-administrative system of the 1970's were detailed. The corresponding models of Public Choice Theory and the associated practice of managerialism and their place in steering governance and management towards a more 'neoliberal' agenda to drive a more efficient, effective and accountable public sector were then examined. The four international administrative 'megatrends' in the 1980's which led to the emergence of NPM as a set of principles for redesigning public and non-profit organisations were discussed. Drawing heavily on Public Choice Theory, NPM enabled the adoption of modern business practices into the public sector across three main themes, which were disaggregation, competition and incentivization.

Part 2 detailed the key dimensions of NPM and describes the patterns of NPM reform which occurred across OECD countries in the 1980's and 1990's. Pollit and Bouckaert's (2004) typology of 'trajectories of reform' which distinguished four types of trajectories associated with the implementation of NPM were discussed. Studies in the early 2000's by the OECD reflected that reforms associated with NPM did not always result in 'a better government that cost less' and in some cases produced a government that cost more and was less accountable to its citizens. This was largely due to the fragmentation, agentification, privatisation, and competition introduced by NPM in the delivery of public services, which led to an erosion of accountability, increased risk taking and public services which did not always operate in the public interest. The weaknesses identified after two decades of the implementation of NPM led to a discourse which suggested a move away from a market-based model towards a broader concept which placed an emphasis on deeper governance values. The need for a better, more democratic approach to public governance which restored trust in government and in political leadership was identified.

Part 3 explored a number of emerging competing approaches including the Neo-Weberian State, New Public Governance, Network Governance and Public Value Management. These approaches reflected the diverse needs of different states to meet the increasingly complex demands of their citizens. The ‘layering’ of these approaches by some states over the existing public management models in order to deliver more responsive and competent public services was discussed. By the early 2000’s Network Governance emerged as a mechanism for public governance. A key characteristic of this approach was stakeholder engagement in policy development and delivery of public services as a way of ‘fine tuning’ existing contracting out practices to ensure that services are evaluated beyond financial criteria and towards the public good (Curry 2014). Mark Moore’s Public Value Management approach (Moore 1995) was developed specifically for public managers to deliver outputs which are of public value and provide citizen satisfaction. Public Value Management moved away from the rational-legal authority towards a more rounded accountability to citizens offering services that are of public value. Importantly for this study, Moore’s theory proposed a possible alternative approach to strategic planning and policy design in the public sector that included citizen engagement as a key element.

The findings of this chapter in relation to the key characteristics of each public management approach as summarised in Table 4 on p. 42 are important for this study. They will help to analyse the primary data to identify whether there is a recognisable footprint of neoliberal approaches to policy and planning in Irish HE.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review: The evolution of strategic planning within the public sector

Introduction

Chapter 3 will examine the evolution of corporate strategic planning and the models associated with the neoclassical economics of the mid-20th century and the degree to which different models of public administration interpreted and operationalised strategic planning. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1 examines the evolution of corporate strategic planning and the strategic management and performance management models associated with the neoclassical economics of the mid-20th century. This will draw out the characteristics of neoliberal approaches to strategic planning. Part 2 will look at how traditional public administration, NPM and emerging competing approaches interpreted strategic planning. It will also look at the public and private sector management dichotomy and will seek to provide an understanding of the mechanisms of idea-transfer from one sector to another and how strategic planning has evolved within public organisations. In particular, it will look at the NPM typology of approaches to strategic planning that captured the characteristics of neoliberal approaches to policy prioritisation and strategy development and how they have influenced public sector planning models. The chapter concludes by presenting the key themes associated with traditional public administration, NPM, Network Governance and Public Value Management approaches to strategic planning.

There is a very substantial literature on the theory and practice of planning for success through the use of strategy, strategic management and change management. ‘From Sun Tsu to Clausewitz, and Alfred Chandler to Michael Porter, this literature has been primarily about two domains: war (how to defeat the enemy), and business (how to achieve and sustain competitive advantage)’ (Mulgan 2008, p. 170). This literature offers many insights for government officials, public servants and the private sector. Mulgan observes that there are some common principles and factors that are common to all fields such as ‘the behaviours and mentalities of competitors; the critical resources; the morale and motivation of real and metaphorical foot soldiers; perceptions as well as realities; the sequencing of actions and which ones are additive or multiplicative’ (Mulgan 2008, p. 170). However, despite these similarities, strategy in public organisations is about much more than achieving competitive advantage and many authors debate the use of corporate planning techniques in the public sector (Mintzberg 1996, Bozeman 2007, Mulgan 2008,

Talbot 2009, Benington and Moore 2011, Chatson 2011, Lynch 2012). Central to this debate is the argument that any management technique applied to public services should seek in ‘each separate case, a match of function, form and culture’ (Pollit 1995, p. 234) rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Part 1 – The evolution of corporate strategic planning

The literature on strategy and its influence on the business world can be traced back as far as Socrates, who observed that generals and businessmen both planned the use of their resources to meet objectives (Whittington 1993, Hughes 2003). Much of the literature on the origin of strategic planning mentions how military imagery has influenced contemporary strategy theories and analysis (Whittington 1993, Mintzberg 1994, Hughes 2003, Segal-Horn 2003, Mulgan 2008, Johnson *et al.* 2011). Strategic management in the corporate world is a component of organisational behaviour and management practice, the roots of which were laid by Taylor, Weber and Fayol in the 19th Century. Their theories were the cornerstone of much of the management practice in the 20th Century where the role of managers was seen (and continues to be seen) as planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling.

The rise in the use of the term ‘strategy’ in relation to business management occurred after World War 2 (Ghemawat 2002, Hughes 2003, Segal-Horn 2004, Joyce 2015), with private sector strategy originating in the 1940’s and 50’s influenced by industrial organisation economics, and success during World War 2 with planning. The organisational and logistical challenges which were overcome during wartime ‘led to many innovations in management science...and paved the way for the use of quantitative analysis in formal strategic planning’ (Ghemawat 2002, p. 39). ‘Management’ as a discipline, (as separate from economic theory or political theory) was established in the 1950’s. Influential work included Peter Drucker’s ‘Concept of the Corporation’ (1946) which advocated management by objectives, with managers aiming for long term goals by setting a series of short term ones (Hindle 2008) and the prediction that strategic management would be commonplace in the future of business management (Joyce and Drumaux 2014).

While the ‘Golden Age’ of public administration was taking place, case driven research on ‘business policy’ undertaken and taught by the Harvard Business School in the 1950’s saw the emergence of strategic planning as part of a general management tradition

developed for use by executives managing hierarchies in diversified firms in the USA (Allison 1980). Aspects of business policy developed between the 1950's and the end of the 1970's included organisational design, organisational behaviour, Human Resource Management, leadership, and strategy in order to enhance organisational performance. (Sanchez and Heene 1997, Johanson 2009). Early thinking around business strategy was concerned with identifying areas within the firm for growth and the allocation of resources to those areas and conversely, identifying areas from which resources should be withdrawn (Allison 1980, Ghemawat 2002, Tokuda 2005). This is reflected in Alfred Chandler's definition of strategy which is 'the determination of the long-run goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals' (Chandler, 1963 cited in Johnson *et al.* 2011, p. 4). Chandler was a key figure in the classical school of strategic planning, which the literature review revealed is the original model that brought strategy to the corporate world.

The Classical Design School of Strategic Planning 1960's – 1970's

Together, Alfred Chandler (1962) a business historian, Igor Ansoff (1965) a management theorist, and Alfred Sloan, (1963) a businessman who founded the US car firm General Motors, all of the Harvard Business School, developed the classical 'design school' of strategic planning.

Sloan, as President of General Motors (GM), created a new organisational form of corporation in the 1940's known as multi-business and multidivisional form or 'M-Form' for short. M-Form organisations were re-structured from bureaucratic, centralised systems to a new federated structure of divisions, each with its own responsibilities. Managers in the M-Form system were responsible for deciding on the company's strategy, designing the structure of the company and selecting the control systems (Crainer 1998). It was held that this organisational structure enabled the 'visible hand' of professional managers to tame Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' of the markets as 'by consciously using formal planning, a company could exert some positive control over market forces' (Ghemawat 2002, p. 39). Chandler studied the M-Form organisations and together with Ansoff created the classical approach to strategy. This model, also known as the 'planning' or 'design school' approach set out to coordinate planning as 'deliberate and rational, directed towards profit-maximisation, and very much the domain of top management' (Segal-Horn 2004, p. 134). Using the dictum 'strategy determines structure' it took a 'top-down' linear approach to strategic planning and focused on the

development of long-term goals and objectives by top managers who then delegated responsibility to middle managers to allocate resources and take action to implement strategy (Chandler 1962, Whittington 1993).

The classical model used ‘a logical process of analysis and evaluation...emphasising the use of tools and concepts that encourage such objective analysis’ (Johnson *et al.* 2011, p.27). Senior managers analysed the ‘mission’ – which was the purpose of the organisation, undertook an environmental scan to determine the organisation’s distinctive competences and strategic capabilities, and formulated strategies on that basis. In order to make sense of the macro-environment, pre-planning tools such as PESTLE (Aguilar 1967) were used. Aguilar’s PESTLE analysis categorised environmental influences into six main types: political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental. It scanned those influences in order to determine how the external environment could influence the possible success or failure of formulated strategies (Johnson *et al.* 2011). A key outcome of the PESTLE analysis was the identification of key drivers for change, which varied by industry or sector.

The results of the PESTLE analysis then informed the SWOT analysis (Andrews 1971). The SWOT analysis was set at meso (organisation) level and assessed the corporation’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in order to identify the internal competences which could be used to respond strategically to the environment, ideally minimising identified threats and maximising opportunities. Following the SWOT analysis, top management formulated strategic goals and assigned responsibility to middle management for the implementation of them. At the implementation (micro) level, middle management assigned resources and actions to achieve the goals, and had responsibility for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress.

To summarise, the key characteristics of the classical model were that strategy was formulated in a rational, deliberate, linear process, focused on profitability, was controlled by the chief executive officer, and was implemented by middle management (Mintzberg and Waters 1985, Whittington 1993). This model dominated strategic planning practice up to and including the 1970’s, largely due to the lack of other models. However, some argued that the classical model was too simplistic and sterile and that organisations were unable to adapt at the pace of the external environment. Tools such as SWOT had limitations, such as it was only as strong as the capacity of management who created it to objectively identify an organisations strengths and weaknesses, leading to limited ‘insight or clarity about the required action’ (Morley and Heraty 2000, p. 93).

In response to this, the 1960's and 1970's saw the rise in management consultancy firms including the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and McKinsey, who developed customised corporate strategic planning models for portfolio analysis and planning, based on the classical approach. The consultancy firms held that they could assist organisations to take a more objective view, identifying blind spots and overcoming internal politics to help to formulate better strategies. BCG developed concepts such as the 'learning curve' and 'market share', which are now used in everyday business vernacular (Crainer 1998, Segal-Horn 2004). Their most famous model was the Boston 'Growth Share' matrix, which gained popularity in the 1960's. This matrix introduced the concept of 'portfolio analysis' for corporations which analysed the business divisions as areas of investment and plotted them into a matrix. This matrix focused on growth and profitability, which was in common with the classical school profit-oriented goal of strategy. It also introduced the concept of 'positioning' an organisation in the market and appealed to the corporate world of 1960's, which enjoyed a relatively stable political and economic environment (Whittington 1993, Mintzberg 1994, Ghemawat 2002, Mintzberg *et al.* 2009).

The political, social and economic turbulence of the 1970's raised questions as to the sustainability of the classical approach to strategy, as the emphasis on long range planning using mainly quantitative analysis techniques became inadequate and inappropriate. Analysis by Ansoff on the implementation of corporate strategic planning suggested that it had become overly complex, demanded too much data, relied too heavily on the past to predict the future, and was ineffective in managing change. He observed that strategic planning was encountering three problems - namely 'paralysis by analysis' where plans were produced but with little results; organisations pursuing the same success factors; and organisational resistance when middle management support was withdrawn from the plan resulting in it being rejected (Crainer 1998, Hughes 2003, Segal-Horn 2004).

In the late 1970's corporate business policy and its associated neoliberal economic model began to influence public management with models such as Public Choice Theory, Managerialism and NPM emerging as solutions to downsize big government. Coupled with the ascendancy of the 'New Right', the aggressive neoliberal political and economic climate of the 1980's saw the rise of 'strategic management' which went beyond corporate strategic planning to focus 'on producing strategic results, new markets, new products and/or new technologies' (Ansoff 1988, p. 135). Strategic management moved

beyond seeking strategic 'fit' through analysis of the external environment and internal resources. It emphasised the concept of competitive advantage and the need for organisations to look outward at the external environment to determine optimal market positioning and win market share. Strategic management became a rapidly growing discipline in the 1980's due to the expansion of business schools and MBA programmes (Segal-Horn 2003, Joyce 2015). Since then, new theories have emerged which 'co-exist' with the older ones, which results in a field of strategic management that is multidimensional. These are reviewed below.

The Strategic Positioning School

Analysis of the resources that any organisation may possess to allow it to gain competitive advantage led to the development of the Positioning School of strategic management and its associated frameworks. These include Michael Porter's Five Forces and Value Chain Analysis. Competition from countries including Japan, Europe and South East Asia in the early 1980's led to a loss of market share by US corporations. In response to this, a group of economists at Harvard Business School, led by Michael Porter, created a framework to assist US corporations to regain competitiveness. Porter is credited with bringing the concept of competition into strategic management theory (Tokuda 2005) and his 'Competitive Five Forces' analysis (CFA) model sought to determine the 'degree of market competition operating within an organisation's competitive environment' (Tiernan *et al.* 2006, p. 113). The CFA was different to the macro-level PESTLE analysis as it focused on a meta-analysis of the immediate competitive environment across each of the following dimensions: threat of new entrants; threat of substitute products; bargaining power of suppliers; bargaining power of customers; and existing rivalry between competitors.

The CFA saw the key drivers of performance and profitability determined by the differentiation of one organisation from another within an industry. It set out to 'position' an organisation to gain market share by 'deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value' (Porter (1996) cited in Segal-Horn 2004, p. 137). Porter argued that regardless of industry context, there was a finite number of generic strategies. These strategies were: cost leadership - where an organisation would seek to become the lowest cost producers of a product; differentiation - where an organisation's product was unique; or market segmentation - where an organisation decided to offer the product to

the broad market or to focus on a key market (Gopalakrishna and Subramanian 2001, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

This meta-environmental analysis helped the organisation to formulate a strategy and shortly after the development of the CFA, Porter created the micro level 'Value Chain Analysis' (1985) which analysed the internal processes of an organisation into discrete components in order to determine how and where value was added. The 'primary' activities of an organisation were recognised as those that created a product or service, and the 'support' activities included human resources management, IT management and procurement. Value Chain Analysis saw every activity in terms of its competitiveness and enabled managers to identify sets of activities which created value, in order that resources would be used on activities that were of value to customers and stakeholders (Pathak and Pathak 2010). Porter's techniques were widely adopted and highly influential within strategic management, with frameworks that were easy to understand and apply. Some criticised these techniques for being overly rational, too top-down, therefore limiting the potential for a more creative strategic approach (Mintzberg and Waters 1985, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

A new approach to strategy that went beyond analysis of industry structures emerged in the 1990's with the 'Resource Based View' (RBV) of strategic management. The RBV was inspired by Edith Penrose's work on analysing the growth of firms (1959) which stressed the importance of the internal capabilities of the organisation. A major focus of her work was on the application of resources and she held that the firm had 'tangible and intangible resources, including its underlying knowledge bases, which, when taken as a bundle, produced competitive advantage in an advanced economy' (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 47). Penrose identified the key intangible resource of an organisation as the tacit knowledge held by human assets and when utilised, that this offered a unique source of competitive advantage and growth. The RBV moved away from Porter's external focus back towards Andrews' SWOT type internal analysis of the firm to determine its distinctive capabilities, and importantly, to identify resources that were 'inimitable' in order to sustain long-term competitive advantage. Set at meso level, the RBV sought to determine the distinctive capabilities that created the 'core competences' of an organisation which were recognised by Prahalad and Hamel as being the 'wellspring of new business development and should constitute the focus for strategy at the corporate level' (Prahalad and Hamel 1990, p. 91). The concept of resources included 'all assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc.

controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness' (Tokuda 2005, p. 129). This model could also be called the capabilities model as it was all about enabling firms to manage their own unique resources so that their capabilities were deployed to best effect in order to 'contribute to its long-term survival or competitive advantage' (Johnson *et al.* 2011, p. 84). The RBV framework divided the strategic capabilities of firms into two categories, resources (what an organisation possesses) and competencies (what an organisation does well). The strategic capabilities were then broken down further in order to identify threshold resources and competences as well as distinctive capabilities. Building on this, Barney (1991) developed the VRIN¹⁶ framework offering an analysis that linked the 'skills, activities and resources of an organisation that together, deliver customer value, differentiate a business from its competitors and potentially, can be extended and developed' (Johnson *et al.* 2011, p. 89). The extent to which an organisation could meet each of the four VRIN criteria determined the level of competitive advantage it had over another. So, together, the RBV and VRIN framework, offered a model which provided organisations with the ability to create inimitability by aligning their strategic capabilities in a way that linked the threshold and distinctive competences to create an environment which their competitors would find difficult to replicate.

Mintzberg's Processual School of Strategy

While the planning, positioning, and RBV schools were designed for use by large corporations that operated in a relatively stable environment, others presented alternative schools, which saw strategy formation as a more 'visionary' process. Led by Mintzberg, who drew on sociology and psychology (rather than industrial organisation economics), the Processual School moved beyond rational strategic planning and saw strategy as 'a pattern in a stream of decisions' (Mintzberg and Waters 1985, p. 257). He argued that rational strategic planning was limited in two key ways 'cognitively (as the capacity of management to possess and process all of the information was limited) and politically (as making strategy involved interaction with many stakeholders, the outcome of which cannot be predicted in advance)' (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 32). The processual school is detailed in the next section.

¹⁶ valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable

Mintzberg's idea of strategy formation moved away from 'orthodox economics-based models of strategy-making centred on the operation of the markets' (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p.2). He observed that the binary split between strategy formulation (by senior management) and implementation (by middle management) led to loss of ownership by the majority of the workforce, implementation deficits and strategic plans which had no basis in reality (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015). He challenged Porter's Five Forces model and held that events in the real world did not always fit a linear, rational model. Mintzberg proposed that a 'processual' method of strategy formation was more effective than the classical, analytic, and top-down method of strategic planning. He highlighted the importance of management's ability to 'direct in order to realise intentions, while at the same time responding to an unfolding pattern of action' (Mintzberg and Waters 1985, p. 271). He held that strategies which were reached by a process that involved both top management and stakeholders were more likely to be successful than those which were imposed. He also acknowledged the multiple drivers of strategy and that strategy formation was a process, which involved making mistakes, review, and learning (Mintzberg and Waters 1985, Lillis 2015). He saw management's role as guiding strategy but also continually and consciously learning, and building implementation capacity throughout the process. Mintzberg championed spontaneity and intuition, and highlighted the distinction between plans i.e. intended strategy, and outcomes i.e. realised strategy. This points to the benefit of a Public Value Management model where the public manager is constantly evaluating outcomes. He created a typology of strategy formation processes that varied from one extreme of very planned and deliberate strategies, to the other - emergent strategies. A summary of the typology of strategy formation processes proposed by Mintzberg and Waters (1985) is set out in Table 5.

Type	Characteristic	Organisational context
Planning	Planned – most deliberate	Rational plans formulated by top management and translated into actions in a predictable environment
Entrepreneurial	Planned – relatively deliberate	Strategies originate in the vision of a single leader
Ideological	Rather deliberate	Strategies originate in shared beliefs
Umbrella	Partly deliberate, partly emergent and deliberately emergent	Leadership in partial control defines strategic boundaries to which other actors respond
Processual	Partly deliberate and partly emergent	Leaders decide process of strategy and leave content to others e.g. in divisional organisations M-Form and Multinationals
Unconnected	Organisationally emergent	Strategies made in enclaves which converge into patterns
Consensus	Rather emergent	Strategies originate in consensus
Imposed	Most emergent	Environment dictates strategy

Table 5 - Mintzberg's types of strategy formation processes
Adapted from (Adapted from Mintzberg and Waters, 1985, Segal-Horn, 2003)

In setting out this framework of strategy making processes, Mintzberg questioned how they might apply to different types of organisations. He proposed a typology of five dominant configurations into which all organisations would fall: namely, the entrepreneurial organisation; the machine organisation (bureaucracy); the professional organisation; the divisional (diversified) organisation; and the innovative organisation ("adhocracy"). He then set out how strategy making in each setting could be approached. This typology is a simplified version of what exists in the real world, and it is subject to ongoing changes in the landscape of private and public management, including deregulation, competition, technology and globalisation (Brock 2006). Mintzberg's work was relevant to both private and public management. It also highlighted the diversity of organisations and challenged the assumption that the context for strategy making was always within a market structure.

Other approaches to strategy

There were, of course, other approaches to strategy, which evolved in parallel to the planning and processual approach. These included the evolutionary approach, which assumed that the environment changed too fast to predict and that there was not much point in long term planning. Based on the Darwinian 'Survival of the fittest' theory of evolution and natural selection, evolutionary strategy held that short-term strategies

where organisations were run as efficiently as possible were best. This approach included experimenting with short-term initiatives in order to determine which would succeed, without over-investing in any one project in order to be able to respond to the market in an agile way in order to survive (Whittington 1993).

System-thinking was another approach. It held that strategy was relative. It stressed the importance of the uniqueness of the social systems in which strategy was formulated (Segal-Horn 2004, Johnson *et al.* 2011). System-thinking differed from the classicists' 'one style fits all' approach and paid attention to values and culture within organisations and that strategy was driven by 'the cultural rules of the local society' (Mazzucato 2002, p. 47). Systemic strategy challenged the universality of any single model of strategy and acknowledged a need for an appreciation of the diversity of market economies and 'the rich variety of their linkages with the rest of society' (Whittington 1993, p. 41). Systemic theory holds that decision makers are people who are embedded in a network of social relations that influence the how and why of strategy in their local context. The main theorists of systemic theory are Pascale, Granovetter and Whitley.

Performance Assessment / Evaluation Frameworks

The challenges of the implementation and evaluation of strategy and the relationship between strategy and performance brought about performance assessment frameworks that sat alongside strategic management models. Two of these performance assessment frameworks were Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard Model (1996) which has been widely adopted in the corporate world and Results Based Management which has its roots in Peter Drucker's mid-20th century concept of 'Management by Objectives' (MBO) and emerged in the 1990's, largely as a public sector performance management framework.

Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard model (1996) was promoted as a performance measurement tool that went beyond financial results to translate strategy into action (Kaplan and Norton 1996). It was a comprehensive performance measurement and management system that aimed to plan, implement and evaluate organisational performance in accordance with a strategic plan. It related strategic aims into objectives, goals, and measurable targets, seen through four 'lenses' namely: financial performance, internal business processes, orientation to the customer and long-term organisational development in order to guide vision and strategy. The measurement of the degree of achievement of these goals was by means of key performance indicators. The framework

claimed to consider ‘both outcome and process, and internal and external perspectives of different stakeholders’ interests’(Li-cheng 2007, p. 103). When used in corporate settings, the Balanced Scorecard focused on the future ‘driving interventions within the organisation to improve organisational performance’ (Lawrie et al. 2015, p. 11), keeping an eye on all four dimensions in order to enable and support better strategic control of organisations.

The key elements of Drucker’s ‘Concept of the Corporation’ and its associated model – Management by Objectives (MBO) were the allocation of time-bound organisational goals and objectives to individual staff within a culture of participative decision-making, who engaged in evaluation of performance and feedback. MBO was adopted as a management practice in the corporate world and then evolved to the public sector in the form of Logical Framework (Logframe) in the USA in the 1960’s. The Logframe was a project management tool which sought to plan, monitor and evaluate projects (Asian Development Bank 2006, UNESCO 2015). By the 1970’s, Logframe was widely used by the public sector (particularly UN agencies) for planning projects, particularly to support monitoring and evaluation (Lawrie *et al.* 2015).

Results based management

By the 1990’s, performance management tools introduced as a dimension of NPM led to a new framework derived from the Logframe called Results Based Management (RBM). RBM has been used in some UN agencies since the late 1990’s. RBM was ‘a management approach focused on achieving results; a broad management strategy aimed at changing the way (agencies) operate, with improving performance (achieving results) as the central orientation’ (Lawrie *et al.* 2015, p. 9). RBM took context and environment and developed strategy with a focus on the delivery of clear expected results, using real time evaluation (United Nations Development Group 2011). The idea-transfer from private sector Management by Objectives to public sector Results Based Management is an example of how private sector performance management techniques have successfully influenced and contributed to public sector strategic planning. The performance assessment frameworks brought concepts such as goals, targets and KPI’s into everyday business language. Since 2000, theorists and practitioners in the corporate world have continued to develop other models and frameworks including sustainable strategic management, scenario planning, co-operative strategies, strategic alliances, game theory, real options theory and stakeholder approaches. Some of these are adaptations of existing models,

some are in response to address particular strategic problems and others offer innovative approaches to strategy in an effort to maintain organisational competitiveness in an increasingly complex global business environment (Segal-Horn 2004, Faulkner and Campbell 2009).

Summary of approaches to corporate strategic planning

Table 6 summarises approaches to corporate strategic planning and the decades in which they emerged.

School	Classical	Processual	Evolutionary	Systemic
Strategy type	Deliberate	Emergent	Efficient	Embedded
Era emerged	1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's
Rationale - outcome	Profit maximisation	Learned outcomes	Survival	Local culture
Focus – looking at	Internal (plans)	Internal (people / politics / organisational behaviour)	Efficiency	Society
Processes – how	Analytical	Learned	Darwinian	Social
Key influencers on school	Military & economics	Psychology & sociology	Economics & biology	Sociology
Key authors	Chandler, Ansoff, Porter	Mintzberg, Pettigrew	Williamson, Freeman	Pascale, Granovetter, Whitley

Table 6 - Generic approaches to strategy with their decades of emergence

(adapted from Whittington, 1993, p. 40)

In practice, it is likely that elements of all four approaches were included in corporate planning systems. Whether planned and deliberate or processual and emergent, focused internally or externally, the general consensus in the business world was that any strategy was better than no strategy. The success of corporate management techniques transmitted through multinational companies became like role-models for how public services could and should be run (Murray 2001).

Summary of the evolution of corporate strategic planning

The literature review on the evolution of corporate strategic planning models reveals that the classical, positioning and Resource Based View (RBV) approaches have a number of key characteristics in common. These include the drivers of market principles, efficiency and effectiveness, management 'steering' strategy with outputs that are measured in largely financial terms. Models associated with these three schools look inwards 'to' and outwards 'from' the organisation and seek to create competitive advantage in order to gain global market-share thus creating winners and losers in the market. The RBV sees competitive advantage being harnessed through the tacit knowledge of employees to create an organisation that is 'inimitable' by its competitors, thus acknowledging employees as a key resource linked to profit. Frameworks and tools such as Porters Five Forces, value chain analysis and VRIN also seek to identify and capitalise on competitive advantage.

These models illustrate the predominant themes associated with neoliberal approaches to strategic planning which include:

- Market driven
- Top-down, led by senior management, implemented by middle management
- Output focused (on goals, targets, KPI's)
- Early schools took a rational, deliberate, linear process
- Focused on competitive advantage
- Directed towards profit-maximisation

Later schools took a processual approach, incorporating performance assessment models for evaluation and feedback in order to be agile. Other corporate models and frameworks include the evolutionary approach, system thinking and approaches that looked to stakeholders. Performance assessment tools which enable strategy evaluation include the Balanced Scorecard and Results Based Management. These tools drive organisational performance by aligning goals to results and measuring evaluation and feedback.

Part 2: The evolution of strategic planning and the degree to which private sector approaches have influenced public sector planning models.

Part 2 will examine how traditional public administration, NPM and emerging competing approaches interpreted strategic planning. It looks at the public and private sector

management dichotomy, and identifies what the sectors have in common and where they differ. It narrates the mechanisms of idea-transfer from one sector to another and how strategic planning has evolved within public organisations. In particular, it looks at the NPM typology of approaches to strategic planning that captured the characteristics of neoliberal approaches to policy prioritisation and strategy development and how they have influenced public sector planning models.

Research by Pascale (1990) revealed that over two dozen management innovations were proposed between 1950 and 1990, many of which were adopted by the public sector, including strategic planning (Birnbaum 2000). The political and administrative context of the welfare state from post WW2 to the 1970's embedded traditional public administration as the model for governments to rebuild their economies through an efficient public service. This represented a compact between state and citizen where public-state organisations provided a broad range of utilities, and remained true to the ideas of Wilson, Weber and Taylor where the administrative culture was in the public interest. Traditional public administration took a short-term view of planning, with planning life cycles largely in keeping with government terms of office. Often the only planning that was conducted was financial planning in the form of budgets. There was a bureaucratic organisational culture, autonomous from the state other than having accountability for finances. There appears to have been little stakeholder engagement as the mission and status of the public services was where public servants were accountable to politicians in accordance with principal-agent theory having bureaucratic and political implementation oversight. There is little to suggest a prevailing culture of evaluation (Hughes 2003, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

Key dimensions that traditional public administration and the classical school of strategic planning had in common were the rational-legal authority model of human behaviour and principal-agent theory. In the traditional model of public administration, politicians provided policy goals, which were implemented by public servants. In the classical school - CEO's and top management set the goals, which were implemented by middle management. However, while the organisational structures are similar, in that they both have hierarchical organisational structures, the strict separation of policy and administration and the emphasis on public interest and pragmatic administrative action of the public service was far removed from the market-obsessed corporate planning models that prevailed until the 1970's.

The counter-revolution to the welfare state that occurred in the late 1970's dismantled the state-citizen compact that had been in place since the end of World War 2. High inflation and high unemployment were driving forces for public sector restructuring. Governments took a 'neoclassical' economic approach which 'committed to reducing the proportion of GDP that was represented by public spending' (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, p. 313). This neoclassical approach emphasised reducing government, balancing budgets and advocated free markets.

How NPM interpreted strategic planning

The emergence of NPM in the 1980's as a model for redesigning public and non-profit organisations led to the introduction of strategic planning into the public sector 'to assist management develop more appropriate plans for managing an increasingly complex world whilst learning to cope with a capped, or sometimes declining, resource base'(Chatson 2011, p. 89). Chatson's interpretation of management's role represents a key paradigm shift between the traditional public administration model and NPM. Where in traditional public administration, public servants were seen as those who rowed along, implementing public policy made by politicians, NPM required empowered public managers who would steer and be responsible for the achievement of results. These results were driven by the requirement to meet short-term economic market demands and were dominated by national / international strategy, action plans and government mandate, targeting a narrow range of defined and economically oriented results. This approach 'aggressively pushed forward technical efficiency as the goal of public bodies at the expense of democratic processes and social values' (Blaug *et al.* 2006, p. 6). This push for public servants to behave like private sector managers and the shift in management focus from input and process to output, especially through management's responsibility to achieve the plan and deliver on performance indicators, changed the focus of the public service towards a more individualistic model of human behaviour and represented a change in public policymaking. During the era of NPM, similarities in the work of the public and private manager emerged. The shift towards managerialism; the focus on outputs and competitiveness; the orientation towards the institution; the language of KPI's, goals and indicators and market-based models of management all represented the adoption of private sector management techniques into the public sector.

However, the public manager's role was and continues to be different and more complex than that of the private manager. This is due to factors including the organisational structures of public bodies, that consultation is expected as part of decision-making

processes, public organisations have more ambiguous objectives (and therefore are more open to accusations of being inefficient) and multi-annual budgeting is not the norm in public services which makes planning for the allocation of resources in the long term difficult. (Hughes 2003). In contrast, generally, private sector organisations have flexible organisation structures; decision making is taken in accordance with strategic objectives (and is not necessarily negotiable) and the goal of the private sector manager is normally profit, with financial return as the mechanism for performance management, evaluation and control (Allison 1980, Esteve and Ysa 2011).

While the transfer of ideas from the private sector was happening through NPM, the differences between the sectors in the areas of policy-making, strategic planning, capacity to deliver the plan and resource allocation meant that that the strategic planning methods and models designed for use in the corporate world were not universally applicable to the public sector. The literature frequently mentioned this, with many citing context as a very important factor in determining strategy (Birnbaum 2000, Moore 2000, Mulgan 2008, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, Joyce 2015). All those citing this phenomenon mentioned the distinction between the two sectors and that users were not the only stakeholders in the public service. Government, taxpayers, employers, civil and public servants, trade unions, advocacy bodies and citizens were stakeholders that public sector strategic planning needed to take into account rather than markets, customers and competition which were the primary concern of corporate models (Pollit 1995).

The difficulty with the interpretation of strategic planning by NPM is that it appears that insufficient attention was given to these differences between management in the private sector and the public sector, with 'global convergence on NPM reforms as the master narrative' (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, p. 121). This master narrative was unfamiliar territory for public service organisations and the push towards strategic planning under NPM sometimes led to the appointment of external consultants to advise public sector agencies and governments on 'how to do' strategic planning with a rational approach being the obvious solution using models from the classical school of strategic planning. Research conducted on the theories of strategic planning in the public sector found models including Porters Five Forces and the Resource Based View and noted that some of the unintended consequences of adopting these private sector theories based on growth, profit, and competitive advantage had unintended consequences (Höglund *et al.* 2018). These included 'short-term, output-oriented and measurable results at the expense of more long-term and outcome-oriented results, consequently hampering the application of

strategic management’ (Höglund *et al.* 2018, p. 823). Other research determined that while NPM reforms resulted in some public organisations creating competitive strategies, the use of strategic positioning models (such as Porters Five Forces) had the potential to negatively impact collaboration between public service organisations (Hansen and Ferlie 2016). One observation of early strategic planning under NPM, was that the strategic plan, once produced, was there to keep external stakeholders and politicians happy, and that little attention was paid to its contents. Difficulties in operationalisation, which included further negotiations to get agreement amongst the internal stakeholders and to also get government funding for the strategy, resulted in a ‘sub-optimal strategy in relation to the future provision of public services’ (Chatson 2011, p. 19). This is reflective of Mintzberg’s findings where the binary split between strategy formulation and implementation led to loss of ownership, implementation deficits and strategic plans which had no basis in reality (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

Balogun *et al.* (2016) defined strategy as practice as ‘a social activity, accomplished through the actions, interactions and negotiations of multiple actors and the situated practices that they draw upon’ (*ibid.*, p. 277). It views strategy through an interpretive lens in order to understand the process of how managers ‘do’ strategy (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2010). It is concerned with ‘who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use, and what implications this has for shaping strategy’ (Jarzabkowski and Spee 2009, p. 69). Whittington (1996) noted that the formulation and implementation of strategy required inspiration: ‘the getting of ideas, spotting of opportunities, grasping of situations’ and also ‘perspiration, the routines of budgeting and planning...sitting in expenditure and strategy committees, writing of formal documents’ (*ibid.*, p. 732). He noted that ‘the value of a long ‘strategy apprenticeship’ within an organisation should ‘not be underestimated’ and that strategy as practice in organisations can ‘harden into distinct and regular patterns, so that knowing the ‘done thing’ locally is essential to being able to get things done’ (*ibid.*). Research on the ‘tools’ of strategy as practice reflect Mintzberg’s understanding of strategy as being something that people and organisations ‘do’ and is comprised of the ‘micro activities of managers and others in organisations, to investigate what is done by whom’ (Höglund *et al.* 2018, p. 826). These micro activities include ‘planning, resource allocation, monitoring and control and the processes through which strategy is enacted’ (*ibid.*). While monitoring and evaluation are highlighted as being important to the success of public sector strategy, there is little research in the area on reporting on performance and what tools are used to enable and measure strategy

(ibid). Balogun *et al.* summarise many of the findings on the research on strategy as practice when they state that while there are many ‘well-known and taken for granted toolkits that we expect strategists to have ...the actual knowledge of how strategists deploy their toolkits is limited’ (Balogun, J.C., Jarzabkowski, P., Seidl, D., & Guerard, S. (2016) in Jenkins *et al.* 2016, p. 277). However, existing theory on strategy as practice analysed by Balogun *et al.* (ibid) revealed that the dominant practitioners of strategy as practice were top and middle managers (ibid, p’s 273, 274). Therefore, while it is known who does the strategy, less is known about how they do it.

By the late 1980’s and 1990’s, specialists including Backoff, Heymann, Bryson, and Moore contributed towards understanding public sector strategic management. As their work focused on experiences at the federal level of US government and in the US public sector in general ‘the intellectual foundations they laid for understanding strategic management in the public sector were North American in scope’ (Joyce and Drumaux 2014, p. 1). The USA was recognised as an early adopter of public sector strategic planning, with initiatives such as the introduction of the Marshall Plan in 1948, performance budgeting by the Hoover Commission in 1949, the RAND Corporation’s development of the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) for the US Defence Department in 1954 and the Logframe in the 1960’s. PPBS set out to coordinate the work on an expanding public sector and plan the work of public agencies years in advance in accordance with government policy (Birnbaum 2000, Johanson 2009). By the 1990’s, 5-year strategic plans were mandatory for federal agencies and by 2010 the strategic planning cycle was linked to the presidential electoral cycle and agencies were mandated to consult the US Congress when making changes to strategic plans. Despite the USA being having a strong reputation for governance based on *laissez-faire* principles, their strong commitment to strategic planning demonstrates the influence of NPM, tightening the link between goals and budgets, reinforcing the subordination of public managers to politicians and the planning cycle to the political cycle (Joyce 2015).

The relationship between a stable, democratic environment and the ability to engage in strategic planning was highlighted in Mulgan’s work (2008) with public organisations. He determined that factors such as a small majority in government, unstable coalitions, and economic volatility led to shorter planning horizons. He concluded that political stability and consistency were essential preconditions for institutions to be able to pay serious attention to long term strategic planning. This observation is useful when trying to unravel how strategic planning occurs in public organisations and how difficult it is to

plan on a meso-level when the macro-level is being influenced by frequent and radical reform as was the case in the 1980's and 1990's.

Agencies including the OECD and World Bank saw strategic management initiatives as a modernising force in public services, working towards a more output and outcome-oriented system (Murray 2001, OECD 2008, Lynch 2012). Under NPM, contractual models of accountability were introduced into publicly funded services which were measurement driven, 'and concerned with standards and results' (Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin 2009, p. 27) making previously autonomous institutions accountable to the government and politicians through a system of metrics. While Pollit and Bouckaert's patterns of NPM reforms (2011) categorised Ireland as a Moderniser, other literature stated that a more *à la carte* approach to the adaptation of NPM was taken by Ireland up to the mid-2000's than that of the core-NPM countries (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008, OECD 2008).

Emerging competing approaches to strategic planning

By the turn of the 21st century, it was clear that disaggregation and agentification of NPM had led to a 'hollowing out' of the state resulting in a 'weakened relationship between state and civil society' (Blaug *et al.* 2006). In response to this, the emerging competing public management approaches sought to deliver public services in a better, more democratic way. In particular, Network Governance was seen as a solution to meet the challenges of managing the multi-level, multi-actor system that emerged during the era of NPM, from local, to regional, to state, to international by developing 'a framework upon which these complex relations can be understood on a policy and public administration context' (Curry 2014). This approach focused on stakeholder preferences and the provision of high quality services and outcomes. It took a balanced approach to formulating strategy guided by government and stakeholders. It focused on the achievement of results by negotiating through networks and integrating lines of accountability. Importantly, strategic planning evaluation and feedback also took an associated approach requiring network members including governments, public servants and stakeholders in the global politico-administrative system to act with shared responsibility to deliver public services of public value that were 'collectively built through deliberation' (Stoker 2006b, p. 42). A stakeholder management approach to strategic planning was proposed by Bryson and Roering (1987) in the late 1980s as one of

the most appropriate approaches to strategic planning in the public sector because it integrated ‘economic, political and social concerns’ (ibid, p. 16).

In recent years, some have identified such a Network Governance approach as the best approach to restore trust in government and in political leadership (OECD 2011, Curry 2014, Crosby *et al.* 2016).

The World Bank and OECD have made links between strategic planning, economic performance and government effectiveness with the World Bank’s ‘government effectiveness’ indicator measured annually across 215 economies since 1996. This indicator is constructed from a set of perceptions including the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service, the independence of the civil service from government, the quality of policy making and implementation gathered from a variety of survey institutes, think tanks, international organisations and private firms (Joyce 2015, World Bank 2016). This link between government effectiveness and ongoing support for governance approaches to public management highlights the relevance and appetite for new, networked, ‘joined up’ approaches to public management which go beyond efficiency and outputs to a system where government systems are linked to each other, international bodies, and other non-governmental actors. An example of this is the Europe 2020 strategy (adopted by the EC in 2010) which set out to engage parliaments, social partners, and representatives of civil society to formulate better systems of public governance based on strategic capabilities to address economic as well as environmental and social goals (Joyce 2015).

Public Value Management is seen as a framework for the promotion of Network Governance (Stoker 2006b) and Public Value Management strategic plans are driven by placing an emphasis on responding to citizen voice and service user preferences paying attention to local and regional needs as well as national strategy, including and beyond the economic market. The process of planning works to balance the tension between the authorising environment, stakeholders and the public service itself, to create a mutual understanding of what can be delivered (Bryson *et al.* 2016). The outcome of Public Value Management Strategy is a compact between these three groups. Public value strategic plans emphasise an institutions’ uniqueness and what distinguishes it from the others, targeting a range of societal concerns and setting targets appropriately. In keeping with Network Governance, Public Value Management strategic plans consider the opportunity cost of redeploying resources from one service to another and they also detail how operational capacity will be supplemented in order to deliver public value outcomes

(Moore 1995). A key component of public value management strategic plans is that they emphasise the evaluation of outcomes with a wide range of stakeholders, including citizens, all of whom are involved in the process (Stoker 2006b, Alford and Hughes 2008).

Summary of approaches to public management strategic planning

To summarise, strategic planning in public management can be seen as evolving across two periods, beginning in the late 1970's where strategic planning came as one of the reforms associated with NPM and was seen as a technique for improving organisational objectives and organisational performance (Joyce and Drumaux 2014). The second period was from the 1990's – 2000's where strategic management was seen as a way of 'modernising' the state and aligning public services to deliver public value. This idea is closely associated with the post-NPM emerging approaches of New Public Governance, the Neo Weberian State (NWS), Network Governance and Public Value Management, where the significance of the state came back and public administration sought to be more professional, efficient and citizen friendly (Randma - Liiv 2008, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015). By this time, the importance of developing the relationship between government and other stakeholders in civil society was becoming increasingly important. Table 7 summarises how each of the different public management approaches explored in Part 2 interpreted and operationalised strategic planning.

Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM/ neoliberal	Network Governance	Public Value Management
The drivers and influences on strategic planning	Policy and strategy preserve of political leadership Responsiveness to rules and regulations Hierarchical decision making and accountability	Market principles dominate Efficiency, effectiveness Reducing state expenditure Focus on input and output metrics Management 'steering' Implementation overseen by agencies Measurement, reward, punishment (hard NPM)	Networked, emphasis on the customer / stakeholder preferences and the provision of high-quality services and outcomes	Emphasis on responding to citizen and service user preferences including and beyond the economic market
Strategy Formulation - process	Bureaucratic organisational culture One best way of working Focus on short-term results Planning life cycles largely in keeping with government terms of office	The process is top-down, rational, deliberate, linear Measurement through performance indicators	A more balanced process of formulating strategy that is guided by government and stakeholders	A democratic process with a broad range of stakeholders who are involved at all stages of the strategic planning process. Strategic plans target a range of societal concerns and set targets appropriately
Extent of stakeholder engagement	Little stakeholder engagement	Limited range of stakeholders, focusing on outputs	A broader range of stakeholders, emphasis on responding to network members	A wide authorising environment to include stakeholders where some have more influence / input than others, focus on outcomes that are of public value
Key characteristics of the plans –	Emphasis on public interest and pragmatic administrative action of the public service	Institutionally oriented Performance aligned to a narrow range of defined and economically oriented results	Strategic plans emphasise the provision of high-quality services and outcomes that are 'collectively built through deliberation'	Broader authorising environment leads to institution specific priorities and more distinctive mission
Implementation, responsibility and control	Public servants 'rowing' & accountable to politicians	An emphasis on management responsibility to deliver the plan 'do more with less'	An associated approach requiring network members including governments, public servants and stakeholders to act with shared responsibility to deliver public services	The process of planning works to balance the tension between the authorising environment, stakeholders and the public service itself, to create a mutual understanding of what can be delivered. The outcome of public value strategy is a compact between these three groups.
Operational capacity	Financial planning i.e. budgets	Emphasis on a better government that costs less. Resource allocation not always linked to the plan which led to difficulties in implementation	Focus on achievement of results by negotiating through networks and integrating lines of accountability	Strategic plan is operationally and administratively feasible and details how operational capacity will be supplemented in order to deliver public value outcomes
Review, Measurement, Evaluation	Conformity, reporting budgeting.	Output focused, Institutionally oriented Emphasis on meeting requirements of increased regulation	Strategic plan evaluation and feedback is broadened to include network members	Emphasis on outcomes with a wider range of authorising actors. All of the stakeholders involved in the evaluation process

Table 7 - Summary of how each of the public management approaches interpreted and operationalised strategic planning.

Adapted from (Hood 1991, Kelly et al. 2002, Blaug et al. 2006, Dunleavy et al. 2006, Stoker 2006b, Bozeman 2007, Alford and Hughes 2008, Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2008, OECD 2008, Benington and Moore 2011, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, MacCarthaigh 2012b, Fisher and Grant 2013, Bryson et al. 2014, Ferlie and Ongaro 2015, Joyce 2015, Noordegraaf 2015)

Table 7 illustrates how each public management approach interpreted and operationalised the process of formulating, implementing and evaluating strategic planning. It set out seven key areas that emerged from the literature as key pillars to which approaches to strategic planning by the different public management approaches can be assessed. They are:

1. The drivers of and influences on strategic planning
2. The process of strategy formulation
3. The extent of stakeholder engagement and involvement
4. The uniqueness of the plans
5. Implementation, responsibility and control
6. The operational capacity to deliver the plan
7. Strategy review, measurement and evaluation

It summarises the key characteristics of strategic planning associated with each approach, where traditional public administration was bureaucratic, with a focus on short term results linked to government life cycles. Then NPM introduced a culture of performance, efficiency, innovation and accountability, using corporate strategic planning models to determine objectives. The emerging approaches of Network Governance and Public Value Management took an overarching ‘governance’ approach to public management in response to some of the negative outcomes of NPM. This saw a change in public service values, moving away from a top-down, rational, deliberate, linear model dominated by management ‘steering’ with limited range of stakeholders, towards a more joined-up public service. These approaches are characterised by strategy formulation that is guided by a network of politicians, public servants and stakeholders, including citizens, to deliver public services that are both efficient and of public value. Strategy evaluation is also a key characteristic of both the Network Governance and Public Value Management approaches.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to draw out the characteristics of neoliberal approaches to strategic planning and to look at how traditional public administration, NPM and emerging approaches interpreted strategic planning. It also examined the public and private sector management dichotomy - what the sectors have in common and where they differ. The mechanism of idea-transfer from one sector to another and how strategic planning has

evolved within public organisations was also examined. The influence of neoliberal approaches to corporate strategic planning and how they have influenced NPM was explored, as well as how traditional public administration, Network Governance and Public Value Management interpreted, operationalised and evaluated strategic plans.

Table 7 (p. 68) summarised the characteristics of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation by traditional public administration, NPM, Network Governance and Public Value Management. This table was used to develop operational framework which was used to assess the approaches taken by Irish universities to strategic planning since 1997.

Chapter 4 – Context: Organisation and Planning in Irish Public Administration and Higher Education

Introduction

Chapter 4 looks at what effect that public service reform had on Irish education and describes Irish education policy. It discusses planning in Irish public administration, how it was introduced, the effects of the politico-administrative regime on planning and the impact of the Strategic Management Initiative (1994) which brought NPM type reform to the public service and how these reforms filtered into Irish HE. It examines the influence of neoliberal policy on Irish HE and the structural developments that took place in the sector between the period 1997-2019. During this time, the 1997 Universities Act was introduced, the economic crisis of 2008 took place and the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011) was introduced. This chapter is concerned with how all of these developments affected approaches to strategic planning in the Irish universities.

Part 1 of this chapter will examine planning in Irish public administration, including how it was introduced, the effects of the politico-administrative regime on planning, the Devlin Report (1969), the impact of the Strategic Management Initiative (1994) which brought NPM type reform to the public service and the establishment of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (2011).

Part 2 assesses policy and structural developments in Irish HE. Just as the case with the earlier chapters, the evolution of change in Irish education is set in the ideological, social and economic framework of the time and reflects the different manifestations of public management that have presented over the past half-century and how these reforms shaped the public sector and influenced HE. It examines the effects of public service management reform on Irish education and describes Irish education policy and practice as a ‘story of two halves’, with the first half taking place between 1930 and 1960 and the second being from 1960 to the present. The importance of the Investment in Education (1965) report is discussed, as well as the effect of the adoption of a human capital economic approach by government. The impact of the massification of secondary school education in the 1960’s¹⁷ and the transformation of the HE system from an elite to a universal system over the following four decades is then described.

¹⁷ 1966

Part 3 deals with approaches to strategic planning in Irish HE. It examines the influence of neoliberal policy on the HE system in Ireland, including the effect of the Universities Act (1997) the impact of the economic crisis of 2008 on the sector and the impact of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt 2011). MacCarthaigh's phases of State Development (2012a) and Scott's Patterns of State Intervention in Higher Education (Scott 1985) and the Evolution of Higher Education Systems (Scott 1995) are mapped onto Irish HE development 1922-2019 identifying the associated public administration approach to strategic planning in each era. The chapter concludes by setting out how the findings of Chapters 2, 3 and 4 inform the theoretical framework for this study.

Part 1 – Planning in Irish public administration

‘The Irish state on its foundation adopted, in virtually complete form, a Westminster-style apparatus of government with which most of its civil servants were already familiar’ (Murray 2001, p. 3). When the Irish Civil Service was being established, serving civil servants were given the option to transfer from the British administration working in Dublin to the new Irish Free State government. When the transfer came into effect in 1922, some 98.9% of civil servants had transferred to the Irish regime, meaning that little had changed in the structures and staffing between the two systems (OECD 2008). The legislation that formed the basis of the new Irish public service was laid down through two Acts. The first was the Civil Service Regulation Act (1923) (later replaced by the Civil Service Regulation Act (1924)) which set out to ensure the independent and non-political nature of public servants and the provisions for the way that the civil service would be controlled, managed and regulated. The second Act was the Ministers and Secretaries Act (1924), which set out the system of eleven ministries, the status of ministers as the corporation sole¹⁸, and the corresponding authority and responsibility of government departments.

This meant that the Irish parliamentary system of cabinet government was very similar to the Westminster-Whitehall type, with the traditional public administration principal-agent model, whereby politicians provide policy goals which are implemented by public servants with no independent role in the policymaking process (MacConsadín 2014).

¹⁸ Linking the operation of the Department very strongly with the Minister. Rhodes, R. A. W. and Wanna, J. (2007) 'The Limits to Public Value, or Rescuing Responsible Government from the Platonic Guardians', *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 66(4), 406-421. Some suggest this can cause too much of the focus of a Department to be concerned with the position of the Minister i.e. ‘Yes, minister’ syndrome’ Stoker, G. (2006b) 'Public Value Management: A New Narrative for Networked Governance?', *The American Review of Public Administration*, 36(1), 41-57., p. 55

It is held that the policy-administrative dichotomy which was established in the Ministers and Secretaries Act is the most significant feature of this legislation, 'which has not been altered in any of the subsequent fifteen amending acts to the initial 1924 statute' (MacConsadín 2014, p. 15) and is aligned to the traditional public administration model. The first review of the Irish Civil Service conducted by the Brennan Commission 1932-1935 (Brennan Commission 1936) affirmed the workings of the administration. It stated that there was no 'practical need for the reorganisation of the civil service' (Brennan Commission 1936, p. 15). Adopting economic policies of protectionism and self-sufficiency in the 1930's, the state had limited involvement in key areas of society already managed by the Catholic Church in Ireland. These included health and education (M. O'Connor 2014, Clancy 2015) In terms of Irish state development, MacCarthaigh identified the period above from 1922-1947 as the 'Emergent' phase of state development (MacCarthaigh 2012a, p. 797).

MacCarthaigh's 'Development phase' followed. Commencing in 1948, Governments adopted an outward facing interventionist policy to encourage economic growth (O'Hagan and Newman 2008, MacCarthaigh 2012a, MacConsadín 2014). The White Paper for Economic Development, followed by the First Programme for Economic Expansion published in 1958 focused on industrialisation, the attraction of foreign direct investment, and export-led growth. This programme is credited as the first attempts at planning by Irish Government (Cromien and Pender 1987, Stapleton 1991, Crafts and Toniolo 2002) and was deemed a success with a modest growth rate of 2% per annum over a five-year period (Cromien and Pender 1987, Stapleton 1991, MacConsadín 2014).

The second and third *Programmes for Economic Expansion* were published for the periods 1964-1970 and 1969-1972. However, these plans were abandoned by Governments before their 'due dates' due to methodological flaws which resulted in unrealistic targets, and a fear that by not meeting the targets, the government of the day would be seen as a failure (Cromien and Pender 1987, Crafts and Toniolo 2002). In keeping with the agenda of development, reform and modernisation, in 1966, a review of the organisation and workings of the Departments of State and public service was announced. The reasons advanced for carrying out such a review included the 'constantly increasing range and complexity of the services required by the modern community' and the need for 'efficiency and economy in [public] administration' (Ward 2015, p. 9). The

review was conducted by the Public Services Organisation Group¹⁹ comprised of ‘outside influencers (from the private sector) and policy entrepreneurs (in the form of current and former senior officials), with consultation a feature of the review process’ (Ward 2015, p. 9). Their subsequent report was known as the Devlin Report, after the Group’s Chairman, Liam St John Devlin.

The Devlin Report

The Devlin Report (1969) expressed concern about structures, management and a lack of planning in the civil service. It saw the ‘lack of strategic thinking about long-term issues’ as being a significant weakness (Stapleton 1991, p. 311, McCarthy 2005, p. 2). The report identified seven groups of recommendations which would represent major changes in the organisation and structure of the public service. These were: the separation of policy and execution; the establishment of a Department of Public Service; the creation of Aireachts; the creation of a Commissioner for Administrative Justice; the integration of general service, departmental and professional staff; the opening of eligibility for promotion to every post of Assistant Principal level and higher to every qualified officer²⁰ and changes to seven existing Government Departments²¹ (Devlin 1969a, p. 430).

The Devlin Report’s most radical recommendation was that that policy making be separated from executive functions and that Government Departments be restructured within ministries known as Aireachts. Acting as the Management Advisory Committee of the ministry, the Aireacht would be responsible for ‘formulation of overall strategy, the general policy of the Department and the preparation of legislation, through the co-ordination by the Secretary of alternative policy proposals which he²² will submit, with his recommendations as to choice, for decision by the Minister’(Devlin 1969b, p. 155). The intention of this was to ‘overcome the peculiarly Irish problem of constituency service, by forcing trivial matters out of the Dáil and into the lower levels of the public

¹⁹ Membership of the Public Services Organisation Group is detailed in Appendix I

²⁰ And that every post should be filled by the best officer available

²¹ Department of Finance to be split into Department of Finance and Public Service; Department of Local Government would become the Department of Regional Development; Department of Agriculture and of Fisheries and of Lands would be combined into a single Department; Department of National Culture undertake responsibility for Roinn na Gaeilge, for cultural matters within the Department of Education; Departments of Health and Social Welfare be combined; Department of Transport and Power transfer responsibility for fuel and power to Department of Industry and Commerce and then be combined with the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in a new Department of Transport and Communications; the OPW transfer some of its activities to other Departments and its procurement activities be combined with other procurement activities in a new Central Procurement Office reporting to the Department of Public Service. Devlin, L. S. J. (1969a) *Report of Public Services Organisation Review Group, 1966-1969 Part Four*, Dublin: The Stationery Office.

²² The Devlin Report referred to ‘he, him, himself’ throughout

service, thereby releasing the time and energies of ministers and senior officials for questions of major policy' (Browne 1982). The report recommended the establishment of units within each Department for the following four functions: planning, organisation, finance and personnel. Each Aireacht was to be led by the Secretary of the Department who would have the Assistant Secretaries of each of the finance, planning, organisation, and personnel units reporting to him. This executive would be responsible for broad policy-making, strategic planning and overall management, leaving the service delivery functions to executive units headed by managers who would be empowered to make decisions (Stapleton 1991). This was a far-reaching and innovative proposal that gave prominence to strategic planning. The structure of the Aireacht provided the Secretary with the resources required to deliver strategy (indicating the presence of the classical school type of strategic planning which linked the allocation of resources to strategy). This structure also signaled the emergence of managerial type practices in Irish public administration.

Another recommendation of the Devlin Report was that the Department of Finance would retain responsibility for the finance and planning element of the public service and that a Department of the Public Service (DPS) would be established. The DPS was envisaged as 'the driver for organisational change' (Adshead and Tonge 2009, p. 56) and would oversee organisation and personnel including the state administration, coordinate the restructuring of the public service (including management, planning, and performance management) and have responsibility for public service organisation, pay, and reform (Ward 2015). This indicates a managerialist approach, which is far ahead of its time. The mention of the establishment of a Commissioner for Administrative Justice (which became the Public Services Ombudsman) to develop an appeals system, indicated a shift towards public services being delivered in a citizen-responsive environment, rather than the traditional approach where public servants were accountable only to politicians and senior officials. The establishment of a Public Service Advisory Council (having members from the public and private sectors) to monitor and report on the progress of the reform programme indicated a change in civil service values towards efficiency, effectiveness, responsibility and responsiveness to a broader stakeholder environment beyond traditional public administrations' characteristics of honesty and fairness. These recommendations have subsequently been acted upon.

Upon its publication in 1969, there was limited Government support for the Devlin Report (Stapleton 1991). The coalition Government elected in 1973 agreed a programme of

reform that included The Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act (1973). This gave effect to the establishment of the Department of Public Service which transferred the power over the civil service from the Department of Finance to a new ministry and department (Murray 2001, OECD 2008). The Public Service Advisory Council was also established. Government placed an emphasis on building up management structures within the public service in order that ‘Government and the Oireachtas [would] take major decisions while allowing maximum discretion in execution’ (Stapleton 1991, p. 313). The most difficult Devlin recommendation to implement was the move away from principal-agent theory to a devolved model of responsibility through the Aireacht on the basis that the primacy of politicians should remain the status-quo as opposed to a federated arms-length system (Stapleton 1991). Only two Government Departments introduced the Aireacht concept ‘and there is little evidence of them having a significant impact’ (Adshead and Tonge 2009, p. 57). Reflecting on the Aireacht, and the status of Ministers as the corporation sole, Stapleton noted that ‘Ministers cannot distance themselves from important decisions. They are not appointed to ensure the financial success of a department; on the contrary their main priority is to assess the electoral and social implications of departmental activity’ (Stapleton 1991, p. 319). Other commentary on the Devlin report reported that was that it was overambitious for the public service and that the adoption of corporate business organisation theory was inappropriate (Browne 1982). The introduction of performance management was also criticised and the point was made that the application of systems where outcomes were judged in financial and performance terms was not appropriate for the public sector as the value created by public services was more ‘nuanced and varied’ than that (Stapleton 1991).

The Devlin Report is seen by some as the ‘bible’ for public service modernisation in Ireland (McCarthy 2005, p. 2) occurring at the end of MacCarthaigh’s ‘Development’ phase in 1970. Its recommendations were far-reaching, they reflected contemporary trends in management science and systems thinking, along the federal decentralised models of the classical strategic planning model. Recognising that strategy follows structure, the establishment of the Aireacht’s to provide direction and control with the creation of units in each department for the four staff functions of finance, planning, organisation and personnel to coordinate the work, were seen as the way of ensuring that national economic plans would no longer fail. It’s recognition of the need for enhanced accountability systems in the public sector and the need for a move towards strategic

thinking about long-term issues makes the Devlin Report a cornerstone in the introduction of planning and managerialism to Irish public administration.

The introduction of managerialism

The next phase of state development between 1971 and 1990 is entitled the 'Modernisation' phase of Irish public administration (MacCarthaigh 2012a, p. 797). This phase is characterised by the introduction of managerialism and 'some blurring of political and administrative roles' (MacCarthaigh 2012c, p. 28). A Department of Economic Planning and Development was established in 1978. Government plans including The National Development Plan 1978-1980, as well as economic stabilisation programmes including The Way Forward (1982) and Building on Reality (1984) sought to address planning deficits (Crafts and Toniolo 2002).

In an effort to manage the ongoing economic crisis, in the early 1980's, Government halted the expansion of the public service and sought improvements in the system through financial management and value for money in public spending (Stapleton 1991, p. 327). Committed to reform in the public sector, and to creating a more accountable system of management in the public service, the Minister for the Public Service published the White Paper, *Serving the Country Better* (Department of the Public Service 1985). This had recommendations similar to Devlin in that it saw that the public service had two broad remits, the first was the delivery of services to the public, and the second was the formulation of policy, advice and planning on behalf of the Government. In terms of resources, it saw that the delivery of services was of most importance to the public and this required the most resources. It also confirmed that policy advice and planning were of the 'utmost importance' (Stapleton 1991, p. 328). *Serving the Country Better* (STCB) (1985) recommended the introduction of management systems to all Government Departments 'based on corporate planning, emphasising personal responsibility for results, costs and services' (Department of the Public Service 1985, p. 6). Areas highlighted for immediate attention were NPM type reforms including decentralised budgets, decentralisation, agentification, the introduction of a total management system, performance management, and managing for results. SCTB also recommended the establishment of a mechanism to appoint senior civil servants from outside of the public service and this led to the establishment of the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) (Taylor 2005, OECD 2008, Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2010). This

represented a significant change for Irish public administration, where the relationship between the Minister and the bureaucracy moved towards 'arms-length', indicating a paradigm shift in the role of politicians from being elected representatives of the people to being elected 'governors' at arms-length from public managers. It also replaced the traditional bureaucratic appointments system that was based on continuity of service and internal promotion, representing a change in civil service capability from the professional development of individuals to a management focus on outputs.

The prolonged economic crisis in the 1980's resulted in the re-merging of the Department of Finance and Department of Public Service in 1987 by Fianna Fáil (FF) in an effort to better coordinate and improve the management of public finances. The late 1980's saw an economic crisis managed by the Department of Finance which led to a 'change agenda driven by cost containment and retrenchment' (Murray 2001, p. 4). Led by senior civil servants, a programme of public sector reform was designed and implemented which is recognised as having the 'characteristics of international NPM-style reforms' (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2011, p. 2). The purpose of this approach was to reorganise Government Departments 'to focus political organisation on, and give greater political impetus to vital sectors where wealth and employment can most readily be created (Stapleton 1991, p. 332). Taking a 'strategy follows structure' approach, certain sectors of the economy were identified as being key to national economic recovery. Agencies with delegated powers were established under the control of Ministers of State, and Government sought to re-engage with social partners to work on consensus building. This approach, where plans are put in place which target a narrow range of defined and economically oriented results, dominated by national / international strategy, action plans and government mandate are classic characteristics of NPM.

The Social Partnership Model which began in the 1970's with the National Industrial Economic Council (1963) and its successor, the 1973 National Economic and Social Council (NESC) are both credited with negotiating policy relating to pay, job creation, taxation and social policy in the 1970's. This was a precursor to the later, more extended form of social partnership that was reinvigorated in 1987 through the NESC Strategy for Development 1986-1990 report. Between 1987 and 2009 seven social partnership framework agreements were negotiated at 3-year intervals by Government, trade unions, employer federations and other representative groups that included farming organisations and later on, the community and voluntary sector. They were seen as the mechanism for Government to engage with labour market actors to 'manage pay determination, defuse

industrial conflict, and take soundings about policy preferences from various organised interests’ (Hardiman 2010, p. 18). Ireland’s accession to the EEC in 1973 and the consequent engagement of politicians and senior civil servants through various international fora promoted a ‘reciprocal and ongoing exchange of information and experience’ (Taylor 2005, p. 111) which influenced the Irish public management reform agenda. This meant that Ireland’s politico-administrative system was subject to the influence of the reformation of public service structures through NPM that was happening in the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The Social Partnership agreements are an example of the introduction of NPM type reforms in the Irish public service including benchmarking, flexibility, rationalisation, agentification and performance-related bonuses for senior civil servants. However, the approach taken where the Social Partnership agenda was broadened to include societal issues and socially oriented groups also speaks to a Network Governance and a Public Value Management approach where the later extension of social partnership to the local level where the more social and less economic actors were very prominent, speaks to a Public Value Management approach. All of this indicates a mindset in government to broaden stakeholder involvement and engagement in public management during this period.

Regulation and Reform

1991-2010 was recognised by MacCarthaigh as the phase of ‘Management and Reform’ in Irish public administration. This phase is characterised by a series of regulatory and reform initiatives designed to reform public services along NPM lines (MacCarthaigh 2012a, p. 797) – albeit ‘soft’ NPM lines.

Evidence of this is the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) which is recognised as a key step in the modernisation of Irish public administration (Humphries 1998, Murray 2001, Boyle 2014). The SMI was a programme of reform designed by Irish senior civil servants drawn from experiences of other ‘Moderniser’ countries, namely New Zealand and Australia. Endorsed by the Taoiseach and launched in 1994, the SMI ‘called for a strategic approach by civil servants based on the need for better planning and management’ (Collins *et al.* 2014, p. 46). The three key objectives of the SMI were to ensure that departments within the public service would work towards:

- Making a greater contribution to national development (social and economic) and reduce unemployment

- Provide excellent service to the public
- Make effective use of resources

(Murray 2001, McCarthy 2005, OECD 2008)

Building on the 1985 report *Serving the Country Better*, the SMI charged the Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries (CoGS), (who were the Secretary-Generals of each Government Department) with implementing the SMI. This required senior officials to work together to negotiate how best to deliver cross-cutting areas of public policy which had been identified as a ‘lacuna in Irish public administration’ (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011, p. 216). One of the first tasks of the CoGS was to mandate Government Departments and public services under the aegis of Departments to produce and submit strategy statements within months of the launch of the SMI.

These strategy statements were required to include the following information:

- The strategic management process that was undertaken in producing the statement
- The Department’s mandate and a SWOT analysis of its ability to fulfil its mandate
- An analysis of the Department’s work *vis-a-vis* national programmes
- 3-5 year goals stated in outcome terms
- Objectives for the major divisions for the Department in outcome terms

(Mc Kevitt and Keogan 1997)

In the spring of 1995, the Government requested that the CoGS bring forward proposals for a modernisation programme for the public service. By 1996, they delivered their report entitled *‘Delivering Better Government’* (DBG). This report built on the aims set out in the SMI and proposed a series of reforms for the civil service and for the broader public service that included ‘initiatives in HRM (through the Performance Management and Development System), Quality Customer Service, Management Information Frameworks (e.g. financial management systems), Regulatory Reform and E-Government’ (OECD 2008, p. 79). DBG set out to a vision for embedding the SMI process across the whole public service by implementing a framework for change resting on the following foundations:

- That strategic management would be embedded into the work of Departments
- That strategy would be oriented towards the customer and the achievement of outcomes and results
- That service delivery would be high quality, open and transparent

- That Departments would provide high quality policy advice to Government
 - That red-tape would be minimised and regulatory reform would occur
 - That issues would be managed cross-departmentally
- (Murray 2001)

The SMI was renamed the '*Public Service Modernisation Programme*' and the Public Service Management Act (1997) followed. Echoing some of the earlier Devlin recommendations, this Act brought in a legal requirement for a three-year statement of strategy (or within six months of the appointment of a new Minister) to be prepared by the Secretary General of each Government Department. Strategy statements were required to set out the key objectives, outputs and related strategies (including the use of resources) of the Department or office concerned. The Secretary General was also required to provide an annual report on the achievement of objectives to the Minister. Strategy statements were seen as a central element in the development of a strategic management process in the Irish public service (Boyle and Fleming 2000). This represented a fundamental change to the management structure of the public service and put in place an accountability mechanism whereby the Secretary Generals were also Accounting Officers, responsible for the stewardship of public funds. Thereby the Act set out devolution of authority with the transfer of responsibility from Ministers (who adopted steering roles) to senior civil servants to manage service delivery. 'DBG also recommended that a system of Strategic Result Areas (SRAs) be set up as a way of identifying priority areas of Government activity which cross cut the public service, but these were never operationalised' (Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011, p. 16)

An analysis of these strategy statements in 1999 by Boyle and Fleming (2000) concluded that those produced between 1996 and 1998 showed some signs of improvement year on year in terms of their quality and made the following recommendations:

- That scenario planning should form part of the strategy formulation process in order to reflect a capability to cope with uncertain futures
- That goals, objectives and strategies be clearly defined and specified and focus on outcomes
- That resource implications be addressed regarding the achievement of goals and targets and to frame this in the context of multi-annual budgeting

- That stakeholder expectations and needs be demonstrated as being drivers of strategy (Boyle and Fleming 2000)

It is clear that DBG and the SMI aimed to deliver joined-up government in the hope that cross-cutting issues could be managed strategically and cross-departmentally, reflecting national priorities. However, despite the publication of strategy statements and identification of areas of cross-cutting policy, few Government Departments detailed how they would collaborate to solve issues meaning that Boyle and Fleming's recommendations were not adopted (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011). In 2005, the NESC Report on the Developmental Welfare State (2005) reported that the implementation of strategy was weak, evaluation of the effectiveness of Government programmes was poor and social policy was not aligned with economic policy (NESC 2005). As well as this, all reform initiatives required approval from the 'centre'²³ which slowed down the pace of change and 'retained the Ministers pre-eminent political position' again, reflecting of the resistance to the Devlin recommendations and this is where Irish NPM varied from the 'let the managers manage' ethos of NPM (Taylor 2005, p. 113).

Even though the SMI looked like NPM, Ireland's version 'facilitated the spread of ideas about improving service delivery, but set relatively soft targets, and was backed by little or no serious evaluation and few effective sanctions' (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2011, p.12). It could be said that the SMI was an adaptation of 'soft' NPM, characterised as being customer orientated with an emphasis on quality rather than 'hard' NPM which was about 'measurement, reward and punishment' (Ferlie and Geraghty 2005). This meant that Ireland's version allowed hard decisions to be deferred, and there were few consequences for targets, objectives or outcomes not being met, despite the talk of strategy and strategic planning being the watchwords in public service development at the time (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011)

While the SMI made links between strategic planning, government effectiveness and economic performance, it seems that the ideology of being seen to have a 'government that worked better and cost less' was the driver behind it, rather than a hard push towards the adoption of market based principles in the public service. Hardiman (2010) noted that while the New Zealand and Australian politico-administrative regimes were the inspiration for reform in the Irish public sector, they both began their programmes of

²³ Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance

public sector reforms earlier, moved faster with them and amended ‘structures and practices more extensively than Ireland did’ (Hardiman 2010, p. 15). She held that ‘the shadow of hierarchy’ (meaning the commitment by Government to achieving policy objectives) was the main factor in the success or failure of public sector reforms. As the style of policy-making in Ireland was consultative, leaning towards achieving compromise and consensus, the Governments ‘drive’ for reform was not as effective as those in the UK, Australia or New Zealand – the countries recognised by Pollit and Bouckaert (2011) as the ‘marketisers’ or ‘core’ NPM group. The implementation of NPM in this core group resulted in a radical reform of the state where there was a shift in control from traditional public administration to NPM. Disaggregation, agentification, competition and incentivisation were market type mechanisms used to reform public service delivery and public management was driven by measurement, reward and punishment (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). When compared to other countries, Irish parliamentary ex-post control of cabinet actions and public service organisations was deemed as weak (MacCarthaigh 2012a). Despite strategic management being the buzzword around public services, the SMI could be seen as a lost opportunity, as while the principles of modernisation and strategic management were widely supported by Government ‘in key areas such as structural reorganisation, delegation of powers, and budgetary autonomy, Ireland actually changed very little’ (Hardiman 2010, p. 27). The lack of accountability, responsibility and evaluation in Ireland’s ‘soft’ NPM approach is evident in the lack of performance measurement, budgetary sanctions, delegation of budgets and delegation of power from the centre. Also while the SMI was led by the leadership of the public service it did not adhere to any theoretical strategic planning frameworks (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2011). Therefore, it could be interpreted that public sector reform in Ireland during this period was largely symbolic. This is reflected in the OECD Review of Irish Public Services (2008) which stated that the SMI had resulted in divergent process reforms which did not link together and saw the need to renew the vision of the SMI in the light of working towards coherent reforms which interact with each other and support national strategy (OECD 2008).

Performance and Accountability - the financial crisis of 2008 and beyond

The global financial crisis of 2008 and its impact on Ireland as a national economic crisis, led to the Government taking a very different approach to public sector reform. Social partnership had broken down, and public spending was cut by €1.5bn in the budget of 2009 (RTE 2009). Following the election of a Government with a strong mandate for

reform in 2011, 23 years after the Department of Public Service was abandoned, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) was re-established to manage public sector expenditure, public service reform, political reform and pay and pensions reform and savings (DPER 2014). Taking functions from both the Department of Finance and Department of the Taoiseach, including responsibility for issues of public sector reform, industrial relations and expenditure control, the re-establishment of DPER ‘effectively saw the carving away of the public management function from the Department of Finance once again – this time joined by the public expenditure or Sectoral Policy Division’ (Ward 2015, p. 14).

In order to implement public service reform plans, hierarchical oversight and reporting structures were created. Led by the Taoiseach, a Cabinet sub-committee worked to ‘firmly link administrative reform with the national economic recovery effort’ (MacCarthaigh 2015, p. 7). New structures were created where across every sector of Government (including education), a ‘Senior Responsible Officer’ was put in place ‘with responsibility to ensure implementation of their respective reform projects’ (MacCarthaigh 2015, p. 7). Echoing the deficits in implementation and evaluation of earlier efforts in strategic planning, this move sought to ensure that reform efforts would be implemented and coordinated. As well as this, an Economic Management Council (EMC) was put in place to ensure that the cross-departmental policy commitments detailed in the Troika²⁴ programme (2010-2013) were implemented and completed in order that the Government could regain control over national economic policy (Hardiman *et al.* 2019). Indicative of this is the programme of reform for Irish public administration that has been in place since 2011 informed by a framework of reports, recovery and stabilisation programmes, reform and renewal plans, and agreements that include:

- The Report of the Task Force on the Public Service: Transforming Public Services (Department of the Taoiseach, 2008)
- OECD – Ireland, Towards an Integrated Public Service (2008)
- The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes (2009)
- EU/IMF Programme of Financial Support for Ireland (2010)
- The Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Group (2010)

²⁴ Representatives of the European Commission, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, colloquially referred to as the Troika, agreed with the Irish government a three-year financial aid programme on the condition of far-reaching austerity measures to be implemented.

- The Public Service (Croke Park) Agreement 2010-14 (2010)
- The National Recovery Plan 2011-14 (2010)
- The Programme for Government 2011
- Public Service Reform Plan 2011
- Action Plan for Jobs 2012
- The Public Service Stability (Haddington Road) Agreement 2013-2016
- Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016
- Civil Service Renewal Plan 2014
- Programme for Partnership Government 2016
- Our Public Service 2020

(Adapted from Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011, p. 12, Government of Ireland 2019a)

The establishment of DPER, which worked with the Department of Finance and the Economic Management Council to implement the Troika loan programme agreement reflect a NPM approach to strategy implementation i.e. ‘do more with less’ as well as a Network Governance ‘joined-up’ government approach (see Table 7 p. 68) within the public service in order to deliver the requirements of the Troika. Hood (2010) held that in times of austerity, governments aim to cut the cost of public services causing as little damage as possible to the quality and quantity of these services (Kippin *et al.* 2013) and the Public Service Reform Plans of 2011 and 2014 aimed to do this. They focused on reducing costs and increasing efficiency through cross-cutting strategies aimed at delivering improved outcomes to service users across a number of areas (including education) without affecting the outcomes to users (DPER 2016a). The most recent public service reform plan Our Public Service 2020, seeks to continue with performance budgeting, focus on key outputs and outcomes, identifying the ones that result in better public services for people and businesses and to ‘build this into the policy-making process’ (Government of Ireland 2017). In contrast to the earlier ‘soft’ adaptation of NPM, following the economic crisis of 2008, public reform is no longer symbolic. ‘In the spirit of ‘never waste a crisis’’(MacCarthaigh and Hardiman 2019) the administrative reform which has taken place goes beyond what was required by the Troika. It has resulted in the ‘implementation of a ‘wider, domestically generated administrative reform agenda’ (MacCarthaigh and Hardiman 2019, p. 4) characterised by accountability for cost-saving measures across a number of metrics. These include compliance in areas like procurement, HR practices and enhanced regulation e.g. legislation to regulate political lobbying and the introduction of protected disclosures legislation (MacCarthaigh and

Hardiman 2019). The introduction of centrally-controlled accountability structures by Government, taking an instrumental and technical approach to the implementation of planning, emphasising managements' responsibility to deliver the plan is indicative of a 'hard'²⁵ NPM approach to planning. Associated with this approach is a culture of compliance. The Code of Practice of the Governance of State Bodies (DPER 2016b) is indicative of the personality shift that has occurred in public management in Ireland during the crisis years led by the DPER. The 2016 Code was a revision of the 2009 Code, which was deemed to leave a lot to local interpretation. The 2016 Code sought to be more prescriptive, particularly in light of subsequent regulatory changes that have been introduced since the 2009 code. These include the Companies Act (2014), Protected Disclosures Act (2014), Single Public Service Pension Scheme, Public Spending Code, Office of Government Procurement and NewERA²⁶, all of which are referenced in the updated Code. The 2009 code is 39 pages long whereas the 2016 has 74 pages with four-associated Code requirement and guidance documents relating to Business and Financial Reporting, Audit and Risk Committee Guidance, Remuneration and Superannuation, and Board Self-Assessment Evaluation. Compliance with the provisions of the code is on a 'comply or explain' basis (DPER 2016b, p. 2). Indicative of the increased requirement for compliance, the word 'shall' is mentioned in the 2009 Code on two occasions, in the 2016 Code, it is mentioned 45 times (White 2018). This new governance Code demonstrates a major change in the relationship between the State and state bodies for the delivery of public services, where trust and confidence to deliver policy objectives is no longer left unsupervised. The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2009, 2016) now forms the framework for each HEIs Annual Statement of Governance and Internal Control that is returned to the HEA annually and forms part of the financial statements of each HEI.

²⁵ Hard NPM was about 'measurement, reward and punishment' (Ferlie and Geraghty 2005)

²⁶ NewEra is the New Economy and Recovery Authority (NewERA) which has specific responsibility to provide financial and commercial advice to Government Ministers in relation to leading State companies in the energy, water, postal and forestry sectors. These companies are An Post, Bord na Móna, Coillte, EirGrid plc, Ervia (including Gas Networks Ireland), Irish Water and ESB (these companies are collectively referred to as the "Designated Bodies"). Following agreement with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport ("DTTAS"), NewERA also provides ongoing financial and commercial advice in relation to CIÉ, daa plc, Dublin Port Company, Irish Aviation Authority, Port of Cork Company, Shannon Foynes Port Company and Shannon Group plc. National Treasury Management Agency (2019) *NewERA* [online], available: [accessed 09.05.19].

Part 2 - Policy and structural developments in Irish HE

Part 2 of this Chapter looks at the effect of public service reform on Irish HE and describes Irish HE policy and structural developments across social, cultural and economic development in the past half-century.

As reflected in Chapter 2, a rise in emphasis on state action during World War 2 to create the welfare state embedded traditional public administration as the model for governments to rebuild their economies through an efficient public service.

Ireland was different. Government economic policy from the 1920's to the late 1950's relied heavily on agriculture, and 'in respect of industrial policy it operated a largely protectionist strategy, attempting to develop indigenous industry based on import substitution and catering for the home market' (Clancy 2015, p. 20). Irish education policy between 1930 and 1960 was seen as being 'a static system for a static society' (Garvin 2004, p. 171). In 1936, a Government interdepartmental committee saw no need to raise the school leaving age to beyond 14 for reasons including the availability of agricultural labour and cost (Hyland and Milne 1992). Low levels of investment, poor management of resources, a lack of planning, and the control of the Catholic Church, resulted in an education system that demonstrated 'a poverty of ambition, an absence of faith in human potential and an aversion among the educated elite towards the notion of state involvement in planning for the expansion of educational opportunities' (M. O'Connor 2014, p. 198).

High levels of emigration and unemployment in the 1950's led the Government to adopt an economic development policy, which moved towards industrialisation, the attraction of foreign direct investment, and export led growth (O'Sullivan 2005). Indicative of the thinking at the time, the first *Programme for Economic Expansion* published by the Government in 1958 did not include the Department of Education in the inter-departmental team that was to implement the programme. However, by 1963, the second *Programme for Economic Expansion* report gave a full chapter to education as being a key facilitator in the transformation process of the Irish economy (Ryan 1963/1964). The change in government policy to move away from an insular process of nation-building that emphasised Catholic restoration and Gaelic nationalism towards the development of human capital represented a paradigm shift in policy away from a 'theocentric to mercantile paradigm' (O'Sullivan 2005, p. 104).

The Irish Government recognised the link between education and the need for a skilled workforce in order to attract FDI in the 1960's. Evidence of this is the report of the OECD and DoE Report *Investment in Education* (Government of Ireland 1965), which is recognised as being seminal to the transformation of the Irish education system in the 1960's (Coolahan 1981, M. O'Connor 2014, Clancy 2015). This report has been described as 'the foundation document of Irish modern education' (Clancy 2015, p. 20). Informed by international thinking, this report took an evidence-based approach to demonstrate that the countries that had invested in post-primary education post WW2 were prospering in the 1960's and presented a 'blueprint for reform' and 'a powerful source of legitimacy for greater activism by the state in Irish education' (Walsh 2008). The reports key research question 'related to the adequacy of educational provision in the context of future skills needs' (M. O'Connor 2014, p. 196). It recognised that a plan needed to be put in place to create a mass system of secondary education in order to provide the human capital required to meet the needs of the economy. The Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, announced the introduction of free second-level education in 1966. The introduction of free secondary education represented a paradigm shift in government policy for a number of reasons. It represented the beginning of a move away from a church-influenced nationalist, theocentric-type model towards a human capital one. It stated that 'education is now accepted as an investment of national resources' and that 'economic expansion and the full development of the potential of our citizens is impossible, if at every level the necessary educational resources do not exist to sustain and advance these aims' (M. O'Connor 2014, p. 199).

The massification of second level education led to a cohort of students ready to go on to third-level education. Influenced by the success of the polytechnics in England, a recommendation by the OECD in 1963 for the establishment of Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) in Ireland was seized on by O'Malley, who established a Steering Committee on Technical Education. This committee recommended the establishment of eight new technical colleges to provide short-cycle, sub-degree level applied programmes and apprenticeships (often in conjunction with the national Industrial Training Authority (AnCO) working under the aegis of Vocational Education Committees (VECs). The remit of the RTCs was to meet the employment and economic development needs of their local areas (M. O'Connor 2014, p. 16). Importantly, by keeping the reporting lines between the RTCs and VECs back to the DES, the Government ensured that it held control over the provision of 'applied' education, aimed at meeting the needs of the jobs market. Two

National Institutes for Higher Education (NIHEs) were established in Limerick (1972) and Dublin (1980) to provide higher-level technical education to degree level.

The introduction of the RTCs and NIHEs alongside the universities created a binary system of higher education in Ireland. Their remit was to produce skilled, technical manpower whilst the universities retained their mission and status in keeping with the traditional concept of university education as ‘a good in itself, as an intrinsic asset that confers a particular benefit on the community as well as on the individual’ (Commission on Higher Education 1967, p. 118). While the State provided most of the funding for the university sector, it upheld the precedent of university autonomy subject to the caveat by the Commission that ‘institutional autonomy must obviously be subject to limitation, especially where institutions had to rely largely on subventions from public funds’ (Clancy, 2015, p. 253).

The establishment of the HEA

Initially established on an ad-hoc basis in 1968, the HEA was given statutory powers under the Higher Education Authority Act (1971). Influenced by the University Grants Commission in the UK, the 1967 Commission recommended the establishment of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as the planning and development body for higher education in Ireland.

The general functions of the HEA included:

- development of HE;
- co-ordination of State investment in HE and preparing proposals for such investment;
- continuous review of the demand for HE;
- promotion of appreciation of the value of HE and research;
- promotion of the attainment of equality of opportunity in HE and the democratisation of the structure of HE;
- allocation of grants voted by the Oireachtas among universities and designated institutions (Higher Education Authority Act 1971, P. O'Connor 2014)

The Act gave autonomy and control to the HEA particularly in the area of the capital and current grant allocations to the HEIs. However, as HEIs were public services, other financial matters, for example salaries and conditions of employment of the public servants that worked in the HEIs, remained within the remit of the Department of Finance.

From its inception until the mid-1980's, the HEA dealt only with the institutions designated in the HEA Act 1971, namely the Universities, and Thomond College. The DES held responsibility for the Colleges of Education, RTCs (now IoTs) and the NIHEs in Limerick and Dublin. 'The retention by the Government of direct control over a substantial segment of the HE system made it possible to direct the activities of these colleges in the pursuit of objectives formulated by the state' (Clancy, 2015, p. 255). By 1985, 59% of students in the HE system were attending institutions regulated under the HEA Act, and 41% were attending colleges within the direct state control of the DES.

Ireland's approach to the development of the HE sector in the period 1960-1985 is reflective of the evolution of HE systems (particularly the UK) and also the pattern of progressive state intervention in HE in other European Countries recognised by Scott (Scott 1985). The first phase in this pattern is where countries trusted the institutional autonomy of their HEIs (as was the case in the 1960's allowing institutional autonomy without any state interference other than accountability for finances) and the HE system was dominated by universities. Phase two was where countries then developed binary systems of HE targeting the technological sector for the most rapid growth (as occurred in Ireland in the 1960's and 1970's). Phase three was where the state attempted to determine the disciplinary balance in HEIs to meet human capital needs. This phase occurred in Ireland in the 1980's commencing with the *White Paper on Educational Development* (1980). This paper proposed that funding would be provided 'with a view to ensuing priority of allocation of resources for such identified areas of national development' and that 'the Minister for Education will direct the attention of the HEA to the need for ensuring that funds made available by the Government for particular projects should be appropriated accordingly' (Oireachtas 1980, p. 70). This is illustrative of Irish public sector policy in the 1980's, where during a period of severe austerity, characterised by budget cuts, unemployment and an embargo on public sector recruitment, Government prioritised economic planning with the development of human capital at its centre.

Notwithstanding the budget cuts, in the 1980's, legislative developments took place which upgraded NIHE Limerick and NIHE Dublin to university status in 1989, establishing two new universities, the University of Limerick and Dublin City University (University of Limerick Act 1989, Dublin City University Act 1989), thus adding two new universities to the HEA's remit.

In 2018, the DES commenced a review of the HEA Act (1971).

The introduction of the Universities Act (1997)

By the 1990's, the future of HE was examined in a number of policy documents generated by the DES and the HEA, including:

- The Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* (DES, 1992)
- The Report of the Steering Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education (HEA, 1995)
- The White Paper *Charting our Education Future* (DES, 1995)

As a consequence of these policy documents other legislation was brought forward including the 1992 RTC Act (Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992) which removed the oversight of the RTCs from the VEC's and the DIT Act (Dublin Institute of Technology Act 1992) which allowed DIT to confer its own degrees. The 1995 White Paper *Charting our Education Future* (DES 1995), identified deficits in strategic planning in the Department going back to the 1960's. It proposed devolution of power to regional, school or institutional level to allow the DES to focus on 'strategic planning and policy and on the execution of those activities most efficiently conducted at national level' (DES 1995, p. 202). It discussed the SMI and its requirement that the DES focus on 'outcomes and associated measures of performance and effectiveness' (DES 1995, p. 203). An example of this was the identification of the need for the DES to be able to compare the Irish education system's performance internationally in accordance with the OECD 'Education at a Glance' annual reports. Similar to Pollit and Bouckaert's 'trajectories of reform' idea, where different patterns of NPM reform were identified and countries could be bundled in accordance with the way they adopted NPM, in the Irish public service system the extent and patterns of accountability varied markedly across different Departments. Within education, 'the extent and patterns of accountability have varied markedly across educational levels from elementary to higher education. These structured differences reveal much about the socio-political and cultural situatedness of policy borrowing and implementation' (Wall 2010, p. 3). The replication of the binary system of universities and polytechnics in the UK indicates that there was some policy borrowing from the UK in the 1960's and 70's. By the 1990's *Charting our Education Future* (1995) set out the legislative and constitutional framework for educational development including the provision for University legislation. This was enacted in 1997 through the Universities Act of which Section 34 (1) set out the requirement for each governing authority to prepare a strategic plan for not less than three years, in accordance with the SMI Strategy Statements initiative. The Universities Act (1997) introduced new levels of

accountability into the Irish HE sector and formed the basis for ‘devolved and autonomous governance and management within a tightly prescribed regulatory framework’ (Wall 2010, p. 5). This is the key Act that introduced strategic planning into Irish HE and will be discussed further below.

The Irish case reflects the evolution of HE systems in the UK where, as a consequence of the massification of HE the ‘growing size and complexity of universities as organisations demanded an upgrading of managerial capacity...right across the universities functions – academic planning, financial systems, estates management, personnel policies, marketing and external relations’ (Scott 1995, p. 64). The professionalisation of university administration saw ‘the waxing of executive leadership and professionalised administration and the waning of academic self-government’ (Scott 1995, p. 64). This is credited with creating the capacity ‘for the strategic planning tasks of the 1990s’ (Scott 1995, p. 65) where strategic planning became a cornerstone in the management of the university system in the UK in order to enable the institutions to become more individualised and to develop their own distinctive missions and strategies to compete in the market.

Part 3 –Approaches to strategic planning in Irish HE

The seven Irish Universities are Dublin City University (DCU), NUI Maynooth (NUIM/MU), National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Cork (UCC), University College Dublin (UCD) and the University of Limerick (UL). The Universities Act (1997) sets the infrastructure of accountability and governance for the university sector in Ireland.

It also set out a range of objectives including:

- advancing knowledge through teaching and research;
- contributing to the social and cultural life of society;
- encouraging independent critical thinking;
- fostering the Irish language and culture;
- facilitating the attainment of national economic and social goals;
- training professional, technical and managerial elites;
- acting as a societal resource in terms of knowledge and research;

- facilitating life-long learning and promoting gender equality (Universities Act 1997, P. O'Connor 2014).

The 1997 Universities Act made it a requirement for the institutions to engage in strategic planning. It also gave the HEA additional powers including oversight of university strategic development plans and quality assurance policies. The Skilbeck Report on international trends and issues with particular reference to Ireland (2001) was jointly commissioned by the HEA and the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities to assist the universities in strategic planning. The publication of this report ‘led to an extensive national debate over the appropriate role and aims of universities’ (OECD 2004, p. 15). The Skilbeck report reflected a Strategic Positioning School / Resource Based View of strategy emphasising that universities needed to ‘enlarge and improve their institutional capabilities’ in areas including governance and management, lifelong learning, sources of university income, strategic alliances, teaching and learning, research, and serving regional and local communities (Skilbeck 2001). These are amongst the key themes that are now being implemented as part of the Hunt Report.

The Lisbon Strategy in 2000 undertook ‘to make the Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010’ (Lisbon European Council 2000) signalling a move by Europe to ‘embrace the ‘knowledge economy’. Irish policy followed suit (Harpur 2010) with the ‘National Development Plan (2006) pledge to enhance enterprise development, and ‘improve economic performance, competitiveness ... generate new enterprise “winners” from the indigenous sector [and] attract high added value foreign direct investment’. This placed higher education and university-based research at the centre of policy-making in a dramatic new way’ (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1345). Sectoral projects produced by the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) organised by the HEA and supported under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006 (GOI 2000), aimed to ‘establish and publish good practice for Irish Universities in the key areas of Teaching and Learning, Research, Strategic Planning/Management and Administration’ (IUQB 2008, p. 2). These sectoral project areas were selected based on recommendations arising from reviews required under the Universities Act as well as recommendations from institutional reviews. One project was the IUQB ‘Good Practice Guide – In Strategic Planning for Academic Units in Irish Universities’ (IUQB 2008). This set out to fulfil a variety of functions including the provision of guidelines for strategic planning, the recommendation of an organisational

and policy framework in which the design of plans take place and the identification of principal contemporary policy issues in strategic planning for Irish universities.

Other research on the process of strategic planning in Irish HEIs reported that in the initial phase of strategic planning, Irish universities used the strategic plans of international HEIs, other actors in the public sector and the corporate sector as guidance in terms of the process of strategic planning (Lillis and Lynch 2013). The same research stated that up until 2013, a predominantly classical, linear, rational, design school strategic planning model was used to conduct strategic planning, with the plans setting out a mission, vision, goals, objectives and targets (Lillis and Lynch 2013). The OECD Review of Financial Management and Governance in HEI's in Ireland (OECD 2004) noted that 'Strong institutional management requires planning, action and oversight not significantly different from that of a large corporation competing in the open market' (OECD 2004, p. 15). Some criticised the use of classical approaches to strategic planning in HE, arguing that 'the analytic nature of the rational approach is at odds with the known difficulties relating to the use of quantitative performance measurement in higher education' (Lillis and Lynch 2013, p. 7). Other reports questioned the appropriateness of the adoption of principal-agent theory in higher education which is traditionally collegiate and academically liberated (Lambert 2003).

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report 2011)

The process to prepare a national strategy for higher education in Ireland commenced in February 2009 (Buckley 2010). A high-level strategy group comprised of national and international experts, chaired by Dr Colin Hunt, led the process. This group produced the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, which was launched in January 2011 and is known as the Hunt Report. This is the overarching strategy for Irish HE. It was launched during a period of austerity and sought to make the HE system more flexible, responsive, accountable and performance orientated. Influenced by the OECD (2006) review of Irish HE Policy, the national strategy sought to develop a performance dialogue between the HEA and the HEI's in order to align institutional strategies with national priorities. Savings were to be made by eliminating duplication of programmes, and incentivising mergers and clusters. Up until 2010, the regulatory system for Irish Higher Education was concerned principally with financial and governance accountability, rather than performance accountability (Wall 2010). The Hunt Report represented a significant change in planning for performance in Irish HE, as it was quickly followed by the HEA's Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape report (HEA 2012). This report set out

proposals for the implementation of the national strategy in the sector and aimed to ‘assist institutions to set out a medium term (approximately 5 years) strategy that builds on institutional strengths and contributes to national needs’ (HEA 2012 , p.2). Both the Hunt Report and the Towards a Future Landscape Report have resulted in increased engagement between the HEA and HEIs around planning for performance.

Implementation of the Hunt Report

A three-year System Performance Framework was introduced in 2014, where institutional performance compacts set out to align the missions, strategies and priorities of the publicly funded HEI’s with national priorities. ‘In this respect, the Irish HE system is reflecting a pattern [being] developed in Australia, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Hong Kong’ (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1348), all countries recognised by Pollit and Bouckaert as NPM Marketisers or Modernisers (Pollit and Bouckaert 2004). This ‘Strategic Dialogue’ process required each HEI to set out in a performance compact how they would perform across seven dimensions over 3 years commencing in the academic year 2014/15. The dimensions were: 1) Meeting Ireland’s human capital needs, 2) Equity of access and student pathways, 3) Excellence in teaching and learning and the quality of the student experience, 4) Excellent public research and knowledge exchange actors, 5) Globally competitive and internationally oriented institutions, 6) Restructuring for quality and diversity 7) Accountability for public funding and public service reform (HEA 2014). These dimensions are consistent with many of the objects of the Universities Act but also include two new dimensions, namely internationalisation and accountability. The national priorities are not only contained in the Hunt Report, but in a number of strategies, both specific to the sector and cross-cutting with other Government Departments which are now driving reform in the Irish education system at present. They include:

- National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report, 2011)
- National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020
- Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape
- Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland
- National Skills Strategy 2025
- Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020
- Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019
- Action Plan for Education 2016-2019

- Innovation 2020
- Investing in National Ambition: A Strategy for Funding Higher Education
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19
- Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland
- Irish Educated, Globally Connected (International education)
- Enterprise 2025 (National employment strategy)
- National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship - OECD Review of Entrepreneurship in Higher Education / HEI Innovate
- Foreign Languages Strategy
- National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions
- Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework
- Framework for Junior Cycle
- National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020
- 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030
- Future Jobs Ireland 2019
- Evolving policy / strategy in relation to specific areas e.g. Teacher supply

(Adapted from DES 2016)²⁷

The increasing influence of organisations such as the OECD, the EU, APEC, UNESCO and the World Bank on education systems worldwide has created a new aspect to the development of human capital which is characterised by concepts such as ‘learning attributes’ and ‘flexibility’ (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, p. 82). Politicians accept and embrace these concepts and willingly bundle the education sector into the economic development agenda as evidenced in the numerous strategies and action plans detailed above which cross-cut Government departments and involve HE. This demonstrates that the HEIs operate in a multi-actor, nested system and that they are now required to align their own strategies with national and international strategies, national and international policy and to engage with a core set of stakeholders to ascertain what is expected and needed from them.

Procedurally, the performance compacts are analysed by means of an annual strategic dialogue bi-lateral panel meeting between each HEI and the HEA with external experts

²⁷ supplemented by information given at the launch of the System Performance Framework by the HEA and other strategies launched in 2019

sitting on the panels and advising the HEA. For the first two cycles (2014/2015 and 2015/16) the performance of HEI's was categorised into Category 1 - high performance, Category 2 - room for improvement and Category 3 -reduced funding due to under-performance in the compact (HEA 2019e). This process introduced a performance-based element to institutional funding for the first time. The HEA announced in spring 2017 that the institutional evaluation statement would no longer use the numerical categories but instead would present outcomes based on both the strengths and weaknesses identified through the Strategic Dialogue Cycle 3 process (HEA 2019f). Since then, the HEA have published more nuanced 'reflections on outcomes' following the bi-lateral meetings.

The HEA evaluated the performance of the HE system at the end of the period 2014-2017. The evaluation report measured the outcomes of the system against the seven dimensions over a three-year period using a traffic light system. It also presented the results of each institutions' performance against the 36 indicators in the Annual Statement of Governance and Internal Control which is a requirement of the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies using a similar traffic light system (HEA 2017b). The importance of compliance with the 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies was highlighted in the HEA evaluation report which warned against lapses in governance stating that 'there have been managerial and/or governance lapses that risk bringing the whole sector into disrepute' (HEA 2017b). It states that the system 'will need to maintain the trust of Government and the HEA' (HEA 2017b). The HEA noted the compact process had enabled the collection of common data sets (in keeping with the OECD 2004 recommendation).

The evaluation report commended the system's performance across a number of dimensions including increased student numbers, research and internationalisation. It noted that there was room for improvement in the areas of workloads, Human Resource Management (HRM), industrial liaison, life-long learning and flexible learning. The evaluation report noted that additional resources (including HR, budgetary and external funding resources) would be required by the system in order to achieve the goal in the National Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 that 'the Irish Education and Training System should become the best in Europe over the next decade'(DES 2016, p. 1).

A new System Performance Framework for the period 2018-2021 was launched in 2018 (HEA 2019c). It has six objectives and 46 associated targets. As was the case with the first system performance framework, performance funding is allocated by the HEA based on performance relating to high-level targets set out in the Framework. For this cycle,

institutions are required to detail a maximum of two institutional strategic priorities under each of the six framework headings. The objectives are as follows:

- 1) Strong talent pipeline, knowledge, skills, employability, responding to the needs of enterprise, public service and community sectors, nationally and regionally maintaining Ireland as a leader in Europe for skill availability (9 targets)
- 2) Create rich opportunities for national and international engagement, which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community (8 targets)
- 3) Excellent research, development and innovation and growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society to strengthen our standing to become an innovation leader in Europe (6 targets)
- 4) Significantly improves the equality of opportunity through education and training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population. (6 targets)
- 5) Demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on academic excellence (6 targets)
- 6) Demonstrates consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence (11 targets)

At the launch of the System Performance Framework 2018-2021, the HEA stated that the purposes of the framework as established in 2013 remain valid. They are:

- To hold the system accountable for performance for the delivery of national priorities and to monitor performance of the system as a whole
- To articulate all of the expectations of the system from different areas of government/agencies across the various dimensions of higher education activity
- To increase the visibility of performance of the system to Government and the wider public
- To contribute to system and policy development by highlighting structural and other deficits including data capacity
- To allow HEIs to identify their strategic niche and mission and agree a performance compact aligned with funding with the HEA.

The system performance framework is evidence of the Governments' centrally-controlled accountability structures taking an instrumental and technical approach to the implementation of the Hunt Report in the universities, emphasising managements' responsibility to deliver national priorities and to be accountable for a range of defined and economically related results. The HEA has acknowledged that the strategic dialogue process has allowed the HEA to 'interrogate institutional strategies' (HEA 2017a). All of this is evidence of an increasingly hard NPM²⁸ approach to planning in the Irish HE sector.

Summary of the evolution of Irish HE alongside the drivers and influences on strategic planning in Irish HE

Table 8 sets out MacCarthaigh's (2012a) four phases of State development and Scott's phases of state intervention in HE (1985) and evolution of HE (1995) alongside the drivers and influences on strategic planning in Irish HE during each phase. This identifies which public management strategic planning model is evident in each era.

²⁸ Hard NPM was about 'measurement, reward and punishment' (Ferlie and Geraghty 2005).

MacCarthaigh Phase of State development	Drivers and influences on strategic planning in Irish HE	Scott's phases of state intervention in HE and evolution of the HE system	Policy driver	PA model of strategic planning
Emergent phase (1922-1947)	Irish education policy and practice is seen as being 'a static system for a static society' (Garvin 2004, p. 171).	Phase 1) countries trusted the institutional autonomy of their HEIs	Government policy largely protectionist, insular, school-leaving age was 14.	Traditional PA - Policy and strategy preserve of political leadership
Development phase (1948 – 1970)	Mass system of secondary education introduced in 1966, RTCs established in late 1960's to meet the employment and economic development needs of their local areas. Adoption of the Human Capital approach to improve the economy.	Phase 2) Countries then developed binary systems of HE targeting the technological sector for the most rapid growth	Programme for Economic Expansion (1963) Investment in Education Report (1965) Devlin Report (1969)	Traditional PA -Bureaucratic delivery of services to the public in the public interest – 1965 - adoption of Human Capital approach by government.
Modernisation phase (1971-1990)	'Emphasis on shaping the educational system to meet the demands of the labour market' (Clancy, 1998 in Lynch 2012, p. 93). NIHE Limerick (1972) and Dublin (1980) established to provide higher-level technical education., both subsequently given university status. Funding was provided in accordance with identified areas of national development	Phase 2) Countries then developed binary systems of HE targeting the technological sector for the most rapid growth	HEA Act (1971) White Paper on Educational Development (1980)	Traditional PA - Hierarchical, accountability, emphasis on economic planning with the development of human capital at its centre.
Management and Reform phase (1991-2010)	An emphasis on the need for accountability with a focus on performance and value for money. Requirement for the universities to engage in strategic planning. Responsibility for accountability within the management structure of the institutions rather than with faculty.	Phase 3) Attempts by the state to determine the disciplinary balance in HEIs to meet human capital needs	1995 Education White Paper (DES 1995), Strategic Management Initiative (1994) Universities Act (1997)	NPM (soft), Introduction of managerialism, strategic plans output focused, institutionally oriented.
New phase that could be called Accountability and Compliance Phase 2011-date	HE policy was a 'sub-set of economic policy' (Clancy 2015). Hunt Report and the associated System Performance Framework aligned the missions, strategies and priorities of the HEIs with national priorities and introduced a performance-based element to institutional funding for the first time. Human Capital approach.	New phase that could be Phase 4) HEIs are responsible and accountable for the delivery of National HE strategy through their strategic plans. HEIs also develop distinctive missions and strategies to compete in the market.	Hunt 2011, Establishment of DPER (2011) Human Capital approach - numerous strategies and action plans which cross-cut Government departments and involve HE.	Traditional PA – Conformity, reporting budgeting. NPM (hard) and some evidence of Network Governance, cross-cutting Government strategies driving reform with accountability for performance against a range of defined and economically related results. Leaders responsible for results.

Table 8 - MacCarthaigh's (2012) phases of State Development and Scott's phases of state intervention in HE (1985) and evolution of HE (1995) mapped on to the landscape of Irish HE development 1922-2019 and the associated PA model of strategic planning in each era.

Adapted from: (Scott 1995, Garvin 2004, Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin 2009, Lynch et al. 2012, MacCarthaigh 2012a, Scott 1985, Scott 1995)

Table 8 demonstrates the evolution of Irish HE from 1922 to date, the drivers and influences on strategic planning, how they reflect what was happening in other systems at the time, the policy drivers in Ireland and the associated public management model. It suggests that traditional public administration was the prevalent model up to the 1990's and that the 1994 SMI and the 1997 Universities Act introduced managerialism and strategic planning into Irish public services including universities. It illustrates that NPM approaches to strategic planning in Irish HE have been present since the 1990's in a soft form. It may be argued that MacCarthaigh's (2012a) phase of state development, which was characterised by management and reform dominated by managerialism, has moved on to a new phase since 2010. The introduction of the 2011 Hunt Report coupled with the establishment of DPER (which enabled the Network Governance characteristic of cross-cutting strategies to be operationalised) have led to a harder type NPM messages being directed towards the universities with the expectation that these will be reflected in their strategic planning processes. This is now being implemented by Government through the HEA acting as the regulator of the system, monitoring performance through compacts, which are the responsibility of the President of each institution to deliver. Therefore this new phase is characterised by performance-based accountability with an audit culture of compliance that is linked to strategic planning and is both cross cutting and evaluative.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the historical context for organisation and planning in Irish public administration and HE from 1922-2019. It detailed the development of public management system and the evolution of planning in the public sector. It discussed the Investment in Education report (1965), the Devlin Report (1969), the SMI (1994), the establishment of DPER (2011) and how these public management developments impacted on the HE sector. It discussed the structural developments in Irish HE between in the period 1997-2019 during which time the 1997 Universities Act was introduced, the economic crisis of 2008 took place and the 2011 Hunt Report was introduced and how all of these developments affected approaches to strategic planning in the universities. The literature suggests that the influence of organisations including the OECD, World Bank and EU have led to policy borrowing among countries. It suggests that Ireland borrowed HE policies from the UK, including the establishment of a binary system of HE in the 1970's. It also confirmed that the system of performance compacts between the HEIs and the State reflect patterns in countries recognised by Pollit and Bouckaert as NPM Marketisers or Modernisers (2004).

Table 7 at the end of Chapter 2 (p. 68) summarised how each of the public management approaches interpreted and operationalised strategic planning and Table 8 above traced the effects of state development, the Governments intervention in HE, the policy drivers and how the related public administration approaches interpreted strategic planning. These tables will inform the operational framework for this study which is detailed in Chapter 5 – Research Design and Methodology along with the overall research design and methodological approach of the study. In landscaping these developments in broader public administration in Ireland and how they have been incorporated into the university sector since 1997, this chapter brings together the literature on strategic planning and public sector management in Ireland. In unifying the two literatures that often don't speak to each other, it allows a broader range of tools to be assembled to analyse the empirical experience of planning in Irish universities. While discussions of NPM often associate the application of private sector management techniques within public management, the exact application of techniques such as strategic planning is not often elaborated. This chapter does this in the context of Irish public administration and its adoption of strategic planning and its application in the HE sector.

Chapter 5 – Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents and justifies the qualitative methodological approaches adopted for this study. Based on the findings of the literature review, it sets out the operational framework and research design and methodology employed for this study including the techniques and methods used for data collection and data analysis. It also details the limitations and ethical considerations for the study.

This is a qualitative study consisting of a) a desk-based detailed review of the content of the strategic plans of the seven Irish universities in the post Universities Act period 1997-2019, and b) detailed semi-structured Elite Interviews with current and past leaders in the field of Irish HE. These people include University Presidents, Senior Public Officials, one former Minister for Education, senior representatives of key stakeholder bodies and senior individuals with responsibility for strategic planning in Irish universities.

Operational Framework

The literature review in Chapters 2, 3 and the contextual considerations presented in Chapter 4 identified the key characteristics of each public management approach to strategic planning and how they have evolved within the context of social, economic and political development over the past half century and how this has been reflected in Irish public administration and in the management of Irish HE. This research seeks to critically examine to what extent strategic planning in Irish universities is driven by New Public Management as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach.

Table 7 (p. 68) set out how each public management approach interpreted and operationalised the process of formulating, implementing and evaluating strategic planning. It set out seven areas that emerged from the literature as key pillars to which approaches to strategic planning by the different public management approaches can be assessed. In constructing an operational framework for this study, these seven key pillars were used to examine approaches to strategic planning through the lenses of the four approaches to public management to discover to what extent Irish universities strategic plans are driven by NPM, or if a broader concept of Public Value Management is present in the outcomes. These pillars are set out in Table 9.

Pillar	Approach to strategic planning
1	The drivers of and influences on strategic planning
2	The process of strategy formulation
3	The extent of stakeholder engagement / involvement
4	The key characteristics / distinctiveness of the plans
5	Implementation Responsibility and Control
6	Operational capacity - the resources necessary to deliver the plan and whether they are referenced.
7	Review, measurement and evaluation

Table 9 - The seven pillars which emerged from the literature to which approaches to strategic planning should be assessed

In order to test and refine the operational framework a desk-based detailed review of the content of the strategic plans of the seven Irish universities in the post Universities Act period 1997-2019 was conducted. The content analysis of the strategic plans was conducted in a two-phase process. This process is detailed below in the section on Data Collection. The result of the content analysis is that the pillars of the Operational Framework were further refined from seven to five. Table 10 illustrates this process.

Pillar	First round coding – open coding²⁹	Refined operational framework themes
1. The drivers of and the influences on strategic planning	Targeting Societal Benefit; Government Strategy; Rankings; Universities Act (1997) - (Teaching and Learning, Research, Access, Gender, Gaeilge); Linkage to other planning processes (also linked to 4 below); HR; Retention; Internationalisation; OECD; Assumptions	1. Visibility of key drivers – influences
2. The process by which planning is carried out and 3. The extent of internal and external stakeholder engagement / involvement and the weighting of their views – taken together	Linkage and relationship with other planning processes (also linked to 1 above); Link to Quality Review; the actual process of planning; existence of a SP committee; use of consultants Consultation processes internal and external; Public Administration Model; Evidence of quantitative targets with persons responsible; relationship with internal and external stakeholders and broader community; who the stakeholders are; what they want to deliver to stakeholders	2. Planning process – design, responsibility and control, GA composition, SP approaches, internal and external stakeholder engagement
4. Characteristics of the plans – distinctiveness	Articulation of values; Graduate attributes; Claims for Achievements; Description of Challenges; Description of Institution; Mission; Vision; Values; Strategic Priorities	3. Characteristics of the plans - Articulation of vision - mission - values; description of mission, description of vision, distinctiveness of mission Strategic priorities – How they are set out (methods) - What are they?
5. Implementation, responsibility and control and 6. The creation of dedicated operational capacity to deliver the plan (and the process of winning people over) – taken together	Resourcing; strategic alliances; reference to context, economic crash, building economy Implementation of SP	4. Implementation and Resourcing – link to financial planning, planning implementation capacity – internal dissemination, relationship with other planning processes,
7. Monitoring, review and learning mechanisms	Evaluation of SP;	5. Review, measurement evaluation,; Reporting, Claims for achievements; Context setting; Foresight planning - environmental scanning

Table 10 – Refining the operational framework themes

²⁹ Open coding - where the strategic plans were read and notes were made of words, theories and phrases that sum up what was bring said in the text.

Table 11 sets out the final operational framework pillars.

Pillar number	Approaches to strategic planning
1	Visibility of key drivers of and influences on strategic planning
2	Planning process –design, responsibility and control, governing authority composition, strategic planning approaches, internal and stakeholder engagement
3	Characteristics of the plans - articulation of vision, mission, values and strategic priorities
4	Implementation and resourcing - link to financial planning, implementation capacity – internal dissemination, relationship with other planning processes
5	Review, Measurement, Evaluation

Table 11 - The five pillars of the operational framework

Table 12 below sets out the Operational Framework. This relates these five pillars to the theoretical approaches to strategic planning across the four approaches to public administration. The key characteristics of the theoretical approaches to strategic planning by each of the four approaches to public management are used as ‘DNA markers’ to identify which public management approach to strategic planning is evident in the content analysis of the strategic plans, establishing a clear connection between the theoretical aspects and the empirical components of the work.

These five pillars and key characteristics of each approach to strategic planning (DNA markers) were used to frame the Elite Interview questions to discover from the participants what their preferred approach to strategic planning was, whether it has changed over time and whether there is existing evidence of a Public Value Management approach already incorporated in strategic planning or potential for one in the future. The interview data collected was triangulated with the content analysis of the HEI strategic plans to ascertain whether the findings correlated. This operational framework enabled an analysis of Universities’ approaches to strategic planning to be viewed through the lenses of each of the four public management approaches examined in this study. In particular, it allowed theories of Public Value Management to be explored ‘in the real world’.

Key characteristics - 'DNA markers'				
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
1. Visibility of key drivers - influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and strategy preserve of political leadership • Responsiveness to rules and regulations • Hierarchical decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market principles dominate • Efficiency, effectiveness • Reducing state expenditure • Focus on input and output metrics • Measurement, reward, punishment (hard NPM) • Management 'steering' • Implementation overseen by agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networked, emphasis on the customer / stakeholder preferences and the provision of high quality services and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on responding to citizen and service user preferences including and beyond the economic market • A wide authorising environment focusing on outcomes that are of public value
2 The Planning process –design, responsibility and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic culture • One best way of working • Focus on short-term results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down, rational, linear process • Limited range of stakeholders • Measurement of outputs through performance indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more balanced process of formulating strategy that is guided by government and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A democratic process with a broad range of stakeholders who are involved at all stages of the strategic planning process.
3.Characteristics of the plans - distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic delivery of services to the public in the public interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionally oriented • Performance aligned to narrow range of defined economically oriented results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on responding to network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader authorising environment leads to institution specific priorities and more distinctive mission • Set targets for a range of societal concerns
4. Implementation and resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public servants 'rowing' & accountable to politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emphasis on managements responsibility to deliver the plan 'do more with less' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on achievement of results by negotiating through networks and integrating lines of accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan considers the opportunity cost of redeploying resources from one service to another, opportunity cost and operational capacity
5. Review and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchical accountability • Emphasis on inputs • Conformity, reporting budgeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionally oriented • Output focused • Emphasis on meeting requirements of increased regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan evaluation and feedback includes network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on learning lessons and reflection on outcomes with a wider range of authorising actors who are all involved in the evaluation process.

Table 12 - The Operational Framework

The Research Design and Overarching Methodology

Creswell (2009) states that there are three components which connect to create a research design, namely philosophical worldviews, strategies of inquiry and research methods.

In terms of the philosophical worldview, this study is situated within a constructivist ontological paradigm. Constructivism recognises that both the researcher and participant's interpretation and knowledge of the field comes from their own experience and that there are multiple socially constructed realities (Mertens 2010, Brosnan 2013).

An interpretivist epistemology is used, as there is an interactive link between researcher and participants with the researcher positioned within the research context, and it is acknowledged that both are influenced by their own background, experience and values (Creswell 2009, Mertens 2010).

This ontology and epistemology fit with the qualitative strategy of enquiry using the research methods of Elite Interviews and the content analysis of the strategic plans, which are required to answer the research question. A qualitative approach was taken to this study because it enabled a deep and rich insight into the process of strategic planning in Irish HE, the rationale behind it and the public management approaches that influence it. Table 13 sets out Creswell's (2009) characteristics of qualitative research and the details of how they match the research design for this thesis.

Creswell Characteristics	How Creswell was applied in this thesis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research is conducted in the field with participants in their natural setting, meeting them face to face and seeing them behave and act within their own context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Elite Interviews’ approach was selected as the most suitable method to gather data from leaders and experts³⁰ in the field of Irish HE in their own workplaces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher is the key instrument as they collect the data through examining documents, observing behaviour or interview participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desk-based detailed content analysis of the strategic plans of each HEI was conducted by the researcher to inform the construction of the questions for the semi-structured Elite Interviews.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research process is emergent, meaning that at the outset the plan cannot be too rigid, as when the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data, the questions may change, or the participants or places studied may be changed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary data analysis (i.e. the desk-based detailed content analysis of the strategic plans) enabled the pillars of the operational framework to be refined from seven to five. • Using the data collected from the content analysis, a semi-structured approach was taken to the Elite Interviews. • Two sets of semi-structured interview questions were devised. One set for Presidents/ Strategic Planners and a second set for Senior Public Officials/ Politicians/ Stakeholders /Academic Commentators. This was to ensure that the data collected would provide the major source of evidence as to the actual process of strategic planning in Irish Universities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants’ meanings are the focus of the learning as opposed to the researchers understanding of the problem, or what is expressed in the literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Elite Interviews examined the unique attitudes, opinions and experiences of influential people in the Irish HE system to the evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities, in order to try to discern patterns, themes, similarities and differences among them. • With self-perception as a key component of meaning-making, this qualitative approach to the research allowed the participants to tell their story from their perspective and relate their own experiences to the researcher.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A theoretical lens is often used by qualitative researchers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this thesis, the theoretical lenses used were those of the four approaches to public management as set out in the operational framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research is interpretive, meaning that the researcher, the participants and the reader all interpret the study from their own perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This fits with the interpretivist epistemology above.

Table 13 - Creswell's (2009) characteristics of qualitative research and how they apply to this study

³⁰ University Presidents, Strategic Planners, Senior Public Officials, Academic Commentators, Stakeholders, Minister for Education.

A mixed-methods approach was considered for this study, where a survey could have been extended to the participants. However, it was decided that the Elite Interview approach, where the researcher met with participants in their own work setting would yield richer and deeper primary data. Another option considered was to extend a survey to middle-level managers in order to get a wider perspective of the process of strategic planning. It was decided to sacrifice breadth for depth, in order to examine the unique attitudes, opinions and experiences of influential people in the Irish HE system to the evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities since 1997.

Data Collection

There were two primary data sources used for this research study. The first was the strategic plans of the Irish universities that have been published since the Universities Act (1997). Between 1997 and 2018, 30 strategic plans have been produced by the seven Irish universities. 29 of these³¹ were analysed and organised into five ‘phases’ enabling a chronological and thematic categorisation of plans to be developed. Due to different starting points and different plan durations, some plans may cross chronological boundaries while maintaining their thematic integrity.

Table 14 illustrates the plans and the phases into which they were placed:

University name	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Total plans
NUIM	2000-2005	2006-2011	2009- ³² 2014	2012-2017	2018-2023	5
DCU	2001-2005	2006-2008	2010-2012	2012-2017	2017-2022	5
UL	2001-2006	2006-2011		2011-2015	2015-2019	4
UCC	2000-2005	2006-2011	2009-2012	2013-2017	2017-2022	5
UCD	2001-2004	2005-2008	2009-2014		2015-2020	4
TCD	2003-2008	2003- ³³ 2008	2009-2014		2014-2019	3
NUIG	1996-2006	2003-2008	2009-2014		2015-2020	4
Total plans	7	6	6	4	7	30
Total coded	6	6	6	4	7	29

Table 14 - The plans and the phases into which they were placed

³¹ The Trinity College Dublin 2003-2008 plan could not be located despite repeated attempts to obtain it

³² The NUIM 2009-2014 plan was published as an addendum to the 2006-2011 plan, note the crossover of time periods on the phase 2, 3 and 4 NUIM plans

³³ TCD Interim Report for the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 (which is missing) was published in 2006 and so this plan was analysed and placed in phase 2

The content analysis of the strategic plans proved to be a very valuable exercise for two reasons. The first was that it enabled an analysis of the evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities from 1997 to date and provided the preliminary findings in relation to the five pillars of this study. It also enabled the preparation of two sets of Elite Interview questions to be devised. One set for Presidents/ Academic Commentators / Strategic Planners and a second set for Senior Public Officials/ Politicians/ Stakeholders. These questions were carefully devised to ensure that the data collected would provide the major source of evidence as to the actual process of strategic planning in Irish universities in terms of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

The second primary data source was a series of detailed semi-structured Elite Interviews with current and past leaders in the field of Irish HE. An initial list of 41 potential Elite Interview participants was drawn up from the following six categories: University Presidents, Senior Public Officials, Ministers for Education, Academic Commentators, Stakeholders, and Strategic Planners. The list was then refined back to 20 participants drawn from the same six categories. Details of the participants are listed in Appendix B.

Two sets of semi-structured interview questions were devised based on the operational framework which was informed by the literature review and the primary data which was the content analysis of the 29 strategic plans. One set of questions was used for the University Presidents and Strategic Planners. The second set was used for Senior Public Officials, Minister for Education, Academic Commentators and Stakeholders. This was to ensure that data collected in the interviews captured the perspectives of all of the participants. The interview questions and how they relate to the operational framework are listed in Appendix A.

Two pilot semi-structured Elite Interviews were conducted to test the questions formulated for this study, one with a Strategic Planner working in the HE sector (not a university) and another with a Stakeholder. Both pilot interviews were deemed to be satisfactory and no changes were made to the interview questions. Subsequently, 20 Elite Interviews were conducted between 2 July 2018 and 16 November 2018, all of which were audio-recorded, totalling 18 hours of audio recording.

Elite Interviewing as a research method

Methodological difficulties associated with Elite Interviews include problems of gaining access to participants; that participants will ‘just talk’ and not answer the questions; difficulties in interpreting the data; and ethical issues where the researcher will be ‘ultra-

careful' when reporting the data in case there are issues with interpretation (Walford 2012). Elite Interviewing is sometimes described as 'studying-up' where the researched have more power than the researcher, which is the opposite to more common forms of research. In this study, the researcher is a practitioner in the HE landscape in Ireland and the literature suggests that this would help to overcome some of the issues with gaining access and building rapport with participants. (Walford 2012). This proved to be the case in this study and all of the participants accepted the invitation to participate in the research.

In order to overcome the participants 'just talking' the researcher is advised to be very well prepared for the interview (Hunter 1993, Phillips 1998). In advance of the interviews, research on Elite Interviewing advised that as the participant would see themselves as experts in their field, that they may seek justification for questions asked. To mitigate this risk, the researcher conducted the primary data analysis of the strategic plans of each university in advance of the interview stage in order to ensure familiarity with all of the universities' strategic plans. This ensured that the questions were well formulated. Mickleson (1994) cautioned against trying to build rapport with participants, arguing that a more assertive style would be more effective, as it makes the interviewer's aims clear and that 'those with power may actually respect such as style as it makes the questioner's aims clear'(Walford 2012, p. 113). In all cases, the participants were open, welcoming and willing to answer every question asked. At no point did a participant withdraw from the interview or ask that the recorder be turned off.

Regarding interpretation, the risk with Elite Interviewing is that the participant want to protect their vested interests and may tend to answer with the "official' view rather than their own' (ibid). In all cases it appeared that the participants spoke freely. Each participant was advised that all interviews would be anonymised to protect confidentiality.

In all cases, indicative interview questions were supplied in advance and a consent form was signed by each participant. All interviews were anonymised and in line with this commitment, the participants are identified in accordance with their occupations and these appear at the end of direct or indirect quotations where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set. Participants were advised that they were entitled to full confidentiality in terms of their participation and personal

details. The researcher transcribed all of the interviews. The coding of the interview data was conducted using NVivo 12.

Elite Interviewing as a research method provided an opportunity to gather rich data by recording insights, by being able to ask further, more complex questions, and by being able to correct misunderstandings and clarify statements there and then with participants.

Data Analysis

The primary data was analysed in NVivo 12 using the Newell and Burnard Coding Framework (2006). Both are described below.

NVivo 12

NVivo is a software programme developed by QSR International which is designed to support researchers to manage research data and is the software programme that was used to analyse the research data collected for this research project. This software has tools which enable the researcher to import the primary data, index and code it with thematic or conceptual labels, write memos and track ideas, run searches and generate reports (Bazeley and Jackson 2013). This software was selected for this research project as it enabled a rigorous analysis of the primary data sources which were the strategic plans of the seven universities and the Elite Interviews with 20 leaders in the field of Irish HE. It enabled the researcher to compare and contrast data sources and to triangulate the content of the strategic plans with the data collected in the Elite Interviews.

Newell and Burnard Coding Framework

The Newell and Burnard coding framework (2006) has six stages and is detailed in Table 15.

Stage	Action
1	Interviews are transcribed verbatim
2	Read transcripts and make notes of words, theories and phrases that sum up what is being said – open coding
3	Re-read transcripts and collect together all the words and phrases on a clean page - start of higher order codes
4	Revisit the data and eliminate duplicate codes
5	Group similar codes and look for overlap
6	Final categories of codes which form the data set from which the findings can be written up and be related back to the literature review and the research question.

Table 15 - The Newell and Burnard Coding Framework

(Burnard *et al.* 2008)

Content analysis of the strategic plans

The content analysis of the strategic plans was conducted in a two-phase process. The first phase involved reading each plan in detail and analysing the plans line-by-line in a first round of open-coding using the Newell and Burnard coding framework (2006) in NVivo 12. Open coding is where notes were made of words, theories and phrases that summarised what was being said in the text. The full detailed codebook for this round of coding is detailed in Appendix F

Following the first round of open coding of the content of the 29 Strategic Plans, it was evident that some of the pillars could be grouped together. A second round of coding was conducted to create higher order codes, eliminate any duplicate codes and group similar areas together. This enabled a final category of codes to emerge which refined the seven pillars which formed part of the operational framework to be refined back to five as illustrated in Table 11 (p. 106). The full detailed codebook for this round of coding is detailed in Appendix G.

The preliminary findings of the content analysis in relation to the five pillars of this study were triangulated with the primary data from the Elite Interviews in NVivo 12 to ‘fact check’ the findings of the content analysis with the interview data.

Elite Interview data analysis

The interviews were imported into and transcribed in NVivo 12. Here, each interview was coded line-by-line, in accordance with each pillar of the operational framework. A second round of interview coding was then conducted to refine the drivers of strategic planning into a small number of categories (n=4) which could be presented in the findings. Codebooks for the first round of these data analysis are provided in Appendix H All interviews were anonymised and in line with this commitment, random numbers have been allocated to each participant in accordance with the category of participant. These random numbers appear at the end of direct or indirect quotations where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

As information regarding the planning process and resource allocation in line with strategic priorities was gathered through the process of anonymised Elite Interviews, in line with this commitment, this data has been anonymised and random numbers have been allocated to each university where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

Limitations

This research was limited to approaches to strategic planning by the seven Irish universities and did not include other higher education institutions in Ireland or elsewhere. The study focused on strategic planning since the adoption of the 1997 Universities Act so all of the historical dimensions relating to planning in Irish universities were not examined. The scope of the study only allowed for Elite Interview data to be gathered from current and recent leaders in the field. In an ideal world, middle level and other staff could be interviewed to gain a broader perspective on the process of strategic planning. This has been identified as an area for further study.

Ethical Considerations

This research was granted ethical approval by the UL Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Ethics Committee on the 12th October 2017 (Ref. 2017-09-17-AHSS). The Letter of Consent and Information letter are provided in Appendix C. The data have been transcribed and digitally stored in accordance with the UL data storage regulations and in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003 and will be stored securely and managed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). The data will be kept for seven years, after which all data and records will be destroyed.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the operational framework and research design employed for this study including the techniques and methods used for data collection and data analysis. The findings of the content analysis of the strategic plans of the seven Irish universities in the post Universities Act period 1997-2019 and the detailed semi-structured Elite Interviews with current and past leaders in the field of Irish HE are presented Chapter 6 in accordance with the operational framework.

Chapter 6 – Presentation of Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter documents and critically analyses approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities since the Universities Act (1997). It presents the perspectives of key participants in relation to the nature of strategic planning in Irish universities. It also delivers an analysis of the strategic plans produced by each of the seven Irish universities.

The chapter begins with the content analysis of the strategic plans published by Irish Universities (n=29) for the period 1997 to 2018 conducted in order to establish their approaches to strategic planning over the past 21 years. The key findings of the content analysis are summarised in accordance with the five pillars of the operational framework of this study:

Pillar 1 – The drivers of and influences on strategic planning

Pillar 2 – The planning process

Pillar 3 – The key visible characteristics of the plans

Pillar 4 - Implementation and resourcing

Pillar 5 - Review and Evaluation

Using these five pillars the chapter then goes on to present the findings of the anonymised Elite Interview data³⁴ (n=20). A summary of the findings relating to each pillar is provided at the end of each section. Elements of the content analysis are used to supplement the presentation of the Elite Interview findings under each pillar.

Content analysis of the strategic plans

The Universities Act (1997) requires that all Irish Universities to prepare a strategic plan. 29 of the 30 existing strategic plans³⁵ were analysed and for the purpose of this thesis have been organised into five chronological and thematic phases.

³⁴ All interviews were anonymised and in line with this commitment, random numbers have been allocated to each interview and these appear at the end of direct or indirect quotations where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set. A full list of the anonymised participants is provided in Appendix B

³⁵ Despite considerable effort, it was not possible to locate one of the plans, the TCD Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

The Phases are as follows:

Phase	Title	Number of plans	Start dates
1	The Inaugural Phase	7	1996-2003
2	The Competitiveness Phase	6	2003-2006
3	The Austerity Phase ³⁶	6	2009
4	The Regulation and Accountability Phase ³⁷ .	4	2011-2013
5	The Ambitious Phase	7	2014-2018

Table 16 - The five phases of strategic planning in Irish universities, 1997-2019

The content analysis of the plans in the ‘Inaugural Phase’ suggests that the strategic priorities were broadly aligned to and driven by the 1997 Universities Act and the eleven objects as set out in the Act. These objects included teaching and learning, research, lifelong learning and access, governance and management, collaboration with stakeholders, increase in student numbers, internationalisation, strategic alliances and contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of society, gender and equality, culture and Gaelige.

Innovation and the role of ICT were identified in all of the plans as being priority areas for development in order to compete in the ‘knowledge economy’ (UL 2001, p. 8). Two of the plans mentioned the National Development Plan 2000-2006 (Government of Ireland 1999) as being a driver or influence (NUIM 2000, UCC 2000).

In terms of operationalising the plans, the appointment of a Director of HR and the development of HR systems was mentioned as an area of strategic priority in three of the plans (NUIG 1997, UCC 2000, UL 2001). This was linked to the need to harness the human resources of the university to deliver the institutional mission (UL 2001), to manage resources to the greatest extent possible (UCC 2000) and to offer staff development programmes to enhance the operational capacity to deliver the plan (NUIG 1997). Four of the plans stated that the President was responsible for the delivery of the plan and four of the Universities had Strategic Planning Committees (NUIG 1997, NUIM 2000, UCC 2000, UL 2001). Strategy was set out in all of the plans using various combinations of objectives, actions, targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Each of the plans in the first phase are different and particular to each institution. Three of the six plans were presented in a basic format i.e. presented in a report style, using ‘Word’ type desk-top publishing, with no images (DCU 2001, UCD 2001, UL 2001). The NUIM plan was similar but had chapters (NUIM 2000). The UCC and NUIG plans adopted a

³⁶ Four of these plans were for a 5 year duration, one was a three year plan and one was a two year plan.

³⁷ Three of these were 5 year plans and one was for four years.

style, which was almost universally replicated by the others across the next phases (NUIG 1997, UCC 2000). This style included a foreword by the President, a situational analysis and then the details of the strategic goals to be achieved over the duration of the plan, with some detailing implementation plans, resource requirements and the office responsible for implementation. This confirms the findings in the literature review that other actors in the public sector and the corporate sector were imitated in terms of the process of strategic planning and the presentation of the plans within the universities.

The content analysis of the first phase plans also revealed that the universities were engaged in quality assurance activities in accordance with Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997) (NUIM 2000, UCC 2000, DCU 2001, UL 2001). The need for capital investment and efforts at generating additional income for capital projects was also mentioned.

The second phase is called the 'Competitiveness Phase' as there was a strong emphasis on competitiveness in the language used in the plans. This is made explicit by UCD in their vision statement where it declares that it will become 'A university where international competitiveness is the benchmark for everything that we do' (UCD 2005). Similarly, DCU's plan identifies that its key future requirement will be competitiveness in the following areas:

- student and staff recruitment
- research grants
- teams competing for strategic initiatives
- as an institution for institutional level bids
- research infrastructure to support an enhanced research effort
- contributing to national competitiveness through building strong research platforms in areas of strategic importance for social and economic development (DCU 2006).

The 'competitiveness' areas set out above are common to all of the universities, with some more advanced than others in their ability to compete. The recruitment and retention of staff is a recurring theme in all of the plans in order for the universities to increase their competitive advantage.

The UCD and TCD plans are very detailed and offer a sense of distinctiveness of mission. Both of these plans display a strong narrative around attracting the best staff and students to drive a research-led culture in the institutions (UCD 2005, TCD 2006). More generally,

in addition to a situational analysis, some of the strategic plans detailed the challenges in the HE landscape and the global influences on higher education, including internationalisation (NUIG 2003, DCU 2006, NUIM 2006, UCC 2006). Integrated planning models where sub-strategies for HR, resource management, research, student recruitment, and academic plans were put in place to deliver the overall plan were present in the DCU, TCD, UCD, UCC and UL plans (UCD 2005, DCU 2006, TCD 2006, UCC 2006, UL 2006). These plans also stated that resources would be allocated in line with strategic priorities. The NUIG plan was the only one that detailed the planning process (NUIG 2003). Strategy was set out in all of the plans using various combinations of objectives, goals, actions and targets. UCC produced a ‘strategic framework’ for the period 2006-2011. This plan identified the challenges for the universities in trying to ‘be all things to all people’. It acknowledged that ‘no institution is funded at the level sufficient to pursue all desirable activities’ and that universities will have to recognise this and ‘seek out their competitive advantage and focus on their individual strengths...so that the sector as a whole continues to deliver all that is required of it’. It went on to state that ‘universities must respond proactively to change, which is both incremental and discontinuous...strategic planning and strategic alliances will be the key to success’ (UCC 2006, p. 11).

The Phase 3 plans, described here as the Austerity Phase, saw institutions competing and positioning themselves against each other, facing resourcing challenges and a global economic crisis. The influence of global rankings was evident in the plans, with the NUIG 2009-2014 plan stating that they ‘cannot be ignored’ (NUIG 2009, p. 8).

Government strategy is frequently mentioned in the plans, including the Building Ireland’s Smart Economy report (2008). It is worth noting that the three highest ranking universities, namely TCD, UCD and NUIG have, by this time, established sophisticated planning systems with cross cutting strategies, resource allocation models, academic strategies, research strategies, and human resource (HR) strategies, all underpinning their strategic plans (NUIG 2009, TCD 2009, UCD 2009). In terms of HR, there is a focus on developing leaders (and leadership in general³⁸) in some of the plans, with others mentioning the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff³⁹. UCD and TCD’s plans allocated resources in line with strategic priorities (TCD 2009, UCD 2009). Strategy was

³⁸ Reflecting an NPM approach to managements’ responsibility to deliver the plan

³⁹ and making the link between government policy (Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) and the Employment Control Framework (ECF)) and the associated difficulties for them trying to work within these restrictions.

set out in all of the plans using various combinations of priorities, projects, metrics, objectives, goals, actions and targets. Performance indicators and outcomes featured for the first time in this phase (NUIM 2009, UCD 2009). DCU took a 'Foresight' approach to planning, seeking to develop a very long-term (20 year) development strategy for the institution as a whole (DCU 2010).

Phase 4 is referred to as the 'Regulation and Accountability' Phase. Plans in this phase were set against the backdrop of the introduction of the Hunt Report and continuing austerity. They mention regulation, accountability, metrics, quality, decreasing budgets for HE and the prospect of a performance based funding model.

The need to build agility into the planning process is evident with DCU taking a 'review and renew' (DCU 2012, p. 7) approach to planning and UCC being 'responsive to changes' (UCC 2013, p. 12) to the plan while UL set out a broad range of monitoring methods. These include quantitative targets to be tracked over time, qualitative targets with dates for completion and qualitative targets with no dates for completion which are dependent on external sources of funding (e.g. extension to library building) (UL 2011, NUIM 2012, UCC 2013). The DCU strategy contains detailed implementation plan (DCU 2012). All of the plans mention their strategic alliances and the importance of them. Research is a priority for all of the universities and all have identified research themes. Some mention research-led undergraduate learning and increasing numbers of PhD graduates⁴⁰. There are several common priorities, many of which have their own specific strategy including: academic plans, resource allocation models, international strategies, HR strategies, research strategies, teaching and learning strategies, communication strategies and resource raising strategies. These sub-strategies devolve the responsibility for devising implementation plans to achieve the targets specified in the strategic plan down the institutional hierarchy.

Only one plan in this phase explicitly states that resources will be allocated in line with the strategic priorities set out in the strategic plan (NUIM 2012). Both the NUIM and UL strategies state that they will engage with new modes of knowledge generation and co-production in partnership with enterprise, communities, civil society, public bodies and the state and that they will adapt their structures and ways of working to make the most of these new opportunities for research and learning (UL 2011, NUIM 2012).

⁴⁰ in accordance with the HEA Strategic Dialogue process and the national research strategy 'Innovation 2020'

The content analysis of the Phase 5 strategic plans indicated a strong theme of ‘Ambition’. NUIG’s President introduces the 2015-2020 plan stating ‘This strategy builds on a platform of success, and a long tradition of facing the future with ambition.’ (NUIG 2015, p. 1).



Figure 2 - Cover of UCC and front and back cover of UL Phase 5 plans

These plans show that the strategic priorities of the seven universities could be grouped together under the areas of research; teaching and learning; stakeholder engagement / societal contribution / community; governance, management and compliance; student experience; internationalisation; participation and access.

In this phase the Universities’ strategic plans are demonstrating implementation of the Hunt Report and their apparent wish to meet the requirements of Government and the public to be accountable, compliant, demonstrate measurable achievement and give ‘value for money’. Other concomitant strategies, including Athena SWAN⁴¹ are mentioned as strategic priorities in this phase. The NUIM Strategic Plan 2018-2022 includes equality, diversity, inclusion and inter-culturalism as a strategic priority, reflecting the requirements of the HEA Gender Action Plan 2018-2020 (HEA 2018a, NUIM 2018). Some of the universities mention how they are responding to the national policy context including a range of enterprise and economic plans. These include the Action Plan for Education 2016-19, Innovation 2020, Ireland’s Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology, Enterprise 2025, the National Skills Strategy 2025, the ICT Skills Action Plan 2014-18, National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher

⁴¹ The Athena SWAN Charter was launched in the U.K. on 22nd June 2005. Managed by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), the Athena SWAN initiative aims to effect cultural and systemic change in HEIs to support gender equality and the career-progression of women in science, technology, engineering, medicine and mathematics (STEMM) disciplines. The Athena SWAN bronze, silver and gold awards testify to institutions’ and departments’ success in advancing these goals. HEA (2019a) *Athena SWAN Charter* [online], available: <https://hea.ie/policy/gender/athena-swan/> [accessed 15.07.19].

Education 2015-19, the National Action Plan for Jobs, the Regional Action Plans for Jobs and the Action Plan for Rural Development. All of these relate to HE, emphasise research and innovation, skills and talent, and regional and rural economic development (UCD 2015, DCU 2017, UCC 2017, NUIM 2018).

The accountability of the universities to funders, both Government and others, has necessitated that universities act in a more business-like manner during this phase. In all of the Phase 5 plans, there is strong evidence of a more managerial rather than collegiate approach to leading in HE in these plans, with the President leading the responsibility to deliver the plan. The professionalism of the universities finance and governance structures is, by now, a requirement of Government as the primary funder of the institutions. The performance of the institutions is by now monitored by the HEA through the System Performance Framework⁴² and DPER through statistical returns provided to the HEA on ongoing items including Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) and the Employment Control Framework (ECF).

While attempting to assert ambition during this phase, universities faced continued resource challenges. Government continued to take a restrictive approach to budgetary and HR matters. The universities' plans suggest how this impacted negatively on their ability to compete in the rankings. All of the plans state the need for non-exchequer funding, with many mentioning developing enhanced relationships with Alumni, mentioning that they are key stakeholders for feedback and for support (TCD 2014, NUIG 2015, UCD 2015, UL 2015, DCU 2017, UCC 2017, NUIM 2018). The DCU plan refers to embarking on an ambitious income generation plan coordinated by a new Business Development Unit that will engage with key individuals in Faculties and Units across the University (DCU 2017). UCC also have an ambitious target for raising philanthropic funding (UCC 2017). Not all of the plans are costed, but TCD's plan is estimated to cost €600m - which is the amount that the 'Investing in National Ambition Report (2016)' indicates as the total investment the entire Irish HE system needs by 2021 (HEA 2017d). All of the plans speak of a willingness to engage with the wider community to encourage them to use campus facilities⁴³. All of the plans refer to building partnerships and collaborating with stakeholders, as well as the importance of strategic alliances and inter-

⁴² A three-year System Performance Framework was introduced in 2014, where institutional performance compacts set out to align the missions, strategies and priorities of the publicly funded HEI's with national priorities.

⁴³ e.g. UCD 7 day per week campus UCD (2015) *UCD Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, Dublin: UCD.

institutional collaborations as being necessary to meet the demands of international competitiveness.

Research-led undergraduate teaching is to the fore in this phase, while student retention and the student experience feature strongly. Many of the universities have refined their strategic priorities in order to play to their strengths in particular academic areas, with research themes and research institutes established to lead this work. This sets this phase apart from other phases and makes it distinctive.

There appears to be evidence in this phase that the universities have learned lessons about setting too many targets or being too rigid in their expectations of their strategic plans. The language used in the plans indicates awareness of the need for agility. DCU's 'rolling planning model' is a good example of this, where an annual 'review and renew' process is conducted (DCU 2017). Strategy was set out using various combinations of aims, objectives, initiatives, goals, actions and targets. Performance indicators, outcomes and measures of success were indicated in three of the plans (NUIG 2015, UL 2015, UCC 2017).

The plans in Phase 5 suggest that strategic planning is a cornerstone in the management of Irish universities and that planning processes are embedded in the HEI's as opposed to being 'a plan on a shelf'. TCD and UCD (the two highest ranked universities) refer to their ambition regarding the university rankings stating the following:

We expect that success in achieving our vision will see us solidly in the world top 100 universities by 2020 (UCD 2015, p. 11)

and Trinity's plan observing that

A university that competes globally for talented students and staff, and for industry research contracts and strategic partnerships cannot but recognise the importance of the international rankings, notwithstanding concerns about their limitations. Therefore an objective of the university is to maximize its position in selected world university rankings. (TCD 2014, p. 59)

Key findings of the content analysis

The content analysis indicates that the direction of strategic plans (Pillar 1) are heavily guided by government policy and related legislation. Initially, the Universities were

required by the Universities Act to undertake strategic planning, albeit without clear guidance as to the focus of resulting plans. In the later phases however, global trends in HE and the Hunt Report established clear parameters and trajectories for the planning processes. This represents a significant change in strategic planning in Irish universities, where strategy is now linked to accountability and performance funding.

In terms of the types of planning processes deployed by the universities (Pillar 2), in all five phases there is evidence of a top down classical ‘design’ school approach to planning, led by the President as CEO. However, while this is the dominant mode of planning, there is some evidence of aspiration towards the strategic positioning school, albeit that this does not exert a high level of influence on planning approaches.

Turning to the analysis of the key characteristics of plans (Pillar 3), given the homogenous nature of the Irish university system and the objects of a university as set out in the Universities Act, it may be inevitable that there would be similarities in the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of the institutions in Phases 1 to 3 (1997 to 2009/10). These plans were ‘of the time’ and it would have taken a number of phases for some of the universities to build expertise within the institutions in relation to planning processes. The current phase of plans (Phase 5) appear to demonstrate an effort by the universities to establish stronger, distinctive identities by differentiating their research priorities and engaging in fundraising to realise their strategic ambition. The Phase 5 plans emphasise each institutions’ ambition within the Irish HE landscape. The enhancement and importance of community engagement is mentioned in all seven Phase 5 plans with institutions seeking to strengthen and prioritise engagement with their communities and stakeholders to respond to local, national and international needs, suggesting a possible tendency towards a Public Value Management approach to targeting a range of societal concerns.

Moving on to the implementation and resourcing of the various strategic plans (Pillar 4), the emergence of a more distinct human resource focus within the Phase 1 plans as a strategic priority, and its role in the development and embedding of performance management systems in the universities, suggests a move away from a collegiate to a managerial organisational culture. Between 1997 and 2011, strategic planning fulfilled a statutory obligation but there appear to be few consequences for weak implementation of strategy. Resourcing of the strategic plans was mentioned by way of the need for capital investment and ongoing Government investment in order to deliver strategic priorities as

well as the universities developing resource allocation plans linked to strategy. All of the Phase 5 plans emphasise a need for non-exchequer funding.

Finally, the content analysis explored the level and nature of review and evaluation of strategic plans (Pillar 5). There is little evidence of any substantive emphasis being placed on the design of systems to enable lessons to be learned from the different planning experiences nor on reflection on outcomes with stakeholders. Indeed it is difficult to ascertain from the plans how they managed the continuity from one planning cycle to the next. Often the plans coincided with the Presidents' term of office, so it is unclear if there was a review or evaluation process and how it was managed. Some of the plans highlighted the achievements of the previous plan, others did not reference the previous plan at all, suggesting an approach to planning which is institutionally-oriented and output focused but not always outcome or impact focused.

Elite Interviews Data

This section of Chapter 6 describes the data arising from the Elite Interviews conducted as part of the research methodology. The interviews focused on strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in the Irish Universities.

Pillar 1 - Drivers of and influences on strategic planning

The drivers of and influences on strategic planning in Irish universities over the five phases of strategic planning since 1997 are presented under the following headings:

- Policy Drivers
- Funding Drivers
- Geographic Drivers
- Human Drivers

Where relevant, links to the content analysis of the five phases of strategic plans are made.

Policy Drivers

The interview data confirmed the findings of the context chapter (Chapter 4 above) that the 1994 Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) was a major driver of reform in the HE sector in the 1990's. The SMI introduced statements of strategy, business plans and performance management into the civil and wider public service with a view to delivering joined-up Government in the hope that cross-cutting issues could be managed strategically cross-departmentally, reflecting national priorities. The 1995 White Paper

Charting our Education Future (DES 1995) set out the legislative and constitutional framework for educational development including the provision for University legislation which was enacted in 1997. This white paper discussed the SMI's requirement that the DES focus on 'outcomes and associated measures of performance and effectiveness' (DES 1995, p. 203). Section 34. (1) of the Universities Act (1997) set out the requirement for the Governing Authority (GA) to prepare a strategic plan for not less than three years, in accordance with the SMI Strategy Statements initiative.

The SMI (1994), the Universities Act (1997), the Skilbeck Report (2001), the OECD Review of Financial Management and Governance in Irish HE (2004), the OECD review of National Policies for Education – Higher Education in Ireland (2006), the OECD review of the Irish Public Service (2008) and Building Ireland's Smart Economy (2008) provided the backdrop for the next major policy driver of higher education in Ireland which was the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt 2011). This national strategy was the overarching framework that put in place a strategic direction and a development path for the HEI's, underpinned by centrally controlled accountability structures, including legislation on Freedom of Information (FOI), Protected Disclosures, Lobbying, and State Board Appointments. It was launched in 2011 which is the same year that the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) was established (Department of Public Enterprise and Reform 2018). A participant observed:

The reforms in the higher education space do not just take place in the HE space alone, they come out of a wider development over a long period of public administration in the country. There has been a move towards a more coherent model of what the public administration [system] does and how it transacts with citizens. A lot of the initiatives around citizens and customer service and financial management and quality regulation would have all come about from that SMI stable so the antecedents are in there (Senior Public Official 4).

The interview data clearly indicates that the Hunt Report has been a major driver of strategic planning in Irish HE since 2011. Some of the participants were involved in the creation and implementation of the Hunt Report. They confirmed that at the time, there was a need for a clear statement of policy and strategy in relation to the HE system to address specific concerns. Examples of these include: *The system was becoming*

homogenous, the IoT's were becoming like the Universities and the Universities were engaging in mission drift (Senior Public Official 5).

One participant said that up until then, successive Ministers were very slow to do a strategic plan for HE because:

They were concerned that a national strategy for HE would become a stick to beat themselves. In other words, if you set out in a strategy what it was you wanted the HE system to do, it begs the question of the resources that are needed to do it, as the Hunt Report does (Senior Public Official 5).

The political will was there in 2009 and a national strategy was developed, with one participant stating that: *If Ireland was going to grow and develop and hold its own in the future, you need a really strong HE sector and I think that view, by and large was shared by everybody (Senior Public Official 4).*

The Hunt Report was not going to be a strategy that sat on a shelf:

Not unlike the SMI, it said 'this is a system for Ireland, this has been a series of individual institutions, but our ambition now is to make a connection between them all and to put in place a strategic direction and a development path for them'. So the System Performance Framework, the articulation by Government for the first time of its ambition for the sector, the change of role of the institutions themselves, the role of the Department and the role of the HEA. So you are seeing a really significant piece of re-architecture, certainly since the foundation of the State, probably the most significant piece of change management (Senior Public Official 4).

Therefore, while the universities were and continue to be independent, autonomous institutions, they were now required to align their strategic plans to the National Strategy to achieve the goals of their primary funder, i.e. the Government.

The Strategy Group that was selected to write the strategy was led by Dr Colin Hunt, an economist and banker who had previously worked as a Special Advisor to former Ministers for Finance and Transport (Flynn 2009). The group took two years to write their report. Amongst the terms of reference was the requirement to develop a set of 'national

policy objectives for Irish HE for the next 20 years' (Hunt 2011, p. 128). One participant observed that the Strategy Group⁴⁴ had 16 members and was carefully composed to include all of the key stakeholders in HE. It included representatives from the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance. This was to ensure that all of the key stakeholders in HE 'bought-in' to the strategy and would support its implementation. Some members of the strategy group were interviewed for this study. One observed that:

What the Government were trying to do, and it goes back to the NPM stuff, they were trying to engage their stakeholders from a very early stage, and I can't really stress how much I have seen, particularly from my early to middle career, reports which came out, launched to fanfare and bells and whistles, and nothing happened. So it is part of the SMI piece, that there was a much bigger focus on that circle between design and implementation. I think we understood much better the interactions and Hunt was a really good example of that.' (Senior Public Official 4).

The Strategy Group was assisted in its work by a panel of nine other international experts drawn from the UK, Australia, USA, Northern Ireland, the OECD, the World Bank, and the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities (Hunt 2011). It sought to concentrate expertise and resources in HE, achieve value for money whilst maintaining quality standards and 'be consistent with current regional and spatial strategies' (Hunt 2011, p. 42). This represented a more co-ordinated approach by Government to national planning.

'Control' of the sector (and the entire public management system) is a theme which emerged from the literature review as a requirement of Government at the time, led by DPER (MacCarthaigh 2017). The interview data confirmed that there was a perceived risk to the reputation of the HE sector that needed to be addressed, given the level of state investment in it. Some of this was in response to the behaviour of some of the HEIs during the economic crisis years:

There were concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector because there had been significant difficulty in terms of

⁴⁴ The Strategy Group Members of the Strategy Group are detailed in Appendix D.

the management of the sector, pay, pensions, adherence to government policy, there was a strong element of 'this sector needs to be better run and more accountable' (Senior Public Official 4).

Influenced by the OECD (2008) review of the Irish Public Services, the Hunt Report sought to develop a performance dialogue between the HEA and the HEI's in order to align institutional strategies with national priorities. Financial savings would be made by eliminating duplication of programmes and provision, and incentivising mergers and clusters. One participant observed that a strategic focus on the funding of the HE system was an imperative of the Hunt Strategy Group *It was definitely my view that there was an imperative to get a strategic focus on how funding was provided (Senior Public Official 1).*

In addition to creating a more efficient and effective HE sector, the interview data revealed that the Hunt Report also had a political imperative: the creation of a new category of HEI – the Technological University (TU)⁴⁵. This was where the 14 IoTs would be re-constituted into four TU's. The rationale was both political and educational with the then Minister for Education and Skills noting that the purpose of the TUs was to 'stop the mission drift of IoTs into becoming Maggie Thatcher type universities' (Walsh 2018, p. 460). An Institute of Public Administration (IPA) report noted that it was also to 'improve the international standing of the IoT sector, to attract more foreign students and investment, to reduce duplication of provision and to provide students with a TU qualification' (O'Riordan 2019, p. 49). The TUs were established to satisfy a regional demand by IoT leaders and politicians for enhanced status while retaining a binary system and 'drawing a line in the sand against further movement into the university sector' (Walsh 2018, p. 462). The interview data revealed that not all of the members of the strategy group were united on the establishment of the TUs as a priority for Irish HE, with one participant stating:

⁴⁵ This political imperative originated in 2006 when Waterford Institute of Technology applied to the Department of Education for university status citing that Waterford was severely disadvantaged compared to other cities regarding funding for third level institutions O'Shea, B. (2008) 'Third level funding: Waterford 'severely disadvantaged' ', *The Munster Express*, February 26th 2008.. The DES commissioned a report by international consultants to assess Waterford's case which was published in 2007 Port, D. J. (2007) *Application by Waterford Institute of Technology for designation as a university, Advice to the Minister for Education* JM Consulting . This is discussed again in the section on Geographic Drivers .

I think the primary focus of the group was political and it was to solve the issue of the creation of what then became the TUs...the political imperative was that something should be done.’ (Senior Public Official 1).

Others were more concerned with the need for differentiation of mission and the need for the sector to be *better run and more accountable* (Senior Public Official 4).

The accountability framework which would be implemented was going to be driven by data supplied by the institutions ‘on student and staff profiles, efficiency and other indicators that will aid in research on and evaluation of public policy in HE and inform the HEA during the strategic dialogue process’ (Hunt, 2011, p. 22). One participant commented that the data collected through the process would encourage the institutions to think about *how their objectives relate in social and economic terms* (Senior Public Official 1), while another observed:

So, we now have a strategy and based on that we have the performance compacts which are required to be quite closely aligned with institutional strategies otherwise the institution is on to a loser, their compact has to be consistent in terms of strategy so that circle has been completed (Senior Public Official 5).

This meant that the performance compacts provided the Government with a ‘reach’ into the institutions, through the System Performance Framework that had not previously existed⁴⁶. It enabled the HEA to exert control and ‘course-correct’ in accordance with government policy:

The performance compacts were a very good mechanism to achieve distinctiveness of mission. It allows for a formal stocktake at very regular intervals by the HEA on behalf of Government on what each institution is doing and then the HEA are in a position

⁴⁶ The DES (1995) *Charting Our Education Future, White Paper On Education*<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Charting-Our-Education-Future-White-Paper-On-Education-Launch-Copy-1995-.pdf> [accessed 14.05.19]. identified the need for the DES to be able to compare the Irish education systems performance internationally in accordance with the OECD ‘Education at a Glance’ reports of 1992, 1993 and 1995 OECD (1992, 1993, 1995) *Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

to see the totality of what is going on and to report on it (Senior Public Official 5).

Of those Senior Public Officials interviewed, some expressed satisfaction that the data collected as part of the System Performance Framework enabled the creation of profiles of the institutions:

For the first time, on a national level, we were able to see who did what where, how it fitted in (Senior Public Official 1).

When discussing the first three years of the System Performance Framework 2014-2017 with the participants, it was clear that the HE landscape has changed quite dramatically since the introduction of the National Strategy.

The one significant positive thing about it is that it is not gathering dust on a shelf, very quickly after it being published, implementation began and it has continued, in a very robust way, the one area that has not been addressed at all is the funding, regrettably (Senior Public Official 5).

Interestingly, the Hunt Report emphasised the enhancement of Teaching and Learning⁴⁷. This point was highlighted by one of the participants:

In the doing of Hunt, our sense was that the research had become the dominant occupation for the leadership of the institutions, so we placed a big emphasis on Teaching and Learning in the System Performance Framework and that was deliberate, because we were worried and remain worried. We had a concern that the incentives for academics were not in relation to Teaching and Learning and we do believe that the core mission when you strip it back is not research, it is actually teaching and human capital (Senior Public Official 4).

This is further evidence of the Government reach into and steering the day-to-day work and direction of universities through the National Strategy.

⁴⁷ The National Forum for Teaching and Learning was established in 2012. One of its objects was to integrate research with teaching and learning and to strengthen the focus on learning outcomes to ensure that graduates acquire key competencies HEA (2019b) <http://hea.ie/policy/policy-development/teaching-and-learning/> [online], available: [accessed 27.02.19].

When discussing the relationship between the strategic plan and the compact a participant observed that:

The compacts have become a component of the strategic planning process, that they fit within framework of the institutions plan and within that they deliver on the aspects that they should for the State and they report that appropriately rather than being a slave to this tick list plan (Stakeholder 1).

Many of the participants stated that the compact process posed little difficulty for the institutions:

We had all of our strategic planning processes and our KPI measurements and all of that very well embedded since 2007, so when the strategic dialogue process came along 4 years ago and the compact etc. it just all fitted very easily into our existing processes. It was quite robust at times because we were pushing back on certain issues, and that's all part of the value of a dialogue (Strategic Planner 5).

There was also a learning process for the HEA, the DES and the institutions themselves in the first three years of the System Performance Framework:

In the first round, the institutions felt that they had to respond to every single national objective, where the HEA said respond to the ones that are consistent with your mission and play to your strengths. So there was always a risk of homogeneity occurring that everybody was doing everything, which was the absolute opposite to the intention (Senior Public Official 5).

This is borne out in the content analysis of Phase 4 of the strategic plans, where it is clear that the institutions saw the need to align their strategic priorities close to the National Strategy. This is more nuanced in Phase 5 where the research priorities of each university emerged more strongly, indicating some differentiation of mission in terms of specialisation of research.

The ability to differentiate mission in the new system performance framework has been welcomed by some institutions:

One of the things that is really encouraging is that in the new performance compact, it says line up your targets with the strategic plan and the performance compact. Whereas the previous performance compact – it was the other way around, the HEA told us what to do. I think that it is very helpful that the HEA understand the concept of mission differentiation (Strategic Planner 1).

Others disagree with the ‘steering’ approach stating:

The strategic performance framework is an absolute unmitigated disaster. It is almost ... (as if)... you set enough performance indicators and goals that they could control the sector like a giant electro magnet, you know, ‘I can put all these goals, and turn on the magnet and everyone will be sucked towards where I want them to go’. It is just impossible to have 210 national indicators and try and hold 30-ish funded institutions to account against them (President 4).

For the first three phases of strategic plans, an opportunistic approach to the expansion of student enrolments in the universities was apparent with incentives coming through the HEA and Government Departments driven by market demands. This offered universities opportunities to increase their student numbers in areas linked to the jobs market:

Incentives were coming through the HEA, or through the HEA from [the Departments of] Jobs, Enterprise, Innovation. Employers were saying we need more engineers, why don’t we have more computer scientists why don’t we have more electronic engineers? Here’s some money, build a building, who says no to money! (Strategic Planner 1).

During this period, the marketisation of HE by Government and its agencies to meet short-term economic demands meant that growth was not planned, coordinated or monitored in the sector:

The real development happened simply opportunistically, something would come along, a State incentive for x-type

programme, you would catch whatever ball comes along and it didn't necessarily fit in to the overall plan (Strategic Planner 1).

This approach, where institutions increased their student enrolment (in accordance with their strategic plans) by creating academic programmes in response to market demands incentivised by Government agencies led to duplication of provision across some institutions, where small numbers of students were enrolled on very similar programmes with concomitant cost implications for the State. By 2011, the Hunt Report sought to reverse this by rationalising programmes and offering them in fewer institutions to achieve economies of scale. The Hunt Report did not seek to reduce the numbers of students in the system. The Irish HE system does not 'cap' the intake of students to third level education and the Recurrent Grant Allocation System (RGAM) which is the funding model used by the HEA is primarily driven by student numbers (HEA 2017d).

This research revealed that the policy drivers of higher education since 1997 were the SMI (1994) and the Universities Act (1997). This research suggests that the introduction of the Hunt Report and associated Action Plans and the System Performance Framework (2014-2017 and 2018-2021) represented a significant change in the approach by Government. The Hunt Report has enabled the steering of the system by the Government since its introduction in 2011, taking a whole-of-government approach to planning in HE.

To summarise, the main policy drivers of strategic planning are:

- The Strategic Management Initiative (1994)
- The Universities Act (1997)
- The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011) and associated Action Plans and the System Performance Framework 2014-2017 and 2018-2021.

A key subset of the discussion of the policy drivers of strategic planning is the role of research policy. The next section details the developments in this area since the Universities Act (1997).

Research Policy Drivers

In the first three phases of strategic plans (1997 to 2009) it appears that there was what could be described as 'light touch' steering of the research activities in the Universities by Government. The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLII) commenced in 1999. This was a programme part-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, with matching funding by the State that provided €1.2bn to build specialist research capacity

across the HE sector in order to improve Ireland's global reputation as a location for research and innovation (HEA 2017d).

This was a structured programme for research for third level institutions. That was equipment, teams and buildings - bricks and mortar (Senior Public Official 6).

PRTLTI submissions were evaluated by a panel of international experts based on a number of criteria including the HEIs strategic plans. One participant observed that:

Rather than what you would have had before that, an ad-hoc or even a free-for-all, where academics could choose what they wanted to do research into, now the universities had to prioritise and present a strategic plan as part of their proposal for funding. So that was a very early development of strategic planning with a purpose, with an impact, because (research) funding depended on it (Senior Public Official 5).

It seems evident from the content analysis of the first three phases of strategic planning, that the research profiles of the universities was a strategic priority and Phase 2 in particular emphasised the competitive environment for research in Irish universities. The Elite Interviews data emphasised that PRTLTI impacted on strategic planning processes and focused minds on the importance of competing successfully for research funding. 'Prior to 2000, Ireland had no national research policy, investment strategy or noteworthy international reputation in scientific research. Between 1997 and 2007, almost €3bn was invested, dramatically changing Ireland's international profile' (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1346). Following the economic crisis of 2008, a research prioritisation exercise was undertaken by Forfás which recommended 'a more top-down, targeted approach' identifying '14 priority areas aligned with industrial sectors to account for c. 80% of national competitive funding; research relevance became paramount, with a focus on impacts and benefits for the Irish economy (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1346). This is reflective of international trends in 'steering' the research agenda towards economic growth and recovery (Hazelkorn 2014).

When PRTLTI funding ceased in 2010, funding for discipline-specific research allocated on a competitive basis was channelled into the universities through Science Foundation

Ireland (SFI), the Health Research Board (HRB), the Irish Research Council (IRC)⁴⁸ and Enterprise Ireland (EI). The IRC is under the aegis of the DES and allocate competitive funding to support public research with a societal focus (HEA 2019d). SFI, the HRB and EI are under the aegis of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and allocate funding to support public research in science, technology and innovation.

Some of the participants were very critical of this approach stating that:

We lost PRTLI, there was a huge problem. I am very unhappy with the way SFI is allocating its research grants, it is too applied, there is not enough blue skies, there's not enough humanities, culture, creativity or anything in there - it is all to do with jobs. (Senior Public Official 1).

Major concern was expressed by a number of participants as to the strategic direction of research in Irish universities. Innovation 2020 is the current cross-government strategy for research and development, science and technology. Launched in 2015, it is driven by an implementation group that includes representatives of the main public research funders as core members and is chaired by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. It reports annually to Cabinet on the implementation of the strategy and publishes annual progress reports on performance (Department of Business 2019). Innovation 2020 is the strategy which seeks to deliver the strategic objectives relating to HE research activity in the Hunt Report and also to other Government policies and strategies including the Action Plan for Jobs, Enterprise 2025, the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship and the National Skills Strategy (Government of Ireland 2015, p. 8). This strategy seeks to deliver a whole-of-Government approach to science and innovation policy (Government of Ireland 2015, p. 77). A key issue arising in the findings on the research policy drivers is the control and steering of the HE research system by the prioritisation of government funding for applied research in areas associated with the economy and STEM, linked to the creation of jobs and the growth of the economy. Concern was expressed by some of the participants at the lack of interest or enthusiasm by Government for research in the humanities.

⁴⁸ IRC was established in 2012 following the merger of the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) and the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET)

The steering of the research agenda of the Irish universities by Government (and its agencies) and the prioritisation of research areas was identified as a major risk to the sector with the following observations being made:

The Department of Enterprise fund Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) who are the biggest funders of University research. They only fund research in the hard sciences, so physics, chemistry, computing, and they fund it through major research centres. This approach effectively drives the research agenda towards a very particular kind of research...which skews the research agenda (Academic Commentator 2).

The interview data appears to confirm that the contested space between funding for applied research and blue skies research has been a difficult one to mediate, and that Innovation 2020 is taking an instrumental approach to sponsoring research that serves market needs:

DPER will demand outcomes, that's the point – for everything (Senior Public Official 1).

Another spoke of the risks of the market-led approach to research stating:

If we don't have an opportunity to do research in areas that are high risk and don't have a market value, I don't know how we will become frontier universities at all. We won't even be frontier universities in our own country (Academic Commentator).

One President saw the current approach to funding research as being very damaging and that there was a huge risk to the sector by focusing on applied research. It was his view that the research centres were producing innovation, not 'new' research and as a consequence: *the idea of a university (is) being lost (President 3)*. He suggested that the autonomy of the universities to create new knowledge and conduct 'blue skies' research was being severely limited by current government policy.

One participant noted that a case is being made for a better research funding model to the Department of Finance because:

The infrastructure is crumbling. We don't have the money available for discipline research across all areas. We want to be

able to give them (the universities) the tools so that they can be competitive at European Research Council awards or anything like that (Senior Public Official 6).

The link between policy, funding, and competitiveness arose on numerous occasions in the Elite Interviews with many of the participants expressing frustration around the lack of creativity in the research agenda that is being led and funded by Government.

Funding Drivers

The Skilbeck (2001) review of international issues in HE with a particular reference to Ireland observed that ‘The University is no longer a quiet place to teach and do scholarly work at a measured pace and contemplate the universe as in centuries past. It is a big, complex, demanding, competitive business requiring large scale ongoing investment’ (Skilbeck 2001, p. 7).

Up until 2009, the core funding of universities was largely provided through the State with the HEA allocating funding to each third level institution from an overall budget provided by the DES (Buckley 2010). The Recurrent Grant Allocation Model (RGAM) was introduced in 2006 (Buckley 2010). This model has three elements. The first is a core recurrent grant and a free fees allocation, both of which are based on student enrolment numbers. The second element is directed funding which is provided for specified purposes, typically for limited time-periods. The third is the newest element, performance funding, which can provide for reward or punishment depending on an institution’s performance in the strategic dialogue⁴⁹ process.

During the economic crisis, the universities managed to deliver more with less, taking in more students, with reduced staff numbers and with a steady reduction in the proportion of total State funding for core activities falling from 73% in 2008 to 48% in 2016 (HEA 2017d). This was described by many participants as being a ‘funding crisis’ and a real threat to the future of Irish HE in terms of quality and reputation:

It is a silent erosion. The University Presidents have been crying wolf for so long, it has become background noise that is being ignored. Once you hit the tipping point – there will be a dramatic

⁴⁹ Which is part of the System Performance Framework

fall and the recovery will take a long time. It is a silent death – you will notice that none of the University Presidents can be explicit as that in public because of Foreign Direct Investment (President 1).

The content analysis of the Phase 5 plans indicated that all of the universities now have strategic priorities that aim to generate non-exchequer income to deliver their strategic plans. Participants from the universities explained the reason for this, stating:

We can't rely on the Government to support us. University X has a number of commercial entities under its umbrella now, their only focus is to generate a profit for the university that is spent to advance its strategic intent (President 1).

The amount of time spent by university leadership on fundraising was mentioned:

You are constantly having to resort to the fundraising or private funding to do the public job. When the energy of leadership is focused on income generation and the income generation is not for development it is for survival, then your eye will definitely be off the ball (Academic Commentator 2).

The content analysis shows that internationalisation is a current strategic priority for all of the universities as it is a major driver of funding to augment declining exchequer funding. This is in keeping with global trends in HE where the 'selling' of education is a profitable business (Walsh 2018). One of the participants stated that

The third biggest contributor to Australian GNP is International Education (Strategic Planner 1).

There is evidence to support this claim where, in 2017, Australia was the third top destination in the world for attracting international students, creating an industry worth USD \$24.7 billion. The USA and UK come first and second on this list respectively, but their positions are threatened by stringent immigration policies currently being discussed by both the US and UK Governments (Sawe 2017, Maslen 2018). Ireland does not currently feature in the top 10 countries hosting the most international students, but the Hunt Report sets an aim that the student population of 2025 will contain 8,569 or 13.2% international students as a percentage of the total new entrants to HE that year (Hunt 2011, p. 44). The Hunt Report discusses the benefits of internationalising Irish HE in terms of

attracting new talent, 'broadening of staff experience, facilitation of research cooperation, and the diversification of funding streams' (Hunt 2011, p. 81). This research found that both the Government and the universities see internationalisation as a major driver of funding, especially in the current exchequer funding climate:

In Ireland, because the amount per student that comes from the State has declined from approximately €8,000 per student in 2006 to little over €3,500 at the moment, if this were just a business, you wouldn't take any Irish students because they cost more to educate, particularly in sciences, than comes from the State. So the only way we can guarantee the quality of education for all students is by bringing in more international students who pay fees. This actually helps to keep the whole ship afloat, not just in Ireland, in a lot of countries, Australia, Canada. There are very few university systems that don't depend to a significant extent on overseas students. It is a global 'business' for want of a better term (Strategic Planner 1).

All of the universities have established International Offices that manage the recruitment of international students to bring those students into as many of their academic programmes as possible.

Some institutions have borrowed money from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to create physical infrastructure *otherwise their campuses would be in dire straits (Senior Public Official 3)*. The reality of borrowing for capital projects was revealed as difficult by participant with subsidiary income generated being used to repay loans, again, to keep the ship afloat:

The income we are generating is to do with the day-to-day stuff. And that comes from the funding hole...you cannot book a room for an academic conference in the summer because we are sweating everything, we have to make money, you get clamped for car parking, all of the charges that come in, you never talk about that in public – you can't (Academic Commentator 2).

Some of the universities benefit from philanthropic funding, but determined that type of funding is often not suitable for the day-to-day activities, which are now suffering from a funding shortfall:

The things that universities of this age are looking for, (to) upgrade buildings, philanthropy does not tend to follow such refurbishments or upgrade. The philanthropists are happy to put funding towards a brand new building, but not refurbishment. It is an issue and I know our leadership is always looking for innovative ways to look for that money and to bid for it and fight for it, same as everyone else (Strategic Planner 2).

Other issues mentioned with regard to philanthropy included the universities being able to set the strategic priorities rather than the philanthropists driving the strategy:

People will say – ‘I will give you a ton of money to promote ‘x’. If it is outside of the strategy of the institution, there is a huge risk it will fail, with no-one in the institution wedded to it (President 3).

The Elite Interview data suggests that the universities’ leadership are willing and able to raise their own funds to deliver on the strategic priorities set out in their strategic plans. Income raising by research, internationalisation, commercialisation of campus activities and philanthropy are now seen as a normal ways of resourcing the universities’ strategic plans.

Many of the participants expressed concern regarding the lack of implementation of a better funding model for HE, though this is a part of the Hunt Report that has not been implemented by Government. The Report of The Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education, also known as the Cassells Report (Cassells 2016) which made recommendations on a funding model appears to be ignored according to many participants, as the political will is not there to address the issue:

The lack of investment is the biggest risk, it is the gradual erosion of quality and offering that puts serious risk over the future prosperity of the nation and its talent (President 1).

This gradual erosion of quality is of major concern to the participants because in their view, the universities cannot openly admit to a reduction in quality standards, as that will damage their reputation and ability to attract students nationally and internationally.

I don’t know when the end solution to the funding will be put in place - but the day will come when we all collectively turn around

and say how did we let this happen? The evidence is there, Cassells, 2016. We have university rankings slipping, capital issues, the evidence is strong now that we are close to the edge. We will need a strong government with a big majority to fix the funding (Senior Public Official 3).

A former Minister for Education interviewed for this research drew attention to the accountability of the institutions to the Government for the management of 100% of their resources, including their non-exchequer income.

I think they have to be very careful that they don't blur the lines between what they have to account for in terms of State funding and what they get in private funding (Former Minister for Education).

A participant acknowledged that this is an issue for the universities.

That is a huge debate at the moment, some of the institutions are heading for 60% non-exchequer funding and yet they are feeling the weight of 100% control (Senior Public Official 3).

Updated from the 2009 Code (which was published by the Department of Finance) the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 reflects the changes to the regulatory framework including the Protected Disclosures Act (2014) and new rules around procurement. It sets out rules for Audit and Risk Committees and refers to value for money internal audits. It requires that public bodies itemise and report separately in their financial statements, details of all hospitality expenditure, foreign and national travel, legal costs, tax and financial advisory costs, public relations and marketing costs, pension and human resources costs and consultancy costs. At 72 pages long, with 4 additional suites of documents to accompany it (i.e. the requirements for business and financial reporting, audit and risk committee, remuneration and superannuation and board self-assessment questionnaire), this is the longest code ever to be published by the Government (White 2018). Each HEI now produces an Annual Statement of Governance and Internal Control, which runs to 25 pages, declaring how the institution complies with the code across 35 metrics. These statements are required by the HEA within six-months of the financial year-end (HEA 2019d). They are also scrutinised by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) as part of each HEIs Financial Statements. The C&AG can refer issues that arise in audits of the HEIs to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

The PAC has brought a number of the HEIs before it to investigate non-compliance with government policy in recent years. Some of these investigations are ongoing. Department officials, representatives of the HEA, representatives of the C&AG and representatives of the HEIs have all been called before the committee to account for various issues which have arisen (Committee of Public Accounts 2017). The Elite Interview data with some participants reveals that there are a number of consequences to these investigations which include a sense of excess-accountability from the DES and the HEA around governance and financial compliance in the HE sector:

So the thing with the PAC is when something does go wrong, the C & AG quite rightly reports it, then the PAC grandstand and go overboard. That encourages in the official mind a desire to control the universities more. But the trouble is, the more the Department seeks to control, they will not be able to stop things going wrong, and when they do go wrong – and the more control they have, the more accountable they are (Senior Public Official 5).

The relationship between the University Presidents and the Government is poor:

I have been to a number of meetings where they make the L'Oréal argument – 'we are worth it'. Well that goes down really badly in the political system. They can engage fine one-on-one but collectively it is a car crash. They talk down, you can see it at any of the PAC, well, imagine that at a table in Marlborough St. (Senior Public Official 4).

This was corroborated by another participants observation:

There is very little doubt in my mind that the University Presidents as a group have a poor understanding of political dynamics. They may not set out to be, but they come across as being extraordinarily arrogant, especially to politicians. And telling politicians, 'we know best, give us the money and

everything will be fine', that's just about the worst possible thing you could say to a politician (Senior Public Official 5).

The Elite Interview data revealed that there has been a gradual breakdown of trust between the Government and the institutions because of non-compliance with government policy and pay rules which began during the economic crisis years.

There was a very big row playing out in the crisis years where that out of the seven universities, six of the Senior Management Teams had paid themselves more than they should have in terms of pay and pensions (Senior Public Official 4).

Participants noted the consequences for the sector following the ongoing various PAC investigations:

Suspicion that we are doing the wrong thing in political circles and continuous erosion of flexibility and autonomy (President 4)

A hermeneutic of suspicion, we can't buy a biro without going through procurement (Academic Commentator 2)

Engagement with the C & AG, the Department, the PAC and the Press – which had created a fairly toxic environment (President 3).

It was noted that the public perception of universities as offering good value for money has also suffered:

If the Government were to say they will pour millions into HE, The Irish Times will love it but the Daily Mail will kill them (Academic Commentator 2).

One participant illustrated the difficulty of planning in public universities when resources are very limited, where there are no incentives for staff to deliver the plan and consequent difficulties in trying to operationalise the plan with internal stakeholders leading to a 'sub-optimal strategy' (Chatson 2011):

When the funding is tight, the weakness of the planning in the public sector is exposed. The strategic plan is almost like a

story without a middle because the funding piece is very difficult and challenging (Academic Commentator 2).

The risk of public institutions being pushed beyond the tipping point and overemphasising the focus on markets, customers and competition was also highlighted:

It would be ironic if the need to deliver on the strategic plan for a public institution drives them either to behave like a private sector one or to become a private institution, because they want to deliver on the public good (Academic Commentator 2).

The Elite Interview data appears to indicate that the continued constrained government funding environment is of great concern to the universities, who state that it is affecting the quality of the student experience, the reputation of the institutions, the ability to fund capital projects and research infrastructure, all of which are detailed in their strategic plans.

To summarise, the findings demonstrate that there is a strong preoccupation among the University Presidents to secure higher levels of funding through the Government and the HEA in order to deliver a high quality university system. Concern was expressed about the amount of time that University Leadership spend on income generation to advance strategic intent and enhance reputation. Initiatives like internationalisation were highlighted as being a major driver of funding to augment declining exchequer funding. Risks relating to the narrowing of publicly-funded research in the universities were highlighted as having the potential to damage the sector by focusing on applied research at the expense of ‘blue skies’ research. The reputational damage to the sector as a consequence of the PAC investigations were also noted.

Geographic Drivers

The content analysis of the strategic plans shows that in their mission, vision and values statements, all of the universities situated themselves in the ‘wider world’. The interview participants situated the work of the universities locally, nationally and internationally: *with sub-texts under each of all three (President 1).*

All of the universities saw enhancing their reputation internationally as being a strategic priority:

I thought that we needed to go about making an international reputation for ourselves, we needed to get our story impressive

enough so that we could feel confident about presenting it to the world (Retired President).

International reputation enhances a university’s ability to attract non-EU fee-paying students (Walsh 2018). The university rankings are a ‘short-hand and problematic way of assessing the quality of institutions in a competitive arena’(Houses of the Oireachtas 2014, p. 9). The rankings are one of the main global drivers that affect Irish universities’ ability to compete internationally for students and research funding, both of which enhance their reputation. This was identified in UCD’s Phase 2 plan which stated ‘The reality that our competitors, already ahead in a variety of international rankings, are not standing still’ (UCD 2005).

A number of league tables rank Irish universities. These include the QS World Rankings and the Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings.

Table 17 sets out the rankings of the Irish universities for the years 2018, 2019 and the recently announced 2020 rankings on the QS Ranking scale.

Institution	Year: 2018	Year: 2019	Year: 2020
Trinity College Dublin	88	104	108
University College Dublin (UCD)	168	193	185
NUI Galway	243	260	259
University College Cork (UCC)	283	338	310
Dublin City University	391	422	429
University of Limerick	501-550	511-520	521-530
NUI Maynooth	701-750	701-750	701-750

Table 17 - The 2018, 2019, 2020 QS World Rankings for the seven Irish universities

(O'Brien 2018, O'Brien 2019a)

The strategic plan content analysis for the three highest ranked Irish universities revealed that they all had sophisticated strategic planning systems. The interviews with the participants from these institutions sought to explore these systems further. When asked about the factors that needed to be managed in their universities to achieve an improvement in their high ranking status they included: the production of research that is globally recognised and of global significance⁵⁰; the diversification of the student population to include international students, improving the staff/student ratio; and brand management⁵¹. They saw their strategic plans as being a key element in achieving their

⁵⁰ which contrasts with the government imperative for the enhancement of teaching and learning

⁵¹ To ensure that all citations are correctly counted as these are a metric of the rankings

place in the rankings. They have developed KPI's for managing their performance in the league tables, including benchmarking themselves against comparator universities internationally.

I had an eye on the rankings, we left no stone unturned, the momentum gathered [around the plan] and we rose in the rankings. (Strategic Planner 3).

One university has an office that is dedicated to tracking the data that is measured in the rankings.

One of the participants whose institution is lower down the league tables said that he felt a lot of pressure from the GA relating to performance in the rankings. His comment reflected how the rankings are linked to reputation in the eyes of some stakeholders:

So the GA had a few members who thought that we should forget about the rankings and focus on the students, but the majority, particularly the private sector people thought that without an enhanced reputation, reflected in the league tables, that it was a disaster (Retired President)

Another participant agreed stating:

Alumni – they think they are important – rankings are taken seriously in the States (Strategic Planner 3).

The Elite Interview data with the Senior Public Officials revealed that there is no current appetite in Irish HE policy to focus on where the Universities sit in the league tables. One of the reasons given was because the league tables (and what they measure) is not coordinated with national policy (e.g. research v's teaching and learning) and that they could drive the universities away from national policy:

International league tables have little or no relevance to what Ireland as a country or economy needs, it is only relevant to international education issues, attracting international students or staff (Senior Public Official 5).

Regional and local drivers

Regional access and economic development have been major drivers of higher educational policy and provision has been established in all corners of the country. Indeed, a characteristic of Irish HEIs is the largely regional catchment area on which they draw their student base (HEA 2017d).

Local demographics drive student numbers and some universities have to work harder than others to recruit students based on their location, e.g. Galway, whereas others are located in areas of population growth e.g. Maynooth (NUIG 2015, NUIM 2018).

One participant explained how demographic demand drives their strategic plan:

We are in the fastest growing region in the country in population terms, it is also very diverse region in terms of urban / rural mix, new migration into city x so we have a demographic demand from a growing population that is a diverse population (President 4).

This diversity of the population in the region was cited as a major driver of planning and growth in the institution:

We feel an obligation to grow given our regional context informed by all of those principles – quality, balance, inclusion, engagement and reputation (President 4).

All of the regional universities spoke of the importance of ‘Town and Gown’, being connected to the local region, focusing on its needs, working collaboratively with industry, culture, the city and the local hinterland, *drawing on local strengths (President 2)* to develop distinctive and different strategic capabilities in the university and in the region it serves:

There is a lot of activity around enhancing the reputation of the university with a set of external stakeholders, everything from prospective students to potential enterprise partners and transcending that whole thing, engaging with enterprises, public

bodies and communities in terms of working in partnership with them - it informs the whole thing (President 4).

Town and gown is very important to the university. We have very strong links with County Councils. Community is very important to the university and is referenced in the strategic plan and will be in the next. We are a massive employer, I would say that we have over 3,000 staff, we would be the second or third largest employer (in the region) we are a big contributor to the economy with 18,000 students. (Strategic Planner 2).

One President described how his institution develops distinctive and different strategic capabilities by working in partnership with schools, enterprise, public bodies and communities in the region and that this engagement informs the strategic plan. Another said: *This university was put here by the community. It is very focused on what the needs are here (President 3).*

An example of the universities' impact on their region is NUIG's research in the Medtech area. Eight of the world's top-ten Medtech companies are based in Galway and there has been a relationship between the university and this industry going back to the early 2000s (NUIG 2019). The NUIG strategic plan comments on the importance of the relationship between the university and the Medtech industry which seeks to 'lead to better and more affordable health outcomes for patients' (NUIG 2019).

One of the Presidents spoke of the difference between a Dublin university and a regional one in terms of their interaction with the locality:

I would never know the Mayor in Dublin, I know the Mayor here, the County Manager, a lot of the people that work in local business, we are very closely linked to the hospital. I have met with the School Principals. We are very closely linked and I think that the university has a very positive impact on the region. (President 3).

And their impact on the region:

Having a university or third level institution in your region has a huge impact on the culture and dynamics and even the mind-set of the people surrounding it (Senior Public Official 6).

The Hunt Report aimed to develop ‘Regional collaboration between clusters of geographically proximate institutions, to ensure that individual, enterprise and societal needs are addressed in a planned, coherent and efficient way’ (Hunt 2011, p. 97).

The content analysis of the strategic plans provided evidence of all of the universities’ attempts to link with the regional community as part of the consultation phase of the strategic planning process and during the strategy implementation and review phases.

Examples of this include:

- Comments about the importance of connecting with the community and stakeholders to share their vision for the universities through consultation processes (NUIG 2015, UCC 2017, NUIM 2018)
- Stating that they are accountable to stakeholders (TCD 2014)
- Measuring success through stakeholder reviews (UCD 2015)
- Connecting with stakeholders ‘in ways that support mutually beneficial and impactful activities’ (UL 2015, p. 21).
- DCU emphasised the importance of communicating the research profile of the university to external stakeholders (DCU 2017)
- UL undertook to communicate their distinctiveness to stakeholders (UL 2015).

All of the universities strategic plans have strategic priorities which aim to engage and contribute to the community generally and many participants expressed the view that the universities role in civic society was about more than producing human capital:

The role of the university in general society is under threat, we have a bigger role than ever in civic society that we need to play a part in. Universities have a role in creating citizens who are well informed, take a broader perspective who are culturally attuned, who have empathy and all of those things are part of the university – not just serving a market need (President 2).

The selection of research areas that both fit on the global stage and are integrated to the local area was seen as being a key mechanism for the regional universities to contribute to the local community. The findings demonstrated that the regional universities were seen as being particularly influential in their communities and *seen by the local population as part of the fabric of the place (Senior Public Official 3)*

Everything is focused on our purpose as a civic university. To contribute to the community in terms of education but also our impact on social and cultural aspects of the city. On the cultural side – all of the arts that are done here. On the social side, health and education would be two of the main areas that we would impact on (President 3).

One participant noted that there could be better engagement with the community if Government provided more incentives to do so, citing examples of community engagement collaborations by some of the big universities in the USA (two of which are public institutions):

Penn State, Columbia, Berkley, they have massive community based outreach programmes which try to collaborate, work, and establish and improve working conditions for people who are vulnerable in society. Here we have bits of things but they are tiny. That's state policy though; it does not fund that kind of initiative (Academic Commentator).

To summarise, the findings reveal that the geographic drivers of strategy in Irish universities include enhancing international reputation through competing well in the university rankings and building an international reputation, which in turn leads to income generation from student fees and research funding. Local demographics, the diversity of the population in the area and Town and Gown where the universities wish to contribute to regional and international development by working with industry and attracting FDI as well as contributing to the development of society, education, industry and research in the regions are also geographic drivers.

Human Drivers

This section on the human drivers of strategic planning reveals the influence, vision and role of the University President as one the main drivers of the strategic plan.

The content analysis of the strategic plans reveals that all of the plans have a foreword, introduction or message from the President. The Elite Interview data confirms that all of the Presidents led the planning process and often used the plan to incorporate their vision for the institution for their term of office. The Presidents interviewed confirmed that they

felt ownership of the plans, their design, development and implementation with one stating:

An awful lot of the developmental process falls to me. That is useful because in a way the Chief Officer is supposed to listen to everyone and say 'here's what we are going to do'. The development of the plan is a matter for me and the senior management team in consultation with colleagues inside and outside the university (President 4).

There is little doubt that the leadership, personality, communication style and ideology⁵² of the President affect how the plan is created, communicated and implemented. Each President, as the main human driver of the strategic plan, approaches the role with their own understanding of the organisational culture, politics and style of the institution. A number of observations were made about the characteristics required of the President and his ability to engage staff to deliver the plan:

It does really need inspired leadership that is willing to think to the future and is willing to lead to people, to bring people with them not just to say 'this is how we are doing it' (Former Minister for Education).

Not all of the Presidents would claim to be inspirational leaders and some spoke of the challenge of being able to bring people on board, being a really good internal communicator and to be familiar with every single aspect of the universities activities:

It is quite challenging to professionally support strategic planning in the university settings in my experience. I think it is because of the diversity of the work that is going on... very few people do actually have the experience to understand and oversee the implementation of a university strategic plan (President 4).

The interview data found that the Presidents' own professional background and experience was a major factor in how the plan was designed and implemented:

He is an engineer, he thinks in terms of plans, in terms of projects. When you are talking to him, you can see the Gantt Charts

⁵² A set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organisation is based Cambridge Dictionary (2019) 'Cambridge Dictionary'.

running in his head. Everything filters up to the President, so he very much thinks in those terms and the rest of us do as well (Strategic Planner 1).

Between 1997 and 2019 there have been 25 University Presidents. Four current Presidents and one retired President were interviewed for this study. At the time of writing, all seven university Presidents are male. Their professions are as follows:

- Two medical doctors⁵³
- Two engineers⁵⁴
- Two physicists⁵⁵
- One accountant⁵⁶

Three of the seven universities are currently led by people who have worked in senior roles at UCD under Dr Hugh Brady, who was the President of UCD from 2004 to 2013. A Medical Doctor and graduate of UCD, Brady left Harvard Medical School to join UCD in 1996 and was appointed as President of UCD in 2004. The UCD Strategic Plan 2005-2008 committed to a radical overhaul of the academic structures, replacing 11 faculties with five colleges and amalgamating over 90 academic departments into 35 schools. There was fierce opposition to this plan, with critics claiming that the new structures would centralise power in the executive rather than the academic structures, as the Heads of the new Colleges would be appointed centrally rather than the traditional system of being elected by the faculty (Byrne 2005).

Given that a number of the Presidents and their management teams have worked in senior roles at UCD, there is potential for the ‘UCD effect’ where systems, processes and approaches to strategic planning are being replicated across the seven universities. One of the Presidents said:

I would say that when Hugh Brady went in to UCD it was such a big kabish of stuff, he had to put shape on it... he was very structured, so in time a system began to emerge (President 3).

⁵³ (Presidents of UL and MU, both worked at UCD in senior roles)

⁵⁴ (Presidents of UCD and Trinity)

⁵⁵ (Presidents of DCU and UCC)

⁵⁶ (President of NUIG, worked at UCD)

For the Presidents appointed at the beginning of a strategic planning cycle, the strategic plan presents an ideal opportunity to roll-out initiatives that were promulgated as part of their application for the post:

I decided that I would take the strategy that I had prepared when I was going for the job in the first place. To go out with a skeletal plan to the staff and say 'I am going to discuss it with you, group by group, and I am going to iterate the plan as you give me feedback' (President 1).

He set out his vision. A lot was taken out from his proposal for President, it was what he wanted to do for the university (Strategic Planner 3).

One President, who joined an institution that was just over mid-way through its strategic planning cycle spoke of how some of the targets were not being achieved: *so that was a challenge that required that we would look at it [the plan] again in order to get people to talk about what are the priorities now? (President 3)*. A review of strategic priorities was undertaken in consultation with staff, students and key stakeholders of the university.

All of the Presidents interviewed for this study spoke about how they lead the process and decide with their senior management teams (SMT) how the plan will be operationalised within the universities:

The pyramid at the top of the university, the people with responsibility, we felt that all of the major strategic goals needed to be owned by the people at the very top and then it would cascade down through them to the various elements of the university (President 1).

Some participants spoke about their experience of strategic planning in university environments and how it was perceived as being the domain of senior management:

I find that people are not that interested in strategy. Most people, faculty members, said we are just going to do our teaching and research and contribute to society and your job is strategic

*planning. Part of it is trust – that we wouldn't mess things up
(President 2)*

*It's often driven by the personalities or the people in power who
want to be seen to be doing it, or feel that they have to do it.
(Academic Commentator).*

That said, consultation with staff was deemed to be vital in terms of buy-in to the planning process with staff engagement identified as being critical to a successful strategic planning process (encouraging a bottom-up approach):

*I emphasised that everyone in the institution were to be focused
on the strategic plan, sure half of the staff are not academics at
all, and there are loads of things that they can do to advance the
plan, and they want to do it, they want to be part of the communal
effort and it is ridiculous not to tap into that (Retired President).*

The contrast between these comments indicates a gap between a top-down and bottom-up approach. Depending on whose viewpoint you take, strategic planning is regarded as the domain of senior management by some and seen as including the entire community by others.

While the strategic plan is a cornerstone in the management of universities, the Presidents also have many other aspects to their role. In some institutions, Strategic Planners operationalised the process for the President, managing all of the tasks associated with planning, drafting parts (or all) of the manuscript, managing and synthesising the feedback from stakeholder consultations discussed above, preparing the plan for presentation to the GA and managing many cycles of strategic planning.

To summarise, the findings in relation to the President as the main human driver of the strategic plan are:

- The Presidents lead the process of strategic planning in all of the universities
- The plans often incorporate the President's own vision and objectives for the institution for his term of office
- The Presidents' may devolve responsibility for the achievement of strategic objectives to the Senior Management Team (SMT) but hold themselves ultimately responsible for the delivery of the plan (taking a top-down approach)

- Stakeholder consultation and staff buy-in are seen as being vital to a successful strategic planning process (encouraging a bottom-up approach) but this process is sometimes seen as being a cynical exercise.

Summary findings – Pillar 1 - the drivers of and influences on strategic planning

The findings confirm that the main policy instruments that have driven strategic planning in Irish universities since 1997 are the Universities Act (1997) as informed by the SMI and the 2011 Hunt Report, which emphasised:

- Government control of the sector
- Accountability for the achievement of national strategic objectives
- Accountability for funding
- The introduction of performance-based funding
- Mission based performance compacts
- The achievement of financial savings by reducing staff numbers and duplication of provision of academic programmes
- The introduction of the Technological Universities and differentiation of mission between the institutions
- A focus on the creation of human capital, the work-ready, world ready, graduate
- Influence on the research output of the universities

This research found that the funding drivers of strategic planning include:

- The challenge of dealing with perceived inadequacy of government funding
- The ability to raise funds through philanthropy, the ECB and pressure to generate subsidiary income
- The ability to recruit international fee-paying students
- The challenge of managing the tension between compliance, accountability and autonomy

The findings in relation to the geographic drivers included the University Rankings, which determine international reputation and influence internationalisation, the local demographics and the diversity of the population in the area, ‘Town and Gown’ and the mission of the universities to contribute to the development of society, education, industry and research regionally.

Finally, this research found that the key human drivers of the strategic plans are the Presidents, who often share responsibility for the achievement of strategic objectives to the SMT but hold themselves ultimately responsible for the delivery of the plan.

Pillar 2 - The Planning Process

This section describes the findings of this research on how strategic plans are developed, managed, overseen, and supported in the universities. It describes the role of consultants, strategic planners, the SMTs and the engagement of the governing authority and other stakeholders in strategy formulation. It examines how the universities set their strategic priorities. It details the findings of this research on the strategic planning process from the beginning to the launch of the plan.

According to the evidence from the content analysis and the Elite Interviews, the universities appear to have developed considerable expertise and confidence in their strategic planning processes which have evolved over time. This was commented on by a participant who stated:

The universities have greatly improved in their strategic planning both in terms of their self-awareness of where their strengths and weaknesses are and their capacity to identify where it is they want to go and how it is they want to go there (Senior Public Official 5).

Between 2000 and 2009 (across three phases of strategic planning) 19 plans were produced by the seven universities in the absence of a national strategy. The Elite Interview data found that the first three phases of the plans had implementation deficits due to lack of support, weak evaluation, and few or no consequences for non-delivery of the plan. This is in keeping with the findings of the literature review on the implementation of strategic planning under the SMI more broadly in the Irish public sector.

A Strategic Planner who took up appointment to the post in the mid-2000's was advised that the approach to strategic planning was that: *You just go into a room and write it up (Strategic Planner 5).*

This practice is reflective of the literature review which found that the approach to strategic planning at that time was in keeping with 'soft' NPM, characterised as being

customer orientated with an emphasis on quality, with no consequences for the targets not being met rather than 'hard' NPM which was about 'measurement, reward and punishment' (Ferlie and Geraghty 2005). Despite talk of strategy and strategic planning being the watchwords in public service development at the time, there were few consequences for targets, objectives or outcomes not being met (MacCarthaigh and Boyle 2011). The interview data appears to confirm this, in that the strategic plan, once produced, was there to keep external stakeholders and politicians happy, and little attention was paid to its contents: *The strategic plan was something that you had to do, but that you didn't have to pay a whole lot of attention to (Strategic Planner 1).*

University participants were asked to describe the way that strategic plans were formulated and to detail the planning process. They were also asked to describe the involvement of internal and external stakeholders and the Governing Authority (GA) in the process and whether they had used consultants to help them with their strategic planning.

One university used a firm of economic consultants to write their Phase 2 plan. When asked about this experience, the Elite Interview data revealed that the then President thought that it would 'cut out all of the work' but the participant stated that they were concerned at the time that *coming from a consultant, there wouldn't be the same ownership or impact (Strategic Planner 3).*

The participant explained that following the approval of the strategy plan by the GA:

It fell on me to put it into order... I needed to bring the people together, they needed to feel that they owned the plan...I put the names of the SMT against particular goals as a first attempt at an operational plan, they liked it at the beginning but then they got tired of it and said 'do we have to fill this out ?' (Strategic Planner 3).

This comment underlines the risks associated with contracting out the task of writing up a strategic plan to consultants and the consequent potential for a lack of ownership of the goals and targets contained in the plan by the staff. It is reflective of Mintzberg's findings where the binary split between strategy formulation and implementation led to loss of ownership, implementation deficits and strategic plans, which had no basis in reality (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

Only one of the seven universities currently uses consultants to conduct their internal stakeholder consultation as part of their planning process. This institution also used consultants on two previous occasions to facilitate sessions with the SMT for the development of themes in earlier plans.

The other six who do not use consultants made the following observations:

That would be counter cultural in this University, they are concerned about corporatism so to bring in consultants to help plan, people would bristle at it to be honest (President 4)

No, absolutely not. Because it's about the conversations and engagement with colleagues and stakeholders and that can be inexpensively done. It's about getting people into a room, you know (Strategic Planner 5).

In order to investigate the internal capacity for strategic planning that has been built up within the universities, five people with specific responsibility for strategic planning were interviewed for this study. Some have been involved in the process of strategic planning over all five phases, others were appointed since the introduction of the Hunt Report.

One Strategic Planner described his role as follows:

I always believed that there should be a director of strategic planning in every university. Someone there all of the time, watching the external environment and noting things (Strategic Planner 3).

The individuals who were in their posts for a long time retained a body of knowledge in relation to the evolution of strategic planning in their institutions, in relation to what worked and what did not. Some of the Strategic Planners also write the compact documents for the HEA. One described the process of identifying and deciding on items which could become strategic priorities:

I have learned a lot by just keeping my ears and eyes open, particularly internally but also externally and I have a habit of noting things in strategic plans folders and files that I keep, saying

'this might be a good idea' and a lot of the content that I get for plans comes from that (Strategic Planner 6).

The positive influence of the Strategic Planner was noted in terms of managing the process of formulating and implementing the plan:

In University A, the strategic planner very good influence on the process in that they were organising it, challenging it, synthesising evidence and so on. In general, if you have got the right person and they are sensitive to how the organisation operates, having support for strategic planning is useful both in the creation of the plan and in the follow up (President 4).

This research suggests that dedicated planners play an important role in driving the strategic planning process on behalf of the President identifying potential opportunities for future plans and providing continuity from plan to plan.

Another key group for identifying and deciding on strategic priorities are the Senior Management Teams (SMTs) sometimes called University Management Teams⁵⁷ (UMTs). These are usually comprised of the most senior individuals in the University, the Vice-Presidents, Bursars, Deans and Directors.

The SMT have overall responsibility for the strategic plan. We have a steering group, and a management council who has a series of sub-committees who are responsible for areas of the plan. We also have research strategy board that does the same thing on the research side so they would have a small number of big projects that they manage (President 3).

Setting strategic priorities

The planning process for the next strategic plan often commences with an away-day where the President, the SMT and the Strategic Planner get together to identify some preliminary strategic priorities.

One President described the process as follows:

⁵⁷ In this thesis, SMT and UMT are referred to as SMT henceforth

I started by coming up myself with what our strengths and weaknesses were and then I tried to collect evidence to be able to communicate them to other people. I had an away- day with the SMT where I presented the evidence to them. They all had their own ideas, and we thrashed it around for the whole day (President).

All of the strategic plans detail the mission, vision and values of the universities and some participants stated that they began the process by re-examining the mission statement:

We start with the mission statement, (we ask ourselves), is it still the same mission statement? Our values, our vision statement are they going to change? Having identified those parts of continuity, we look at our goals and decide are these still our goals? (Strategic Planner 1).

The Elite Interview data reveal that depending on whether the President is an internal or external appointment, or whether he was continuing on from one term to the next, affected the initial setting of the goals and targets. In one case where the President was an internal appointment and starting his first plan, it was observed that he was working from a solid evidence base for setting the strategic priorities: *It was not aspirational (Strategic Planner 3)*. Another said that the new plan would be: *a continuation from previous plan, we are not starting at year 0 (Strategic Planner 1)* and that the initial consultation by the President and the SMT would be to look at goals and decide if they are still the same: *identify those parts of continuity (Strategic Planner 1)*.

Stakeholder consultation

One President stated that when he got the opportunity to develop a strategic plan, he saw consultation phases of strategic planning with staff as being vital to the plans success, as he had been a staff member when a previous plan was launched. He said:

No-one ever looked at it [the plan], no-one ever mentioned it... it came down from on-high, and that's what made me think, you have to get the people you expect to implement it involved from day-one (Retired President).

The Elite Interview data revealed that following high level discussions and meetings between the President and the SMT to identify initial themes, that in all cases, the next step was to consult with stakeholders.

The initial phase of internal stakeholder consultation included the following methods:

- E-mails to staff detailing the themes, inviting feedback
- President hosted Town Hall meetings and workshops with staff (some had special sessions for students)
- Schools/Departments/Units were asked to do SWOT analysis and themes emerged from those which fed into the process
- Off-campus / away-day meetings with SMT and working groups

Generally, following the initial phase of feedback, a draft plan would be prepared. Further rounds of stakeholder consultation would then take place, both internally and externally.

Methods for wider stakeholder consultation varied and included the following methods:

- Consultation through social media channels and a dedicated intranet site
- Draft of plan sent to internal and external stakeholders for feedback
- Stakeholder mapping
- Specific consultation with Alumni

This research shows that the drafting process was quite similar across the institutions and generally involved drafts coming before the SMT, Academic Council and GA as the plan was developed, with the GA approving the final plan. The importance of 'buy-in' through this phase of the planning process was identified as a key priority of the Presidents:

As President I would be identified with the strategic plan, so the way I tend to go about these things is that they are deeply consultative... this was remarked upon both at Academic Council and Governing Authority in approving the plans, in both of those governance fora, people were anxious to say 'I may not agree with everything in this plan but there was a very full consultative process around it'. (President 4).

Despite the efforts to engage stakeholders, some of the participants that had contributed to strategic planning processes as stakeholders expressed some frustration about their feedback not being visibly incorporated into the plan:

In my honest opinion, consultation is a farce and a charade and gives the impression that you are being taken seriously – but absolutely in my experience it is not true (Academic Commentator)

We put forward a submission to this institutions strategic plan, but nothing ever came of it. Nobody ever came back to say 'thanks for that, this is what we've incorporated, this is why we didn't incorporate this'. I think it left down the process, there was no feedback, no follow-up - that is missing (Stakeholder 2).

One of the Strategic Planners said that in his experience, a lot of people couldn't understand why their feedback wasn't included and said that in his institution, it was because their proposals were operational, and more suited to the institutions internal operational plan and the external strategic plan was for the public. He did not explain if or how he communicated this to those concerned.

This demonstrates the challenge for the universities in deciding what the strategic priorities will be and then managing the differing perspectives and expectations of stakeholders and the tensions among them. One way of bringing people on board was described as 'socialising the plan' through a number of cycles of consultation and reflection with all internal stakeholders.

Quite apart from internal stakeholder consultation, engagement with the community beyond the university was also seen as a valuable exercise for some of the universities. For one university, the external stakeholder consultation was seen as an opportunity to engage with the wider community and industry:

Engagement with the wider community, we are doing much more engagement with industry now because that's what is required of us. We need to validate our existence and make external actors recognise that we are here (President 1).

Some universities expressed a lack of confidence when it came to communicating the value of their work in the humanities to the current political and administrative system, expressing the view that the current regime *want to hear something much more instrumental (President 4)* where *History, politics, social sciences, arts, they don't see why the university is doing that at all (President 3)*.

One university explained that they were careful to refer to government policy in their strategic plan

to tick the STEM box because particularly under Richard Bruton, unless it had STEM in it, he had no interest in it (President 4).

This research suggests that there may be a hierarchy of stakeholders when setting the strategic priorities and the challenge for the universities is to manage the tension among them to produce a strategic plan which is acceptable and deliverable. Some internal stakeholders have significantly more influence on the strategic plan than others, i.e. the SMT's, the Strategic Planners, the GA's, the Academic Councils (in some cases) and Schools and Departments, especially at the implementation and review phases. This points to a 'top-down' approach to strategic planning which is dominated by senior and middle management. There is also a hierarchy of external stakeholders with government policy having the most influence on strategy, followed by the wider community and industry.

In all cases, the draft strategic plan is brought before the SMT and the GA regularly during the drafting process. The next section details the findings in relation to the GA's role in approving the plan.

The role of the Governing Authority

Section 34 (2) of the Universities Act (1997) requires the governing authority to either approve the strategic plan prepared by the President or 'approve the plan with such modifications as it thinks fit' (Universities Act, 1997). In all of the universities, the GA is involved in approving drafts and signing off on the final strategic plan.

The composition of the GA is set out in Section 16 of the Universities Act (1997). All of the current GA's are composed of between 26 and 40 members (other than Trinity College Dublin⁵⁸ which has 25 internal members and 2 external and is chaired by the Provost) drawn from different stakeholder groups who broadly represent and comprise the university community. They include elected representatives, ministerial appointees,

⁵⁸ It is worth noting that the governing authority of Trinity College Dublin has the highest academic representation (near-absolute) (Scott 2019) of all of the Irish GA's, which is reflective of the Oxford and Cambridge model in the UK. Trinity College Dublin is the highest-ranked academic institution in Ireland. This is a counter-point to the requirement for more professionalised, external, paid GAs.

representatives of industry, arts, culture and community, representatives of other public bodies, alumni, Education and Training Boards, international experts, foundation representatives, and NUI nominees. The composition of the current GA's are set out in Table 18. This table shows that there are no current representatives of 'community' in the current GA's of the seven universities.

Uni.	Representation			Chairperson	Sectoral Representation includes										NUI	
	Internal ⁵⁹	External	Total members		Politician ⁶⁰	Ministerial appointees	Industry	Arts / Culture	Community	Other public bodies	Alumni	ETB ⁶¹	International Experts	Foundation		
UL	14	15	29	Mary Harney	2	2		3			1	2	1	1	2	
UCC	18	21	39	Dr. Catherine Day	7	4	2	1				3	1			2
NUIG	18	22	40	The Hon Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness	7	3	2	1			2	4				2
UCD	19	21 ⁶²	40	Marie O'Connor	9	3	3					2				3
DCU	11	15	26	Dr. Martin McAleese	1	4	4	2				2			1	
NUI Maynooth	15	17	31	Baroness Nuala O'Loan		2	2				7	2		1		2
Trinity College Dublin	25	2	27	Provost Patrick Prendergast		1	1									

Table 18 - The composition of the current Governing Authorities

⁵⁹ Internal membership includes: Chairperson, President, ex-officio members who are normally senior officers of the university, Professors, Academic and Research Staff, Non-Academic Staff, Student Representatives

⁶⁰ Mayors, County Councillors

⁶¹ ETB = Education and Training Board

⁶² 5 external seats currently vacant

Not all of the GAs have the same composition, as the Universities Act specifies particular membership for some institutions. The Elite Interview data on the planning process (see Table 19 p. 170) demonstrates that the GA plays a key role in formulating the strategic plan. One President observed that their involvement as a diverse representative group of stakeholders was helpful:

The more diverse the GA the more useful and effective they are in helping the institution to select the optimum strategic plan (President 4).

The interview data also highlighted the way in which they were involved in the process of drafting, approval and oversight of the strategic plan:

They are heavily involved, the strength of GA (is that) it has got broad representation, and (the strategic plan) gets a huge amount of discussion and interest which is what you want, so (they are) highly engaged (Strategic Planner 5).

So their views, we were benefiting from their wisdom, and they weren't trying to re-write it but they were challenging aspects of it. So the final sign off by them was one where they had an active participation in the final shaping of the plan itself which I have to say I found very positive as well (President 1).

However, other participants questioned the ability of some representatives of different sectors that comprise some of the members of the GA's to input to strategy stating:

My sense is that aspect of governing authority review is not as active as it should be and I think that may be a function of the make-up of governing authorities (where) a lot of positions are representational positions as opposed to competency-based ones (Stakeholder 1).

Others questioned the capability of the GA to hold the management to account:

The GA's are a joke, they do nothing but service whatever the President says and all of the decisions are already made, so the idea of them as representative of public accountability? Sure the Presidents now are Chief Executives, and under the legislation,

they can do what they like and they do do what they like and then they get the GA to just rubber stamp it, so the whole thing is farcical (Academic Commentator).

Some of the Senior Public Officials interviewed said that the GAs were not fit for purpose due to their size, problems with regulation and weaknesses in governance:

The GAs are a pretty ineffective crowd. Much has to do with their size and every constituency under the sun is represented. A lot of people who are on GAs are not really competent to be on the boards of a university, so what that leads to is of course the President gets his own way. The very size of GAs, which are composed on the basis of representation rather than competencies, militates against them being as strong as they should be and as effective as they should be in the overall governance of the institution and in setting the strategic direction for the institution (Senior Public Official 5).

I think everyone knows that the existing arrangements for Governing Bodies are not fit for purpose. We have had problems in almost every institution in the university sector and the IoT sector in governance and regulation (Senior Public Official 4).

The proposal to narrow the representation on the GAs arose on a number of occasions with Senior Public Officials, Presidents and Strategic Planners.

They are too large, too representative. If you are on the GA, you should be there with the sole purpose of advancing the university, not for advancing sectional interests. No people from the county council or trade unions, I don't think staff members should be on it (Senior Public Official 3).

This sentiment was also reflected in the responses to the 2018 DES review of the HEA Act (1971). In their response to this review, the HEA recommended that ‘consideration should be given to reducing the size of HEI governing bodies...and that external members should be appointed through the Public Appointments Service and that all eligible members should be paid for their service’ (HEA 2018c, p. 3, 4). Another submission identified that a competency governance model would be preferable to the current

representative one (Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) submission to HEA 2018c).

One President stated that he saw the recent opportunity of the appointment of a new governing authority for a new term of office as an opportunity to ‘really revamp governance’, but that it could not be done to the extent that he would have liked because the Universities Act (1997) limited his power to amend the composition of the GA.

Summary findings Pillar 2 – The Planning Process

Table 19 summarises the findings of this research regarding the process of strategic planning in all seven universities⁶³. Table 29 (Appendix E) is a more detailed version of this table. This shows that the process of strategic planning is very similar across the institutions where in all of the universities the planning process follows the classical ‘design’ school of strategic management model.

⁶³ As this information was gathered through the process of anonymised Elite Interviews, in line with this commitment this data has been anonymised and random numbers have been allocated to each university where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

Table 19 - A summary of the process of strategic planning in each Irish University

Uni.	Led by Pres. with input from SMT	Planner led process	Internal workshops /SWOT with Schools/ Dept's	Away day	Town Hall	S/holder consult'n using IT	External S/Holder Consult'n	Draft to SMT	Draft to SP sub-comm.	Draft to Ac. C'cil	Draft to GA	Approval SMT & GA	Pres. leads reporting to GA through SMT	Pres. & SMT in partnership with Ac. C'cil & GA
1 ⁶⁴	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2 ⁶⁵	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓ ⁶⁶	✓			✓	✓		✓
3 ⁶⁷	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	✓		✓			✓ ⁶⁸	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
5 ⁶⁹	✓		✓		✓ ⁷⁰		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓ ⁷¹	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
7	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	

⁶⁴ 14 month process

⁶⁵ 11 month process

⁶⁶ Most didn't respond 'but they couldn't say they weren't asked'

⁶⁷ 11 month process

⁶⁸ 'no one could say I wasn't consulted'

⁶⁹ 15 month process

⁷⁰ 'Deeply consultative' academic council and GA play a 'huge role'

⁷¹ Small amount of consultation with external stakeholders 'totally useless'

Pillar 3 - The Key Visible Characteristics of the Plans

An examination of the key characteristics of the strategic priorities of the universities (Pillar 3) enables an assessment of the degree to which institutional distinctiveness has been achieved over the five phases of strategic planning

This issue is encapsulated in the Phase 2 UCC Strategic Plan (2006-2011) which identified the challenges for the universities in trying to ‘be all things to all people’. It acknowledged that ‘no institution is funded at the level sufficient to pursue all desirable activities’ and that universities will have to recognise this and ‘seek out their competitive advantage and focus on their individual strengths...so that the sector as a whole continues to deliver all that is required of it’. It went on to state that ‘universities must respond proactively to change, which is both incremental and discontinuous...strategic planning and strategic alliances will be the key to success’ (UCC 2006, p 11).

The content analysis of the strategic plans suggests that in Phase 5 an effort by the universities to assert distinctiveness emerged more strongly as a result of the System Performance Framework. It demonstrated that the universities are prioritising and focusing on particular areas for development in their current plans. This approach is a recommendation of the 2006 OECD review of Irish HE (OECD 2006) that was adopted by the Hunt Report. The implementation of this recommendation in the current phase of the strategic plans is indicative of the extent of the implementation of the Hunt Report. Some of the participants welcomed this development, stating that it has the potential to create a more diversified system of universities in Ireland:

[Up until now] every university wanted to be everything, research leader, regional, global, undergrad, they want to be all of these things, whereas some would be better off working on the research side, others doing undergraduate work. I think if you did that top-down: ‘here is the research university’ there would be holy war. But I think if you allow universities to develop their own differentiated strategic plans, a version of that will evolve, it won’t be pure but there will be a version of that. To develop in a way that says ‘we know what we do well’ (Strategic Planner 1).

One participant saw mission diversity in Ireland being created by the unique capabilities and expertise individuals on staff and the location of the institutions:

Specific niche areas have grown up in each of the institutions where they excel. The rankings is a very blunt instrument, there is only so much you can say about the top 100, and now Ireland does not have anyone in the top 100. But if you go down to the discipline area level, we have expertise, and almost all of the universities could point out and say ‘this is actually something that on a world ranking that we are excellent at (Senior Public Official 6).

This is reflective of Penrose’s Resource Based View (1959) which identified the key intangible resource of an organisation as the tacit knowledge held by human assets and when utilised, that this offered a unique source of competitive advantage and growth. This research identifies that mission diversity is evident in the Phase 5 plans where most of the universities have a small number of high level strategic priorities in their current plans which focus on key areas of development. These are summarised in Table 20.

University	High level strategic priorities Phase 5	Strategic Priorities
NUIG	4	Teaching and learning; research and innovation; globalisation; engagement with the community
UCD	6	Global university; academic excellence; campus development; international research engagement; building partnerships with wider society; increasing agility and effectiveness
UCC	5	Teaching and learning and the student experience; research, innovation, creativity and discovery; contribution to community; attract staff of the highest quality; strengthen infrastructure and resource base
DCU	6	Talent; Discovery; Creativity; Society; Technology; Sustainability
NUI Maynooth	13	Quality of provision; teaching / learning / research balance; student experience; ethical internationalisation; equality, diversity and inclusion; arts and culture linked to the community; be an excellent place to work; promote operational excellence and digital transformation; good governance; connect with alumni and friends
UL	3	Building on achievements, accentuating distinctiveness, raising international profile
TCD	3	Strengthen community; research; engage with wider society

Table 20 - The Phase 5 high level strategic priorities per university

A number of participants highlighted the importance of narrowing the strategic plan to a sharp focus, with one stating that:

Universities probably have a fighting chance of delivering five or six objectives effectively (Stakeholder 1).

This suggests a mature, experienced approach to strategic planning, where the universities appear to have learned that they do not have the resources or the capabilities to compete with each other or internationally on every front. The funding drivers section of this chapter illustrates that the universities are being assertive and securing non-exchequer income to fund their strategic priorities in order to pursue their futures. As well as this, the content analysis of the high level strategic priorities appears to indicate that the universities still see themselves as being public institutions that pursue the public good. The Elite Interviews reveal that the universities are now engaged in a balancing act, where their overarching mission is to have an excellent academic reputation, provide an excellent student experience, deliver high quality pioneering research and be part of and contribute to the community. A President explained the challenge of this balancing act, stating the work of the university is:

To grow, given our regional context, informed by the principles of quality, balance, inclusion, engagement and reputation. Enhancing the quality of provision, balancing our strategic energies between the teaching mission and the research mission and maintaining the right mix of undergraduate and postgraduate activity and the right discipline mix. Being inclusive and diverse and the final thing, which catches a lot of things is the institutional reputation, the more respected you are as an entity, the easier it is to get things done (President 4).

The Elite Interview data suggest that the continued constrained government funding environment is of great concern to the universities who state that it is affecting their mission as public institutions. Consequently, there is a risk that the universities will be pushed beyond the tipping point and will overemphasise the focus on markets, customers and competition rather than the current mission, which is the development of society, education, industry and research, all of which are contained in their strategic plans.

Pillar 4 - Implementation and Resourcing Strategic Plans

The findings indicate that while the responsibility for the delivery of the strategic plan belongs to the President and his senior team, many of the participants spoke of how their strategic plans are underpinned by annual operating plans that cascade down from the main strategic plan to Colleges, Schools, Faculties and Units. Information about the

methods used by all seven universities for the implementation, reporting and monitoring of the strategic plans was gathered through the content analysis and also from the Elite Interviews with the university representatives who were asked to describe the process. This was to gain an understanding as to how the universities achieved institutional engagement with the plan, translating it from the manuscript, which sets out a high level institutional framework with goals and targets for a five-year period, to one that is implemented across the institution and beyond.

In six of the universities, the SMTs are ultimately responsible for strategy implementation⁷². Three of them take different approaches where one requires College Principals to present strategies for approval to the SMT (University 2); another requires academic and support functions to produce annual operating plans aligned to the strategic plan (University 1); and another has a management council who report to the SMT which has sub-committees responsible for implementation of sub-strategies (University 6). The seventh university has an SMT for strategy (UMTS), which includes members of senior management in the university (beyond the regular membership of the SMT) which is responsible for strategy implementation (University 3).

Five of the universities use KPIs as a monitoring tool with one of these combining KPIs with a traffic light system for reporting. One has a system where quantitative actions with target dates are tracked and qualitative actions are evaluated on the basis of evidence of institutional commitment to the achievement of the objective.

The complexity of strategic planning in universities and the dependence on so many variables to successfully achieve the ambition which is set out in the strategic plan (including changes over time) led one Strategic Planner to comment that when using the traffic light system, two new colours could be included for coding strategic priorities not achieved:

The red that's just dead – because either the external environment has changed and you are not going to do it no matter how hard

⁷²As this information was gathered through the process of anonymised Elite Interviews, in line with this commitment, this data has been anonymised and random numbers have been allocated to each university where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

*you bang you head against the wall - the dead red!, and blue –
there are some things that are just ‘iced’ (Strategic Planner 1).*

In five cases, the President provides a progress report annually to the GA, in one it is twice yearly and in another monitoring or progress reports are presented quarterly to GA by the person responsible for the section of the plan.

In four of the universities, planning is linked to the budget, with one stating that resources were allocated in line with the plan and another stating that the strategic plan was ‘supported’ by a financial plan and student enrolment plan.

The methods for strategy implementation and monitoring are presented in Table 21⁷³ which sets out the designated responsibility for strategy implementation, the monitoring tools used and the frequency of monitoring of strategic plans. It demonstrates that corporate monitoring tools including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and traffic light systems are used to report progress to the GAs. It also illustrates the relationship between planning and resource allocation.

⁷³ As this information was gathered through the process of anonymised Elite Interviews, in line with this commitment, this data has been anonymised and random numbers have been allocated to each university where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

Uni.	Designated responsibility for implementation	Monitoring tools used	Frequency of monitoring	Any other items of note
1	SMT responsible for implementation with academic and support functions required to produce annual operation plans aligned to the strategic plan	High level KPI's	SMT monitor the plan fortnightly. Outputs of operational plans reviewed annually by Operational Strategic Planning Steering Group, who report to the SMT and the President reports to GA	Resources allocated in line with the plan
2	Each member of the SMT has a strategic plan for their area. College Principals present strategies for approval to UMT	KPI's	President reports annually to GA.	There is a strategic planning committee under the auspices of the UMT to make sure that there was 'a proper academic input into the plan'. Budgets are devolved to Schools.
3	SMT for strategy (UMTS) have responsibility for implementation and monitoring	KPI's	SMT for strategy (UMTS) review the plan every 6 weeks. Progress reports provided by the UMTS to the GA annually	Strategic plan supported by a financial plan and student enrolment plan
4	Rolling planning model – each owner of a strategic goal (who is a member of the SMT) reports on the progress of the goal through the SMT to the GA	Traffic light system	Annually to GA	Owner flags any aspects of the plan that may need to be adjusted – GA takes a 'renew and review' approach to planning ⁷⁴ Budgets are allocated to the faculties based on activity not strategy.
5	SMT responsible for implementation	KPI framework formulated by the Quality Office. Progress is presented using a Traffic Light System.	GA monitor reports quarterly, which are presented by the person responsible for the section	They do not look at a Traffic Light for the whole plan for every quarter. Different reforms have their own timelines. Developing a resource allocation model driven by an academic plan.
6	SMT responsible for the implementation of the plan with a management council who report to SMT that has sub-committees responsible for implementation of sub-strategies	Quantitative actions with target dates tracked. Qualitative actions evaluated on the basis of evidence of institutional commitment to the achievement of the objective.	Twice yearly progress reports to GA Strategic Planning Committee and Quality Assurance Committee, annual reports to GA	Budgets are allocated to the faculties based on activity not strategy. Plan is linked to budget – 1 year and 5 year planning.
7	SMT responsible for the implementation of the plan	Traffic Light System	A sub-set of the SMT is responsible for monitoring and produce twice yearly progress reports to GA and a mid-term review	Resources are tied to the plan.

Table 21 - The methods for strategy implementation and monitoring

⁷⁴ Copied from the London School of Economics Strategic Planning Model (President 1)

While it is clear that the SMTs have ultimate responsibility for delivering the plan, the Elite Interviews sought to ascertain what mechanisms were used to engage staff and to resource the plan, using human and financial resources both internal and external to the universities.

When asked about how they went about getting staff to engage with the plan and to translate it from a high level framework to one that is operational throughout the institution, the following observations were made about the difficulty of strategic planning in universities:

I think as a strategic planning environment it's probably as tough as it gets. You are dealing with people with very high intellectual capacity, often themselves are experts in aspects of strategic planning. I think the challenge for leadership is how you engage those people so that they contribute to it, as opposed to trying to just trying to bring them along with you. And I think that's extremely difficult to do (Stakeholder 1)

Mechanisms that were used to engage staff included providing budgets, structural support, devolved authority, selecting people to perform certain tasks, offering incentives to encourage ownership of the plan:

You need to provide budgets and structural support for themes. Devolve authority so that they can have their own influence and voice in the plan, give staff the autonomy, the liberty – decide where to go and how to get there (President 2)

The relationship between planning and resource allocation was explored during the Elite Interviews and Table 22 below summarises the responses to the questions about the relationship between the two in the universities. All of the participants confirmed that there was no additional money available for strategic initiatives other than small allocations that were set aside from the core grant income:

Each faculty and each support division had to come up with an implementation plan for how they would respond to the plan and we had a strategic fund that they could bid for. We did that for every year of the plan and if they didn't do what they said they

were going to do then they had a serious problem in the second year in succeeding in drawing down that kind of money (Retired President)

The challenge of resourcing the strategic plans was a recurring theme in the Elite Interviews. Many of the universities pointed out that they now had funding strategies to raise private non-exchequer income to enable them to achieve their strategic ambition (in line with the Funding Drivers discussed earlier in this chapter). Certain approaches to public sector planning emphasise the need for operational capacity to deliver the plan and one participant spoke of his experience in this regard:

Most of the resources you require to make public-sector strategy successful are outside of your direct control so that means the strategy must make sense and have support (Senior Public Official 3)

This comment emphasises the importance of the ‘collective ownership’ of the plan, where the many stakeholders of the universities understand the strategy and support it.

Table 22⁷⁵ illustrates that some of the universities set aside small funds with very limited resources exclusively for strategy implementation but in the main that resources are allocated in accordance with strategy. The Elite Interview data highlighted that the current methods for strategy implementation and monitoring as described in Table 21 (p. 176) coupled with mechanisms for resource allocation as detailed in Table 22 have made strategic planning a more iterative process in four of the seven universities where resources are linked to the plan. This appears to enhance the capacity of those institutions to ensure that the strategy is implemented operationally and administratively.

⁷⁵ As this information was gathered through the process of anonymised Elite Interviews, in line with this commitment, this data has been anonymised and random numbers have been allocated to each university where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

University	Resourcing of the plan	Strategic Initiative Fund
1	UMT allocate resources in accordance with the plan	No – ‘people have to prove that they will meet targets and exceed them and the money will follow. If something is very strategic to the university, I am sure that some money can be provided but like all of the unis there is simply not enough money coming in’ (Strategic Planner 2)
2	Budgets devolved to Schools	No
3	Financial Plan and student enrolment plan	No – UMT decisions of resource allocation are informed by the strategic plan ‘and there is always negotiation around that and where we should invest and where we should give the limited pool of resources that we have’ (Strategic Planner 5)
4	Budgets are allocated to the faculties based on activity not strategy	Small fund for strategic initiatives known as the ‘President’s Fund’
5	Developing a resource allocation model driven by an academic plan	No
6	Plan is linked to budget – 1 year and 5 year planning. Budgets are allocated to the faculties based on activity not strategy	Extra and exceptional support would be provided based on a business case presented to the SMT.
7	Resources are tied to the plan	No

Table 22 - Resourcing of the plans

Summary findings Pillar 4 – Implementation and Resourcing

This section describes the findings in relation to strategy implementation and resourcing. Table 21 (p. 176) detailed the implementation and monitoring mechanisms of each university and Table 22 detailed the universities approaches to financially resourcing the plans. The two main challenges in terms of implementation were identified as the ability to harness the capacity to deliver the plan through the staff and the financial resources available to the universities.

Pillar 5 – Review and Evaluation

Finally, this research sought to ascertain how plans were reviewed and evaluated in the universities and whether strategy was evaluated at the end of each cycle. When it comes to review at the end of the planning cycle the following comment summarises the general approach by all of the universities:

At the end of the 5 years, we aim to have everything done. In some cases we overachieve in some elements and in some cases we fall a bit short but it is based on ongoing feedback and a critical analysis of how we are performing and that is ongoing and then that informs the next plan, there are some elements that are carried forward (Strategic Planner 5).

The content analysis shows that none of the strategic plans make reference to evaluation exercises or reports. The Elite Interview data indicated that review and evaluation essentially were interpreted by the universities as one and the same thing where in all cases, the review process was an internal one conducted by the President, SMT and the GA:

At the end of this plan we will go down through the strategic objectives and say 'what have we achieved, what do we have left to achieve'. We will examine in what ways the international landscape has changed since we wrote the last plan and in what ways has the Irish educational landscape changed and developed. What are the new things that we need to be doing for the next period? (Strategic planner 4).

From the Government perspective, it appears to be a similar process, where they are monitoring the implementation of the NS HE 2030 and stating:

From the point of view of having a live evaluation process, we are monitoring and also asking 'did we get it right' or if we've got to change as what would we be changing? (Senior Public Official 6).

Communicating the outcome of the GA review process to the university community was highlighted by one President as being worthwhile:

The very act of doing an annual review and an annual renewal process keeps the plan alive. One mistake we made the last time was not to communicate the annual outcome to the broader university community. We did it after year 4 and it got great

attention, we will now we do it on an annual basis, review, renew and communicate (President 1).

The only evaluation of the strategic plans which appears to take place is the final reporting of the achievements of the plan by the President / SMT / UMTS to the GA. Ultimately however, despite reviewing 29 out of 30 plans and interviews with key informants, there is little evidence that the key component of review and evaluation is prioritised.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of this research through a unique, detailed historical analysis of the range of available universities' strategic plans which offers a longitudinal perspective on strategic planning, alongside more contemporary evidence of the process of strategic planning as provided by Elite Interviews. Not only does it present the perspectives of Senior University Management, it also draws on the knowledge of Strategic Planners in the institutions, as well as a number of strategically identified critical commentators. It provides rich and detailed information on the process of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in Irish universities for the period 1997-2019. As such, it captures the most significant dimensions of strategic planning practice in Irish universities since 1997 and represents an important contribution to understanding strategic planning in the university sector in Ireland. The key sources of primary data for this study were a detailed content analysis of the strategic plans published by Irish universities (n=29) for the period 1997-2018 and Elite Interviews with leaders in the field and key experts in the Irish HE sector. The findings were summarised in accordance with the five pillars of the operational framework of this study. Chapter 7 presents the analysis of the findings, testing the approaches of the Irish universities to strategic planning in order to identify which public management approaches dominate strategic planning.

Chapter 7 Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the findings arising from this research study under the five pillars of the operational framework (see Table 23 below). These pillars are:

Pillar 1: Drivers of and influences on strategic planning

Pillar 2: The planning process

Pillar 3: Key visible characteristics of the plans

Pillar 4: Implementation and resourcing

Pillar 5: Review and evaluation

This operational framework enables the findings across all five pillars to be viewed through the lenses of four different public management approaches in order to ascertain the extent to which each approach is evident in the universities strategic plans. Shaw (2015) states that the lack of research to analyse ‘the potential empirical consequences of the new post-NPM analytic of government...needs to be addressed before the dual promises of more decision-making autonomy for public managers and greater civil society involvement in that decision making are realised’ (Shaw 2015). Given this lack of empirical evidence ‘to test, challenge and extend the scholarly contributions’ (Hartley *et al.* 2016, p. 1) this research enables theories of Public Value Management to be explored ‘in the real world’.

Key characteristics of public management approaches- ‘DNA markers’				
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
1. Visibility of key drivers - influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and strategy preserve of political leadership • Responsiveness to rules and regulations • Hierarchical decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market principles dominate • Efficiency, effectiveness • Reducing state expenditure • Focus on input and output metrics • Measurement, reward, punishment (hard NPM) • Management ‘steering’ • Implementation overseen by agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networked, emphasis on the customer / stakeholder preferences and the provision of high quality services and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on responding to citizen and service user preferences including and beyond the economic market • A wide authorising environment focusing on outcomes that are of public value
2. Planning process –design, responsibility and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic culture • One best way of working • Focus on short-term results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down, rational, linear process • Limited range of stakeholders • Measurement of outputs through performance indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more balanced process of formulating strategy that is guided by government and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A democratic process with a broad range of stakeholders who are involved at all stages of the strategic planning process.
3. Characteristics of the plans - distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic delivery of services to the public in the public interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionally oriented • Performance aligned to narrow range of defined economically oriented results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on responding to network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader authorising environment leads to institution specific priorities and more distinctive mission • Set targets for a range of societal concerns
4. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public servants ‘rowing’ & accountable to politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emphasis on managements responsibility to deliver the plan ‘do more with less’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on achievement of results by negotiating through networks and integrating lines of accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan considers the opportunity cost of redeploying resources from one service to another, opportunity cost and operational capacity
5. Review, Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchical accountability • Emphasis on inputs • Conformity, reporting, budgeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionally oriented • Output focused • Emphasis on meeting requirements of increased regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan evaluation and feedback includes network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on learning lessons and reflection on outcomes with a wider range of authorising actors who are all involved in the evaluation process.

Table 23 - The Operational Framework used in this study

Pillar 1 – Drivers of and influences on strategic planning

According to the findings of this research, four key drivers have influenced strategic planning in Irish Universities since the passing of the Universities Act in 1997. These are policy drivers, funding drivers, geographic drivers and human drivers. The operational framework was used to analyse the findings relating to the drivers of and influences on strategic planning through the lenses of the four different public management approaches to ascertain the extent to which they are evident in the universities strategic plans.

Policy Drivers

The findings indicate that there were three main policy drivers of strategic planning in Irish universities since 1997. These were the SMI (1994), the Universities Act (1997) and the Hunt Report.

The SMI sought to reform public management in Ireland by introducing a requirement for Government Departments to produce statements of strategy and business plans as well as to introduce performance management with a view to delivering joined-up government to strategically manage cross-cutting / cross-departmental issues that were national priorities. By doing so, the SMI introduced strategic planning and managerialism into Irish public management. The SMI was the harbinger of NPM style approaches to strategic planning in the Irish public sector, albeit initially low key and with little or no consequences for weak implementation.

While many of the objectives of the Universities Act could be said to echo characteristics of Public Value Management (e.g. the promotion of the cultural and social life of society, facilitating life-long learning, scholarly research and scientific investigation) the Act also set out a new infrastructure of accountability and governance for the universities. Written at a time before NPM took hold and embodying the tension between different public administration paradigms, the Act signalled a step-change away from a collegiate culture, where traditionally, decision making was centred on ‘distinctively academic decisions’ (Hedley 2010, p. 133). It assigned responsibility for strategic planning to the Office of the President, thus placing the duty for accountability and agenda setting within the management structure of the institutions rather than with the academic management structures. The managerialist model introduced in the Universities Act (1997) reflected practices adopted in other Anglo HE systems such as in the UK, Australia, New Zealand

and the USA (Clancy 2015), all of which are NPM ‘Marketiser’⁷⁶ countries (other than the USA) (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

While the SMI and the Universities Act sought to reform the Irish public service and the universities respectively, the literature review on public sector reform in Ireland between 1995 and 2008 found that Irish NPM during that time was symbolic with a lack of accountability, responsibility and evaluation indicating a ‘soft’⁷⁷ NPM approach to public management. Reflective of this were the Phase 1, 2 and 3 strategic plans published by Irish universities between 1997 and 2010. These plans met the statutory requirements of the Universities Act, but there were no apparent consequences for strategy that was not achieved. The financial crisis of 2008 and the establishment of DPER marked a turning point in Irish public management where the tone and character of public management changed. At this time the Government appears to have taken a co-ordinated cross-departmental ‘hard’⁷⁸ NPM approach to public management in order to implement both the austerity measures which were required by the Troika and also to implement a ‘wider, domestically generated administrative reform agenda’ (MacCarthaigh and Hardiman 2019, p. 4). The model of public management that emerged was characterised by hard NPM policy drivers that included the need for a more efficient and effective strategic planning system that could cope with reduced state expenditure and account for input and output equilibrium.

With a strong emphasis on a ‘fit for purpose’ HE system that would contribute to the Irish economic recovery and generate human capital, the Hunt Report (2011) appears to have been the critical policy driver that introduced hard NPM in to the management of Irish universities. The Hunt Report sought to bring closer alignment between the objectives of national policy and the objectives of the universities as articulated in their strategic plans. Examples of these are control of the sector through the System Performance Framework, which comprised the strategic dialogue process and performance compacts; financial

⁷⁶ Marketisers – countries, which underwent radical reform, where the role of the state was ‘rolled back’ and minimised, with a shift of control moved from public administration to public management. Disaggregation, agentification, competition and incentivisation were market type mechanisms used to reform public service delivery in marketiser countries which included the UK, Australia, New Zealand referred to as the core NPM group by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011).

⁷⁷ ‘soft’ NPM, characterised as being customer orientated with an emphasis on quality rather than ‘hard’ NPM which was about ‘measurement, reward and punishment’ Ferlie, E. and Geraghty, J. (2005) "Professionals in Public Sector Organizations: Implications for Public Sector Reforming" in Ferlie, E., Lynn Jnr, L. and Pollitt, C., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 422-425.

⁷⁸ ‘hard’ NPM which was about ‘measurement, reward and punishment’ *ibid.*.

savings made by reducing duplication of provision and mergers; and enhancing contribution to the regions through the establishment of regional clusters. The Hunt Report sought to change the structure of the HE system from a homogenous to a heterogeneous one by encouraging distinctiveness of mission, where institutions play to their strengths, reduce duplication of provision of programmes and emphasise research prioritisation and research collaborations. This reflects a Strategic Positioning School approach to strategic planning where organisations use their capabilities to gain competitive advantage and to compete in the marketplace. The Hunt Report required the collection of data from the HEIs by the HEA in order to formally stocktake at regular intervals on how each institution was performing, bringing Irish HE into line with other OECD HE systems. By aligning the strategic plans of the universities with national strategy, it enabled Government to steer the HE system and to focus the universities on the growth of human capital. This was done using the HEA as the regulator, performing a new role in the HE landscape in Ireland (HEA 2018c).

The Elite Interview data reveals that the choice of membership of the Hunt Report Strategy Group was designed to bring all of the stakeholders in Irish HE together. While the inclusion of a range of representatives of Government Departments on the Strategy Group suggests an element of Network Governance, in reality, the core concern was with control, compliance and accountability through the use of performance compacts and bilateral strategic dialogue meetings between the Universities and the HEA, according to the Elite Interview data. This further emphasises the re-direction towards a harder NPM style approach in the management of Irish HE. These mechanisms are in keeping with practices in HE systems in Australia, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Hong Kong (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1349) as well as Finland (Ferlie and Ongaro 2015).

It may be argued that MacCarthaigh's (2012a) phase of state development, which was characterised by management and reform dominated by managerialism, has moved on to a new phase since 2010. This new phase is characterised by performance-based accountability with an audit culture of compliance that is linked to strategic planning and is both cross cutting and evaluative. Elite Interviews data indicate that evidence of this can be recognised in the ongoing accountability, reporting, evaluation and control of the performance of each university by the HEA and Government Departments including:

- Cross-government control that is exerted by DPER through the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)
- Auditing of the expenditure of the HEIs by the C&AG
- Examination of the reports of the C&AG by the PAC

These measures also seem to demonstrate how hard NPM approaches layer and integrate with pre-existing and more traditional rules and regulation-based approaches to public administration. Rules-based approaches are the norm in public management systems in the USA ‘with control exercised in the U.S. largely through legislation and regulatory mandates’ (Sama and Shoaf 2005, p. 180). By contrast, in Europe control exercised through social norms of acceptable conduct is the most common model. Indicative of this rules-based approach is a statement contained in the Programme for Partnership Government (2016) which stated that the universities would have ‘earned autonomy’ as long as they operated within ‘strict budgets, transparency and new accountability agreements’ (Government of Ireland 2016, p. 94).

When assessing the extent to which the policy drivers of strategic planning in Irish universities are driven by NPM as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach, this research found a change in the policy drivers of strategic planning before and after implementation of the Hunt Report. Between 1997 and 2011, the objects of the Universities Act set a broad agenda for the universities strategic plans. The Hunt Report brought about a significant change in the accountability of the universities. This research found that the Hunt imperatives are driving the universities to meet the needs of the economy and industry by embedding a ‘planning for performance’ model that defines their accountability for economically driven results. This is reflective of a hard ‘measurement, reward and punishment’ NPM approach, as well as a traditional public administration approach where policy and strategy is the preserve of political leadership, with accountability for results.

Funding Drivers

Alongside the policy drivers discussed above, the changing nature of HE funding arrangements has played a significant role in determining the direction of approaches to strategic planning in the universities. The key funding drivers reported in Chapter 6 were the challenge of dealing with the perceived inadequacy of government funding and research funding through Government agencies, the pressure to generate subsidiary

income to advance strategic intent, the ability to recruit international fee-paying students and the challenge of managing the tension between compliance, accountability and autonomy each of which is discussed below.

Up until 2009, the core funding of universities was largely provided by the State with the HEA allocating funding to each HEI from an overall budget provided by the DES (Buckley 2010). The economic crisis of 2008 resulted in a steady reduction in the proportion of exchequer funding for core activities within the universities falling from 73% of total income in 2008 to 48% in 2016 (HEA 2017d). It also introduced constraints associated with government policy, including the Employment Control Framework (ECF) and the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI), both of which limited the universities' ability to recruit and retain staff. This affected the student to staff ratio, which is one of the criteria for the QS World Rankings and the Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings. Commentators have suggested that all of these measures impacted the reputation of the universities and their ability to compete internationally and that a long-term solution to funding Irish HE is required (Hazelkorn 2014, Boland 2015, Boland 2016, Cassells 2016, O'Brien 2018, IUA 2018).

Reflecting this resource constrained environment, Chapter 9 of the Hunt Report focused on developing a 'sustainable and equitable funding model' (Hunt 2011, p. 5) against the tightening resource base at the time. The strategy sought to put in place accountability mechanisms that included workload models, the maintenance of balanced budgets, full responsibility for pensions resting with the institutions, and a reform of the student contribution. It required that the HEA would 'keep institutions under close review in relation to the sustainability of their ambitions for growth, as measured against the financial resources available to underpin that growth' (Hunt 2011, p. 122). It stated that public investment in HE 'must be aligned with national policy priorities' with service level agreements establishing the key 'outputs, outcomes and levels of service to be delivered and the resources allocated to achieve them' (Hunt 2011, p. 122). All of the accountability measures detailed above have been implemented, other than the student contribution which is linked to a bigger issue of the future funding of the Irish HE system that is the subject of the Cassells Report (2016). The implementation of the Hunt Report in the absence of a funding strategy is evidence of the NPM driver of reducing state expenditure and that it is managements' responsibility to deliver 'doing more with less'.

The reduction in government funding of the universities was described by many interview participants as being a ‘funding crisis’ and a real threat to the future of Irish HE in terms of research infrastructure and steering the research agenda, quality of provision and the reputation of the universities. The Hunt Report prioritised ‘research areas with the greatest potential for national economic and social returns’ (Hunt 2011, p. 66). Innovation 2020 (Government of Ireland 2015) is the national strategy driven by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation which controls the allocation of public research funding in the areas of science and technology to the universities. This Department has confirmed the prioritisation of science and technology research as drivers of economic growth/recovery and innovation (Hazelkorn 2014, Department of Business 2019). Government steering of the HE research agenda towards science and technology as a driver of ‘economic growth and innovation... parallel[s] trends elsewhere’ (Hazelkorn 2014, p. 1346) and appears reflective of the marketisation of HE to align performance to defined economically oriented results, in keeping with NPM funding drivers.

A new ‘Oversight Arrangement’ between Government and Employers Groups provides further evidence of an effort to steer the universities’ towards meeting the needs of specific stakeholders. This facilitates employers having a greater say in the strategic direction of €300 million in education spending, emphasising the need for the HE sector ‘to prioritise the immediate needs of industry and business, above all else’ (O’Brien 2019c). The Irish Congress of Trade Unions criticised the Oversight Arrangement observing that ‘The ever increasing emphasis on the higher education and further education and training sectors to prioritise the immediate needs of industry and business, above all else, not only erodes academic freedom; such a policy approach is out of step with the times’ (O’Brien 2019c). A number of the Elite Interview participants stated that the current Government is taking an instrumental approach to the output functions of the universities, e.g. by placing a higher value on STEM programmes than Humanities programmes. The Elite Interviews reveal the view that it is important that the universities are seen to engage with industry with one President noting that *we are doing much more engagement with industry now because that's what is required of us. We need to validate our existence and make external actors recognise that we are here (President 1)*. This points to prioritisation of the needs of the market and the economy and alignment of the functions of the universities with defined economic priorities. All of these are DNA markers associated with NPM.

Ensuring the adequacy of funding to deliver a high quality of service and maintaining national and international reputation is a key concern for university leadership. However, a problem arises when the Government is unconvinced that the university sector is underfunded. It may be argued that the ability of the universities to cope with an increase of 24,000 students and a 38% decrease in funding in the period 2008-2016 meant that the HE system was previously overfunded. With a proven ability to generate non-exchequer income the universities appear to be able to deliver government strategy and cope with all-time high student enrolments within the current envelope of funding, suggesting the possibility that no additional resources will be forthcoming in the future. As public bodies, the universities are accountable to the Government for the management of 100% of their resources, including their non-exchequer income. Negative publicity around the PAC meetings with the HEIs has created an environment of heightened-accountability from the DES and the HEA in relation to governance and financial compliance in the HE sector. Many Elite Interview participants were of the view that the sector will inevitably become more regulated in order for Government to take control of the sector and to bring the universities 'into line'. This highlights the presence of the hard NPM approach to public management, characterised by accountability for cost-saving measures, enhanced regulation and compliance and the traditional public administration requirement for conformity, reporting and budgeting.

Other targets linked to funding have also been set in areas that go beyond the traditional sphere of HE regulation and compliance. Examples of these are targets set for gender equality in HE which are linked to research funding. In December 2016, the IRC, SFI and the HRB announced that higher education institutions will be required to have attained an Athena SWAN Bronze Award by the end of 2019 and an Athena SWAN Silver Award by the end of 2023 in order to be eligible for research funding from these agencies (HEA 2017c). Another initiative is the 'Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive' Framework (DES 2019) which now requires HEIs to record statistics on harassment, assault, and rape, and report them in the context of their strategic dialogue with the HEA (Government of Ireland 2019b). Both of these examples could be interpreted as being somewhat reflective of a Public Value Management approach, where the strategic plans target a range of societal concerns and set targets appropriately. Equally, however, the manner in which they are applied and the absence of additional resources to deliver these initiatives may suggest a more measurement-reward-punishment hard NPM approach.

Geographic Drivers

Alongside policy and funding drivers, this research reveals the role of regional development, international reputation and internationalisation as drivers of strategy in Irish universities. A survey by the HEA in 2019 shows that in general, the public perceive Irish HE as being effective in contributing to the community, offering relevant fields of study for today's workplace, equipping graduates for life and preparing graduates for the workplace (HEA 2019g). Over 60% of participants in the survey identified third level education as being of vital importance to growing the economy, enhancing Ireland's global reputation, attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and improving communities in general (HEA 2019Ee). These views are reflected in the findings of this research, which recognises that the universities have strategic priorities that aim to engage and contribute to their local region, focusing on its needs, working collaboratively with industry, culture and the local hinterland. This came out strongly in the Elite Interviews, where 'Town and Gown' was regarded as important to most of the universities. The participants described how the universities prioritise and value the development of partnerships with schools, enterprise, public bodies and communities in the region and how this engagement informs their strategic planning. This echoes the principles of Public Value Management which envisages a high level of responsiveness to citizens and service user preferences beyond the economic market and focusing also on outcomes that are of public value. However, the research presented here indicates that this is often low down on the list of institutional priorities.

At another level of geographical responsiveness, universities are expressly concerned with enhancing their international reputations. A HEA survey (HEA 2019E) on public perceptions of Irish HE found that third level education is seen to be of vital importance both from a domestic point of view, but also in terms of Ireland's standing on the global stage. Over two-thirds of the Irish public express the view that third level education is "very important" when it comes to Ireland's global reputation, economic worth and ability to attract FDI (HEA 2019g). This concern with the global environment and the need to become a global player was in evidence in the findings. The universities make clear that they are focused on developing and enhancing their international reputation by competing successfully in international rankings including the QS World Rankings and the Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings, thus enhancing their ability to attract non-EU fee-paying students. The three highest ranked universities in Ireland have

strategic KPI's for managing their performance in the international university league tables, and one has an office that is dedicated to tracking the data that is measured in the rankings. The Hunt Report discusses the benefits of internationalising Irish HE in terms of attracting new talent 'broadening of staff experience, facilitation of research cooperation, and the diversification of funding streams' (Hunt 2011, p. 81), a perspective shared by most participants. However, the challenge of managing the tension between serving the needs of the local/national community and also focusing heavily on internationalisation has attracted recent debate. The IUA have stated that the combination of growing demand by international students for places in Irish HE, coupled with state under-investment, 'means that Colleges will be forced to make hard decisions... as numbers grow⁷⁹'. It also noted that 'universities are fearful that they will be put in a position where places for Irish students would have to be curtailed or replaced by higher fee-paying⁸⁰ international students'(O'Brien 2019d). This message was communicated as part of an IUA campaign for increased funding from Government for the universities that has placed a large focus⁸¹ on the contribution of the universities to the Irish economy. It suggests a push towards the market whereby the publicly funded Irish HE sector may prioritise fee paying international students over Irish and EU students for financial reasons.

This research study suggests that aspects of the universities' concern with geographic drivers may potentially reflect a Public Value Management approach to strategic planning. However, the influence of policy and funding drivers means that a greater emphasis is placed on regional and international development by working with industry and attracting FDI, enhancing international reputation and attracting non-EU fee-paying students to augment declining exchequer funding. Therefore, the geographic drivers reflect the NPM DNA marker of marketisation, emphasising university functions that primarily benefit industry and the economy.

⁷⁹ Students in Irish HE are forecast to grow by up to 25% in the next 10 years due to a demographic bubble (O'Brien 2019c).

⁸⁰ i.e. non-EU

⁸¹ see the Indecon report on the collective contribution of the seven universities to the economy (Indecon 2019)

Human Drivers

According to the findings of this research, amongst the human drivers of strategic planning, the role of the University President emerges as a key factor. In all cases, the Presidents are perceived and perceive themselves as the primary human drivers. They lead the planning processes, often incorporating their own vision and objectives for the institution into the plan, the duration of which is often their own term of office. This is reflective of Mintzberg's 'Entrepreneurial' typology of strategy formation where strategies originate in the vision of a single leader. All of the Presidents referred to the importance of consultation as part of the strategic planning process, in particular consultation with their own staff. The Presidents often regard themselves as the architects of the plans and hold themselves responsible for their delivery. They share the responsibility for the achievement of strategic objectives with their SMTs. This top-down model is reflective of the classical 'design' school of strategic management where the CEO has ultimate responsibility for delivery of the strategic plan, using a rational, linear, management 'steering' process, consulting with a limited range of stakeholders and placing an emphasis on outputs which are measured using performance indicators.

The Presidents' professions, leadership and communication styles, ideologies and professional background were all found to affect how the plan is created, communicated and implemented. In Ireland, currently all of the seven university presidents are male (there has never been a female university president in Ireland) and six are Irish nationals. Three of the seven universities are currently led by people who have worked in senior roles at UCD under Dr Hugh Brady, who was President of UCD from 2004 to 2013. Brady overhauled the management at UCD, centralising power in the executive rather than the academic structures. Given the similarities in the planning processes in the seven universities, it is very possible that the systems, processes and approaches to strategy development at UCD are being replicated across the other universities.

Given the centrality of the role of the University Presidents, current weaknesses in the relationship between the Presidents and the Government is a matter of concern. This research shows that this has been attributed to a breakdown in trust between the Government and the universities, primarily because of non-compliance with government policy and pay rules, which began during the economic crisis years and has worsened in recent years. This research found that as a consequence of the PAC investigations there is suspicion that the universities are *doing the wrong thing and there is a continuous erosion of flexibility and autonomy (President 4)*. The 2017 PAC Report on the

Examination of Financial Statements in the Third- Level Education Sector contained 35 recommendations relating to the governance and management of the HEI sector and stated that ‘the HEA needs to be empowered and resourced to carry out a greater oversight role effectively’ (Committee of Public Accounts 2017, p. 5). This is in keeping with the findings of Chapter 4 of this work which found that trust and confidence to deliver policy objectives is no longer left unsupervised by the State. The recommendations of the PAC Report of 2017 have been implemented and are being regulated and monitored by the HEA with a view to minimising risk and enforcing compliance.

Other human drivers are involved in the strategic planning process. They include the strategic planners who facilitate the process and the governing authorities who sign off on the plan. These are discussed under Pillar 2.

Summary of approaches to Pillar 1 - Drivers of and influences on strategic planning

Table 24 summarises the key characteristics of the drivers of and influences on strategic planning mapped on to the operational framework. This shows clear evidence of both the traditional public administration and NPM ‘DNA markers’ in the policy and funding drivers of strategic planning in Irish universities. It reflects a hybrid of hard NPM characteristics of cost cutting, regulation and compliance alongside the more hierarchical, rules based culture of traditional public administration.

The change in role of the HEA from the planning and development body for Irish HE to the regulator is also indicative of NPM agentification. The emphasis on Teaching and Learning and the prioritisation of research in science and technology (structured within a human capital framework) are indicative of the state ‘steering’ the outputs of the universities. While it could be argued that there are some limited and somewhat marginal Public Value Management priorities, these are imposed top-down.

The geographic drivers show some, albeit less influential, evidence of a Public Value Management approach, but the influence of policy and funding drivers means that there is a greater emphasis on the NPM DNA marker of marketisation. This places an emphasis on outputs that benefit industry and the economy, thus narrowing down the universities’ focus on performance to a range of defined economically oriented results. The human drivers demonstrated that the President as CEO leads a top-down, steering, classical model of strategic planning in all of the universities, which is reflective of the NPM

requirement for empowered public managers who would steer and be responsible for the achievement of results.

Key public management ‘DNA markers’ in the drivers of and influences on strategic planning in Irish universities				
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
Key drivers of and influences on strategic planning in Irish universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steering of HE strategy by the DES • Cross-government control led by DPER • The requirement for proven efficiency, accountability and compliance – the threat of PAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketisation of HE, emphasising internationalisation and a narrow range of economically oriented outputs • The steering of HE research strategy by the Department of Business • The emphasis on Teaching and Learning ‘at the end of the day, it is about the creation of human capital, not research’ • A focus on financial savings • President is the architect of the plan ‘steering’ • The regulation of the HE sector by the HEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited evidence of Networked Governance attempt at broader stakeholder engagement in the Strategy Group that wrote the Hunt Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some limited evidence of Public Value Management priorities in the policy drivers but they are imposed in a top-down fashion • Some limited evidence of Public Value Management priorities in the geographic drivers which are outweighed by NPM marketisation

Table 24 – Key public management ‘DNA markers’ in the drivers of and influences on strategic planning in Irish universities

Pillar 2 - The Planning Process

This research examined the process of strategic planning in each university from formulation to launch stage. It looked at the role of consultants, strategic planners, the SMTs and the engagement of the GAs and other stakeholders in strategy formulation. It also examined how the universities set their strategic priorities. This research found that that the process of strategic planning is very similar across the universities indicating the traditional public administration characteristic of ‘one best way’ of working. It found that considerable expertise has been built up in the universities in the area of strategic planning with some having dedicated strategic planners, working closely with the Presidents to drive the planning process. Only one of the seven universities currently uses consultants for their planning process and the use of consultants was found to be unpopular with the

other six. This section will describe and discuss the strategic planning processes across the sector.

The findings from the Elite Interviews show that in all of the universities, the planning process is led by the President with inputs from the SMT. The interview data revealed that the initial setting of the goals and targets depended on whether the President was an internal or external appointment or whether he was continuing from one term to the next. In one case, where the President was an internal appointment starting his first strategic plan, he observed that he was working from a solid evidence base for setting the strategic priorities. Another President who was mid-way through his term of office said that the strategic plan would be a continuation of the previous one. New Presidents who came from outside the institution often used the opportunity of writing a strategic plan to operationalise their vision that was articulated in their application for the position. Therefore, this research found that, in keeping with the findings on the human drivers, the President heavily influences the content of the institutional strategy.

While consultation with stakeholders (especially staff within the university) is seen as being vital to the strategic plans, the findings demonstrate that there is a hierarchy of internal stakeholders where some have significantly more influence on the content of the plans than others. These are the Presidents, the SMTs, the strategic planners, the GA, Schools and Departments and in some universities, the Academic Councils, usually in this order. In all of the universities the planning process follows the Classical 'Design' School of strategic management model, characteristic of NPM strategic planning as described in Table 7 (p. 68). Tools including SWOT analysis are commonly used to develop strategic priorities, and mission, vision and values statements are detailed in all of the strategic plans. This appears to indicate a logical linear process of analysis and evaluation as plans are prepared. The process also involves conducting workshops with Schools and Departments around themes, away-day meetings with SMTs, Town Hall meetings with staff and students as well as internal and stakeholder consultations using technology. This research shows that at times the universities find it difficult to manage the tension between the differing perspectives and expectations of stakeholders. External stakeholder consultation processes conducted by each university were seen as an opportunity to engage with the wider community and industry. The findings suggest that as well as a hierarchy of internal stakeholders, there is also a hierarchy of external

stakeholders, with state actors having the most influence on strategic targets⁸², followed by industry and then the wider community. The drafting process as described in the Elite Interviews was quite similar across the institutions and generally involved drafts coming before the SMT, the GA (and the Academic Council in some universities) as the plan was developed, with the GA approving the final plan. This research did not find that the draft plan was circulated for approval to a broader range of stakeholders for consultation as part of the drafting process. The NPM approach to strategic planning has a limited range of stakeholders focused on outputs, whereas a Public Value Management approach seeks to broaden the authorising environment to a wide range of stakeholders to incorporate and empower a wider range of voices. When examining these findings through the strategy as practice lens, they reveal the process of strategy making in the seven universities i.e. what is done by whom in each institution. The findings demonstrate that strategy making is a social activity, driven by people, in this case the senior management of the institutions, and this is in keeping with the findings of the research on strategy as practice (Balogun, J.C., Jarzabkowski, P., Seidl, D., & Guerard, S. (2016) in Jenkins *et al.* 2016). It also demonstrates that the process of strategy making has hardened into distinct and regular patterns across all seven institutions in accordance with Whittington's research (Whittington 1996) on strategy as practice.

A key arena where stakeholder involvement might be expected to be recognisable is within the GAs of the universities. This research found that there are no community representatives on any of the current GAs of the Irish universities. Rather than expanding involvement (which would reflect a Public Value Management process of stakeholder engagement), the view was expressed across the Elite Interviews (especially by Senior Public Officials) that the GAs should have a smaller membership. Many participants suggested that there should be no staff representatives or politicians and that international education experts should be included rather than the current broad stakeholder mix as set out in the Universities Act (1997). The findings show that this view was also present in the responses to the DES (2018) review of the HEA Act (1971). Proposals to narrow the authorising environment in this way suggests that there may be resistance to a more Public Value Management informed approach to strategic planning and reflects the continuing dominance of NPM processes. Table 25 summarises the findings from an analysis of the key characteristics of the process of

⁸² where care was taken by the universities to refer to government policy in the plans

strategic planning mapped on to the operational framework. This demonstrates that the similarity in strategic planning process is indicative of Taylor’s (1911) ‘one best way of working’ associated with traditional public administration. The process is in keeping with the classical ‘design’ school of strategic management where a linear, rational, strategic planning model associated with NPM is used.

Key public management approaches ‘DNA markers’ found in the process of strategic planning in Irish universities				
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
The planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of strategic planning is very similar across the institutions ‘one best way of working’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down, classical model • Narrow range of stakeholders (which may become narrower) • Emphasis on outputs, measurement through performance indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Network Governance in the planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Public Value Management in the planning process

Table 25 – Key Public management approaches ‘DNA markers’ found in the process of strategic planning

Pillar 3 - The Key Visible Characteristics of the Plans

Pillar 3 is concerned with how the universities’ strategic priorities can help to set one university apart from the others and how their ability to do this has evolved over the five phases of strategic planning. This research found that there were similarities in the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of the institutions in the earlier phases of the plans (Phases 1 to 3 between the period 1997 to 2009). Chapter 8 of the Hunt Report sought to develop a coherent framework for higher education in Ireland where ‘the needs of diverse individuals, the economy and society are met by a variety of institutions of different kinds, each with a distinct mission and range of activities’ (Hunt 2011, p. 96). This is reflective of Porters Five Forces framework discussed in Chapter 3, where the key drivers of performance and profitability were determined by the differentiation of one organisation from another within an industry. It set out to ‘position’ an organisation to gain market share by ‘deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value ’ (Segal-Horn 2004, p. 137). This research found that by the Phase 5 plans, six of the seven universities have limited the breadth of their strategic priorities to bring the key objectives of the Hunt Report into sharp focus (see Table 20, p. 172). It also found

that the current phase of plans (Phase 5) demonstrates an effort by the universities to establish stronger, distinctive identities by playing to their strengths in particular academic areas and differentiating their research priorities with research themes and institutes established to lead this work and emphasising each institutions' ambition in this regard. This indicates that implementation of the requirements of the Hunt Report for distinctiveness of mission has been incorporated by the universities into recent strategic plans.

The Elite Interview data indicate that limiting the strategic plan to a sharp focus resulted from the learned experience that *'universities probably have a fighting chance of delivering five or six objectives effectively'* (Stakeholder 1). Confining strategic planning to selected chosen priority areas is reflective of the corporate strategic positioning school approach to strategic planning, where drivers of performance and profitability are determined by the differentiation of one organisation from another within an industry. This approach 'positions' an organisation to gain market share by 'deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value '(Segal-Horn 2004, p. 137). It is also reflective of the Resource Based View which identified that the key intangible resource of an organisation is the tacit knowledge held by human assets and that this offered a unique source of competitive advantage and growth. The Elite Interview data suggest that within specific niche areas and at discipline area level, expertise exists in each university that can compete at world ranking level.

The Elite Interview data also confirmed that careful selection of strategic priorities is an acknowledgement by the universities that they cannot be 'all things to all people'. Given that they are not funded at the level where they can pursue all desirable activities they each need to each play to their strengths in order that the sector as a whole delivers what is required of it. This reflects a mature, experienced approach to strategic planning, where the universities have learned that they do not have the resources or the capabilities to compete with each other or internationally on every front. The funding drivers section of this chapter illustrated that the universities are securing non-exchequer income to fund their strategic priorities in order to pursue their futures. As well as this, the content of the high-level strategic priorities reflects that the universities still see themselves as being public institutions that pursue the public good. However, as evidenced in the geographic drivers, the Elite Interview data shows that the balancing act of delivering their respective missions in the continued constrained government funding environment could cause them

to place an even greater emphasis on NPM type characteristics. This would most likely lead to focusing on markets, customers and competition rather than a Public Value Management-type broader range of societal concerns.

Table 26 summarises the analysis of the key characteristics of the plans and their distinctiveness. It indicates that the university strategic plans are being designed to implement the key objectives of the Hunt Report by developing distinctive missions where they are playing to their strengths and harnessing their strategic capabilities in order to fulfil their strategic ambitions. This reflects the strategic positioning school and Resource Based View strategic management model. This is taking place in the context of NPM-type, narrow, institutionally focused planning.

	Key public management approaches ‘DNA markers’ found in the distinctiveness of the Irish universities’ strategic plans			
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
Key visible characteristics of the plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of traditional public administration approaches to distinctiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans are institutionally oriented ‘playing to their strengths’ Six of the seven universities have limited the breadth of their strategic priorities to bring the key objectives of the Hunt Report into sharp focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of Network Governance approaches to distinctiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of Public Value Management approaches to distinctiveness

Table 26 – Key public management approaches ‘DNA markers’ found relating to key visible characteristics of the plans

Pillar 4 - Implementation and Resourcing

The literature review in Chapter 3 discussed the mechanisms of idea-transfer from one sector to another and how strategic planning has evolved within public organisations. It discussed how the characteristics of neoliberal approaches to policy prioritisation and strategy development have influenced public sector planning models. Mintzberg held that top-down planning led to loss of ownership by the majority of the workforce, implementation deficits and strategic plans that had no basis in reality (Ferlie and Ongaro

2015). Chatson highlighted that early strategic planning under NPM encountered difficulties in operationalisation, which included buy-in amongst the internal stakeholders and to also get government funding for the strategy, resulting in a ‘sub-optimal strategy in relation to the future provision of public services’ (Chatson 2011, p. 19). The findings of this research concur with the literature, as the two main challenges in terms of implementation that were identified related to the ability to harness the operational capacity to deliver the plan in terms of staff and the financial resources available to the universities, given the reduction in state funding to the sector since 2008.

In all of the universities, the Presidents and the SMTs are ultimately responsible for strategy implementation, taking a ‘top-down’ linear approach and focusing on the development of long-term goals and objectives. This research indicates that the methods for strategy implementation⁸³, the monitoring tools used and the frequency of monitoring of strategic plans is similar across all seven universities. This reflects the findings of Balogun *et al*’s research on strategy as practice, where strategic planning is the domain of top and middle management (2016) and that the micro activities of strategy including planning, resource allocation, monitoring and control are being replicated across the university sector. Corporate monitoring tools including KPIs and traffic light systems are used to report progress to the GAs. The relationship between planning and resource allocation was revealed, where in five of the universities, planning is linked to the budget, with one stating that resources are allocated in line with the plan and another stating that the strategic plan is ‘supported’ by a financial plan and student enrolment plan. These five universities stated that by linking the resources to the plan it made strategic planning a more iterative process in the universities and ensured that the plans were operationally and administratively feasible. In the other two universities, the budgets are devolved to the schools and faculties and linked to activity not strategy. In order to encourage ‘buy-in’ from the faculties, schools and professional services staff, many of the universities use mechanisms including budgets, structural support, devolved authority, selecting people to perform certain tasks and offering incentives to encourage ownership of the plan.

The challenge of resourcing the strategic plans is a recurring theme in the interviews. Many of the universities pointed out that they now had funding strategies to raise private non-exchequer income to enable them to achieve their strategic ambition (in line with the funding drivers discussed earlier in this chapter). Public Value Management emphasises

⁸³ Table 21, p. 176

the need for operational capacity to deliver the plan and one participant spoke of his experience in this regard: *Most of the resources you require to make public-sector strategy successful are outside of your direct control so that means the strategy must make sense and have support (Senior Public Official 3)*. This comment emphasises the importance of the ‘collective ownership’ of the plan, where the many stakeholders of the universities understand the strategy and support it. Key to this is the domain of politicians and their influence over the system. This was discussed by Tom Boland in 2016 in an address to the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) following his retirement as CEO of the HEA, entitled ‘The relationship between the higher education and research sector and government – fractured but reparable’ (Boland 2016). He pointed to ‘negative and hostile attitudes to HEIs’ by politicians which has real consequences for the sector and that the sector ‘needed to do a great deal more to inform people of their value and their needs. At the same time, those at influential levels in the system of government need to review their attitudes and work to overcome the negatives’ (Boland 2016, p. 9) . He pointed to the ‘impact of increased politicisation of the public accountability system’ (Boland 2016, p. 11) through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). He observed that, at times, a lack of understanding by politicians (and one could read, the public) of the relationship between the HEA and the HEI’s and the legal framework within which they work, results in politicians seeking even more government regulation of the HE system. He predicted that that if this continues, that it will gradually erode the autonomy that is a major strength of the system (Boland 2016, p. 11). This reflection points to the need for a broader approach to building the operational capacity required to achieve the desired outcomes of the universities’ strategic plans. This in turn requires agreeing with a broad range of stakeholders (including Government) what is of public value and importantly, agreeing on the resources that are required to deliver the results and gaining agreement (particularly from the political system) that the resources will be available.

Table 27 summarises the analysis relating to Pillar Four - Implementation and Resourcing. It demonstrates that NPM approaches to strategy implementation and resourcing are evident in a) the linking of strategy to resource allocation in five of the seven universities; b) the Presidents and the SMTs being ultimately responsible for strategy implementation in all of the universities, taking a classical ‘design’ school ‘top-down’ linear approach; and c) achieving goals and objectives with less state resources i.e. ‘doing more with less’.

	Key public management approaches found in the approaches to implementation and resourcing of the Irish universities' strategic plans			
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
Implementation and Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of traditional public admin. approaches to implementation and resourcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and performance linked to budgets and resource allocation. • Goals and targets assigned to SMT • The requirement to deliver a high quality, performing university sector with reduced state funding 'do more with less' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Network Governance approaches to implementation and resourcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Public Value Management approaches to implementation and resourcing

Table 27 – Key public management 'DNA Markers' found relating to Implementation and resourcing

Pillar 5 – Review and Evaluation

Pillar 5 is concerned with the approaches of the universities to strategy review and evaluation. The Elite Interviews sought to ascertain how plans were reviewed and evaluated in the universities and whether strategy was evaluated at the end of each cycle. The interviews reveal that while great emphasis and value is placed on stakeholder consultation as part of the planning process, there is no evidence of reference to the use of performance assessment or evaluation models. There is no indication of stakeholder engagement in strategy as the plans were rolled-out nor is there evidence in the Elite Interviews of feedback from stakeholders or reflections on outcomes with stakeholders at the end of the planning cycle. None of the strategic plans mention evaluation exercises or reports and when asked in the Elite Interviews, the participants indicated that review and evaluation essentially were interpreted by the universities as one and the same thing where in all cases the review of the strategic plan was an internal one conducted by the President, SMT and the GAs. This took the form of final reporting of the achievements of the strategic plan by the President / SMT / to the GA. This is reflective of an NPM approach to evaluation that is institutionally oriented and output focused.

One university noted the benefits of communicating the annual outcomes to the broader university community for information purposes. This university also took an annual review, renew and communicate approach to *'keep the plan alive'*.

One element of the institutional strategy plan that is evaluated and reported on annually is the evaluation of performance as assessed through the performance compact/ strategic dialogue process. However, this evaluation is conducted by the HEA with a panel of international education experts and is associated more with accountability for performance rather than evaluation of strategic plan outcomes. This hierarchical accountability which emphasises the requirement to conform and report is reflective of a traditional public administration approach to evaluation.

Table 28 suggests that overall, the current evaluation mechanisms reflect a traditional public administration and NPM approach. There is no evidence of Network Governance or Public Value Management approaches emerging from this analysis.

	Key public management approaches found in the approaches to review and evaluation of the Irish universities' strategic plans			
Pillar	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
Review and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on performance compacts and evaluation of each universities' performance against set targets annually by the HEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the strategic plan is internal No evidence of feedback from stakeholders or reflections on outcomes of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of Network Governance approaches to review and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of Public Value Management approaches to review and evaluation

Table 28 Key public management 'DNA Markers' found relating to strategy review and evaluation

Conclusion

This analysis presents the approaches of Irish universities to strategic planning and the extent to which each public management approach is evident in approaches to planning in Irish HE. It demonstrates that the strategic plans reflect the policy and structural developments that have taken place in Irish public management and the Irish HE system since 1997. The next chapter uses the analysis in order to answer the central research

question, which is: To what extent is strategic planning in Irish universities driven by New Public Management as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach? alongside the two key sub-questions which are: i. How visible are managerialist/New Public Management approaches within Irish universities strategic planning processes? and ii. Can Public Value Management contribute to renewing approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities?

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Introduction

Set against the changing Irish politico-administrative and economic climate from 1997-2019 and located within the context where HEIs are recognised as key actors in the economic and societal recovery from the recent economic recession, this research focuses on Irish universities' approaches to strategic planning, including strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation, since the Universities Act (1997). It examines the main public sector management theories, how they have evolved within the context of political, economic and social development over the past half century and how this has been reflected in Irish public management and in the management of Irish HE. The research is conducted through the lenses of four public management approaches to strategic planning that form the operational framework for this study. The key purpose of this work is to establish whether there is a tangible footprint of NPM approaches to planning in Irish HE as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach.

Commencing with a summary of this thesis, this chapter concludes this study by providing a short summary of its main component parts. It also addresses the research question and the two sub-questions before finally setting out the original contribution of this study to knowledge and identifying areas for future research.

Summary of thesis

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this research study. It sets out the purpose of the study, the central research question and two key sub-questions, the research aim and objectives. It describes the central concepts of NPM and Public Value Management and it details the background and context to the study and its relevance to the field. It also sets out the thesis structure.

Two main bodies of literature are used to establish the theoretical framework within which to address the central research question and these are described in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on how the theory, themes and characteristics of the main public sector management approaches have evolved within the context of economic and social development over the past half-century. It details the key characteristics of traditional public administration, NPM and of emerging competing approaches including the Neo-Weberian State, New Public Governance, Network

Governance and Public Value Management. In particular, it establishes the dimensions of traditional public administration, NPM and Public Value Management to highlight the key characteristics of the three approaches.

Complementing the literature on public management, Chapter 3 provides a review of the literature on the evolution of corporate strategic planning, including strategic management and performance management models associated with the neoclassical economics of the mid-20th century. It presents the key characteristics of neoliberal approaches to strategic planning and examines how traditional public administration, NPM and emerging public management approaches interpret, operationalise and evaluate strategic plans. It also examines the public and private sector management dichotomy, the mechanism of idea transfer from one sector to another and how strategic planning has evolved within public organisations.

Moving beyond the theoretical literature, Chapter 4 establishes the historical context for organisation and planning in Irish public administration and HE from 1922-2019. It details the development of the public management system and the evolution of planning in the public sector. It discusses the Investment in Education report (1965), the Devlin Report (1969), the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) (1994), the establishment of DPER (2011) and how these public management developments impacted on the HE sector. It also discusses the structural developments in Irish HE in the period 1997-2019 during which time the Universities Act (1997) and the Hunt Report (2011) were introduced. The chapter also reflects upon the impact of the economic crisis of 2008 and examines how approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities were subsequently affected.

Having set this theoretical and contextual framework, the thesis sets out the research design and overarching methodology in Chapter 5. It presents the operational framework that was developed to guide data collection and analysis. It provides the rationale for the qualitative research design and methods that were employed. It details the data collection methods through which primary data were obtained from a detailed content analysis of the 29 strategic plans published by the seven universities during the period 1997-2018 allied with Elite Interviews conducted with 20 senior leaders and experts in the field of Irish Higher Education. Penultimately, the chapter details the approach to data analysis, elaborating on the use of NVivo 12 and the Newell and Burnard coding framework (2006).

Chapter 6 presents the findings of this research. It details the findings of the content analysis of the universities' strategic plans and the anonymised Elite Interview data. These data were analysed through the operational framework which related the five key themes that emerged from the literature as key dimensions of strategic planning to each public management approach to strategic planning.

Chapter 7 tests the approaches of Irish universities to strategic planning in accordance with each of the pillars of the operational framework. In the process it identifies which public management approaches dominated strategic planning and establishes a clear connection between the theoretical aspects and the empirical components of the work. Central to this is an assessment of the extent to which there is a tangible footprint of New Public Management within strategic planning approaches but also of the potential utility of Public Value Management in the Irish universities planning processes.

Addressing the Central Research Question

This thesis set out to address one central research question: To what extent is strategic planning in Irish universities driven by New Public Management as opposed to a broader Public Value Management approach?

The analysis in Chapter 7 demonstrates that across all five pillars of the operational framework, there is strong evidence of an NPM approach to strategic planning which has 'hardened' since the implementation of the Hunt Report. This hardening was aided by the austerity necessitated by the recession and enabled by the creation of DPER as a distinct Government Department. This hard NPM has been accompanied by the re-introduction and emphasis of elements of hierarchy, centralised control, highly bureaucratised approaches associated with traditional public administration. Therefore there is evidence of a hybrid of hard NPM and traditional public administration within the public management model in Irish universities approaches to strategic planning. Figure 3 below presents these as cross tabulated approaches to strategic management.

This research concludes that since the 1965 'Investment in Education' report there has been a long-term trend in Irish public management to shape the educational system to meet the demands of the labour market, linking political goals of economic growth with the outputs of the sector and creating human capital. The SMI (1994) introduced NPM to public management in Ireland and the Universities Act (1997) introduced soft NPM into Irish HE. This analysis confirms that having originally been driven by soft NPM (between

1997-2010), that following the implementation of the Hunt Report (2011-2019), Irish universities approaches to strategic planning are now driven by a hybrid of hard NPM and traditional public administration. Across the time line of this study (1997-2019), the findings demonstrate that there has been a very clear shift to hard NPM in the management of public universities in Ireland since the economic crisis of 2008, which resulted in a period of severe austerity.

The Irish Government appears to have used the opportunity of austerity to introduce a wide range of reforms characterised by accountability for cost-saving measures. Led by DPER, these reforms have resulted in a major change in the relationship between the State and state bodies for the delivery of public services, where trust and confidence to deliver policy objectives is no longer left unsupervised. This research found that Irish HE has been reformed through the implementation of the Hunt Report as part of a whole-of-government, top-down steering of public service effectiveness, efficiency, quality and delivery, implemented by a cross-governmental strategy of public reform in place since 2008. Consequently, it finds that strategic planning in the Irish HE sector has become increasingly driven by and responsive to NPM approaches. Moreover, since 2010 there is clear evidence of a hard NPM methodology to strategic planning and associated monitoring and review processes. This hard NPM approach layers and integrates with a pre-existing and more traditional hierarchical rules and regulation based culture of Traditional Public Administration which is also evident in the findings.

Pillar	Key public management approaches found the Irish universities strategic plans			
	Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
Drivers of and influences on strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steering of HE strategy by the DES • Cross- government control led by DPER • The requirement for proven efficiency, accountability and compliance – the threat of PAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketisation of HE, emphasising internationalisation and a narrow range of economically oriented outputs • The steering of HE research strategy by the Department of Business • The emphasis on Teaching and Learning ‘at the end of the day, it is about the creation of human capital, not research’ • A focus on financial savings • President is the architect of the plan ‘steering’ • The regulation of the sector by the HEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited evidence of Networked Governance attempt at broader stakeholder engagement in the Strategy Group that wrote the Hunt Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some limited evidence of Public Value Management priorities in the policy drivers but they are imposed in a top-down fashion • Some limited evidence of Public Value Management priorities in the geographic drivers which are outweighed by NPM marketisation
The Planning Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of strategic planning is very similar across the institutions ‘one best way of working’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down, classical model • Narrow range of stakeholders (which may become narrower) • Emphasis on outputs, measurement through performance indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Networked Governance approaches to the planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Public Value Management approaches to the planning process
Characteristics of the plans - distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Traditional PA approaches to distinctiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are institutionally oriented ‘playing to their strengths’ • Six of the seven universities have limited the breadth of their strategic priorities to bring the key objectives of the Hunt Report into sharp focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Networked Governance approaches to distinctiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Public Value Management approaches to distinctiveness
Implementation and resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Traditional PA approaches to implementation and resourcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and performance linked to budgets and resource allocation. • Goals and targets assigned to SMT • The requirement to deliver a high quality, performing university sector with reduced state funding ‘do more with less’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Networked Governance approaches to implementation and resourcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Public Value Management approaches to implementation and resourcing
Review & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual evaluation of each universities performance against set targets by the HEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the strategic plan is internal • No evidence of feedback from stakeholders or reflections on outcomes of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Networked Governance to R&E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of Public Value Management to review and evaluation

Figure 3 - Cross tabulated approaches to strategic planning

Some visibility of a Network Governance approach could be claimed in the efforts to ensure key stakeholders were included in the membership of the Hunt Report Strategy Group, but given the strength of hard NPM approach to the Strategies' implementation this is weak. Equally, there is some limited evidence of Public Value Management in what might be described as more marginal policy drivers, dealing with issues of equality, diversity and safety, but top-down implementation methods suggest an over-riding NPM approach. Similarly, some Public Value Management priorities appear in the geographic drivers, but these are outweighed by a stronger emphasis on NPM marketisation, particularly in the drive to attract international students. In relation to distinctiveness of mission, this research found that, in line with the requirements of Hunt, despite earlier assertions of sameness and despite the constrained funding environment, the later phases of planning demonstrate a clear effort by the universities to situate, position, and assert difference. However, the evidence emerging from this research is that policy and funding drivers are pushing the universities towards further marketisation, where they will place an even greater focus on markets, customers and competition. This will inevitably limit adoption of any Public Value Management mission that might enable them to encompass a broad range of societal concerns and to engage with a broader range of authorising voices. Other than these three areas, there is very little evidence across the rest of the findings that point to the presence of Public Value Management philosophy in Irish universities' strategic planning.

NPM principles again dominated the approaches to implementation and resourcing where there is a strong emphasis on 'doing more with less' in terms of human, capital and financial resources. The current evaluation mechanisms also reflect a hybrid traditional public administration and NPM approach with a dominance of input and output regulation taking precedence over a generally poor focus on outcomes or impact-based evaluation. Indeed, it could be argued that the most far-reaching application of the principles of accountability that derive from NPM have been applied in the HE sector. Evidence of this is the ongoing accountability, reporting and evaluation of the performance of each institution against national strategy by the HEA through the System Performance Framework and through new enhanced regulatory measures about to be introduced by Government following the review of the 1971 HEA Act as reported in *The Irish Times* on 17 July 2019 (O'Brien 2019b). Examples of the planned measures include giving increased powers to the HEA (which will be called the Higher Education Commission)

to carry out reviews of performance and governance of the HEIs; to appoint an ‘observer’ to sit on the GAs of HEIs where there are concerns; and to impose non-financial penalties.

Finally, despite hints of Network Governance and Public Value Management in the findings, in all cases, they were outweighed by NPM characteristics across each of the five pillars of the operational framework. The findings demonstrate that the ongoing reduction in state funding to the universities is pushing them towards further marketisation, which will place an even greater focus on markets, customers and competition rather than a Public Value Management mission to target a broad range of societal concerns.

Therefore, it is concluded that Irish universities approaches to strategic planning are and most likely will continue to be driven by the principles of New Public Management, leaving little space for consideration of other public management approaches.

Addressing the research sub-questions

Drilling down further, this thesis posited two sub-questions. Firstly, it sought to assess the visibility of managerialist/New Public Management approaches in the strategic planning processes employed within Irish universities. The second sub-question is more speculative and asks whether Public Value Management can contribute to renewing approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities?

Looking first to the mechanics of the strategic planning process, the analysis demonstrated that NPM approaches prevail in Irish universities strategic planning processes where the classical ‘design’ school, linear, rational, top-down strategic planning model is widely deployed. This also reflects the traditional public administration characteristic of ‘one best way of working’. It found that considerable expertise has been built up in the universities in the area of strategic planning with some having dedicated Strategic Planners, working closely with the Presidents to drive the planning process. Where present, the Strategic Planners provided continuity from one planning period to the next and in two cases, led the planning process. While stakeholder consultation was deemed vital to the process, it found that there was a hierarchy of internal⁸⁴ and external⁸⁵ stakeholders with some having greater influence on plan development than others. The

⁸⁴ President, SMT, GA, Heads of Schools, Colleges, Faculties, Academic Councils in some universities (in this order).

⁸⁵ Government policy having the most influence on strategy, followed by the wider community and industry.

role of the GAs was examined. The lack of community representatives on the GAs was noted, as was the sentiment by many Elite Interview participants that the stakeholder mix on the GAs should be limited even further, reducing the number of staff representatives and politicians and including international education experts. This research finds that this view was also present in the responses to the 2018 DES review of the 1971 HEA Act.

While the responsibility for the delivery of the strategic plan belongs to the President and the SMT, many of the participants spoke of how the strategic plans are underpinned by annual operating plans that cascade down from the main strategic plan to Colleges, Schools, Faculties and Units. It found that in six of the seven universities, the SMT are responsible for leading strategy implementation. The seventh university has a Senior Management Team for strategy (SMTS), which includes members of senior management in the university beyond the membership of the SMT who are responsible for strategy implementation. This indicates a highly centralised model of managerialism in the universities strategic planning processes.

Monitoring tools including KPIs and Traffic Light Systems are used to report on quantitative and qualitative goals and targets to the GAs. In four of the universities, planning is linked to the budget, with one stating that resources were allocated in line with the plan and another stating that the strategic plan was ‘supported’ by a financial plan and student enrolment plan. These processes reflect a hard NPM approach to strategy implementation, which places an emphasis on managements responsibility to deliver the plan ‘do more with less’. In the other two universities, the budgets are devolved to the schools and faculties and linked to activity not strategy. This reflects an earlier soft NPM approach to strategy implementation which does not give adequate consideration to the resourcing requirements to deliver the strategy.

The interview data indicated that review and evaluation essentially were interpreted by the universities as one and the same thing where in all cases, the review of the strategic plan was an internal one conducted by the President, SMT and the GAs. This type of evaluation is output rather than outcome oriented and is reflective of NPM characteristics of the plans being institutionally oriented, output focused and concerned with conformity and reporting.

Therefore it is concluded that managerialist/New Public Management approaches are very visible within Irish universities strategic planning processes.

To address the second research sub-question about whether Public Value Management can contribute to renewing approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities, it is necessary to first consider what a Public Value Management approach to planning might consist of, before assessing whether the current HE system in Ireland has the capacity and willingness to embrace and sustain it.

In the context of strategic planning in Irish universities, a Public Value Management approach would anticipate that the national policy context would be more amenable to institutional and regional specificity and that it would decouple funding provision from centralised compacts and metrics and would enable greater responsiveness to more local, decentralised performance metrics. It could also be expected that there would be an acceptance of the need to broaden the authorising environment that determines the trajectory of individual institutions in place of the increasingly monopolised authority of the DES, the HEA and DPER. Finally, it would anticipate a stronger emphasis on building operational capacity at all levels of HE, both to democratise the planning process but also to support its delivery. The reality of planning in Irish HEIs is far from this and in the current public management environment; it would appear that there is little potential for this approach.

Emphasising pragmatism and innovation, the Public Value Management approach would take a less dogmatic approach to public management placing a strong focus on authority and on operational capability, moving away from the more rigid bureaucratic approaches associated with traditional public administration and NPM towards more democratic values. This is not to say that bureaucracy is not needed, simply that it would be balanced by a more democratic ethos. A Public Value Management approach would therefore work towards balancing the three corners of the strategic triangle of the authorising environment, the operational capacity of the universities and the identification of public value outcomes to create a compact on what the agreed outcomes of the university system would be. This would help to create a greater understanding of the positions of all of the stakeholders in HE, moving away from a centralised control model to one where the entire HE system is working in the public interest.

At the level of individual institutions, the planning processes would include iterations of the plan, circulated to the broad authorising environment, working towards balancing the tension between the strategic triangle of the authorising environment, the operational capacity of the university and the strategic goals identified as being of public value, in order to create a mutual understanding of what can be delivered. By engaging with a

broader authorising environment, the strategic plans would contain institution specific priorities and create more distinctive missions for each university, setting targets for a range of societal concerns. The outcome of Public Value Management strategy would be a compact between the universities and the stakeholders (including Government) which would seek to align efficiency and performance of the universities with trust and legitimacy in the 'public interest'.

Moreover, a Public Value Management approach to evaluation would include an ongoing process of reflection on outcomes with a wide range of authorising actors who are all involved at all stages in the strategic planning process, serving a more holistic vision of accountability, not just for inputs but also for results created. An existing performance assessment model such as Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard or Results Based Management would enable the universities to evaluate their strategies in the 'wider world', locally, nationally and internationally in order to deliver higher education that is of public value. These evaluation reports would then reflect the true contribution that universities make to Irish society, locally, nationally and internationally, beyond narrow outcomes.

Returning to the sub-question, as to whether Public Value Management can contribute to renewing approaches to strategic planning in Irish universities, the evidence appears to suggest that if such a role can be played it is most likely to be confined to the level of the institution. It is considered that beyond this, Public Value Management will struggle to overcome the weight of NPM at national level.

Contribution of the study

The thesis makes an original contribution to the literature in two areas. This research investigates the challenge in the literature on Public Value Management which seeks empirical evidence of its applicability in the real world. This research explores the potential for a Public Value Management approach to strategic planning in the University sector in Ireland and concludes that while Public Value Management may have greater potential to inform local level strategic planning, it will have to do so within a broader HE planning context that will continue to be dominated by an NPM ethos.

As well as making an exploratory contribution, this research is also the first major exercise in gathering evidence about and analysis of the actual process of strategic planning in Irish universities since the passing of Universities Act 1997. The detailed content analysis of the 29 strategic plans published by the Irish universities since 1997

coupled with the data gained from Elite Interviews with 20 senior leaders in the field, provides a comprehensive analysis of Irish universities' approaches to strategic planning since 1997. It has clearly mapped the evolution from a largely planning free zone prior to the 1997 Act, through a period of soft NPM planning from 1997 up to the early days of the economic crisis, ultimately moving to a more recent metrics-regulation-compliance driven approach to planning. Based on this, the research has pointed towards ways in which strategic planning processes could be adjusted and imbued with the more democratic values associated with a Public Value Management approach, not as a replacement for the bureaucratic values of existing planning, but as way of improving and enriching them.

Areas for Future Research

Inevitably, when conducting PhD level research, choices have to be made to limit the scope of the research undertaken. During the process of completing this research many related and attractive avenues for additional research presented themselves, but had to be resisted so that this thesis could be completed. Thus, a number of topics worthy of future research in the field of strategic planning in Irish universities and in a broader public management context emerge.

While this research focused on strategic planning through the content analysis of the strategic plans and Elite Interviews with leaders in the field, there is potential for further research in this area where the experience of middle-level staff in universities experiences of strategic planning could be explored. This would provide a deeper understanding of the process of staff's engagement with the plan and their experiences of doing so and would further inform deeper analysis of the process of academic planning; resource allocation models; quality review and workforce planning.

Of course, the Irish HE sector is not only comprised of universities, though the current trajectory may see most if not all in the Institute of Technology sector achieve university designation. While this may be attractive for these institutions, it may result in a landscape where even more HE institutions come to more closely resemble each other, rather than one where there is greater specialisation, institutional distinctiveness and diversity in educational provision. Further research, both on the nature of current planning in the Institutes of Technology and emerging approaches in new, aspiring universities would be of considerable value in understanding how homogeneity can be avoided.

Finally, going beyond Ireland, there is potential for comparative research on HE planning processes in other countries, especially those that were early adopters of NPM, for example HE in New Zealand.

Conclusion

Amongst other things, this research was prompted by commentary on the homogenous nature of strategic planning in the Irish HE system between the years 2000 and 2010. This research has found that this is not entirely true and has certainly changed since 2010. Strategic planning in Irish universities is being driven by an increasingly centralised approach to policy design and delivery and a ramping up of the accountability of the universities to Government, which is particularly evident in the Phase 4 and 5 strategic plans (from 2011 to date). HEIs' strategy are now strongly linked to the delivery of national policy priorities, are bounded by regulation and must respond to increasingly onerous compliance, accountability and performance obligations. In July 2019, Ireland has seven universities. These are the same seven universities that are mentioned in the 1997 Universities Act. On 11 July 2019, the Oireachtas passed a bill which will introduce a new mechanism to allow the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI) to apply to the Minister for Education and Skills for authorisation to be called a university. This coupled with the establishment of the first Technological University (TU) in January of 2019 and the likelihood of three more TU's in the near future means that there is no doubt that the landscape of Irish HE is changing. The mass drive towards all HEIs becoming universities underlines the need for more creative thinking around the vision of Irish HE and the role of the seven universities. Centralised government policy which designates the title of universities on institutions is unlikely to supply this vision. It is vital that the existing seven universities assert themselves and articulate the critical role that they play in Irish society and their unique place and mission within the Irish HE landscape including and beyond the economic market. They can do this through their strategic plans. A more strongly informed Public Value Management approach has potential to liberate their ability to assert this institutional specificity and to empower them to produce the type of innovation needed to meet the needs of a more complex and challenged world.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions and how they relate to the operational framework

Second level coding – coding to themes	Interview questions for University Presidents/ Strategic Planners.	Interview questions for Senior Public Officials / Minister for Education/ Academic Commentators/ Stakeholders	Key characteristics ‘labels’			
			Traditional PA	NPM	Network Governance	Public Value Management
1. Visibility of key drivers – influencers	<p>What would you say have been the main drivers of and influences on strategic planning in your University?</p> <p>Can you identify if these have changed over time?</p> <p>To what extent DES your non-exchequer income influence the strategic direction of the University?</p>	<p>When you look at the university strategic plans, what do you see as the main drivers of and influences on strategic planning in the plans?</p>	Bureaucracy	Marketisation	Customer and high quality outcomes	Emphasis on responding to the citizen voice
2. Planning process –design, responsibility and control, GA composition, SP approaches, internal and external stakeholder engagement; Strategic priorities How they are set out (methods) - What are they	<p>In what way is the development of the strategic plan managed, overseen, supported in your institution?</p> <p>Did you use consultants to help you with your planning processes?</p> <p>Who do you see as stakeholders in relation to your institutions planning processes?</p> <p>In your experience, to what extent DES the composition of the GA affect the Strategic Plan? How do you identify and decide on your strategic priorities?</p> <p>Do you have a strategic planning model that you favour or that guides you?</p>	<p>In terms of the planning process, have you ever been consulted as a stakeholder in the field?</p> <p>Who do you think are the main stakeholders in the university sector in Ireland?</p> <p>Do you see their influence in the plans? Give example</p> <p>What element of the Universities leadership – do you think most affects the strategic plan ?</p> <p>What are you looking for when you look at the strategic priorities?</p> <p>Is there any particular strategic planning model that you favour?</p>	Bureaucratic and autonomous culture – rowing	Steering, emphasis on outputs – top-down	Collaboration with government and stakeholders – networked	All stakeholders involved in all stages of the process, outcomes that are of PV
3. Characteristics of the plans - distinctiveness - articulation of	<p>What makes your plan different from all of the others?</p> <p>How easy is it for you to carve out a niche for your institution?</p>	<p>To what extent do you think it is possible/ feasible / desirable for HEIs to achieve distinctiveness of mission?</p>	Mission and status in keeping with traditional	Strategic plans target a narrow range of defined and	Emphasis on responding to network members and the provision	Strategic plans emphasise the institutions uniqueness and what distinguishes it from the others.

vision - mission - values;		Is it feasible for HEIs to be unique?	autonomous university	economically oriented results	of high quality services and outcomes	Strategic plans target a range of societal concerns and set targets appropriately.
4. Implementation – link to financial planning, planning implementation capacity – internal dissemination, relationship with other planning processes; operational capacity	<p>What mechanisms, if any, did you put in place to deliver the strategic plan?</p> <p>How do you get people to engage with the plan, how do you translate the SP from being a high level institutional framework to one that is engaged with in the institution and perhaps beyond?</p> <p>What is the relationship between the strategic planning process and other planning processes? (budgeting, master plan, academic plan, HR plan, research plan)</p> <p>In a culture of academia, which is traditionally individualistic, how do you shift towards a culture of one where people move towards collective ownership of a plan?</p>	<p>How do you think the universities should go about implementing the strategic plan?</p> <p>What do you think the challenges are in terms of harnessing the capacity to deliver the plan and getting people to engage with the plan?</p> <p>When you speak to the universities, how do you know or how are you reassured that the plan is real and live as opposed to a document on a shelf?</p> <p>Do you see any challenges for the universities in terms of resourcing the strategic plans?</p>	The only planning conducted was financial planning i.e. budgeting and some Capital Development Plans, i.e. an instrumental and technical approach	An instrumental and technical approach with an emphasis on management responsibility to deliver the plan	Strategic planning considers the opportunity cost of redeploying resources from one service to another and the operational capacity of the organisation to deliver outcomes prior to the pursuit of any objectives	Strategic plan is operationally and administratively feasible -details how operational capacity will be supplemented in order to deliver public value outcomes
5. Review, Measurement, Evaluation - Situation analysis – background; Building on previous plans reporting; Claims for achievements; Context setting; Foresight planning - environmental scanning	<p>Do you monitor and evaluate your strategic plan and if so - how?</p> <p>Is there continuity from one planning cycle to the next or do you think that each planning phase is distinct?</p> <p>Do you have monitoring and evaluation reports?</p> <p>What lessons have you learned from previous strategic planning processes?</p>	<p>Do you think that strategic plans should be monitored and evaluated and if so how and by whom?</p> <p>Have you ever been involved in the monitoring or evaluation of a HEIs strategic plan?</p> <p>Can you tell me about any lessons you have learned from any of the strategic planning processes you have been involved in?</p>	No culture of evaluation; emphasis on input, accountability, audit	Self-interested output focused, institutionally oriented	Strategic plan evaluation and feedback authorising environment is broadened to include network members	Emphasis on learning lessons and reflection on outcomes with a wider range of authorising actors. All of the stakeholders involved in the evaluation process.

One final question that was asked of all participants ‘What are the main risks to the Universities at this time in relation to strategic planning?’

Appendix B

Interview Participants

List of participants anonymised and allocated random numbers

Category	Date interviewed
Academic Commentator	24 August 2018
Former Minister for Education	16 July 2018
President 1	22 August 2018
President 2	31 October 2018
President 3	17 November 2018
President 4	18 October 2018
Retired President	18 July 2018
Stakeholder 1	2 July 2018
Stakeholder 2	19 September 2018
Strategic Planner 1	20 August 2018
Strategic Planner 2	13 August 2018
Strategic Planner 3	18 October 2018
Strategic Planner 4	2 July 2018
Strategic Planner 5	19 July 2018
Senior Public Official 1	25 July 2018
Academic Commentator 2	25 July 2018
Senior Public Official 3	18 September 2018
Senior Public Official 4	26 July 2018
Senior Public Official 5	26 July 2018
Senior Public Official 6	2 July 2018

Appendix C

Information letter and Consent Form

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

'The evolution of strategic planning in Irish Universities'

Name
Address

13th June 2018

Dear

My name is Orla Banks. I am a research PhD student in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick, carrying out a study on the evolution of strategic planning in Irish universities. My research aims to document and critically analyse approaches to strategic planning in Irish Universities between 1997 and 2018, and to question whether these approaches will generate a sustainable university model or whether a different approach to strategic planning is required or merited.

As part of my research, I plan to interview a number of people who have been involved in the process of strategic planning in Irish universities in recent years, as well as others who are key experts in the third level education sector. As you are a leader in the field, I would be grateful if I could interview you for my research. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes of your time. I can meet with you at your place of work or a location convenient for you, at a time that suits you. There is no obligation to answer all questions during a potential interview. You are also free to withdraw from the interview at any stage. You have the right to anonymity and all interviews will be fully confidential.

All interviews will be audio recorded and password protected. The files will also be password protected on a PC. The files will be stored for a period of seven years following completion of the research and then securely destroyed.

This research study has received Ethics approval from the AHSS Research Ethics Committee (2017-09-17-AHSS). If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact:

Chairperson Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
AHSS Faculty Office
University of Limerick
Tel: +353 61 202286
Email: FAHSSethics@ul.ie

My research supervisors are Dr. Chris McInerney and Dr. Bernadette Connaughton. Their contact details are chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie telephone Tel: 061-234800 and Bernadette.connaughton@ul.ie telephone 061-202792.

If you are willing to participate in this study, I would be grateful if you would contact me by return of e-mail or by telephone to advise when it would be convenient to meet with you to conduct the interview.

Yours sincerely,

Orla Banks
PhD Student
Department of Politics and Public Administration
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science
University of Limerick
086 7015983
orla.banks@mic.ul.ie



FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSENT FORM

‘The evolution of Strategic Planning in Irish Universities’

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in research for the project entitled:

‘The evolution of Strategic Planning in Irish Universities’

- I declare that I have read the information sheet and that I agree to be interviewed for this study.
- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am aware that I have the right to anonymity and that all interviews will be fully confidential. Pseudonyms will be used where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.
- I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details.

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix D

Membership of the Strategy Group who wrote the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030:

Chairman: Dr Colin Hunt, Macquarie Capital Advisers

Dr Mary Canning, Former World Bank Lead Education Specialist and authority member, HEA

Peter Cassells, Chair, National Centre for Partnership and Performance

John Casteen*, President, University of Virginia, USA

Marion Coy, President, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

Mary Doyle, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

Dr John Hegarty, Provost, Trinity College Dublin

Michael Kelly, Chairman of Higher Education Authority

Shane Kelly, President, Union of Students in Ireland

Dick Lehane, former Senior Vice-President of Worldwide Manufacturing, EMC Corporation

Brigid McManus, Secretary General, Department of Education & Skills

Paul Rellis, Managing Director, Microsoft Ireland

Martin Shanagher, Assistant Secretary, Department of Enterprise Trade & Innovation

Professor Jussi Välimaa Professor, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of

Jyväskylä, Finland

Robert Watt, Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance

* Due to unforeseen commitments, President Casteen was unable to attend the majority of the meetings of the Group.

The Strategy Group were assisted in their work by an international panel of higher education experts, who are listed in full here:

International Panel of Experts

Prof Peter Coaldrake, Vice Chancellor Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Professor Sir Graeme Davis, Chair of Northern Ireland HE Strategy Group

Prof Malcolm Grant, Provost, University College London

Dr. Simon Marginson, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne, Australia

Aims McGuinness, Snr Associate National Centre for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) USA

Paul Ramsden, Former Chief Executive of Higher Education Academy, UK

Jamil Salmi, Tertiary Education Co-ordinator, World Bank

Dirk Van Damme, Head of Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD

Prof. Frans van Vught, President of the European Centre for Strategic Management of

Universities and Member of the EC Group of Societal Policy Advisor

Appendix E

Table 29– Details of the process of strategy formulation in the seven universities⁸⁶

⁸⁶ As this information was gathered through the process of anonymised Elite Interviews, in line with this commitment, this data has been anonymised and random numbers have been allocated to each university where contributions from participants are discussed in the analysis of the data-set.

Institution	Commencement	Initial Consultation	Meetings / Working Groups / Away Days	Stakeholder Consultation mechanisms	Drafting process	Approval	Responsibility and Control
University 1 ⁸⁷	President commenced process, established oversight groups and thematic working groups who identified initial themes	E-mail to all staff detailing the themes, feedback gathered from staff, students, alumni, and business, cultural and community leaders	Off-campus meetings with SMT and working groups	Consultation through different communication channels, dedicated communication channels for different themes on Twitter, Facebook, intranet site	Strategic Planner brought together final submissions to a 'documentation group' who brought the plan to publication	SMT, standing and strategic planning committee of GA	President, SMT and strategic planning committee of GA reporting to GA
University 2 ⁸⁸	Developed by President with inputs from the SMT	Workshops with staff facilitated by Strategic Planner, Schools asked to do a SWOT, themes emerged from workshops and SWOT	Extended leadership team away for 2 days – came away with the bones of the plan	'Socialised the plan' amongst Academic Staff, SU, HEA, DES, major sponsors, international academics and the GA for feedback ⁸⁹	Draft discussed by SMT at a long meeting, then draft submitted to GA	GA approved – launched by Minister for Education and Skills	President, SMT in partnership with Academic Council and GA
University ⁹⁰ 3	President leads the planning process, Strategic Planner operationalises the process	SMT look at mission, vision, goals - multiple workshops with SMT. Multiple staff consultations, special student session, themes emerge pretty quickly	Town Hall meetings with internal stakeholders, discussions, debates, briefings and staff consultations.	Strategic Planner did a stakeholder mapping in terms of importance and influence and engaged with these in a 'robust and thorough way' Used technology to communicate with the student body	Drafts of the plan went before every meeting of the SMT, the GA Strategy Committee (oversight) and the Academic Council, and two drafts came before the GA	GA signed off on plan	SMT Strategy led by the President reporting to GA Committee on Strategy and GA
University 4	President led the process, based on the strategy he prepared when applying for the job taking the mission and the vision into account	Went out to every school and unit in the university and talked to them and revised the plan as feedback was received.	SMT own the goals, constituent strategies sit below in 5 areas which influence faculty, school and unit plans.	President met with various groups. Online consultation with internal and external stakeholders through a 48 hour online consultation on any idea to do with the strategic plan on a high level framework – 'no one could say I wasn't consulted'	Feedback from all of the consultation converged into a number of themes, major points were extracted manually and digitally, GA heavily involved in strategy development, sub-groups of the GA looked at different aspects of the plan	GA approve the plan implementation and any adjustment to it	President and SMT reporting to GA
University 5 ⁹¹	President leads the process and it is managed by the Office of the President	Develops plan in consultation with SMT in consultation with colleagues inside and outside the university.	'Deeply consultative' Academic Council and GA play a 'huge role'. AC in	Town Hall meetings, culture and style of the institution was collegial, AC developed the plan, GA had a 'really good debate at the beginning	Drafts come to SMT, AC and GA as it is developed	GA approve the plan	President and SMT, GA monitor progress

⁸⁷ Time period 14 months from initial development to approval by GA

⁸⁸ Time period 11 months from initial development to launch

⁸⁹ Most didn't respond 'but they couldn't say they weren't asked'

⁹⁰ 11 months from beginning to launch

⁹¹ 15 months to develop the plan

Institution	Commencement	Initial Consultation	Meetings / Working Groups / Away Days	Stakeholder Consultation mechanisms	Drafting process	Approval	Responsibility and Control
			developing the plan and GA in approving the plan	of the process about what their concerns are and what things they might like to see in it. Then look at how it is about half way through, and by the end they are satisfied with the process and the plan'			
University 6	Led by President who came up with 'own thoughts on strengths and weaknesses backed up by evidence'	Away day with SMT facilitated by a consultant to discuss President's initial thoughts and to come up with themes	Town Hall meetings with staff, then over a two-week period 10 meetings with smaller groups who came up with 'very good ideas, outline of the plan changed after this'	President consulted with GA and SMT and created draft 2 of the plan, which went through three cycles of consultation and reflection with all internal stakeholders. Small amount of consultation with external stakeholders 'totally useless'	Several drafts came before SMT and GA.	GA approve the plan.	President and SMT, strategy steering group, management council. SMT report to GA on progress.
University 7	Led by the President	Starts with mission, vision, values, 'continuation from previous plan – not starting at year 0' look at goals and decide if they are still the same – 'identify those parts of continuity'	Working groups established of SMT, Staff, Students and Alumni	Internal and External stakeholder consultation	Planning Group is a subset of the SMT create the targets, plan is linked to financial projections, drafts come before SMT and GA	GA approve the plan.	President, SMT, planning group. SMT report to GA on progress.

Table 29 - Details of the process of strategy formulation

Appendix F

Codebook for the first round of open coding of the strategic plans in NVivo

First round of open coding of the strategic plans	Files	References
articulation of values	20	44
Graduate attributes	1	1
Assumptions to the plan	1	10
Claims for achievements	19	2 8
Description of challenges	14	23
Description of institution	3	4
Description of mission	26	36
Distinctiveness of Mission	9	13
Description of Vision	24	34
Evaluation of strategic plan	15	24
Implementation plan	17	46
Linkage to other university planning processes	12	19
HR	9	13
Athena SWAN	1	1
Link to Quality Review	8	15
Master Campus Development Plan	9	13
Mention of Government Strategy - Influences on plan	11	27
Access	9	13
Retention	2	2
Gender equality	1	1
Graduate School	2	2
Internationalisation and Bologna	11	14
Mention of Enterprise Strategy Report 2004	1	3
Mention of National Strategy for HE to 2030	5	5
Mention of Mission-Based Performance Compact	4	5
Sahlberg	1	1
Strategy for Science	2	3
Mention of OECD review of HE in Ireland 2004	5	7
Mention of British Academy Report on humanities	1	4
Mention of the Universities Act (1997)	5	8
Mention of National Development Plan	6	6

Mention of Building Ireland's Smart Economy 2008	2	5
Mention of SIF	6	7
Mention of the Code of Governance for Irish Universities	1	1
Research SLC	22	37
Prediction of future trends	5	9
Teaching and Learning	5	8
Mention of rankings	5	7
Mention of Resourcing	20	50
Mention of Strategic Alliances	18	31
National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030	3	5
Pre-1997	1	1
Process of strategic planning	19	27
Adjustments to plan	2	2
Assumptions of the plan	3	3
Consultation processes	4	7
Consultation processes - internal	10	14
Existence of Strategic Planning Committee	6	6
Use of consultants to help with planning	1	2
Public administration model	11	13
Networked	1	1
NPM	1	5
Public Value	6	11
Quantitative targets with persons responsible	9	10
Reference to context, economic crash, building economy	10	15
Relationship with Stakeholders and or broader community	18	36
Building partnerships with wider stakeholders	4	6
Open campus to wider community	3	4
Who stakeholders are	4	5
Strategic Priorities	26	84
Targeting societal benefit	15	23
Towards a future HE Landscape	2	2

Appendix G

Full codebook for the second round of coding of the strategic plans which enabled the pillars to be revised back to 5, i.e. visibility of key drivers and influences; planning process; characteristics of the plans; implementation; review, measurement and evaluation.

Second round of coding of strategic plans	Files	References
Characteristics of the plans - articulation of vision - mission - value	20	57
Description of mission	24	47
Description of Vision	21	33
Distinctiveness of Mission	11	18
Implementation and resourcing	0	0
Link to financial planning	16	36
Planning SP implementation capacity internal dissemination	18	40
Relationship with other planning processes	14	30
Capital Development Plan	11	19
Research Strategy	14	35
Review, measurement evaluation, reporting	13	28
Planning process	0	0
Design	19	35
Responsibility and control -GA composition	7	14
SP approaches	5	10
stakeholders - engagement	22	49
Review, measurement, evaluation	2	2
Building on previous plans - review - evaluation	11	33
Claims for achievements	12	18
Context setting	18	37
Foresight planning - environmental scanning	16	26
Strategic priorities	0	0
How they set out (methods)	0	0
What are they	26	98
Visibility of key drivers - influencers	20	65

Appendix H

Coding of Elite Interview data back to each pillar

First round of interview coding	Files	References
Pillar 1 - Formulation - Visibility of Key Drivers and Influences	0	0
Demographic demand	2	3
Early Waves - experiences	3	5
Global grand challenges	2	2
National Strategy for HE to 2030	6	9
Background to NSHE 2030	3	8
Compacts and their ability to 'reach' into the universities	5	7
Policy system before and after NSHE 2030	5	14
Differentiation of Mission	8	12
Non exchequer income and its influence on strategic direction	8	11
Public v's private funding	4	7
Pressure of the rankings	6	10
Research funding	3	4
Vision of the President and SMT	14	33
Role of the Strategic Planner	7	16
Pillar 2 - Formulation - Planning Process - Design, Responsibility and Control	0	0
How the plan is developed managed overseen	9	17
Role of the GA in planning	7	10
Use of consultants	8	10
The stakeholders who should be and were consulted	11	17
Mechanisms for stakeholder consultation	4	7
Not incorporating stakeholder feedback - operational v's strategic	3	4
Weak or overrated stakeholders	1	2
Pillar 3 - Characteristics of the plans - distinctiveness, vision, mission, values	0	0
Distinctiveness of mission	11	16
Setting of the strategic priorities	15	24
Community and Public Value	6	6
Example of a strategic priority	2	3

Pillar 4 - Implementation, Engagement with the planning process and Resourcing	0	0
Constituent Colleges	2	2
Engagement of staff to deliver the plan	15	24
Difficulty of motivating staff to be engaged with the plan	3	3
Engagement with the planning process	10	12
Mechanism for implementation and monitoring	11	16
Relationship with other planning processes	5	6
Resourcing and control	14	17
Pillar 5 - Evaluation - review, measurement and evaluation	0	0
Continuity from one planning cycle to the next	8	11
Evaluation mechanisms	6	6
How the plan should be monitored	6	8
Mention of the Governing Authority and their role	9	14
Relationship with the Performance Compact for strategy review	7	9
What are the major challenges for Universities at this time	1	1
Autonomy independence control	8	10
Brexit	3	3
Dominance of the compliance and regulatory agenda	4	5
Funding	11	21
Governance	1	2
Homogeneity	1	1
Quality	2	3
Questions around the implementation of parts of the NSHE	3	6
Rankings and League Tables	2	3
Relationship with government	4	8
Research funding - where the funding for research is going	4	5
TU's	3	5

Appendix I

Membership of the Devlin Report Group

Name	Role
Liam St John Devlin (Chairman)	M. Atkins, Ltd., and of British and Irish Steampacket Co., Ltd.
Lieut-General Sir Geoffrey Thompson	Director, Arthur Guinness, Son & Co. (Dublin), Ltd.
Professor P. Leahy	Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University College, Dublin
Mr. T. J. Barrington	Director, Institute of Public Administration
Dr. J. F. Dempsey	Shortly retiring as General Manager of Aer Lingus
Dr. Thekla J. Beere	Recently retired Secretary, Department of Transport and Power.
Mr. L. M. FitzGerald	Shortly retiring Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance
Mr. Magnus Bratten	Head of Education and Training in the Norwegian Civil Service