

IN GOOD STANDING
THE PUBLIC VALUE OF REPUTATION
MANAGEMENT

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Declaration

The author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged and referenced, this research study is entirely her own work and has not been submitted for any degree or other qualification in Waterford Institute of Technology or any other third level institution in Ireland or internationally.

Aileen McHugh

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List of Abbreviations

C & AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPA	Croke Park Agreement: Public Service Agreement 2010-2014
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DA	Discourse Analysis
DBA	Doctorate in Business Administration
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
DJEI	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
EU	European Union
FCIC	Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission (United States)
FDA	Food and Drugs Administration (United States)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (United States)
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and communications technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSPIRE	EU Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community
LGA	Local Government Association (United Kingdom)
NCC	National Competiveness Council
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSi	Ordnance Survey Ireland

PP	PeoplePoint
PRA	Property Registration Authority
PSA	Public Service Agreement: Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 (Haddington Road Agreement)
PSO	Public Sector Organisation
US	United States
VO	Valuation Office
WIT	Waterford Institute of Technology

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In Good Standing

The Public Value of Reputation Management

Aileen McHugh

Abstract

Reputation, per se, is assessed externally by way of perceptions held by stakeholders and, in the main, quantitative approaches are used in academic research. Endogenous management of reputation in public sector settings, which is the subject matter of this particular study, is a perspective and context which has not received much scholarly attention to date. Reputation management is intertwined with the value system of an organisation and, in the public domain, involves trade-offs within a complicated authorising environment. In this study an interpretative analysis has been rationalised in terms of understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants themselves, to organisational reputation imperatives, and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on their reputation management efforts. The sample frame involves overlapping research settings consisting of two newly emerging agencies, one the result of a merger, and the other, a shared services centre. The interdependence and simultaneous multi-level management of shared reputations in such public sector settings is evident from data generated through talk, text and context. Differing underlying institutional logics as well as competing agency discourses have been revealed. Analysing such discourses has surfaced disparities of approach and emphasis in reputation management. The findings confirm that the inherent complexity and layered accountabilities, characteristic of public sector organisations, can compromise reputation management efforts. These findings are integrated with existing literature to develop a new conceptual framework for public sector reputation management that accounts for interaction between legitimacy, reputation, governance and performance. The contribution of this research is that the outcome of such interaction is conceptualized specifically in relation to public value theory. Although this study is limited to Irish public sector organisations, implications for public management practice generally arise from a shared international context of economic recession with an associated reputational crisis in public institutions.

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Part 1

Introduction and DBA Research Overview

Introduction

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the WIT School of Business DBA programme which focuses on the application of theoretical knowledge to the advancement of management and business practice. At its simplest the overall aim of this research was to explore strategic reputation management in public sector organisations (PSOs) and its relationship to public value creation (Moore, 2013).

Corporate reputation is generally assessed using external perceptions (Fombrun, 1996; Mahon, 2002; Wartick, 2002; Walker, 2010). This study, however, investigated what is essentially an under-researched topic, public sector reputation, from an insider perspective. Data was generated through qualitative interviewing of accountable actors in two overlapping research settings. The data was interpreted using discourse analysis and findings were distilled into recommendations for professional practice and in respect of devising guidelines for reputation management in public sector settings.

This thesis is structured in three distinct parts. **Part 1** presents the study's progression and achievements in terms of its initial aims and objectives under the following headings:

- Research overview
- Public sector reputation as an academic concept
- Backdrop of economic crisis and reputational loss
- Professional practice context in which the research was carried out
- Discourse analytical framework and ethical considerations
- Reputation and its public value

Part 2 of this thesis contains an embedded cumulative four paper series, comprising in sequential order, a conceptualisation, methodological rationale, sampling frame and data generation and lastly, findings.

Part 3 comprises discussion, recommendations for practice and concluding comments.

Research Overview

Reputation *per se* is assessed externally by way of perceptions held by stakeholders and, in the main, quantitative approaches have been used in academic research. It became clear quite quickly at the initial stages of this study that, despite the interest in managerial ideas in the public sector, very little scholarly work had been published on reputation in public sector settings. This research explored endogenous management of reputation in such settings, a perspective and context which had not up to that point received much scholarly attention. As a consequence of this apparent under-theorisation, the development of an appropriate conceptual framework for reputation management in PSOs became an obvious research imperative. At the outset in Paper 1 of the cumulative paper series, this necessitated the formulation of a working definition and led to the development of generalisable core propositions and an initial conceptual model prior to data generation.

In Paper 2 a qualitative approach incorporating an interpretative method was then justified taking into consideration the exploratory nature of this study. The particular endogenous angle of view taken was rationalised in terms of understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants, themselves, to organisational reputation imperatives, and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on their reputation management efforts. Because of the methodological novelty inherent in this study's approach, a taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity risks was developed initially as a guide. Its utility affirmed, it subsequently emerged as a research output of itself, a methodological contribution suitable for use generally in similar qualitative studies.

The sampling frame used comprised two settings, both flagship projects for the Irish Government's public sector reform agenda. The first, a merger of three existing agencies is part of an overall rationalisation programme of state agencies and the second is the first shared services centre established and the largest multifunctional project ever undertaken in the Irish Civil Service. This sampling frame was theoretically driven rather than representative, addressed the initial propositions and was relevant in terms of potential contributions to practice. The sample organisations chosen provided variety and granularity and included two large government departments, one of long standing Justice and Equality (DJE) and the other of recent provenance Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and a mix of four agencies both bureaucratic and commercial in outlook and culture.

Qualitative interviewing of accountable actors in these settings yielded evidence of organisational identity, image and reputation at different stages of being pro-actively and discursively constructed (Hardy, 2001). Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting approximately an hour each. A sample interview guide is reproduced in Appendix 4 and interview extracts are provided in Appendix 3.

Interviewees comprised eight civil servants, one at Assistant Principal and seven at Principal Officer level and above. Four of these respondents had previous experience in the private sector in areas such as marketing, multinational shared services and HR strategy and consultancy services. The other six were career civil servants, two of whom were in professional grades, one a valuer, the other a lawyer. Each had a vested interest in, or responsibility for the construction of a positive reputation in respect of two different newly emerging Irish state agencies *PeoplePoint*, the Civil Service HR Shared Services Centre and *Tailte Eireann*, a new agency for land and property registration, valuation and surveying.

Data comprising talk, text and context was generated through aural, digital and print media incorporating taped interviews, organisational publications, official reports including Comptroller and Auditor General reports, webcams and verbatim reports of parliamentary committee meetings and websites. Secondary data sources were useful in providing authoritative voice, rigour and data triangulation.

A discourse analytic framework was used to analyse data generated and acted as a distancing technique and mitigated researcher bias. Findings confirmed *inter alia* an appreciation among public managers of reputational risk and interdependencies and that the inherent complexity and

layered accountabilities of PSOs can compromise reputation management efforts. In the merger setting discursive construction of an identity for *Tailte Eireann* revealed a potentially shared and ultimately transcendent reputation having persuasive rhetorical power. In terms of construed reputation interviewees were relatively negative and the depressive and the self-effacing qualities of PSOs was in evidence. Governance emerged in almost all interviews as a key concern of public managers. Other findings confirmed the notion of multiple reputations and the dissonance between a professional ethic and responsiveness to customers.

The findings allowed the propositions which had emerged in the initial conceptualisation to be revised. A re-modelled framework was developed informed by qualitative data, existing scholarly work and professional practice which firmly placed reputational considerations within the tenets of public value theory.

The notion of reputation in the public sector will be developed in the following section.

Public Sector Reputation as an Academic Concept

Media representations of public sector reputation are as predictable, as they are familiar. The impact of international rankings has also become more pervasive in terms of public policymaking (DF, 2014; DJEI, 2014; World Bank, 2014). However, there has been a lack of academic attention paid to reputation in the public sphere despite the transferring of many so-called New Public Management (NPM) ideas into public administration over the past three decades (Hood, 1991; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). As a consequence, reputation *per se* is under-theorised in public sector settings (Luoma-aho, 2007, 2008; Wæraas and Byrkejeflot, 2012; Maor, 2014) providing an opportune research gap for this study.

Scholarly work in the area of public sector reputation, which has been relied upon in this study, can be divided into two distinct academic cohorts. The first grouping belongs to the US historical-institutional political science tradition and includes the historical analyses of Professor Daniel Carpenter of executive departments (Carpenter, 2001) and his corpus on the reputation and regulatory power of the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) (Carpenter, 2010). Professor Moshe Maor theorises what he terms bureaucratic reputation and critiques Carpenter's approach and advocates an endogenous approach to studying reputation management (Maor, 2010; 2014). Patrick Roberts, in writing on the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), distinguishes between autonomy as a consequence of professionalisation, as opposed to reputation-based autonomy, as outlined by Carpenter (Roberts, 2006).

The second academic grouping includes the work of several Northern European academics who have conducted empirical research on *inter alia* hospitals, universities, government ministries and local authorities in Norway and Finland (Aula and Tienari, 2011; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011; Wæraas and Solbakk, 2011). The notion of a neutral reputational ideal for public agencies has emanated from among this cohort (Luoma-aho, 2007; 2008). From Sweden has come the recommendation for brand orientation as opposed to market orientation in PSOs (Gromark and Melin, 2013) and research partly based on expressiveness in

hospital websites (Blomgren *et al.*, 2013). The agencies studied by this Scandinavian loose grouping are more comparable in size, power and secure base of authority to the Irish PSOs under review in this research, as opposed to the commanding, autonomous, yet potentially more vulnerable US regulatory agencies, such as the FDA and FEMA (Wilson, 1989). Ireland also shares a parliamentary regime and corporatist outlook with its Scandinavian counterparts. Despite these distinctions, however, conceptualisation in the US studies is no less pertinent to this research.

Defining Public Sector Reputation

It has been observed that the unit of analysis in general for corporate reputation is the firm, the company or the corporation, or indeed, the organisation. The site of choice is seldom referred to as the agency, the institution or the bureaucracy (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012). In public administration literature reputation-based research has been characterised as still being in its relative infancy (Carpenter and Krause, 2012). Therefore, part of the initial conceptualisation undertaken in Paper 1 in the cumulative paper series for this research involved devising an appropriate working definition of public sector reputation, referred to as bureaucratic reputation in the American literature (Carpenter, 2001; Maor, 2014). Adhering to Deetz's (1992) admonition that the function of theory is conception not definition, the intention here was not to reify or ascribe fixed attributes to the notion of public sector reputation, but to clarify the parameters to this particular research project and to open an academic discussion.

This research was progressed during a period of worldwide recession and its public value conceptualisation provides an opportune and timely platform for translating an essentially private sector imperative such as reputation into the public sphere, where legitimacy is arguably more esteemed (Deephouse and Carter, 2005). The highly charged backdrop to this research is now described.

Backdrop: Economic Crisis and Reputational Loss

The genesis of this study can be located in the aftermath of the global economic crisis which unfolded during 2008. After an initial period of decrying the conduct of financial and private sector institutions generally, in many states worldwide the spotlight began to fall on government regulatory and oversight bodies and light touch regulatory regimes (FCIC, 2011; Turner 2009). In Ireland a quartet of official reports were published which examined this issue (Honohan, 2010; Nyberg, 2011; Regling and Watson, 2010; Wright, 2010).

The international fiscal calamity combined with domestic banking irregularities and inadequate regulation had a devastating effect on the Irish economy. Five key interrelated elements of the Irish crisis are outlined by O'Connell (2013) – the bursting of the property bubble, the banking collapse, the contraction in economic activity, the fiscal crisis and mass unemployment. The fall of the export driven 'Celtic Tiger' is described in hindsight by Donovan and Murphy (2013) as a story of four interrelated crises, beginning with the collapse of the property market which then led successively to a banking and fiscal crisis which collectively led to the financial crisis.

In 2009 The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) had similarly, but more broadly, identified five dimensions to Ireland's crisis – economic, banking, financial, social and reputational (NESC, 2009). The key to mitigating reputational loss, according to the Council, lies in the close link between international reputation and the credibility and effectiveness of national governance mechanisms. It has been suggested that a large part of the reason for Ireland's difficulties rests with three institutions the Central Bank, the Financial Regulator and the Department of Finance because, although, much blame lies with the banks, these institutions did not intervene effectively to control them (Donovan and Murphy, 2013).

In November 2010 the Irish Government agreed to an EU/IMF Programme of Financial Support amounting to €85B, a source of much angst among both citizens and their political representatives (EU/IMF, 2010). Drawdown of funding was subject to compliance criteria as laid down in a Memorandum of Understanding. The fallout of the economic crisis impacted on Ireland's standing internationally and reputational damage limitation became an economic imperative for the Irish Government (Gilmore, 2011; Kenny, 2011).

Overreliance on property related taxes during the property boom period led to an inevitable shortfall in revenue during the subsequent recession (O'Connell, 2013). To reduce expenditure levels the government embarked on a severe austerity programme which included *inter alia* reductions in public sector pay and decreases in numbers through the use of a moratorium on recruitment and promotions and a rationalisation of state agencies (CPA, 2010; PSA, 2014). To restore institutional legitimacy and credibility strategies to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services included shared services projects, centralised procurement and a renewed emphasis on eGovernment (DPER, 2011).

Recession induced adjustment in the public sector is a phenomenon common to most European countries. However, the pace and scale of cuts in expenditure, pay and employment has been unprecedented and the scale and pace of adjustment undertaken by Ireland is greater than for many other European countries including Greece, Spain, Portugal and the UK (O'Connell, 2013). This policy retrenchment, a combination of quantitative adjustment combined with structural reforms has induced what has been termed as 'public sector shock' in Europe (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2013).

Context: Merger and Shared Services

The unprecedented property crash, the result of a classic asset bubble, inevitably had a huge negative impact on all property transactions in Ireland, resulting in a much lower level of intake of applications in the Property Registration Authority (PRA, 2011; 2012) in which I am employed as a senior manager. The future outlook, sustainability and relevance of my own organisation became a focal point of academic interest for me at this juncture. I had been involved in business development initiatives during the initial stages of the recession and was acutely aware that, although its services were pervasive due to high owner occupier rates in Ireland, there was a lack of awareness of the PRA among the general public and indeed among public servants also. This led me to initially consider reputational themes, in particular corporate reputation (Barnett *et al.*,

2006; Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997; Lange *et al.*, 2011; Walker, 2010; Wartick, 2002).

As part of the overall reform agenda in the public service the Irish Government announced in 2013 that it would proceed with an earlier recommendation (McCarthy, 2009) to merge the PRA with the Valuation Office (VO) and Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi). A move to shared services was also initiated for the Irish civil service which commenced with the transactional aspects of human resources (DPER, 2011). Shortly afterwards I moved from the operational side of the PRA's business and was appointed HR Manager. Both the merger and the transition to a civil service HR shared services centre entailed the establishment of new entities. I would be directly involved in the first, and tangentially, by way of transitioning transactional functions, to the second. The scene had been set and this conjunction of work activities provided a focus for me, both professionally and academically.

It became clear that, from the government itself down, there would be reputational inter-dependencies, not alone among the political and administrative actors driving these large flagship projects, but also among and between the sponsoring parent departments and agencies themselves, at a corporate level. Indeed the new entities, *PeoplePoint* and *Tailte Eireann* would each, in time, have to evolve a unique corporate identity, image and ultimate reputation. This fluid environment became my sampling frame. I realised that I was part of potentially overlapping research settings and that it would be of interest academically, and of value in terms of practice, to elicit the views of actors in this particular context and sub-set of inter-connected senior public managers.

Discourse Analytic Framework

Reputation building refers to actions by discursive and symbolic means that pro-actively try to influence the (re)construction of the reputation of a particular entity (Aula and Tienari, 2011). Following personal involvement in the collaborative development of appropriate vision, mission and values for the new merged entity, it became apparent to me that organisations actually emerge from texts and social action rather than being physically real or embodied in bricks and mortar. Sensemaking is a linguistic process and can involve the production of texts that leave traces (Weick, 1995). What is involved is language, talk and communication, with identity construction at its root. Indeed, through sensemaking "*situations, organizations and environments are talked into existence*" (Weick *et al.*, 2005; pg. 409). Such sensemaking was ongoing between the merging partner organisations during the period of this research process.

The social reality of establishing new government agencies dovetails with the study's constructionist approach, which is concerned with subjective and shared meanings (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Therefore, this research has assumed an interpretive method grounded in the understanding of respondents' perspectives, in the context of the conditions and circumstances of their organisational lives. Thus, reality is seen as socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), a world effectively built in and through meaningful interpretation or symbolic 'worldmaking' (Schwandt, 1994).

From my professional practice I therefore became drawn to the academic view of organisations as discursive constructions (Fairhurst and Putnam, 2004). This led me to the idea of discourse analysis as an appropriate analytical approach when interpreting the data generated in this research. Consequently, an interpretative analysis of discursive repertoires is therefore used in this study to understand the meanings ascribed by public servants, themselves, to organisational reputation imperatives, and how subscription to a public value ideal (Benington and Moore, 2011; Moore, 1995; 2013) might impact on reputation building efforts.

In terms of discourse and institutions Philips *et al.* (2004) present a discourse analytic framework which emphasises that institutions are constituted through discourse and the production and consumption of texts, which both describe and communicate social action. The authors argue that language is fundamental to institutionalisation, which happens when actors interact and come to accept shared definitions of reality. They state that institutions can be comprehended as products of the discursive activity that influences actions, rather than being constructed directly through actions. Therefore, discourse analysis involves analysis of collections of texts to explore the multidimensional processes through which social entities, such as organisations, emerge.

In the merger context the first such text was a government commissioned report which recommended the rationalisation of a myriad of state agencies including the merger of the PRA, VO and OSi (McCarthy, 2009). The next major text was a critical review which was published by the sponsoring Department involving actors in the three merging agencies and their parent departments (DJE, 2012). The production and consumption of these texts may be viewed as the first actions of the merger process. The development of the mission, vision and values was another. Various communiqués and discussions delivered more text and so on. Therefore, it can be said that the merger process is dependent on the production of a variety of texts or instruments, including the drafting of strategies and, not least, in due course governing legislation. The discourse involved was slowly evolving through the production and dissemination of such texts reflecting “*the mutual constitutive relationship among discourse, text and action.*” (Philips *et al.*, 2004). Text can be viewed as ‘the done’ or the material representation of discourse in spoken or recorded forms (Taylor and Van Every, 2000).

Very quickly the data gathering phase of this study revealed the embedding of texts in discourse thereby conferring discursive legitimacy. The future-oriented articulation of a reputational dividend, by inter-textual evocation, as a by-product of merger, may be considered a prime example. Of course merger situations have also been viewed through a critical discourse lens. Aula and Tienari (2011) offer a longitudinal analysis of a merger of three universities in Finland which refers to discursive resources being deployed to legitimise and render valid certain viewpoints and decisions and delegitimise or marginalise other voices. The authors of this article sought to make visible assumptions behind dominant views and to voice alternatives. The merger they review, was a flagship project of a reform of third level education in Finland.

The new HR shared services centre, the second setting in this research, is likewise a flagship public sector reform initiative by the Irish government. However, a critical approach surfacing other voices is not favoured in this study as it comprises neither a case study, nor is a longitudinal

perspective possible at this juncture. Furthermore, such an approach might involve a conflict of interest in the context of my dual role as a public sector manager/researcher. In Paper 3 of the cumulative paper series it is emphasised that with discourse analysis, it is important to remember that the account or narrative is the primary object of the research, as opposed to the truth (Wetherell, 2001). Judgement of truth or falsity is suspended in favour of studying the process of the construction itself. Therefore, the accounts offered by informants or interviewees in this study were not subjected to critical discursive analysis *per se*, but are described discursively. Indeed, in the research settings of this study strategic decisions to establish new agencies were made at a political level, and thus, organisational sense-making, as such, is about the interplay of action and interpretation, rather than the influence of evaluation on choice (Weick *et al.*, 2005).

Discourse analysis, therefore functions on three basic assumptions: antirealism which relates to descriptions cannot be deemed either true or false portrayals of reality, constructionism which is how constructions are formed and undermined, and reflexivity (Cowan and McLeod, (2004). Generally speaking, in discourse analysis representative or unique segments or components of language use, for example, several lines of an interview transcript are selected and then analysed closely to establish how versions of elements such as the society, community, institutions, experiences and events emerge in discourse (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

In content analysis formal measures of inter-coder reliability are crucial and any differences in interpretation can prove problematic and risk nullifying research results. On the other hand, in discourse analysis formal measures of reliability are not usually necessary as differences in interpretation are not problematical and validity is seen in terms of demonstrating a plausible case (Hardy et al, 2004).

There are certain ethical considerations, attributed, in particular, to the use of discourse analysis of interview data, to which I will now turn.

Ethical Considerations and Discourse Analysis

In a highly institutionalised environment, such as the civil service, discourse analysis can be a very productive method of analysing how participants themselves view or perceive a topic. However, Hammersley (2013) warns of what he terms a deception and gap between the *natural attitude* of interviewees and a *constructionist analytic orientation* of the researcher. He contends that this is an ethical dilemma, arising in an acute form, in constructionist forms of discourse analysis. In response, it must be said, though, that issues regarding informed consent arise in all types of research. Furthermore, he appears to conflate several different levels of the research process (Taylor and Smith, 2014).

Hammersley contends that those being researched are positioned by the research very much as objects of investigation rather than being engaged with as expert informants. This study's approach does not bear this out and, in Paper 3, it is clearly outlined that what is being constructed by accountable actors is the object of the investigation. Taylor and Smith (2014) suggest that attitudes expressed may be analysed, not with reference to the speaker as the supposed attitude

holder, but rather as an aspect of the larger society or social context. I would contend that I was not analysing performance, as such, and how things were said, but what was said as expressed discursively. Furthermore, use of discourse analysis provided a means of distance from the views expressed, thereby acting to mitigate researcher bias.

To conclude Part 1 the overarching objectives and rationale for this study will be presented now in terms of a public value proposition.

Reputation and its Public Value

As indicated in the opening of this introductory section, the overall aim of this study was to explore strategic reputation management in public sector organisations. The underlying objective was to understand whether reputation management contributes to public value creation (Moore, 1995; 2013). To this end, Paper 1 of the cumulative paper series which follows, conceptualised reputation management specifically in terms of public value with an emphasis on achieving valued societal outcomes.

In examining public sector reputation it must be borne in mind that the array of impacts affecting the image of public services is far wider than for privately provided services. Expectations of public service performance are influenced not only by direct communications with the specific service on a transactional basis, but also by media commentary and even the esteem in which the Government and politicians are held at any given point (Ipsos MORI, 2009). In this context, Ireland continues to experience a profound and continuing trust crisis. In 2014 the Irish Government has been shown to be the least trusted of four institutions¹ with only 21% of people saying that they trust government to do what is right (Edelman, 2014). Furthermore, in terms of public services all members of the general public are stakeholders, although not always service users, and can hold perceptions of civil service performance, without any direct experience of the service it provides (Ipsos MORI, 2009).

There are also important differences in the professional, practical and normative contexts in which private and public sector managers' work. Value in the private sector is judged by individual customers, whereas in the public sector value is assessed by citizens, taxpayers, their elected representatives, in effect, the community at large which defines the social outcomes to be achieved with tax revenue. Quite often the customer for public services is an *obligatee* rather than a volunteer e.g. a taxpayer, criminal or benefits recipient, which brings into play issues such as justice and fairness of procedures (Moore, 2013).

Whilst reputation *per se* is externally assessed by stakeholders (Fombrun, 1996) reputation management is intertwined with the value system of an organisation and in the public domain involves trade-offs within a complicated authorising environment (Moore, 1995) or performance regime (Talbot, 2010a; 2010b). Using Rescher's (1969) classification Public Value can be regarded as an end or superordinate value. There can be a comparative assessment or measurement of something with respect to its embodiment of a certain value. A public policy, therefore, can be

¹ The other institutions being business, media and non-governmental organisations.

evaluated in respect of its public value. This research has shown, therefore, that reputation in the public sector can be evaluated in terms of the public value it creates. The realisation of public value, for itself, is what makes it a superordinate value. Its locus of value lies in the attainment of specific human purposes or public policies. In comparison reputation can be said to be an instrumental value, a means to a desired end state, and the benefits at issue being social outcomes.

Part 2 which now follows contains a cumulative four paper series comprising stand-alone reviews covering conceptualisation, methodology, data generation and findings.

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Part 2

Cumulative Paper Series

Paper 1

Reputation:

A Public Value Conceptualisation

REPUTATION

A PUBLIC VALUE CONCEPTUALISATION

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

In the risk averse public sector domain the mitigation of reputational risk can take precedence over concerted efforts to actively manage reputation. Such an approach may no longer be defensible in the context of a global economic crisis. Restoring institutional legitimacy and credibility in the face of declining international reputation has become an economic imperative for recovery. This conceptual paper forms part of a DBA Cumulative Paper Series which will examine the under-researched topic of reputation in the context of public sector organisations. The main objective of this study is to investigate whether reputation management and its interaction with institutional legitimacy contributes ultimately to public value. A framework is proposed which provides insights into this interface in the organisational authorising environment. The contribution of this paper is that the outcome of such interaction is conceptualised specifically in relation to public value theory. This study is limited to Irish public sector organisations. However, implications for public management practice generally arise from a shared international context of recession with an associated reputational crisis in public institutions.

Keywords: Reputation, Public Sector Organisations, Public Value, Legitimacy.

Introduction

The subject focus of this conceptual paper is reputation management in public sector organisations (PSOs) and it is the first of a cumulative four paper series to be submitted as part-fulfilment of the requirements of the WIT School of Business DBA programme. The main objective of the overall study is to investigate whether active reputation management in PSOs contributes ultimately to public value. A framework is proposed in this paper which provides insights into the interaction of reputation and legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse and Carter, 2005; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008; King and Whetton, 2008; Ruef and Scott, 1998; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011) in the organisational authorising environment (Benington and Moore, 2011; Moore, 1995; Talbot, 2010a; 2010b). This multi-disciplinary analysis is analogous to a synthesised coherence approach drawing connections between concepts not typically cited together (Sandberg and Alvesson, 2010). Thus, the contribution of this paper is that the outcome of the interaction between legitimacy and reputation is conceptualised specifically in the context of public value theory (Moore, 1995).

This paper is structured as follows. At the outset, the rationale for this research is outlined, together with its contribution to theory and practice. Secondly, a new definition of reputation for PSOs is advanced. Thirdly, the role of public value theory and its place in the history of ideas pertaining to public management is traced. Fourthly, the interaction of reputation and legitimacy is explored. Next, a framework illustrating the conceptual affinity between legitimacy, reputation and public value is presented. Finally, conclusions are drawn integrating this study's public value approach and the emerging research agenda.

Reputational Crisis in Public Institutions

The rationale for commencing this research was provided by the identification of a reputational crisis as being one of five dimensions² to Ireland's overall economic downturn since 2007 (NESC, 2009a). The key to mitigating reputational loss, according to the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), lies in the close link between international reputation and the credibility and effectiveness of national governance mechanisms. Weak regulation and oversight are no longer acceptable for many reasons, not least of which is that legitimacy can be regarded as antecedent to reputation, and more crucial for PSOs (King and Whetton, 2008; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011).

In the Irish public sector there have been well documented collective failures of institutional capacity and governance. Dysfunctional behavioural attributes such as groupthink, herding and a hierarchical/conformist style of policymaking, for example, were revealed in a trio of government commissioned reports (Nyberg, 2011; Regling and Watson, 2010; Wright, 2010). Strong internal cultures play an important role in minimising reputational risk (Fombrun, 1996). Consequently, restoring institutional legitimacy and credibility has become an economic necessity for national recovery to reverse a severe decline in international reputation and good standing (NESC, 2009b). This dilemma, shared by many states worldwide, since the global economic crisis of 2008

² The other dimensions being banking, fiscal, economic and social.

(Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, 2011; Turner, 2009), forms the backdrop to this paper's conceptualisation of reputation in the public domain.

Theoretical Framework

The literature on all three dominant theories in this conceptual analysis namely reputation, legitimacy and public value, has grown considerably since the mid-1990s. Legitimacy and reputation have been described as perceptions of approval of an organisation's actions based on stakeholders' evaluations (King and Whetton, 2008). Other interlinked concepts examined include corporate reputation (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997), neutral reputation (Luoma-aho, 2007; 2008), and performance regimes (Talbot, 2010a; 2010b). Reputation is a multi-level concept and the unit of analysis adopted in this study is at organisational or corporate level. Corporate reputation therefore has relevance and represents the aggregate perceptions of external stakeholders (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997). In this sense also, organisational reputation has been characterised as a particular type of stakeholder feedback concerning the organisation's identity claims (Whetton and Mackey, 2002).

Organisational legitimacy relates to the degree of cultural support for an organisation. No questions will arise about a completely legitimate entity (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008). Organisational legitimacy is not homogeneous and Suchman (1995) advises researchers to clearly identify which aspects of legitimacy are being studied. Drawing from Suchman's typology, it is the maintenance and repair of moral and cognitive legitimacy, based on procedures and structures in an institutional environment, which comes under scrutiny in this paper.

Corporate Reputation and Public Value theories were first articulated in seminal books published in the mid-1990s (Fombrun, 1996; Moore, 1995). Indeed the corpus of literature on legitimacy in organisational institutionalism emanated from this period also (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008). This was an era dominated by individualism, distrust of government and what might be termed a double headed hydra of the prevailing economic neo-Liberal consensus and market oriented reforms in public management.

There has been a lack of academic attention paid to reputation in the public sphere despite the transferring of many managerial ideas into public administration. Fombrun implied that his book related to all organisations. However, the unit of analysis in general for corporate reputation is the firm, the company or the corporation, or indeed, the organisation. The site of choice is seldom referred to as the agency, the institution or the bureaucracy (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012).

The theoretical perspective underlying this research is public value. A public value approach represents a way of thinking which is post bureaucratic and post competitive and allows debate to move on from the narrow market versus government failure argument of the New Public Management era (O'Flynn, 2007). In a recessionary period this study's public value conceptualisation provides an opportune and timely platform for translating a more highly theorised, and essentially private sector imperative, such as reputation, into the public sphere, where legitimacy is arguably more highly esteemed, and the potential consequences of lower reputation, less grave (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008).

Contribution to Practice

The present worldwide economic crisis has required unprecedented state intervention. Consequently, a new approach to public management has become necessary. The concept of public value is attractive in this context, as it takes on board the managerialist efficiency of new public management, the legitimacy and trust aspects of traditional public administration and also newer types of collaborative and networked governance (Talbot, 2009).

It is argued that Public Value theory is of more relevance now in an era of prolonged economic downturn (Benington and Moore, 2011; Talbot, 2009). Indeed. The value proposition of services provided by state agencies has come under more forensic analysis resulting in proposals in many countries to sell state assets, and to abolish and merge agencies and outsource operations. Certain agencies can become politically vulnerable in a recessionary period. Environmental entropy can occur whereby the capacity of the economic system to support a public agency, at existing levels of activity, is eroded (Levine, 1978). For reasons such as taxable capacity in the general economy even well performing agencies can be affected by political decision, irrespective of reputation, or the need for services provided (McCarthy, 2009). This process can be exacerbated by the fact that non-commercial agencies in particular, are dependent not on sales, but on Government appropriations in aid, which are in turn determined by prevailing macroeconomic circumstances (Pandey, 2010).

Accordingly, a contribution to practice arises from the researcher's position as a senior manager in the Property Registration Authority (PRA), an Irish State agency which is to be merged, during 2013 following a Government decision, with the Valuation Office (VO) and Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi). This merger is expected to result in more cost-effective property and spatial data based services for the Irish State (McCarthy, 2009). Property registration services are pervasive due to historically high owner occupier rates at 69.7 per cent in Irish society (Central Statistics Office, 2011) and indeed land administration/property registration has a fundamental part to play in any modern economy (De Soto, 2001). In the context of managing in a new merged entity, following a severe downturn in the property market, there is an opportunity to enhance not just the legitimacy and relevancy, but also the reputation of Irish property registration and ancillary information services.

Defining Reputation for a Public Sector Context

In common usage the term organisational reputation appears deceptively uncomplicated and appealing (Lange *et al.* 2011 pg. 154). However, it is very difficult to find an appropriate definition in the literature, which encompasses the complexity inherent in public sector settings. Many authors refer to the paucity of literature in this regard (Luoma-aho, 2007; 2008; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012). Although reputation literature is focused, in the main, on private companies or firms, this has not been solely the case (da Silva and Batista, 2007). Studies have been undertaken, for example, in relation to university business schools, their ranking and accreditation (Martins, 2005; Rindova *et al.*, 2005; Vidaver-Cohen, 2007), university mergers (Aula and Tienari, 2011) and branding (Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009) and non-profit organisations

(Padanyi and Gainer, 2003). However, in public administration literature reputation based research has been described as being in its relative infancy (Carpenter and Krause, 2012).

Reputation and Public Administration

In the American historical-institutional political science tradition the focus has been on the consequences of reputation, such as autonomy or independence from politicians (Carpenter, 2001) or success of jurisdictional claims (Maor, 2010). Reputation has also been seen as fragile in the case of disaster management failures (Roberts, 2006). In this tradition agency reputation has been characterised variously as-

“..the belief among a segment of the public and then among politicians, in an agency’s ability to anticipate and address public needs” (Roberts, P., 2006 pg. 81).

or

“A set of beliefs held by audience networks about the actual performance of an organisation as well as its capacities, roles, and obligations to accomplish its primary organisational mission” (Maor, 2010 pg. 134).

Maor’s (2010) definition is stated to rely on both prior historical analyses carried out by Carpenter (2001) on bureaucratic autonomy and the development of US agencies in the nineteenth and twentieth century and research by Ruef and Scott (1998) on legitimacy and US hospitals. In a similar vein Carpenter (2010) referred to reputation as a multidimensional concept that comprises a group of beliefs about an organisation’s capabilities, aims, history and mission which is implanted within a network of multiple audiences.

Organisational and Corporate Reputation

In seeking an appropriate definition in the context of PSOs, this study draws upon strands of literature relating to both organisational reputation and corporate reputation. As the unit of analysis is at organisation level, a concept relating to private companies or firms, such as corporate reputation, has certain relevance. Indeed the terms *organisational* reputation and *corporate* reputation are often used interchangeably in the literature. However, contextual differences between public and private sector settings cannot be ignored. Public management is not a neutral, technical process, but an activity closely and seamlessly interwoven with politics, law and the wider society (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004).

Since the publication of Fombrun’s highly influential book on reputation (Fombrun, 1996) numerous authors have endeavoured to provide definitional clarity around the academic concept of corporate reputation (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997; Llewellyn, 2002; Mahon, 2002; Wartick, 2002; and Rindova *et al.*, 2005). Three exhaustive definitional review articles have also been published (Barnett *et al.*, 2006; Lange *et al.*, 2011; Walker, 2010).

This study originally sought a generic definition transferable and appropriate for use in public sector contexts and the following comes closest to these initial requirements:

“A corporate reputation is a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describes the firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. It gauges a firm’s relative standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders, in both its competitive and institutional environment” (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997 pg. 10).

The references in this particular definition to valued outcomes, multiple stakeholders and institutional environment lends it the type of non-specific quality and unifying capability originally sought in terms of a definition which might prove appropriate in public sector contexts. Indeed the achievement of societal impacts is a fundamental aim underlying public value theory. It also dovetails with Suchman's (1995) consequential legitimacy which is based on evaluations of outcomes of the organisation's activities.

New Definition: Trust and Legitimacy Considerations

However, in terms of building legitimacy and closing any trust deficit, the notion of procedural justice and the importance of fair process are best included in any characterisation of reputation in the public sphere (Van Ryzin, 2011). Trust and legitimacy are at the centre of what is termed the "public value scorecard" which includes also a process and equity focus (Moore, 2003; Talbot, 2010a). Moore (2003) further recommends measuring performance on the basis of a mix of outcome, output, process and input measures. To this end, therefore, and bearing in mind Osigweh's (1989) advice on connotative precision or depth to facilitate concept universality, the following definition is now advanced-

"Reputation in a public sector organisation may be defined as the aggregate assessment by constituents in its authorising environment, as to both the legitimacy of its mission and processes and the public value of its activities and performance outcomes"

This definition also encompasses Carpenter's (2010) four dimensions of an agency's reputation, performative, moral, procedural and technical.

Authorising Environment

The authorising environment in which PSOs operate may be viewed as a political, rather than an economic marketplace (Moore, 1995). It has also been termed a richly textured political environment (Carpenter and Krause, 2012) which presents obstacles to reputation management that deviate from those normally encountered by private firms (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012).

Moore's authorising environment has been further conceptualised, or more formally mapped, in terms of a *performance regime*, which can be understood as the complex institutional milieu and accountability layers, within which public agencies have to operate. It includes actors, institutions and interventions which seek to shape or steer the performance of an agency (Talbot, 2010b). Performance regime institutions can include *inter alia* the executive, legislature, judiciary, line Departments, auditors, professions and citizens/users (Talbot, 2010a). In this context one of the key challenges in translating private sector frameworks and concepts into the public sphere, relates to the existence of such multiple stakeholders, which results in the identity of the customer in the public sector being convoluted (Fountain, 2001).

Identifying the 'Customer'

In the definition proffered in this paper the term *constituent* has been favoured over *stakeholder*, because PSOs have a different notion of their stakeholder milieu (daSilva and Batista, 2007). Customer sovereignty is a major tenet of New Public Management, but agencies ultimately serve the public/society at large and in certain circumstances can be obliged to withhold service to direct

clients, so that the public/taxpayer is best served (Fountain, 2001). To appreciate the difference in approach it is necessary to understand the basic principles underlying public value theory. For example, public value theory facilitates clarification of a more inclusive notion of the customers for services provided by non-profit organisations. These include ‘upstream’ customers such as “*third party payers and other authorizers and legitimators of the organisation itself*” (Moore, 2003 pg. 22). Taking property registration services, as an example, this notion encompasses society at large, in terms of creation of capital (De Soto, 2001) rather than immediate consumers or end users of services.

The theoretical perspective underlying this study is public value and the next section will examine the merits of this construct in more detail

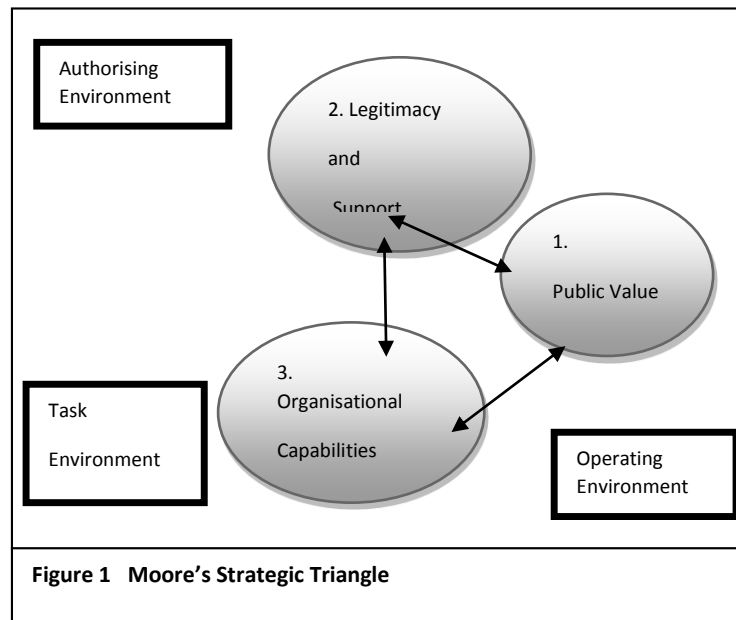
Public Value Theory

In his seminal book *Creating Public Value*, Moore proposes that public managers “*must produce something whose benefits to specific clients outweigh the costs of production; and they must do so in a way that assures citizens and their representatives that something of value has been produced.*” (Moore, 1995 pg. 29). Thus, public value is operationalised, as such, for practitioners, rather than neatly defined by Moore in theoretical terms (Bennington and Moore, 2011). Kelly *et al.* (2002) define public value as the value created by governments through services, laws, regulations and other actions. Coats and Passmore (2008) develop this definition further by stating that public services are characterised by claims by citizens to services that have been authorised and paid for through some democratic process. Therefore it is the political system which ultimately defines what is publicly valuable (Moore, 1994).

Moore’s Public Value Framework

Moore introduced the concept of the strategic triangle with three specific environments in which public sector managers operate: the authorising or political environment; the operating environment and the task environment. The public value circle represents explicit aggregate social goals or outcomes to be pursued. The legitimacy and support circle focuses attention on what Moore describes as upstream customers or third party payers. The third triangle directs attention on the productive capabilities to achieve desired goals (Moore, 2003). This conceptual framework was developed for public managers to encourage strategic thinking. He saw the role of government in society as a creator of public value. Figure 1 comprises a refined model of Moore’s strategic triangle

According to public value theory, it is essential to focus on upstream customers who contribute resources as well as those downstream at the coalface of an agency’s operations. They are normatively significant because there may be legal and accountability requirements in relation to satisfying the expectations and demands of funders such as taxpayers. They are also arbiters of the value of what PSO produces. They are, in essence, customers for social results rather than achievement of individual satisfaction for agency clients (Moore, 2003). Thus, in public value terms, the customer can include frontline clients, service users, end users, voters/legitimators, taxpayers/funders, public representatives and ultimately society at large.



Alford and Hughes (2008) remind us that value is not public by virtue of being provided by the public sector. It can be delivered by government organisations, private firms, non-profit or voluntary organisations, service users or various other entities. It is not who produces it, but who consumes it that makes it public. According to Moore (1995), it is value that is consumed collectively by the citizenry, rather than individually, by clients. Another central feature is the use of State power for taxation purposes (Moore, 1994).

In order to place public value theory in its proper context and as part of a history of ideas (Horner and Hutton, 2011), developments over time in public management will now be outlined.

From Public Administration to New Public Management

The innate conservatism of public management is evidenced by the fact that there have been in essence only two paradigmatic shifts or discontinuous upheavals since the end of the nineteenth century. Traditional public administration based on bureaucratic principles prevailed in Anglo-American democracies from about the end of the nineteenth century. The oil crisis of 1975, a pivotal moment in the global economy, precipitated the end of a continuous growth in unwieldy public bureaucracies. By the early 1980s so-called new public management ideas (NPM) began to proliferate and represented a definitive paradigmatic break (Hood 1991). The upsurge in public sector reforms at that point has been attributed to an intensification of three main factors - global economic forces, socio-economic change and the supply of new management ideas (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004).

Criticisms of New Public Management

NPM encompasses both a critical assessment of monopolistic state services and a rationale for a more market-oriented approach to management (Stoker, 2006). It has been the subject of academic critique for issues as inappropriate comparison of public and private sector, designation

of citizens as clients and disregarding the salience of non-financial, non - measurable values (Alford and Hughes, 2008).

NPM is regarded as individualistic – a neo-Liberal rolling back or hollowing out of the State, in comparison to the more socially cohesive Welfare State model. It has been described as a “*decisive shift away from collectivist towards individualist solutions to social problems*” (Talbot, 2009 pg. 167). For some commentators market concepts of profit and efficiency have had a destructive impact on the functioning of government (Self, 2000). The NPM paradigm rests on economic foundations and its competitive government model does not succeed in enshrining deeper governance values (O’Flynn, 2007).

Public Value Discourse

Awareness of public value theory developed in the early 2000s, in the UK with the publication of a discussion paper by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit (Kelly *et al.*, 2002). It was subsequently taken on board by organisations such as the BBC (2004) policy research agencies such as the Work Foundation (Coats and Passmore, 2008; Talbot 2008) and an academic interest developed (Benington, 2009; Benington and Moore, 2011; Maddock, 2009; Stoker, 2006; Talbot, 2009; 2010a).

In Australia the debate among the main research protagonists was particularly polarised. Rhodes and Wanna (2007; 2009) question the relevancy of Moore’s work to Westminster systems. Alford and Hughes (2008) are more favourably disposed towards public value and suggest “public value pragmatism” as an antidote to NPM. Smith (2004) is of the view that a focus on public value allows aggregation of issues for scholarly analysis and is also intuitively meaningful for practitioners and the community at large.

In tracing the evolving meanings of public value, Alford and O’Flynn (2009) categorise it as an umbrella concept, still open to validity challenge. They conclude that it is not yet possible to predict if it will have lasting significance in the public administration and management domain.

The foregoing discussion and proposed definition give rise to the following proposition.

Proposition 1 *Assessing reputation in the public domain is complicated because the authorising environment of public sector organisations comprises layered accountabilities and a multiplicity of constituents up to and including society at large.*

The organisational interface of legitimacy and reputation will now be considered.

Legitimacy and Reputation

The concepts of legitimacy and reputation both represent assessments of an organisation by a social system (Deephouse and Carter, 2005). Managing the complexities of legitimacy and reputation simultaneously has been considered in the literature. Wærass and Sataøen (2011) examine the conflicting demands, tensions and trade-offs in relation to reputation and legitimacy, as revealed in practice in Norwegian hospitals. Deephouse and Carter (2005) study the distinctive

properties of legitimacy and reputation and the degree to which similar antecedents can produce different outcomes in the empirical context of US commercial banks.

Legitimacy has been regarded as essential or critical to organisational survival (Suchman, 1995). On the other hand, reputation amounts to added value and just makes an already legitimate entity better (King and Whetton, 2008). The chronology according to Wæraas and Sataøen (2011) is that organisations must first acquire legitimacy. It is an essential prerequisite for reputation, in particular, in institutionalised settings. Once a strong foundation of legitimacy, and therefore conformity, has been established, agencies may then proceed to build reputation. Legitimacy is of more fundamental significance, therefore, in the public domain (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012).

Legitimacy definitions, in general, suggest judgment and behavioural consequences and represent a form of social control (Bitektine, 2011). The loss of legitimacy can have more serious consequences than a loss of reputation. Having a lower reputation does not automatically result, for example, in the organisation being challenged by government or the combined action of powerful stakeholders (Deephouse and Carter, 2005).

Proposition 2_a *Legitimacy is a pre-requisite of reputation building and assumes greater importance in public sector organisations.*

Reputation implies *inter alia* a ranking of companies relative to their competitors (Fombrun, 1996). Institutional theory approaches emphasise conformity within the organisational field (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983), whereas reputation research focuses on organisational differentiation (Bergh *et al.*, 2010). Isomorphism is critical for legitimacy, but not so for reputation. With reputation management activities in institutional settings there is a potential for conflict between pressures for conformity and differentiation. However, legitimacy modifies the necessity for uniqueness (Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011).

A legitimacy-seeking organisation may have to strategically evaluate whether it is preferable to be perceived as the same as, or different from its agency cohort. If it is also reputation-seeking, it may be necessary to reflect on its disparities, rather than similarities to other organisations (Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011). Furthermore, ongoing reputation management efforts in an institutionalised field are dependent on prior legitimacy requirements. Therefore reputation strategies must defer to what is legitimately feasible (Deephouse and Carter, 2005).

Proposition 2_b *For public managers a trade-off arises between isomorphic pressures for an agency to conform and the differentiating requirement for reputation building.*

Assessing Performance

The standards applied and performance expectations arising for each concept vary along a continuum moving from sufficient through superior to ultimately excellent performance. Although seen as a social control mechanism (Bitektine, 2011), minimum standards apply to legitimacy. For reputation both minimum and ideal standards cumulatively apply. However, ultimately only an excellent performance can achieve the societal outcomes which apply to public value criteria.

The legitimacy of an organisation depends on perceived similarity to a social category of organisations which includes minimum accountability standards (Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011) and *satisficing* to an acceptable level (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008). Reputation is inclusive of both minimum standards and ideal standards that determine excellence and distinctiveness (King and Whetton, 2008). Incrementally superior performance is not always required for obtaining and maintaining legitimacy. Performance sufficient to avoid questions and challenges is sufficient. (Deephouse and Carter, 2005). On the other hand, reputation is inherently competitive (King and Whetton, 2008) and incrementally superior performance improves an organisation's relative reputation (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). In the resource based view of the firm, performance is antecedent rather than a consequence of reputation (Bergh *et al.*, 2010).

Proposition 3a *As minimum accountability standards apply to legitimacy, it is easier to achieve than a good reputation in the public domain.*

Proposition 3b *Ideal standards relating to distinctiveness and performance are antecedent to reputation.*

A Neutral Reputation?

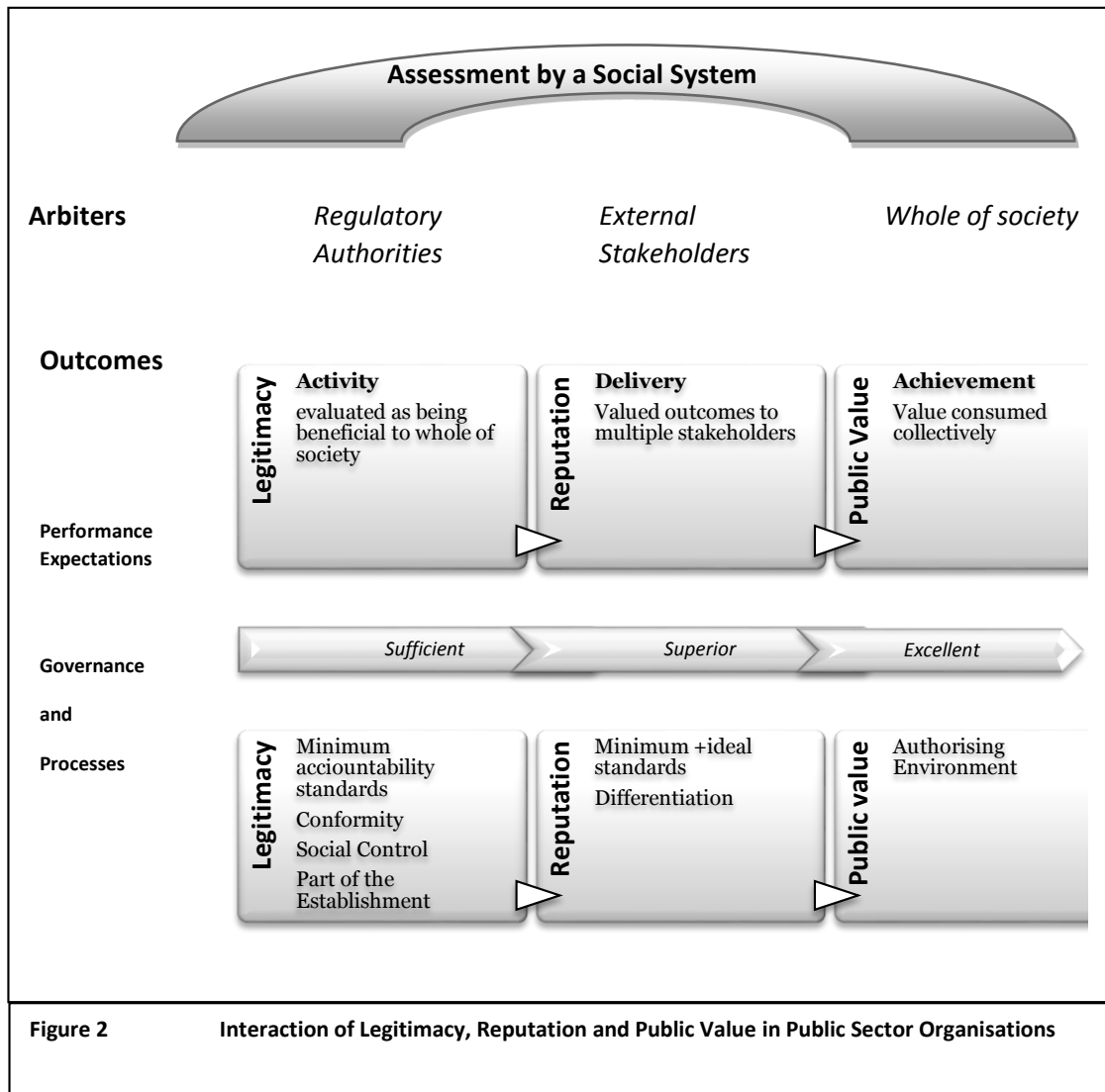
The ideal of a neutral reputation for PSOs, most particularly those which are non-commercial in orientation, has been proposed (Luoma-aho 2007; 2008). A neutral reputational ideal allows a critical operating distance and echoes the US concept of neutral competence in public managers (Rourke, 1992). It is attractive in an era when the resources for maintaining an excellent reputation are scarce. As this research related to Finnish social welfare state agencies it is a moot point whether the reputation of PSOs in countries other than Finland, and those with similar codified legal systems, might fit the ideal of neutral reputation. The Finnish Constitution is explicit in regard to transparency, the rights of citizens and the obligations and responsibilities of public servants (Finland, 1999), thereby narrowing the scope for administrative discretion. Bearing this in mind impartiality, rather than neutrality, might be more appropriate in terms of the relationship between stakeholders and agencies in common law jurisdictions. Neutrality implies not judging, but impartiality is a principle of justice holding that decisions should be based on objective criteria.

Proposition 4a *Impartiality is preferable to neutrality as a reputational ideal*

Proposition 4b *As a strategic objective, pursuing a neutral reputation is sub-optimal, as it does not address requirements of impartiality or public value.*

A Proposed Conceptual Framework

As an integrative device Figure 2 represents a public value conceptualisation of the interaction between organisational legitimacy and reputation. All three concepts are presented as subject to assessment by an overall social system, each with a distinctive arbiter of value produced.



Conclusion

In the Irish public sector the first overt reference to reputational risk is contained in the Report of the Working Group on the Accountability of Secretaries General and Accounting Officers which recommended the establishment of formalised risk systems in all Government offices (Mullarkey, 2002). However, unlike in the UK (Local Government Association, 2010), no official guidelines or template have been published for reputation management in Irish public sector organisations.

Although the subject of burgeoning research in leading peer reviewed public administration journals, public value has not, to date, received much overt acknowledgement by Irish academics or practitioners as a foundational principle to drive the public sector reforms necessary for national economic recovery.

This paper attempts to fill these gaps in two ways. Firstly, following examination of available scholarly characterisations of reputation in the public management, institutional, organisational and corporate reputation literature, a new definition for reputation in PSOs is proposed. Secondly, generalisable core propositions and a framework for conceptualising the theoretical and

practical affinities between reputation and legitimacy, using public value theory, are presented. A contribution to practice is identified also in the context of managing in a State agency during a transitional period leading to organisational merger. Following the establishment of a new merged entity, strategic opportunities for reputation building will inevitably arise.

Further papers in this cumulative DBA series will include philosophical and literary reflections; methodology and research design; and findings. A qualitative approach is adopted in this research as being appropriate for macro-oriented theoretical and strategic concerns such as public value, reputation and legitimacy (Luthans and Davis, 1982). Such approaches are amenable to producing rich descriptions of abstract type professional practice issues and also the required transferable knowledge in this context (Mantzoukas, 2008).

International reputation is linked to the ability of a society to act collectively, recover and reinvent its economy (NESC, 2009b). The present worldwide economic crisis has required an unparalleled renewal of state institutions. Consequently, new modes of governance are crucial. Although this study relates to Irish public sector organisations, it has implications for public management practice generally which arise from this shared international context of economic recession with an associated reputational crisis in public institutions.

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Paper 2

Subscribing to Public Value:

An Interpretative Approach to Exploring Reputation Management in Public Sector Organisations

SUBSCRIBING TO PUBLIC VALUE: AN INTERPRETATIVE APPROACH TO EXPLORING REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

A researcher's world view is grounded in an underlying philosophical paradigm, which not only influences the choice of research topic, but also facilitates appropriate choice of methodology. This paper outlines the philosophical basis of a qualitative research approach for exploring the complexity inherent in strategic reputation management in public sector organisations. Ontological and epistemological issues pertinent to the intended methodology are considered and use of an interpretive perspective is offered within a framework of wider theoretical concepts. A taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate potential validity challenges at each stage of the research process is also presented. Whilst reputation, per se, is externally assessed by stakeholders, reputation management is intertwined with the value system of an organisation and, in the public domain, involves trade-offs within a complicated authorising environment. An interpretative analysis of discursive repertoires is rationalised in terms of understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants, as constituents themselves, to organisational reputation imperatives, and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on reputation management efforts.

Keywords: Reputation Management, Public Value, Interpretive Analysis, Discursive Repertoires.

Introduction

This paper is the second of a cumulative four paper series to be submitted as part-fulfilment of the requirements of the WIT School of Business DBA programme. The main objective is to investigate whether active reputation management in PSOs contributes ultimately to public value. Paper 1 comprised a public value conceptualisation of reputation management. This second paper now explores the methodological implications of an interpretive paradigm on the proposed research design.

Methodological implications require, in the first instance, that researchers should fully understand the philosophy of science parameters underpinning their research worldview and academic studies (Ponterotto, 2005). Philosophical reflection is a pre-requisite, in particular, when proposing an interpretive approach to research, which can entail greater justification than a quantitative empiricist study. Selected methods and techniques, therefore, must be understood in the context of research methodology and such consideration of meta-theoretical positioning provides a basis for producing “*crafted, persuasive, consistent and credible research accounts*” (Cunliffe, 2011 pg. 647).

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research can be regarded as an approach, rather than a set of techniques, and its appropriateness derives from the nature of the social phenomena to be explored (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). This overall research endeavour will examine, in particular, the meanings ascribed by public servants to the issue of organisational reputation and how subscription to a public value ideal impacts on reputation management. The purpose, therefore, is to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 1994).

The significance of qualitative research lies in the emphasis on understanding rather than measuring difference (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This paper progresses a qualitative approach to rendering and understanding the complexities and discursive repertoires (Byrne, 2004) inherent in strategic reputation management in a public sector context. Such an approach entails exploring attitudes and beliefs relating to reputation management from the inside, providing depth of focus, nuanced accounts and the opportunity for clarification and greater insight into cognitions held in relation to intended and construed organisational image (Brown et al, 2006).

This paper explores the methodology of the research itself and clarifies the philosophical and axiological bases inherent in the main constructs at issue, namely, public value and reputation. This entails situating the interpretive orientation within metatheoretical assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge. It also entails the use of *a priori* constructs or foundational theory to initially ground topic focus and shape the initial research design, whilst retaining theoretical flexibility (Eisenhardt, 1989). The challenge and ultimate worth of the proposed research method will lie in fulfilling not just the contextual, explanatory and evaluative functions of qualitative research, but also the generative function of inductively developing theories, strategies or actions

(Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This would increase the likelihood of realising accessible insights for practice as part of the output of the overall study.

This paper is structured as follows.

Section 1	Philosophical Reflections
Section 2	Methodological Rationale
Section 3	Reputational Themes and Qualitative Research
Section 4	Values, Public Value and Reputation
Section 5	Conclusion

Section 1 comprises the philosophical reflections underpinning the study's interpretive approach and deals with ontological and epistemological considerations. In section 2 a methodological rationale is presented. As the approach used is novel in terms of subject focus and context, a taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity risks appropriate for each stage of the research process. To preserve internal cohesion Appendix 1 links data sources and methods to the propositions presented in Paper 1. In section 3 the utility of qualitative approaches when dealing with reputational themes is examined. In section 4 the axiological and collectivist foundations of public value theory and how it relates to the theme of reputation in the public domain are explored. Section 5 draws conclusions in terms of the overall methodological approach.

The first section will now reflect on the philosophical basis underlying this research.

Philosophical Reflections

Research philosophy informs choice of methods and how new knowledge can be generated through enquiry. On an iterative basis throughout the research process, according to Hughes and Sharrock (1997), philosophical concerns afford the opportunity to consider fundamental questions about the nature of appropriate topics within disciplines, their academic provenance, their investigative rationales and suitability and validity of research methods. In this regard Elliott et al (1999) have labelled one of their guidelines for qualitative research in terms of '*owning one's perspective*' (pg. 221). They recommend that researchers should specify their theoretical orientations, values and assumptions in advance and as they emerge, or are revealed during the phases of the research.

In relation to qualitative research, in particular, Mason (1996) advocates that the outcomes should be '*social explanations to intellectual puzzles*' (pg.6) and that researchers should be explicit about the logics on which these are based. The following sections of this paper, therefore, will concentrate on making explicit the wider philosophical ideas espoused, including the proposed worldview of the study and how this has moulded the present research approach (Cresswell, 2013).

Interpretive Paradigm

The concept of paradigm represents the researcher's perspective on what constitutes an interesting research problem and the most suitable choice of methodology (Gummesson, 1999). Originally paradigms were conceptualised as universally recognised scientific achievements that for a period provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners (Kuhn, 1970). In a broader sense paradigms have been characterised as problematics, alternative realities, frames of reference, forms of life, universe of discourse (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). More recently they have become synonymous with the basic belief system or worldview of the researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Differences in paradigm or metatheoretical assumptions cannot be dismissed as mere philosophical, or indeed, theoretical differences, as they have very practical consequences (Cunliffe, 2011). Such differences influence topic selection, study focus, how an investigation is undertaken, the consequent data analysis, findings, theorising, write-up and occasionally policy choices.

In accordance with Burrell and Morgan's (1979) analysis, this research lies within a frame of reference that is nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist and ideographic. It lies firmly within the confines of an interpretive paradigm, as it seeks explanation from inside the sphere of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant, as opposed to the observer of the action. In this regard the ontological implications will now be considered.

Ontological Assumption

Ontology is concerned with beliefs about what there is to know about the world, in other words, the nature of the world and what we can know about it (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). In quantitative research the usual assumption is that the social world exists as separate and distinct. Such an assumption is based on realist philosophy which implies belief in a single, uniformly held reality (Meredith, 1999). In qualitative research it is assumed that reality does not exist outside the individual, and the emphasis is on interpretations (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Such an assumption relies on a relativist philosophy, which implies a belief in multiple perceptions of reality (Meredith, 1999).

In relation to one of the main constructs used in this research, public value, Meynhardt (2009) proposes that if a value is not in people's minds it is not real. The ontological position adopted here, therefore, is subjective and privileges people's knowledge, values and experiences as meaningful and worthy of exploration (Byrne, 2004). The method of enquiry used is that of *verstehen*, which entails the reconstruction of the subjective experience of social actors (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). Such a subjective approach allows respondents to give meaning to, interact with, and construct their world (Cunliffe, 2011). Constructionism assumes that reality is an output of social and cognitive processes. Indeed, reputation has been described as a type of cognition about organisations (Clardy, 2012). In this research the strategic management of reputation and cognitions held by accountable actors are examined. The next section will explore the type of knowledge which will be produced.

Epistemological Considerations

Epistemology concerns the nature, origins and limits of knowledge (Slife and Williams, 1995). It also relates to ways of acquiring knowledge and of knowing and learning about the social world (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). In short, it is the philosophy of how we come to know in the world (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). In the subjective epistemological view no access to the external world beyond our own observations and interpretations is possible. This research assumes an interpretive approach grounded in the understanding of respondents' perspectives, in the context of the conditions and circumstances of their organisational lives, what Rist (1997) refers to as '*grounded means of knowing*' (pg. 551).

Research interviewing is a knowledge producing activity (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Data will be generated in this study through semi-structured interviews with senior managers in PSOs. Evered and Louis (1981) refer to the "*inherent epistemological assumptions associated with knowledge yielding procedures*" (pg. 394) and, as such, the epistemological matters raised by such qualitative interviewing centre around the status of the output produced:

- What can the interviewees tell us and what do they not tell us?
- How do we assess and analyse the interview data?
- Interview as topic rather than resource
- Discursive repertoires (Byrne, 2004 pp. 182-183).

The anticipated output will be "*subjectivist knowledge of a phenomenological kind*" and specific to context (Adcroft and Willis, 2008 pg. 317). Nonetheless, it may be anticipated that the data generated will have some originality, the potential to have impact, and be of relevance to practice. The interpretive issues posed are reflected in the *Method and Strategy/Data Source Options Table* in Appendix 1, which also shows how the selection of methods flows from the propositions (Marshall and Rossman, 1999), which emerged from the conceptualisation in Paper 1 of the DBA paper series, and the underlying philosophical foundations.

Having made explicit the philosophical worldview underpinning this research, a justification for the selected methodology will now be presented.

Methodological Rationale

A methodology, also referred to as strategies of enquiry (Cresswell, 2013), is a general approach to studying research topics which can be regarded as more or less useful in relation to any particular phenomenon (Seale, 2004). It is concerned with the method of data collection and the form of analysis used to generate knowledge (Cunliffe, 2011). A distinction has been drawn by Smith and Heshusius (1985) between method as technique or as '*logic of justification*'. The latter entails a focus on justifications given to support choice of methods and involves epistemological and ontological questioning. A logic of justification appropriate to the course of this research now follows.

Interpretivism and Social Constructionism

Prasad and Prasad (2002) drew a distinction between qualitative and interpretive research methodologies, the latter being a sub-set of the former. Qualitative research can be conducted within traditional positivistic assumptions about the nature of reality and production of knowledge. However, modern interpretivism sees social reality as a constructed world built in and through meaningful interpretation. This process has been referred to as symbolic 'worldmaking' (Schwandt, 1994).

Social constructionism is often combined with interpretivism to make sense of, or interpret the meanings others have about the world. They are both concerned with subjective and shared meanings (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Samples are usually small in scale and purposively selected on basis of salient criteria. Data is rich, extensive and detailed. Analysis is open to emergent concepts and ideas and may produce description and classification and identify patterns of association or develop typologies and explanations. Outputs tend to focus on interpretation of social meaning through mapping and 're-presenting' the social world of research the participants (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

Qualitative Research and Public Policy

Although this study does not concern policymaking *per se*, it can be said to be situated in the policymaking arena of public institutions. In this domain the choice not to decide is a common outcome of the policy process (Rist, 1994). In PSOs choosing mitigation of reputational risk, as opposed to strategic management of reputation, can be said to fall roughly into this category. Additionally public value theory suggests '*an active sense of adding value, rather than a passive sense of safeguarding interests*' (Alford and O'Flynn, 2009 pg. 176). In this sense also pro-active reputation management would be more publicly valuable than passive reputational risk avoidance.

From the 1970s onwards there has been increasing pressure to reduce public expenditure. Arising from the adoption of monetarist policies in the 1980s qualitative methods became somewhat marginalised in terms of policy evaluation, as Governments in the UK and the US privileged scientific evidence to legitimate intervention in the lives of citizens (Torrance, 2011). However, qualitative approaches are particularly useful where contextual understandings are required and they allow for the consideration of unintended consequences or trade-offs between policy choices (Rist, 1994). Nonetheless as advocated by Torrance (2011) informed judgement is required to balance the rigour of research against potential contribution to policy.

In terms of public value, qualitative research is advantageous for rendering complexities (Van Maanen, 1979) and can combine issues of accountability and impacts or outcomes of policy (Rist, 1994). In this respect Grube (2012) conducted a qualitative content analysis of public speeches by senior bureaucrats and considered whether public rhetorical leadership is a legitimate

contribution to the search for public value and also the inherent challenges it poses to good governance.

Building Theory

Such inductive research has the capacity to generate theory, as such, as opposed to data (Mintzberg 1979). A good theory is dependent on its plausibility (Weick, 1989) and whether it is “*parsimonious, testable and logically coherent*” (Eisenhardt, 1989 pg. 548). The central inductive purpose is to contribute to “*a process of revision and enrichment of understanding*” as opposed to verification (Elliott *et al.*, 1999, pg. 216). According to Mintzberg (1979) theory building benefits from the rich description that comes from anecdote. This process is analogous to the sensemaking, undertaken by research participants in interpreting their own world. It is an intentional process, more akin to artificial selection, than natural or scientific selection, and is steered by representations (Weick, 1989). However, this does not mean that full instrumentation is advisable in qualitative studies which, in the main, have flexible research designs (Myles and Hubermann, 2009).

Research Design

In this research *a priori* specification of tentative constructs, including reputation and public value, has been made, and there has been reference to extant literature which has informed initial propositions. This has worth in terms of laying a sustainable empirical foundation for emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). However, it is anticipated that the emphasis in the research propositions offered by way of conceptualisation, may shift during the evolving research process and hence the research design itself has in-built flexibility. It will be imperative, therefore, to continuously maintain a rigorous approach to data collection, data analysis and report writing. On the basis that validity is ascertained by examining the possible sources of invalidity (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Figure 3 presents a taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate potential validity challenges at each stage of this research process.

Data will be generated initially through semi-structured interviewing of public managers and the transcribed text will be discursively analysed, a process which will now be considered.

In-depth Interviewing and Discourse Analysis

The qualitative interview has been described as a method which gives “*privileged access to people’s basic experience of the lived world*” (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, pg. 9). Two main strengths of such interaction were identified by Hakim (2000). Validity is underpinned by the way individuals can be interrogated in sufficient detail for the results to be taken as true and believable and motivations can also be comprehensively explored. From a postmodernist point of view, the knowledge produced is a social construction of reality with a focus on the interpretation and negotiation of the meanings of the social world (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

Figure 3 Mitigating Validity Challenges in Qualitative Research Designs ³				
Research phase/focus	Possible Validity Challenge	Counter Strategy	Operationalisation	Outcome
Methodological approach: Subjective Frame of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Researcher bias ❖ Meanings inferred indirectly from interpretations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acknowledge ▪ Reflexivity ▪ Openness to new and unexpected phenomena ▪ Discourse as constitutive of reality ▪ Interviewees as constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear audit trail ▪ Research journal ▪ Field notes ▪ Bracketing ▪ Discourse analysis ▪ Peer/supervisor debriefing through paper series preparation ▪ Colloquia participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Objectivity ◦ Balance between adaptiveness and rigour ◦ Methodological triangulation
Semi-structured interviews Data: Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inaccuracy or incompleteness of data ❖ Reactivity to researcher ❖ Power and positionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accuracy ▪ Reliability ▪ Auditability ▪ Foreknowledge of researcher balanced by a qualified naïveté ▪ Respect for respondents ▪ Ethical approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of tape recording and transcription ▪ Focus on particular themes ▪ Openness ▪ Bracketing of presuppositions ▪ Neutrality ▪ Field notes ▪ Member checking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Data quality enhanced ◦ Researcher objectivity ◦ Precision in description ◦ Primary experience of the world
Data: Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Researcher bias ❖ Respondent bias ❖ Lack of rigour ❖ Amount of data amassed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple data collection techniques ▪ Data quality checks ▪ Relevancy to research problem ▪ Data reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of secondary sources ▪ Member checking ▪ Rationalise selection of data ▪ Flexibility as to number of interviews required ▪ Selective transcription where necessary ▪ Effective records management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Data Triangulation ◦ Secure Data
Data: Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Researcher bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Search for invariant essential meanings ▪ Analytical Saturation ▪ Other Analysts, if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of software package nVivo, if appropriate ▪ Identifying key themes ▪ memoing -theme refinement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Multiple levels of abstraction ◦ Layering of analysis from particular to the general
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Researcher bias ❖ Imposing a framework or meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discourse analysis ▪ inductive analysis ▪ analytic reflexivity ▪ Data display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear audit trail ▪ Stringency in meaning interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate clearly how interpretation was reached and justify ▪ Responsiveness to contradictory evidence ▪ Devil's advocate ▪ Outliers ▪ Rival explanations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Plausibility ◦ Internal validity ◦ Objectivity
Findings/Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Researcher bias ❖ Blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meanings tested for validity ▪ Conclusion drawing and verification ▪ Reframing as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider alternative explanations ▪ Linking of propositions to emerging theory ▪ Check representativeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Theory triangulation ◦ Internal generalisability ◦ Research legitimacy ◦ New insights
Report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Imbalance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting evidence in the literature ▪ Assertional logic ▪ Coherence and consistency ▪ Ethical considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balanced approach ▪ Sound logic ▪ Ethical considerations ▪ Reflexivity ▪ Refinement of any initial propositions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Objectivity ◦ Quality, Credibility and trustworthiness of research
Evaluative criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Subjectivity ❖ Lack of contribution to practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pragmatic approach ▪ Primacy of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on craftsmanship of research ▪ Audit Trail ▪ Values ▪ Social robustness ▪ Responsiveness to practice ▪ Utility of results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ External validity ◦ Transferability ◦ Fittingness ◦ Analytic generalisation ◦ Application Utilisation /Action orientation

³ Based on Miles and Huberman (1994); Robson (2002); Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and Torrance (2011).

Language is the medium and the tool of interviews and the resulting product is linguistic, by way of transcribed texts (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Discourse analysis is, therefore, a useful method to analyse the data generated. It has been described as the study of talk and texts or as a set of methods and theories for researching language in use and in social contexts (Wetherell *et al.*, 2001). As a method it is a perspective on language, which is not reflective of reality, but its use constructs and organises the terms in which we understand that social reality (Tonkiss, 2004). Therefore, it can be termed as the qualitative approach to textual analysis.

Language cannot be regarded as a neutral conduit for transmitting information. It is constitutive rather than descriptive of reality. It is the site where meanings are created and changed (Taylor, 2001). Discourses, therefore, make sense of the world “giving it meanings that generate particular experiences and practices” (Philips *et al.*, 2004, pg. 636). For example, reputation can be conceptualised as an ongoing evaluation process by relevant stakeholders constituted in discursive practices. Consequently, it is not seen as an outcome at any one point, but as constant re-construction (Aula and Tienari, 2011).

Discourse is not just ideas and or ‘text’. It is not merely what is said, but also context. It encompasses representation and processes. In what has been conceptualised as discursive institutionalism, public officials are said to engage in coordinative discourse in contrast to the communicative discourse in the political sphere (Schmidt, 2008). Using discursive institutionalism as a framing device, institutions are seen as internal to actors, who possess background ideational abilities and foreground discursive abilities.

Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) recommend maintaining a healthy tension between discourse as a local achievement of language in use as opposed to discourses which can be seen as enduring systems in historical contexts (Foucault, 1969). Discourses, as such, are changed through the production, dissemination and consumption of texts. By focusing on texts Maguire and Hardy (2009) demonstrate how, over time, discursive dynamics influenced the outside driven de-institutionalisation of the taken for granted, and widespread, use of the insecticide DDT⁴. In a later study, the same authors analyse websites and publicly available texts which describe practices of chemical risk assessment and management processes. By combining a performance process study with a discursive perspective, important empirically grounded insights were generated into the relationship between organising and risk (Maguire and Hardy, 2013). New Public Management discourse has been investigated in relation to the link between identity and image management, through analysing texts which attribute a new significance to communications in public management (Hansen *et al.*, 2001). Critical discourse analysis has been used to analyse reputation building during the merger of three universities in Finland, where the qualitative empirical material comprised university communications materials and media texts (Aula and Tienari, 2011).

⁴ dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane

In this research relevant selective texts will be analysed as well as interview transcripts. These texts will include Parliamentary Debates, speeches and media reports. The rationale for using such sources is data triangulation. They will act as external perspectives and representations, either corroborating or disconfirming or exposing inconsistencies in the discursive repertoires (Byrne, 2004) within the interpretations of public officials, in relation to construed and intended image of their organisations, and their view of their role as constituents in strategic reputation management.

The use of qualitative research methods in conjunction with reputational themes will now be considered.

Reputational Themes and Qualitative Research

This section will examine the utility of qualitative approaches when dealing with reputational themes in academic studies. To date quantitative methods have dominated empirical research in the field of reputation. Of 24 empirical articles remaining from a larger original sample published between 1980 and 2007 in Walker's (2010) systematic review of corporate reputation, only two used qualitative methods, one of which used mixed methods

In his reputation based account of the regulatory power of the U.S. Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) Carpenter (2010) questioned whether quantitative analyses and aggregations could make sense of human emotions, meanings, memories, and political consequences attached to events. Alternative methodological approaches used in the extensive scholarly research on reputation, image and impression management themes have included grounded theory (Sutton and Callahan, 1987; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011), case study (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) mixed methods as a follow up to statistical enquiry (Davies et al, 2009) narrative, quantitative and comparative approaches (Carpenter, 2010), hermeneutics (Heil and Whittaker, 2011), group interviews (Arnold *et al.*, 2003), and longitudinal critical discourse analysis (Aula and Tienari, 2011).

Sutton and Callahan's (1987) qualitative and inductive study uses a grounded theory approach which proposes a hierarchy of five stigma –management strategies for use by leaders to avert or repair the spoiled images of top management and firms in discrediting predicaments and inductively presents method, and then theory. Heil and Whittaker (2011) conducted a hermeneutical study of a large developmental finance organisation in South Africa. The authors characterise their findings as guiding reputation management and corporate branding efforts at a '*more primordial level in creating a vivid and sustainable image of the organisation for stakeholders*' (pg. 262).

Identity, Image and Reputations

Theoretically, reputation is seen as the aggregate perception of all stakeholders. To focus on a company's reputation is to determine how it deals with all of its constituents (Fombrun, 1996). In studying reputation, therefore, it is recommended that the following criteria be specified –

- (1) the actual stakeholder group from whom the organisational impression is being sought
- (2) the reputational issues or dimensions being investigated (Walker, 2010).

The constructs of image, identity and reputation are frequently confused. Each type of impression is independent and can be differently held by each relevant audience. Brown et al (2006) enumerate four distinct types of impressions as follows:

Identity – who are we as an organisation?

Intended image- what do we wish outsiders to think about us as an organisation?

Construed images - What do we, the organisation, believe others think about us as an organisation?

Reputation- What do audiences actually think about the organisation?

Elsbach (2003; 2006) categorises images, reputations and identities and demonstrates how the primary perceivers of organisational reputation are outsiders, but in terms of organisational image the primary perceivers are both insiders and outsiders. This study proposes to examine the structure of beliefs held by those accountable, or in some way with an interest and responsibility for the reputation and indeed the controlled messages emanating from PSOs. It is not the intention to investigate the construct of reputation in isolation. The main emphasis, instead, is on understanding and exploring, in context, the subscription by public servants to a public value ideal, when considering issues relating to image, impression and reputation management.

Following their hermeneutical study about external understanding of the identity of an organisation Heil and Whittaker (2011) recommend an internal study on similar lines. They suggest that such a study would have to ascertain the organisational identity and the inherent commitment of employees. It would also have to examine the similarities and differences between external and internal understanding of the organisation's identity and the gap between strategic intent and the kind of identity required (Heil and Whittaker 2011). This study will take up this challenge, to an extent, and will attend to some of these issues from an internal perspective.

The next section will examine the axiological or value basis to the construct of public value.

Values, Public Value and Reputation

Imputing a value to someone means that its espousal should reveal itself in practice, as well as thought. A value is focused in two directions, that of discourse and explicit acts. The principal role of values, therefore, lies in the rationalisation of action (Rescher, 1969). In this research in-depth interviewing will provide an opportunity to ascertain whether espoused values of public

sector organisations and senior officials cohere internally with values-in-use and externally with media representation. With respect to public value it is important to see questions of value not just solely in abstract terms. (Benington and Moore, 2011).

Values can be classified by way of the *loci of value*, or the particular purpose served, in public sector terms, the attainment of specific social outcomes. Thus, when we speak of evaluation, we mean that something is evaluated with reference to a particular valued attribute (Rescher, 1969). A pertinent example for this research is where a particular policy might be evaluated, or assessed, in terms of its public value proposition. Public value is, in fact, created as a result of such evaluation (Meynhardt and Metelmann, 2009).

Value, itself, is created in relationships. It is the result of a relationship between a subject that is valuing an object, and the valued object. Public value is one such relational concept and it is created in relationships in which ‘the public’ is involved (Meynhardt, 2009). Figure 4 illustrates Rescher’s (1969) classification of values and how this might apply to the concept of public value (Moore, 1995).

Dimensions of a value	Key features	Application to Public Value
Subscribership	Who holds it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals • Public Managers/politicians • Nationally
Object items	Value object/Evaluation Domain of applicability of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative assessment or measurement of something with respect to its embodiment of a certain value • A policy can be evaluated in point of its public value
Benefits at issue	Qualitative /political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Outcome
Purposes at issue	<i>Loci of value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment of specific human purposes/public policies
Relationship between subscriber and beneficiary	Orientation of the value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice/humanitarian values
Relationship to other values	Intrinsic/end Instrumental /means Subordinate/superordinate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realisation of public value for itself – superordinate value

Figure 4 Classification of values adapted and applied to Public Value⁵

Collectivism and Public Value

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that, from a hermeneutical point of view, the researcher can look beyond the here and now of the interview setting, and pay heed to the contextual, interpretive horizon provided by history and tradition. In this respect public management is not a neutral

⁵ Based on Rescher (1969)

technical process, but an activity closely and seamlessly interwoven with politics, law and wider society. It is diffused with value laden choices and influenced by broader ideologies (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). Thus, the public value discourse “*catalyses essential questions of how to reconcile different, contradicting values given today’s contingencies in the public sector.*” It encompasses performance, legitimacy and a broader search for “*values framing our understanding of society*” (Meynhardt, 2009 pg. 215). These values can come into conflict with one another in the competing demands their realisation and pursuit makes on finite or scarce resources. New Public Management (NPM) can be seen as a manifestation of value change and consequent erosion, induced by ideological and political change (Rescher, 1969, Hood, 1991). In this manner the propagation of Thatcherite and Reaganite monetarist policies in the 1980s facilitated a paradigmatic shift in traditional public administration and a questioning of the role of government in the provision of public services.

Moore’s *Creating Public Value* (Moore, 1995) was written at a period, when NPM ideas were proliferating in Anglo-American democracies, in response to bureaucratic weaknesses and to the view of government as an obstacle to economic and social progress. One of the perceived shortcomings of NPM is that it promotes individualism at the expense of collective public solutions to social problems. Another is that the emphasis on economic measures in public reporting of performance, results in reinforcing a limited scope for public value creation (Meynhardt and Metelmann, 2009) Figure 5 outlines the paradigmatic shifts as they have evolved in public management.

Paradigm/ Model	Era	Context/ Environment	Characterised by
Public Administration	<i>End 19th century up to early 1980s</i>	❖ Relative economic stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down bureaucratic structures • Known and understood Monopolistic provision of services
New Public Management (NPM)	<i>1980s -</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Free market competition ❖ Neo-liberalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms of market choice ▪ Shrinking of size and scope of government and public sphere Individualism
Public Value	<i>1996-</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Volatility and uncertainty ❖ Complex cross – cutting problems Wicked or adaptive challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State, market and civil society ▪ Shared public value goals ▪ Polycentric networked governance Collectivism
Figure 5 Paradigmatic shifts in public management			

Hirschman (1982) conceptualised cycles of collective human behaviour in terms of a predisposition of societies to oscillate between concern with private acquisition and public spiritedness. Following the global economic crisis of 2009 it is a moot point whether we are about to enter a new more collectivist period, and facilitating a new public value approach to public management (Talbot, 2009; Benington and Moore, 2011).

Discussion will now turn to how the foregoing analysis on values impacts on the notion of reputation in the public domain.

Reputation in the Public Domain

Using Rescher's (1969) typology of values reputation can be seen as a subordinate value, a means or instrumental value to further the extent of public value creation, the increased realisation of which will benefit society. Therefore, public value is valued for itself, and reputation management is a means to this end. The proximate benefits of reputation include positive media representation, potentially increased appropriations or Exchequer funding, and less Parliamentary scrutiny. The more remote benefits can be classed as societal and involve the construction of a reliable conduit from "a *philosophical concept of value to an empirically observable reality*" (Benington and Moore, 2011, pg.). An empirical study of the German Federal Labour Agency has indicated that reputation is indeed a key external antecedent to public value creation (Meynhardt and Metelmann, 2009).

Conclusion

The main objective of this study, as conceptualised in Paper 1, is to investigate whether reputation management and its interaction with institutional legitimacy contributes ultimately to public value. This second paper in the DBA series has outlined the philosophical basis of a qualitative research approach for exploring the complexity inherent in such strategic reputation management in public sector organisations. Through this process of philosophical reflection the interpretative worldview of the research is made explicit. The axiological underpinning of orientating constructs is also clarified, in line with propositions which arose from the conceptualisation process.

In keeping with the spirit of a qualitative approach, the proposed research design is flexible and open to emerging possibilities as to sources of data generation and methods of analysis. A taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity risks, appropriate for each stage of the research process, has been offered. Data sources and methods have been linked to propositions and underlying philosophical paradigms. It has been acknowledged that organisational reputation *per se* is assessed externally by way of the perceptions held by stakeholders and that empirical investigation has, in the main, been positivist. However, the subject focus of the overall study is strategic reputation management which has been rationalised in terms of understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants, as constituents, to this issue and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on their efforts to manage the reputation of their organisations. It is contended that the interpretive perspective presented holds the possibility of facilitating novel insights both theoretically, and in terms of practice, for public service managers.

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Paper 3

Talk, Text and Context:

**Discursively Constructing Shared Reputation
in New Agency Settings**

TALK, TEXT AND CONTEXT

DISCURSIVELY CONSTRUCTING SHARED REPUTATION IN NEW AGENCY SETTINGS

Research-in-Progress

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Doctorate in Business Administration

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Abstract

This paper describes the sampling strategy, approaches to data generation and initial thematic findings from an exploratory study using discourse analysis to assess the complexity and endogenous prioritisation and trade-offs inherent in the strategic management of reputation in public sector organisations. The sample used comprises two newly-emerging agencies, one which will entail merger of three existing organisations, each with its own distinctive legacy reputation, and the other a new civil service shared services centre for human resources. The interdependence and simultaneous multi-level management of shared reputations in public sector settings is evident from data generated through talk, text and context. The initial data generation phase of this research reveals the political imperatives of a large department of state in the prioritisation of ministerial reputation. It also demonstrates a reputational dividend being discursively constructed as a justification for agency merger in tandem with new identity formation. The rationale for establishing a shared services centre is shown as arising from the aftermath of spoiled superordinate institutional reputation. Definitive conclusions arising from this research await full analysis which will be presented in the final paper of this four part series.

Keywords: Public Sector Reputation, Agency Merger, HR Shared Services Centre, Discursive Construction, Shared Reputations.

Introduction

This paper is the third of a cumulative four paper series to be submitted as part-fulfilment of the requirements of the WIT School of Business DBA programme. The subject of the overall study is reputation management in public sector organisations (PSOs). The main emphasis of this research is on understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants themselves to this issue and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on their efforts.

The initial paper comprised a public value conceptualisation of reputation management. The second paper outlined the philosophical basis to the qualitative research approach, making explicit its interpretative worldview. Paper 3 is now concerned with the data generation phase of this enquiry.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Firstly, the rationale for the sampling strategy chosen is provided. Secondly, profiles and legacy reputations of the agencies under review are examined. Thirdly, the data generation methods used are discussed and secondary sources for achieving data triangulation are outlined. Emerging from the data produced through talk, text and context tentative thematic findings are then presented. The paper concludes by looking forward to finalising data generation and to presenting completed analysis and findings and to further development of the discussion and conclusions in the last phase of this research.

Sampling Strategy

A sampling strategy should fit the purpose of a study, the resources available, the questions being asked and the constraints being faced (Patton, 2002). Criterion sampling entails selection of cases that meet a particular criterion and is appropriate when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon in question (Cresswell, 2013; Miles and Huberman, 2009). To establish accessible parameters for this study I have opted to use the criterion of emerging agencies in the throes of constructing new identities.

The two overlapping research settings are outlined in Figure 6. This sample frame comprises firstly, three Irish agencies which are about to merge on foot of a Government decision and secondly, a new civil service HR and pensions shared services centre called *PeoplePoint*. The two relevant superordinate authorities, or parent Government Departments, have been included for completeness and to provide sufficient perspective and stratification.

Both the merger and the shared services project form part of an overall programme of public service reform to drive Irish economic recovery (CEEU, 2011; DJE, 2012a). At the time the interviews were undertaken in the merging organisations, a vision statement for the new entity was still in development. Enabling legislation was not yet drafted, nor had selection of a name for the new organisation been finalised. In contrast, the shared services centre had been *in situ* for about six months and already had a recognisable identity for civil servants. Half of the projected Government Departments and agencies had already transitioned to its services, representing in excess of 15,000 civil servants.

Setting	Agency		Acronym
(1) Merger	1	Valuation Office	VO
	2	Ordnance Survey Ireland	OSi
	3	Property Registration Authority	PRA
	4	Department of Justice and Equality	DJE
(2) Shared Services	5	<i>PeoplePoint</i>	PP
	6	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	DPER
Figure 6 Sample Frame			

It is important to judge a sample in context (Patton, 2002) and to ask whether it provides access to enough data with the appropriate focus to facilitate addressing of the research questions (Mason, 2004). The sample chosen fits with the overall purpose of this study. It does not strive to be representative of all public sector organisations, but is theoretically driven and relevant to the propositions which have emerged from the conceptualisation phase of this research (Miles and Huberman, 2009) and are now re-stated for the purposes of clarity in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Propositions articulated in Paper 1	
P1	Assessing reputation in the public domain is complicated because the authorizing environment of public sector organisations comprises layered accountabilities and a multiplicity of constituents up to and including society at large
P2a	Legitimacy is a pre-requisite of reputation building and assumes greater importance in public sector organisations
P2b	For public managers a trade-off arises between isomorphic pressures for an agency to conform and the differentiating requirement for reputation building
P3a	As minimum accountability standards apply to legitimacy, it is easier to achieve than a good reputation
P3b	Ideal standards relating to distinctiveness and performance are antecedent to reputation
P4a	Impartiality is preferable to neutrality as a reputational ideal
P4b	As a strategic objective, pursuing a neutral reputation is sub-optimal, as it does not address requirements of impartiality or public value

The sample chosen provides variety and granularity and enables cross-sectional analysis by, for example, including parent Departments, one of which was established at the beginning of the State in the 1920s, the other just over two years in existence. It also includes a mix of bureaucratic and commercial type organisations within its purview. Both the new agencies being at different junctures in their evolution, I anticipated that qualitative interviewing of accountable actors in

these settings would yield evidence of organizational identity, image and reputation at different stages of being pro-actively and discursively constructed (Hardy, 2001).

The number of interviewees is outlined in Figure 8 and remains subject to change, if required. Such sampling practice can be seen as organic and relevant to the emerging shape of a research project (Mason, 2004). What is important is that each interviewee has the potential to assist in developing theoretical insights (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) into the complexities of reputation management in PSOs. Therefore, in the merger setting seven interviewees have been selected from the three merging agencies and the lead Government Department under whose ambit the merged entity will be established. Each of these merger interviewees is either accountable for, or in a position to influence strategic reputation management and controlled messages emanating from their own organisation. Six of this cohort are members of the senior management team of their organisation. Furthermore, they would each have responsibility for, and indeed a vested interest in, the construction of a positive reputation for the new merged agency.

Figure 8 Interviewees		
Setting	Agency	Interviewees
(1) Merger	VO	2
	OSi	2
	PRA	2
	DJE	1
(2) Shared Services	PP	1
	DPER	2

In terms of layered accountability in the shared services setting a senior member of the HR Shared Services project team, a senior member of *PeoplePoint*, the new agency itself, and a senior manager from the parent Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will be interviewed. In the merger setting all interviewees are career civil servants. In this second setting, however, two interviewees are relatively new appointees from the private sector. This combination of both public and private sector experience was purposively selected with discursive variety in mind. Each interviewee would have a vested interest in and/or responsibility for the success of *PeoplePoint*, the first shared services agency established as part of the Government public service reform agenda (DPER, 2011a).

As outlined in Paper 2 in describing the underpinning methodology of this research, it is not intended to investigate the construct of reputation in isolation. The main emphasis is on understanding and exploring, in context, the subscription by public servants to a public value ideal when considering issues relating to image impression and reputation management.

Contribution to Practice

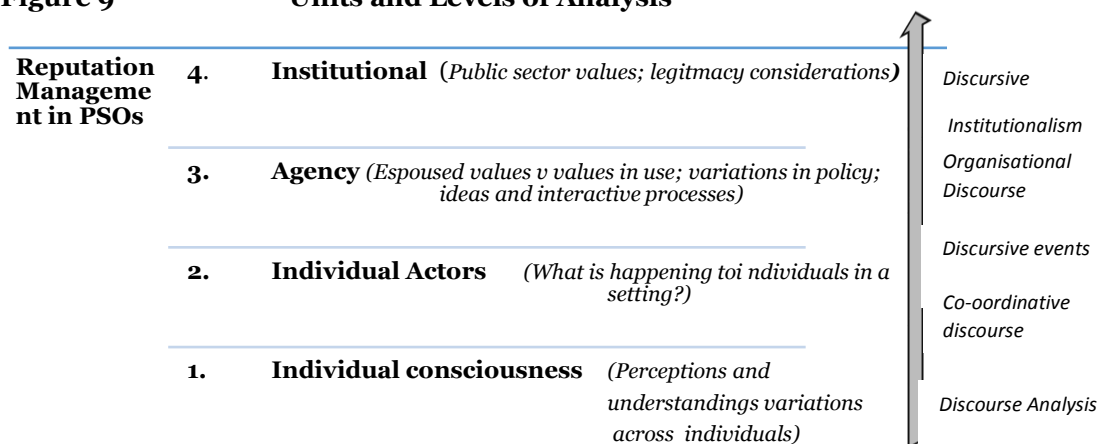
Validity, meaningfulness and insights gleaned through qualitative inquiry are more likely to result from the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher as opposed to sample size (Patton, 2002). As this research is part of an executive doctoral programme a major parallel aim of the sampling strategy was also to facilitate a dual contribution to practice in terms of public management generally and at a personal level also.

I am a member of the senior management team of the PRA and also a working group set up to consider strategic HR for the new merged entity. As HR Manager I also assisted in the transition to *PeoplePoint* in August 2013 of the transactional HR functions undertaken in the PRA. It is acknowledged, therefore, that the sampling logic of this study is underpinned by pre-understandings on my part. Such prior knowledge has assisted my purposive selection of agency settings on the basis of relevance to the research question (Mason, 2004), discursive analytical framework being pursued (Schwandt, 2001) and also in terms of my own self-development and practice as a public manager.

Units of Analysis

When choosing a suitable unit of analysis it is important to know what it is, you want to be able to say something about, at the end of the study (Patton, 2002). Different units of analysis are not mutually exclusive, but each involves its own approach to data gathering and analysis. The level at which findings and conclusions can be made is also subject to change depending on the level of the unit of analysis. Figure 9 demonstrates how the units of analysis in this study correlate with levels and development within a discourse analytic framework which allows language to be located within a wider organizational context (Lawton, 2008).

Figure 9 Units and Levels of Analysis



My research on reputation management will encompass all four dimensions. I will collect data related to individual consciousness in semi-structured interviews. Discourse analysis of the interview transcripts and other texts, including context, will encompass both individual and agency levels. Ongoing and emergent review of relevant literature will provide linkage to all levels up to and including, institutional.

There has been growing academic interest in the idea that societies, institutions and identities are discursively constructed collections of texts (Alvesson and Kärremer, 2000a; 2000b; Hardy, 2001). Indeed texts can be considered discursive units, as such, and can include interview transcripts as well as official documents which are composed in and by organisations. Discourse analysis attempts to reveal the way in which social reality is produced and is a methodology based on a constructivist epistemology (Philips and Hardy, 2002). It moulds social objects such as organisations, and solidifies their identity facilitating the ability to speak of them as if they were naturally occurring social entities (Hardy, 2001). In this sense, therefore, discourse analysis is useful where newly establishing agencies form the research settings, as in this instance. When using discursive institutionalism as a framing device, institutions can be seen as internal to actors. They act as structures constraining actors and as constructs created and changed by those actors (Schmidt, 2008). Discourse analysis can be regarded as a constitutive social practice. Language is studied as a means of providing insight into organizational processes and linked to broader social processes (Lawton, 2008).

The context of each research setting will now be described.

Setting 1 Merger: Legacy Reputations

All three merging agencies have a similar lineage. As venerable Irish institutions of long standing, they share common historical roots and initial establishment in an Ireland colonised by England. Indeed certain functions of the PRA commenced as early as 1707 (McHugh, 2011). Ordnance surveying began as a military function in 1824 to update valuations for land taxation purposes. All staff employed by the OS were in fact military until the 1970s, when the first civilian employees were recruited. Together with the VO it was originally one entity under the Irish Department of Defence.

The three agencies all deal with land, in terms of its ownership (PRA), valuation (VO) and topographical depiction (OSi). Merger will facilitate development of a governance framework for the custodianship of land and geospatial information for the Irish State. From a socio-anthropological perspective there is added interest because land, and its ownership, specifically, have a particular resonance for Irish people. This is due in part to a colonial past and to public policy including protection of property rights in a written constitution⁶. Despite a devastating property crash in 2008 there is a continuing propensity towards relatively high levels of home ownership (CSO, 2011; Somerville, 2007).

Although sharing historical lineage and connection to land, each agency, nonetheless, has its own distinctive organizational profile and reputation and these will now be described in turn. Strategic communication and expressiveness can be a means of building and maintaining reputation (Wæraas, 2010). Therefore, in terms of how each agency projects its own identity, organizational visions, missions and espoused values as expressed in annual reports and strategy documents are

⁶ Bunreacht na hEireann Article 43(1) (1)

presented in Appendix 1. Furthermore, differentiation in expressiveness in strategic website communication across agencies is shown in Appendix 2.

Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi)

The OSi is a hybrid PSO, as such, and has a commercial outlook and focus due to a funding model which requires it to increase its revenue from own resources in order to decrease its reliance on Exchequer funding. As the national mapping agency, it must also act in the public interest through servicing requirements, which are often unprofitable. Its primary product is mapping services. Other spatial products include aerial photography, digital terrain models and online web services.

OSi has a recognisable brand and a positive reputation among the general public. In the main this is because it sells tangible products and operates an outreach to schools and universities. Interview data reveals a somewhat negative reputation because of the pricing policy for licenses to use its data by other public bodies.

Unlike its merging partners it has remained removed somewhat from Parliamentary oversight as its Accounting Officer to Parliament is the Secretary General of its parent department. However, it has been the subject of adverse reporting in the past by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG, 1996). In its Annual Report 2011 (OSi, 2011) reference was made in an appended report by the C&AG to bonus payments to certain staff and to the then CEO, which contravened emergency financial legislation enacted in 2009⁷. This episode received negative coverage in the media (RTE, 2011; Irish Times, 2011a; 2011b) and was the subject of an appearance before the Committee of Public Accounts (PAC, 2013a).

Valuation Office (VO)

The function of the VO is to provide accurate, up-to-date valuations of commercial and industrial properties which underpins the collection of some €1.35 billion in rates by Irish local municipal authorities (VO, 2011). The office is under considerable pressure from parliamentary representatives, local authorities and other Government bodies to accelerate the pace of the National Revaluation Programme (C&AG 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011; PAC, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013). Current commercial valuations are based on 1988 relativities, which are compromised due to the occurrence since that date of a property market boom and consequent crash. Effects on values are nuanced and despite the collapse of retail sales, net retail unit values for example are higher and net industrial unit values are lower.

Amending legislation is before parliament which will facilitate an element of self-assessment and external delivery of services⁸. As the current National Revaluation Programme is being rolled out, it has been receiving some adverse local and national publicity due to its negative impact ultimately on retailers whose businesses have already been affected by the recession. Before the Public Accounts Committee of the Irish Parliament the Commissioner for Valuation distanced the

⁷ Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest no. 2 Act 2009

⁸ Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2012

Office from the policy effects of the technical exercise it was mandated to undertake. Measures to offset such consequences, including redistribution of commercial rates liabilities following revaluation, are the responsibility of other agencies such as the Department of Finance and local authorities themselves (PAC, 2013).

Property Registration Authority (PRA)

The PRA is the state organisation responsible for the registration of property transactions in Ireland. When the legal title to a piece of property is registered, the PRA on behalf of the State guarantees that title. PRA services are pervasive because of the high levels of property ownership in Ireland and the compulsory requirement to register following all purchases of property. However, there is a lack of awareness among the general public about the PRA due, in part, to the complex, legal and technical nature of its work and having end users who must use a legal professional or solicitor to lodge applications on their behalf.

It has also to be said that its image as a registering authority has suffered in the past due to delays and large arrears of casework because of inadequate resources to cope with constantly increasing intake during the Irish property boom years 1999 to 2007. In a recent appearance before a parliamentary committee, however, the PRA with eRegistration systems developed internally, was viewed as a leader in the eConveyancing agenda in Ireland, with the financial institutions viewed as lagging behind (CJDE, 2014).

Economic recession has adversely affected intake of applications and consequently casework on hands has now decreased (PRA, 2012; 2013). In 2013 property registration in Ireland received an improved rating as one of the criteria measured in the World Bank annual *Doing Business* report. This international ranking system presents quantitative indicators on business regulations and the protection of property rights across 185 economies and over time (Irish Independent, 2013a; 2013b; World Bank, 2013). In 2013 Ireland is ranked 15th for ease of doing business overall. It is ranked 53rd for registering property which represents an improvement of 29 places on previous years (Irish Times, 2009).

Department of Justice and Equality (DJE)

The parent department and project sponsor for the new merged entity is the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE). This government department has already over 30 separate agencies within its wide remit, many of which deal with security issues including the Prisons Service, Courts Service and Probation Service. Other agencies deal with censorship, legal aid, immigration,

human rights and equality issues (Mac Carthaigh, 2010) and more recently as a result of the recession, personal insolvency services⁹.

DJE is involved in crisis management on an ongoing basis. Media and other reports regarding crime, prison conditions and treatment of immigrants (IMCI, 2013) appear regularly. A wide variety of draft legislation is produced annually by this Department and piloted through Parliament by its Minister (DJE, 2012b). Because of the security issues arising from the Northern Ireland problem, this Department would have had a particularly severe, austere image up to 1997 when its remit broadened to include equality matters. As evidence of how it would wish to be seen the current strapline appearing on its website is *Working for a safer, fairer Ireland* (Appendix 3). It is arguable that the introduction in 2011 by the current Minister of well publicised citizenship ceremonies may have alleviated somewhat its image as a hard line bureaucracy in terms of immigration (Irish Times, 2013). Almost 20,000 persons were conferred with citizenship at thirty-five ceremonies held in 2012 (DJE, 2012b).

Having outlined the context of the merging PSOs and merger sponsoring Department, the background to the establishment of a HR shared services agency for the Irish civil service will now be described.

Setting 2 Shared Services: Spoiled Superordinate Reputation

In paper 1 the rationale given for commencing this research was outlined in the context of a reputational crisis being one dimension of Ireland's economic downturn since 2007 (NESC, 2009). Reference was made to well-documented collective failures of institutional capacity and governance. In the aftermath of the banking and property crisis there was much criticism in the media and official reports regarding the lack of specialist capacity in the Department of Finance (Molloy, 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; Irish Times 2010, Boyle and MacCarthaigh, 2011).

The report of the Independent Panel Review (Wright, 2010) on the Department of Finance was commissioned by the then Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan on 10 September, 2010, to examine the Department's performance over the previous ten years and to advise how the Department might adapt to meet the challenges of the future. Subsequently the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform was established by a new Irish Government. Furthermore, in its Public Sector Reform Statement (DPER, 2011a) this Government announced its intention to establish shared services centres in a number of areas including HR.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)

The Wright Report stated that the Department of Finance did not have critical mass in areas where technical economic skills are required, but it also revealed that it was poor on human resources management. Although the Department was the superordinate authority for the entire civil service in respect of all HR matters, it was itself shown to have a deficit in capacity in this area (Wright, 2010).

⁹ Insolvency Services of Ireland Act, 2012.

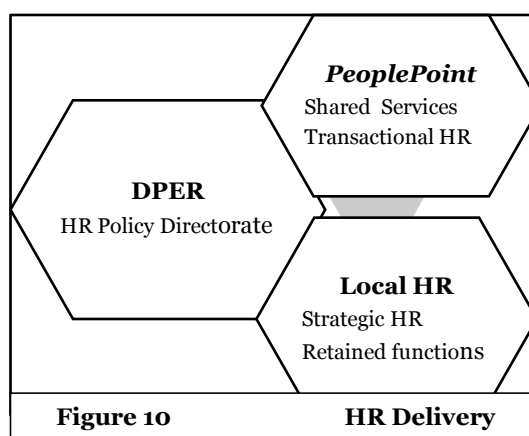
DPER now employs HR specialists, who have had experience in the private sector, both as part of its Civil Service HR Directorate and as part of the *PeoplePoint* project, two of whom are interviewed in this research. This change was recommended in the Wright Report and represents a shift from the era of the ‘gifted generalist’ to greater specialisation in the Irish civil service (Molloy 2010b). The new Department is expected to play a central role in driving reform in public management, insofar as this agenda is not unduly compromised by the imperatives of the public expenditure dimension of its brief (Boyle and Mac Carthaigh, 2011). This dilemma is recognized in its mission statement –

“We will endeavour to ensure that the national interest is represented in the decisions taken on spending and on public services” (DPER, 2011b).

PeoplePoint

The HR and pensions shared services project commenced in October 2011 following a Financial Appraisal and the first tranche of Departments/Offices began using the new agency *PeoplePoint* in March 2013. By end 2014 the administrative or transactional elements of HR and Pensions processes from 40 Departments/Offices will have transitioned to the new agency. It was estimated in 2012 that the annual cost of HR services would be reduced by 26% and the number of staff involved in HR transactional functions would be reduced by at least 17% (Howlin, 2012).

As at the data generating phase of this research *PeoplePoint* provides services for over 15,000 Civil servants across 13 Departments/offices. The new civil service HR delivery model is shown in Figure 10.



The strategic functions to be retained locally by Departments/Offices include workforce planning, industrial relations, learning and development and organizational development.

It is too early to assess whether *PeoplePoint* has been successful. And it should be borne in mind that the development of shared services in public sector contexts has not been universally successful. Australian experience in this area has shown that where there is, in effect, a monopoly service provider in tandem with a mandated client base, that risk assessment, service level agreements and governance become especially important (Boyle and Mac Carthaigh, 2013). What can be said, however, is that its reputation in tandem with that of DPER can only be an

improvement, in the light of the spoiled reputation of the previous regime in the Department of Finance.

A description of the data generation processes used in this study now follows.

Data Generation

Data comprising talk, text and context was generated through aural, digital and print media which includes taped interviews, organisational publications, website communication, official reports, webcams and verbatim reports of parliamentary debates and media representations obtained from print and online sources. Details regarding data sources are tabulated in Appendices 2, 5 and 6.

Text, Context and Data Triangulation

PSOs have become more aware of how they are publicly viewed (Wæraas, 2010). In Appendix 6 the data generated from secondary sources have disclosed how each agency represents itself by way of expressed identity symbols through mission, vision and espoused values in official strategy publications. Interests, identities and values of organisations are also embedded in different institutional logics (Kitchener, 2002; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008) which can co-exist in practice and are evident from interview transcripts, websites and strategy statements in the public domain. Figure 11 illustrates the propensity towards each logic demonstrated by the merging organisations.

Figure 11 Institutional Logics pertaining to merging organisations¹⁰

Logic	Ideals	Organisation
Professional	Expertise, extensive formal training and practice; self-governance and control; professional codes of ethics	PRA; VO; OSi
Bureaucratic	Accountability; transparency; formalisation; standardisation and equality; Hierarchy; rules and regulations	PRA; VO
Market	Efficiency through means of competition, profit generation and managerialism; Strategy, efficiency, competition, choice	OSi

The sources listed in Appendix 5 provide contextual background revealing legacy reputations and some negative media representations regarding occasional organisational difficulties. Expressiveness in strategic website communication has been assessed under several categories in Appendix 2 in order to get a feel for the audiences being addressed and underlying logics or business/operational orientation of each agency.

¹⁰ Adapted from Blomgren *et al.*, 2013

Appendix 6 outlines the mission and values expressed in annual reports. The market orientation of the OSI emerging from these organisational sources stands in contrast to its merging partners. The espoused values of the OSi shown in Appendix 6 - responsiveness, enterprise, innovation, efficiency and results- can be stated to be managerialist in origin. In contrast, all of the other PSOs in the sample frame include what might be termed public sector type values such as accountability (DJE) impartiality, national interest (DPER), public interest, transparency (PRA) honesty and integrity (VO).

Secondary sources, therefore not only provide authoritative voice, rigour and data triangulation, but were also consulted by me in order to fully understand the salient discourses prior to conducting interviews. Such sources include verbatim reports and webcasts of parliamentary debates, reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General, annual reports and strategy statements, organisational websites, customer surveys and media reports. Prior preparation in this manner facilitated my appreciation of organisational context and interviewee perspective. It also increased my awareness of the variety of applicable wider discourse settings.

Interview Process

Interviews commenced in August 2013 and are being taped and transcribed personally by me. The duration of initial interviews has been a minimum of one hour. Each interviewee is offered a consent form to sign. An interview guide is used in each instance and modified to suit the setting, context and individual. For example, the CEO of the Valuation Office in his role as Accounting Officer had just recently appeared before a parliamentary committee, the Committee of Public Accounts (PAC, 2013), and having viewed a webcam of the meeting, I altered the relevant interview guide to take account of these proceedings as a discursive event. Field notes are written up after each interview to enhance reflexivity and for consultation at the data analysis phase.

Discursive Events

During the data generation phase of this research initial consultant- facilitated gatherings of the twenty four members of the combined senior management teams of the three merging organisations were held. Together with the topical PAC webcast proceedings in relation to the VO, OSi and PRA, these events also provided a serendipitous opportunity to view in the first instance, and participate in the second, in significant discursive events in terms of my research.

The initial data generation phase has yielded some emerging thematic constructions which will now be outlined. Details of data analysis undertaken will be outlined in conjunction with findings in Paper 4.

Emerging Thematic Constructions

Because of the range of purposes, functions, values, professions, stakeholders and underlying logics that they represent, PSOs will embody a wide variety of often competing discourses (Lawton, 2008). In discourse analysis it is important to bear in mind that the account or narrative is the primary object of the research, as opposed to the truth. Decisions about truth and falsity of

descriptions are suspended in favour of studying the process of the construction itself (Wetherell, 2001).

In this research the data generated in interviewing reflects the discursive construction by public managers of identity in new agency settings. The emergent thematic constructions transcend legal and technical discourses and include ideas such as a reputational dividend from merger and ministerial versus corporate reputation. Further interviewing will reveal whether these ideas gain traction discursively.

Reputational Dividend

From the outset it was evident from texts produced and in interviews that the new merged organisation is expected to be greater than the sum of its parts, which indicates an expectation of enhanced reputational capital from the merger process. For example, the Working Group, established to critically review Government proposals for merger, concluded that the establishment of a new organisation would potentially result in a more coordinated and holistic approach at both national and EU level in relation to spatial/geographic issues. This could strengthen and/or support national initiatives in related policy areas, e.g. development of the Irish Spatial Data Infrastructure and implementation of the EU INSPIRE Directive (DJE, 2012a).

When asked in interview about how he would envisage the reputation of the new merged organisation, the CEO designate also constructed a reputational dividend -

“..it should be the first port of call and probably the only port of call for anything to do with land registration, valuation of property especially government property and for it to be a statutory role and to be the definitive, authoritative source of geospatial information to both the private sector and public sector communities and to have an international profile commensurate with the expertise that it holds in that area.”

In what has been written and said authoritatively by those who, in effect control the agenda, there is a clear anticipation of a future merged organisation with a standing both nationally and internationally which would transcend the existing profiles of the individual agencies. Both a public value proposition and a reputational dividend, therefore, are being discursively constructed as a rationale for the merger and also as part of the process of new identity formation. This construction is an example of the framing power of context and language.

Ministerial versus Corporate Reputation

It is evident from interview data that in a senior government Department like DJE proximity of the Minister can impact on prioritisation processes. Thus managing the reputation of a Government department is complicated by the necessity to protect the Minister’s own political reputation. The risk averse nature of civil servants is evident in the inclination towards mitigating reputational risk focused on the Minister as articulated in interview:

“So, in the context of protecting the Minister, you want to spare him political embarrassment. You are always trying to foresee potential problems and head them off, where possible, or mitigate them.” DJE Official

However, it is understood that reputation management is a strategic concern in contrast to short term political outlook.

“I have always felt that departments do not sell themselves actively, that in terms of reputation management departments very much focus on the protect the minister, the political agenda, but don't really sell the department as a corporate body.” DJE Official

Parent Departments interpret and manage risks to the Minister's reputation as political head of the department and therefore aim to control any reputational risks emanating from agencies under their aegis as well. Nevertheless, in the agencies under review the reputation of the Minister was not expressed as a concern presumably because of the distancing effect of agency governance arrangements which are underpinned by statute.

However, reputation, of itself, is stated to be fundamental to the operations of one agency, the OSi.

“We are probably one of the only organisations in the public sector that produce a product and gain commercial revenue. So reputation is basically our bottom line. It affects our funding model. Without our bottom line, we don't have funding, we don't have an organisation. And I think unlike any other organisation, well maybe one or two in the public sector, we compete with alternative products from alternative suppliers, so reputation is very important.” OSi Official

Thus, the commercial logic underpinning the OSi evident in records data results in a high emphasis being placed on corporate reputation, as such, in contrast to the other merging organisations which have underlying bureaucratic and professional logics. This is well illustrated in Appendices 2 and 6. Appendix 6 outlines missions and espoused values and Appendix 2 demonstrates the range of expressiveness evident in website communication by the organisations in the sample frame of this study. The OSi, in both the values it espouses and on how it communicates via its website shows a very distinct customer/sales focus.

Further analysis of data garnered into reputation and its management in PSOs will be developed in the fourth and final paper to come in this research.

Way Forward

This particular paper has focused on data generation. The rationale for the sampling strategy chosen has been provided in terms of addressing research propositions, fitting with the overall purpose of this study as conceptualised in Paper 1 and facilitating a potential contribution to practice appropriate to an executive doctoral programme. The units of analysis were outlined and correlated with varying levels and development within a discourse analytic framework. Data generated through publications by and about the agencies under review allowed exploration of historical legacy reputations, provided appreciation of context and interviewee perspective and increased my awareness of the variety of applicable wider discourse settings.

Emerging data output so far has revealed differing underlying logics as well as competing agency discourses. Initial findings confirm the complexities inherent in public sector management of reputation, including the political imperatives in large departments of state. The discursive construction of identity has revealed a potentially shared and ultimately transcendent reputation having persuasive rhetorical power (Hood, 1998) as the desired outcome of agency merger. Based on secondary data already outlined a shared and interdependent reputation would also appear to be inevitable for *PeoplePoint* and DPER.

Conclusive findings and discussion of these and other emerging themes await the completion of the interviewing stage of data generation. In Paper 4 the final phase will involve full data analysis of interview transcripts including theme refinement according to subscribed theoretical frameworks derived from the conceptualisation in Paper 1, the subjective perspectives and ontological and epistemological positions set out in Paper 2 and intuitive field understandings (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009).

The endogenous management of reputation in public sector settings is a perspective largely under-researched to date (Maor, 2013). The combination of talk, text and context together with a process of analytic reflexivity and refining of initial propositions in the final stage of this research will partly bridge this gap, by providing new insights derived from the discursive construction by public managers of identity in new agency settings, as outlined in this paper.

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Paper 4

In Good Standing:

The Public Value of Reputation Management

In Good Standing

The Public Value of Reputation Management

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

This paper describes the findings from an interpretive research study which investigated strategic reputation management in public sector organisations. Reputational constraints, fragilities and interdependencies are apparent from data generated about organisations in a merger setting and a shared services context. The findings confirm that the inherent complexity and layered accountabilities, characteristic of such agencies, can compromise reputation management efforts. Together with performance, governance emerges as a key internal antecedent to legitimacy, reputation and the creation of public value. Using discourse analysis disparities of approach and emphasis in reputation management are surfaced. Subtle trade-offs emerge which belie existing literature. In transactional agencies, at one remove from the centre, there can be differing views as to whether governance or performance takes precedence in terms of reputation building. Managerialist discourse reveals the penetration of New Public Management ideas in the Irish Civil Service. Public Value concepts are less in evidence. The influence of austerity fiscal measures, although pervasive, proves not to be entirely negative for reputation seeking organisations. The findings also lend doubt as to the utility of pro-actively pursuing a neutral reputation in all public sector settings and jurisdictions. Findings are integrated with existing literature to develop a new framework for public sector reputation management that accounts for the interaction between legitimacy, reputation and public value

Keywords: Public Sector Reputation, Discursive Repertoires, Governance, Public Value.

Introduction

This paper is the fourth of a cumulative four paper series to be submitted as part-fulfilment of the requirements of the WIT School of Business DBA programme. The subject of the overall study is reputation management in public sector organisations (PSOs). The main objective of this research was to investigate whether active reputation management in PSOs contributes ultimately to public value. The approach taken has been rationalised in terms of understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants themselves to this issue and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on their efforts.

The initial paper comprised a public value conceptualisation of reputation management. The second paper outlined the philosophical basis to the qualitative research approach, making explicit its interpretative worldview. A taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity challenges proffered therein has proved useful throughout this research process. Paper 3 described the sampling strategy selected, data generation approach and initial thematic findings of this enquiry. This fourth and final paper now reveals empirical findings using a discourse analytic approach which endeavours to capture what Alvesson and Kärreman (2000b) describe as “*the delicacies of language use in organisational settings*” (pg. 155) and hence improve knowledge of the realities of strategic reputation management in public sector settings,

The structure of this paper is as follows. Firstly, the data generation process and output is described. Secondly, the discursive approach taken in data analysis is clarified and theme refinement procedures used are outlined. Findings which render the complexities and discursive repertoires (Byrne, 2004) inherent in reputation management in PSOs are then revealed followed by discussion of emergent themes. The limitations of this study are then considered before drawing conclusions and suggesting further avenues of research.

Data Generation

Data comprising talk, text and context was generated through aural, digital and print media which included taped and transcribed interviews, organisational publications, website communication, official reports, webcams and verbatim reports of parliamentary debates and media representations. These sources detailed in Paper 3 of this series were progressively supplemented and additional record data arising from discursive events over time is now provided in the reference section to this paper.

Ten interviews were conducted with a cross section of respondents comprising eight civil servants working in two parent government departments and three subordinate agencies and also, two public servants working in a state agency with a commercial remit. All had responsibilities at a strategic level or in policymaking and were in a position to influence and assess reputation management or the compilation of risk registers in their respective organisations. One interviewee was at Assistant Principal level and the other nine were all at Principal Officer level and higher. Three headed up their organisations and two represented professional grades. Four originally worked in the private sector with experience in *inter alia* business and marketing, shared services in multinational settings and in HR strategy and consultancy.

The sample used comprised in essence two nested new agency settings. The first setting entailed a merger in progress of three existing organisations, each with its own distinctive legacy reputation. The creation of the merged entity is part of an overall rationalisation of Irish state agencies (McCarthy, 2009). The second, a new civil service shared services centre for human resources, *PeoplePoint*, the establishment of which is the largest multi-functional project ever undertaken in the Irish civil service. By end 2014 it was envisaged the administrative or transactional elements of HR and pensions processes of forty Government Departments/Offices comprising 40,000 civil servants will have transitioned to the new centre. *PeoplePoint* is a flagship project under the overall public service reform agenda whereby a shared services approach in procurement, ICT, pay, financial management and learning and development is gradually being rolled out (DPER, 2011a; 2011b; 2014a).

The interviews conducted were semi-structured, lasting approximately one hour each. A consent form was signed by each interviewee. An interview guide was used which was modified in each case to suit setting, context and individual respondent as part of an iterative design (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). As the interviews were exploratory in nature the guides contained a number of themes, as opposed to structured questions (Kvale, 1983). Certain themes such as how the interviewees construed the reputation of their own organisation were common to all. Field notes were written up following each interview to enhance reflexivity and for consultation during data analysis. (Byrne, 2004; Denscombe, 2005; Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Patton, 2002) These procedures assisted in both the framing of interview content and later interpretation of data generated.

The discursive approach taken in analysing data will be now be outlined.

Discourse Analysis

In this study the naïve or functional view of language is not applied and interview and records data are not used merely to mirror external realities (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b). Instead the emphasis is explicitly on language and language use in organisational contexts. Language is both constructed and constructive and people use language to construct versions of the social world. However, such construction is not a conscious activity as such, but emerges, for example, as interviewees try to make sense of a phenomenon. Analysis of discourse, therefore, is the analysis of what people do with language in specific social settings (Potter, 1997). Thus the focus should be on the discourse itself, in how it is organised and what it is doing essentially (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In this research, for example, the data generated in part reflects the discursive construction by public managers of identity in new agency settings as described in Paper 3.

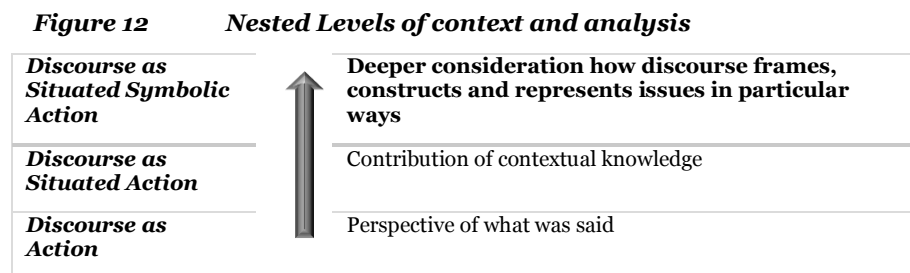
My aim has been to consider the concerns expressed by respondents' *discourse in practice* and also the constructive activities or *discursive practice* (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995), whilst also being reflexive about my approach to this material. This amounts to a dual interest in both the *hows* and *whats* of meaning production. The *hows* of the interview include *inter alia* contexts, situations of interviewees and nuances, an emphasis on which lends itself to the discourse analytic approach used in this study.

In Paper 3 of this paper series I demonstrated how units of analysis in this study correlate with levels and development within a discourse analytic framework which allows language to be located within a wider organizational context (Lawton, 2008). My research on reputation management has encompassed four dimensions. Data has been generated in relation to individual consciousness in semi-structured interviews. Discourse analysis of the interview transcripts and other texts, including context, encompasses both individual and agency levels.

Ongoing and emergent review of relevant literature will now provide linkage to all levels up to and including, institutional, what Heracleous and Marshak (2004) describe as

“..nested, complementary and additive analysis of successively increasing complexity in which each subsequent level assumes to encompass the previous one”

Figure 12 illustrates these nested levels of context and discourse analysis at three successive levels



Data analysis entailed several iterations which will be outlined in the next sections.

Data Analysis

The use of a computer programme such as *nVivo* was initially considered as an option to assist with the process of data analysis. However I felt it was unnecessary, in the end, for several reasons. The data generated was easily structured manually and the sample was not overly large. The learning curve in familiarising myself with the full range of functionality of this software programme did not justify possible benefits arising through use. The researcher is the expert and remains in control of the interpretative process which may entail use of tools within a software package, but only if they suit the approach being taken in data analysis (Lewins and Silver, 2007.)

Software applications will assist in collating, storage and retrieval of data. However they provide an imposed structure and will not provide insights or indeed analyse the data, as such. Indeed creativity may be stifled in terms of devising an emergent conceptual framework, which may have to shoe- horned into available options in the software. Sutton and Callahan (1987) citing Mintzberg, stated that a significant assumption underlying grounded theory for example is that the data do not develop the theory. Instead human creativity and intuition are required. Whilst this may not be obvious at the earliest stage of analysis, it certainly comes into play at the later stages of categorisation of data. As such, the progress made in achieving research objectives, and

conceptually, is dependent on the researcher’s own thinking, observations and methodological underpinnings (Lewins and Silver, 2007).

Data Analysis is not merely a repetitive technical task but a reflexive process which is key to stimulating insight and developing meaning (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009). To facilitate this process taped interviews were transcribed initially by me into tables with four columns, an example of which is illustrated in Figure 13. In the first two columns I inserted the speaker and verbatim record as part of the transcription process. These two columns represent *discourse as action* (Heracleous and Marshak, 2004) and are purely descriptive. They contain the language itself in terms of “*the conventional view of language as a transparent medium for the transport of meaning*” (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000, pg. 141).

Figure 13 Extract illustrating analytical iterations

(1) Speaker	(2) Transcript	(3) Topic	(4) Discourses framing/constructing/representing issues
PRA Legal Professional	<i>It's time and it's resources but it's mainly constantly reviewing how the work is done and seeing other ways that we can modify our processes in some way, but there is a limit to what you can do, because if you overdo modifying your processes and procedures to the extent but conceivably going back to an earlier point you could damage the integrity of the register</i>	Continuous improvement limits re legal casework May negatively impact integrity of the register	Discursive repertoires: Legal /Performance Managerialism-risk management based on legal liability Discourses framing -Issue of legitimacy Limits to what can be legitimately achieved see Deephouse and Carter (2005) on this Original conceptualisation - See Paper 1 – Reputation strategies must defer to what is legitimately feasible Proposed definition in Paper 1 refers to “legitimacy of mission and processes” P2 _a Legitimacy as pre-requisite for reputation in PSOs cf Carpenter’s (2010) performative and procedural aspects of reputation links performance and governance to legitimacy

The third column labelled topics /context was used during initial readings of the transcript to note what appeared *prima facie* to be significant contributions to understanding the meaning of reputation management. The notations here represent *discourse as situated action* (Heracleous and Marshak, 2004) and signify the key indigenous categories that interviewees use to make sense of their world (Patton, 2002). These categories are interpretive or contextual, and can be viewed as language in use or how language works in the real world using an emphasis on what Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) characterised as - “*the productive, functional, interactive and context dependent nature of all language use –including research interviews*” (pg. 141). This initial

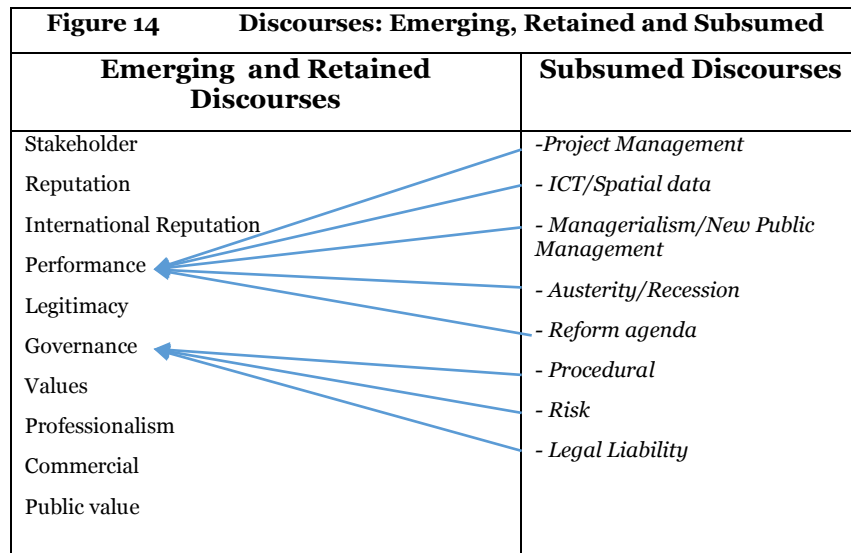
analytic process is analogous to open coding in a way that is meaningful at the level of the interviewee (Van Maanen, 1988; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The last column was reserved for evidence of any emerging discursive repertoires being used as framing devices or to note any resonances with existing literature. This last iteration represents *discourse as symbolic situated action* (Heracleous and Marshak, 2004) and is partly the examination of data in terms of theory-derived sensitised concepts. In parallel, new and emergent understandings were sought for which there were no labels in the literature (Patton, 2002). With each successive re-reading of the data contained in the verbatim record and following reflexive memoing and reference to appropriate scholarly work, insights or intuitive perceptions were also noted. This included *inter alia* authors' names or concepts to check later, and any commonalities or disparities with other transcripts.

Data analysis allows for multiple levels of abstraction and comprises a layering of analysis from the particular to the general. Reflexive iteration is the basis of "*connecting the data with emerging insights and progressively leading to more refined focus and understanding*" (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009). Analytic reflexivity is a pre-requisite, therefore, when using empirical evidence, at the level of language use, to infer conclusions at higher discursive levels.

Figure 13 illustrates sample iterations which were used in analysing a response given by a PRA interviewee whom I questioned in relation to improving responsiveness in the completion of complex legal casework. The construction of the issue by the respondent was listed as an emergent topic for consideration under the theme of legitimacy. The rewards of sensitivity to the framing power of context and language is evident in the notations in Column 4 referring back to the original conceptualisation, proposed definition and propositions in Paper 1 and to the literature on legitimacy and reputation.

Following multiple readings of the transcripts a succession of themes began to emerge from the data which were transposed on an ongoing basis to an interview extracts table together with associated or linked quotes. In tandem topics and linked discourses were separately tabulated and interviewee constructions or representations arising listed for potential use as headline findings and themes for discussion. Over time the list of relevant discourses used to frame themes was slowly narrowed and any outlier discursive usage also noted. It has been recommended that prioritising is best achieved according to the "*utility, salience credibility, uniqueness, heuristic value and feasibility of the classification schemes*" (Patton, 2002). Gradually therefore from eighteen discourses, in total, only those ten discourses which consistently featured were retained and, where relevant, minor discourses were subsumed. This process is illustrated in Figure 14. These discourses frame major thematic categories with links to relevant literature and the original conceptualisation in Paper 1.



Findings

In Paper 3 of this series some initial findings were presented. The first of these related to the discursive construction of a public value proposition and reputational dividend as a rationale for merger and as part of a process of new identity formation. Another finding related to ministerial reputation taking precedence over corporate reputation in large Government Departments such as the Department of Justice. To corroborate such tendencies in central departments, ongoing monitoring of discursive material on Government websites has been undertaken to continue to assess expressiveness in strategic website communication by the agencies under review. This has revealed that following a re-vamp of the DPER website, the Minister is now attributed as being an occasional author of the ongoing departmental blog entitled *As Per* (DPER, 2014b)

Findings will now be outlined in this section in relation to further significant themes which emerged during data analysis.

Construed Reputation

In Paper 2 the value of a qualitative approach was characterised as providing an opportunity for greater insight into cognitions held in relation to intended and construed organizational image (Brown, et al., 2006) In order to assess strategic reputation management in PSOs the preferred option in this research has been to gain an internal perspective on cognitions held by public managers (Clardy, 2012), one of which has been termed construed reputation. How PSOs construe their own reputation in part reflects what Wæraas (2012) refers to as the charisma problem. Figure 15 shows that, with the exception of the OSi and the PRA, none of the other organisations construed their own reputation in an overly positive light. The confident responses in terms of the OSi results from its commercial orientation and underlying entrepreneurial logic. Strong reputations are often built on emotional appeal (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004 95) but it is difficult for PSOs to develop organisational charisma or an emotional connection with their customers (Waeraas, 2012). The OSI produces tangible products allowing it to create an emotional appeal with external audiences.

Figure 15 Construed Reputations in PSOs

Organisation	How the organisation’s reputation is construed internally	Key words
OSi	<p>“We’ve a corporate reputation and a brand”</p> <p>“I would like to think that in general our reputation is positive”</p>	<p>Corporate Reputation</p> <p>Positive</p>
PRA	<p>“So, I would think that we probably haven’t got a particular reputation as the PRA. We’re probably lumped in with the general public service depending on the bias that you have.”</p> <p>“Looking at how we are judged by external stakeholders I think we have a very strong reputation in terms of the performance we have achieved over the last number of years and in terms of our strategic approach to work and the results we have delivered over the last number of years”</p>	<p>No particular reputation</p> <p>Strong</p>
VO	<p>“Well first of all its profile is quite modest”</p> <p>“I would say it’s mixed”</p>	<p>Modest</p> <p>Mixed</p>
PeoplePoint	<p>“It’s a bit of a challenge. I think it recognises itself and the people working in it recognise themselves as <i>PeoplePoint</i>. But do they recognise themselves as an entity that could create something a little different, probably not.”</p>	<p>Challenge</p>
DPER	<p>“DPER is struggling to assert itself as something different”</p> <p>“I think the reputation of this department depending on who you speak to is either positive in terms of its renewal of public expenditure and some of the reforms that have been carried out. But it would be perceived as quite negative in relation to cuts in benefits to the general public. And also I think among other civil service departments and bodies I think it has quite a negative reputation.”</p> <p>“Oh God..... the grim reaper”</p>	<p>Struggling</p> <p>Positive and negative</p> <p>Very negative</p>
DJE	<p>“The department I suppose, traditionally has a reputation for being rather secretive, closed, focused on national security I suppose that was very much a product of its time.I suppose, in more recent years there may have been a certain shift firstly with the incorporation of the various equality dimensions and agenda within the department’s ambit. And, indeed, as the Department continues to grow, I suppose it is very possibly maybe the case, that different sides or different facets of the department may actually show different cultural aspects, let’s say, to the outside world.”</p>	<p>Traditionally secretive and closed</p> <p>Shift with Equality agenda</p>

During the recession the PRA has been able to take advantage of the lull in property transactions to clear historic backlogs and improve performance. In the newer agency settings like *PeoplePoint* and DPER relative immaturity results in reputation being partly framed in terms of asserting or constructing an identity. In this sense organisational reputation has been characterized as a particular type of stakeholder feedback concerning the organization's identity claims (Whetton and Mackey, 2002). As an institution which is of age with the Irish State itself, DJE is cognisant of its historic legacy in terms of State security and how that might colour external perceptions.

Stakeholders: Diversity and Relative Power

"I suppose it is very possibly maybe the case, that different sides or different facets of the department may actually show different cultural aspects, let's say, to the outside world.And there are a diverse range of stakeholders and indeed, a diverse range of areas of economic activity that many of those agencies interact with. And that obviously shapes, I suppose, the image of the Department and indeed those agencies to those diverse stakeholders." DJE Official

"And I think both in house and the two key Government Departments that we deal with and the rating authorities and in particular the Society of Chartered Surveyors I think our reputation has improved somewhat in that regard." VO Official

That from amongst its stakeholders the PRA would prioritise its parent Department is telling.

"My own personal view is that we tend to be more concerned about the Department of Justice rather than the Incorporated Law Society regardless of the fact that the Law Society and its members might be our primary customers" PRA Official

The bureaucratic and hierarchical power relations inherent in public sector contexts, in particular where there might be resource dependency is reflected in this interview extract.

International Standing

Interviewees were conscious of how Ireland is viewed externally and the role of the public sector as a whole in economic recovery and job creation. A reform agenda discourse was evident in this sense.

"If you are trying to attract inward investment you need your public sector bodies to be as efficient as they possibly can". VO Official

The World Bank Doing Business rankings are a particular difficulty for the PRA as property registration is one of the criteria benchmarked across 189 economies (World Bank, 2014).

"I think it's vital that we do have a good reputation because we don't work in isolation. We are part of the general functioning of the State and I mean if you look at the World Bank Reports I mean that would give you an idea because our markings and our ratings in that feed into the whole area of doing business"

PRA Official

Because of its more commercial outlook the OSi characteristically represents its international reputation with a degree of certitude.

"Developing an international reputation means that you have more leverage and influence with the international technology providers. So, definitely within Europe we'd be say in the top 5 of advanced national mapping agencies in relation to our use of technology and efficiencies. We're fairly much up there ..." OSi Official

Economic Recession

The rich interview data in this study paints an interesting picture of what can happen in a recession and is reminiscent of Hirschman's (1982) oscillating cycles. The economic boom which was fuelled by a property bubble raised the profile of private sector valuers to the detriment of their public sector colleagues. Following the property crash there are indications that the reputation of public sector valuers has come more to the fore.

“First of all a lot of public bodies are actually approaching us again to carry out certain valuations for them because of our reputation of being independent and fair and I suppose maybe it's a bit of lack of confidence in the private sector and the whole issue as to what the valuation profession are providing to them well maybe to the level of fees associated with it.” VO Official

The recession in tandem with technological improvements has also proved beneficial to the PRA in terms of its performance.

“In actual fact the view that people would have had of us if the property collapse hadn't occurred would have been far worse I think” PRA Official

The lull in intake of applications together with the introduction of digital mapping and other technological improvements has facilitated clearance of historic backlogs.

Reputational Interdependencies

The interdependence and multi-level management of shared reputations in public sector settings is evident where references to international standing are made. It is also manifest in the shared services setting where the rationale for establishing the new agency arises in part from the aftermath of spoiled superordinate institutional reputation.

“So we're conscious the government is looking at it as a vested interest it doesn't want us to fail. Obviously the Department is a new department it doesn't want a failure.” DPER Official

The consultants engaged on the project were represented as being implementation partners as such.

“and very much we're both driven that we have to succeed and the consultants have to succeed. So we both have reputational damage in this. They need us to succeed and we need them to succeed and from that perspective that works quite well. It's in both our vested interests actually to make it work” DPER Official

This partnering relationship, as depicted, is reminiscent of the long term contractual relationships engendered by the OSi and depicted as being different to the transactional relationships in the other merging organisations.

“So, our reputation has to be, the importance of our reputation is that we have to maintain long-term relationships with our users and our customers. Typically we roll over 3 and 5 year contracts. Without a good reputation at the end of each contract it's a negotiation.” OSi Official

Pace and Professionalism

Interviewees referred to multiple reputations depending on particular organisational functions, identity being projected and stakeholder involved. In the Department of Justice and Equality there appears to be pride in having an excellent policymaking function recognised by peer

departments, whereas at an operational level it is accepted that its standing might be lower in the eyes of the general public.

For the Valuation Office there is also evident dissonance between the professional ethic and independence of the technical valuation function. The outcome of higher rateable valuations for retailers for example from the National Revaluation Programme is a highly contested issue. When asked about a desirable reputation for the VO the following response was given.

“Oh I would like it to be at a stage where we had the broadest possible range of stakeholders happy, by which I mean that, whereas they might not always like the particular outcomes of a revaluation exercise and that’s inevitable because there’s winners and losers, that’s what we’re trying to achieve. But that they would have no issue over either the pace at which it is happening or the professionalism with which it is being conducted.” VO official

Another dichotomy apparent in the PRA is between legal expertise and responsiveness. The standing of legal professionals in the PRA is characterised as being high.

“I think the professionals in the Land Registry are seen by the rest of the legal profession as being experts in their particular field.” PRA Official

In relation to responsiveness, however, there appears to be a trade-off between ensuring legal accuracy and compliance and quicker throughput of applications and in interview this problem was characterised in the following manner.

“You can have all the legal experts that you want, but if you’re sitting around contemplating the law the whole time you know you wouldn’t get a whole lot done” PRA Official

This can be understood in light of the fact that superior performance is not always required for obtaining and maintaining legitimacy. Although seen as a social control mechanism (Bitektine, 2011) minimum standards apply to legitimacy and performance sufficient to avoid questions and challenges is sufficient (Deephouse and Carter, 2005)

In contrast to PRA legal professionals, public sector valuers appear to be marginalized rather than valued for their expertise among their professional cohorts in the private sector.

“Not great no it would be very much them and us as a matter of fact we would be part of a loose grouping within the Society of Chartered Surveyors called public sector valuers” VO Official

The attitude of professional civil servants generally to efficiencies was also referred to as being in transition

“Some people would say that professional civil servants weren’t as in tune to the need for speed and efficiency as quality and the professional standards of the thing, but that’s something that’s changing rapidly” VO Official

Governance

Governance emerged in all interviews as a key major concern confirming its significance internally in the operating environment of PSOs. In the majority of cases it was regarded fundamental to managing reputation. Here is what was said by a central Department interviewee which affirms recent literature on the topic of public sector reputation management (Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011)

“I suppose I think that you focus on governance first, because I think if the organisation has good governance arrangements and things are working relatively well, you perhaps don’t need to worry about reputation management so much.” DJE Official

In the VO following several issues of lax financial controls and governance being raised by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG, 2010) and the Committee of Public Accounts (PAC, 2011), the link between reputation and governance appears to be accepted.

“I think we are on a learning curve there all the time” VO Official

“I think that they are intrinsically linked.” VO Official

The interplay of governance and performance is also apparent in consideration of the mandatory provisions which apply regarding registration of property. Where the customer has no choice and no exit in dealing with what is effectively a State monopoly greater responsiveness and fairness of procedures must apply.

“I think that there’s a greater onus on public servants to be able to deliver a service to people where they feel they are hard done by. While they may not be hard done by, but at the same time they may have the perception that they have not got the service that they are entitled to.”
PRA Official

However, governance can also be viewed as an irritant by civil servants which can inhibit performance and deflate morale. The constraints imposed by governance controls were evident, in particular, in the shared services setting where it was viewed as impeding service delivery expectations.

“Delaying just to have something signed off to the nth degree right we wouldn’t have got past first base” DPER Official

Annoyance was expressed with what was regarded as an emphasis on trivial matters in the political arena and in the media

“Probably what bugs a lot of people in the public sector is the trivial stuff right it’s the number of bottles of Ballygowan (water) you bought this year” VO Official

On the other hand the opposing view representing the case for fair procedures was also presented.

“if you were to have the absolutely supreme operational efficiency you would have to remove due process appeals and things like that and I don’t think that that’s in anybody’s interest to do so.” VO Official

Neutral Reputation

The ideal of a neutral reputation for PSOs in particular those agencies which are non-commercial in orientation has been proposed (Luoma-aho 2007; 2008). However, unexpectedly in interview it was a representative from the sole commercial organisation who initially referred to the idea of a neutral reputation

“So how do I perceive Ordnance Survey’s or how I would like Ordnance survey’s reputation to be perceived I think on balance if I could keep it somewhere up between above neutral and tipping into positive I would be happy with that ” OSi Official

A good reputation creates expectations which can be problematic for PSOs (Luoma-aho, 2007). One benefit in practice of a neutral reputation would be to allow a critical operating distance or

certain detachment between organisations and their stakeholders (Luoma-aho, 2007). In an era of austerity in public expenditure a neutral reputation may therefore be attractive.

“okay at the moment. I think that the best we can strive for is a sort of neutral perception out there in the public mind in inverted commas. We have the resource constraints.” DJE official

Luoma-aho’s research related to Finnish social welfare state agencies but in Paper 1 I asserted that in an Irish common law context it would be unclear as to what a neutral reputational ideal might entail. This uncertainty is reflected in interview responses as in the following example.

“I suppose in terms of the terminology we use in the civil service I suppose we are politically neutral and we are impartial in terms of our work on a day to day basis. I am not so sure” DJE Official

As stated at the conceptualisation stage of this study impartiality, rather than neutrality, might be more appropriate in terms of the relationship between stakeholders and agencies in common law jurisdictions. Neutrality implies not judging, but impartiality is a principle of justice holding that decisions should be based on objective criteria. In addition, in an era where responsiveness is key to better service delivery, perhaps passionate commitment might be regarded as preferable to passive neutrality (Rourke, 1992).

Discussion

This section will now refer back to the rationale for this research and will assess the appropriateness of the original conceptualisation in the light of the findings outlined.

Reputational Backdrop

From the outset the backdrop to this enquiry was the reputational crisis in public institutions which arose following the global economic crisis of 2008. According to the NESC (2009a) the key to mitigating reputational loss in the Irish context lies in the close link between international reputation and the credibility and effectiveness of national governance mechanisms. The evidence from this study demonstrates the internalising by public managers of the message that restoring institutional legitimacy and credibility is an economic necessity, which will contribute over time to national recovery and the reversal of a decline in international reputation and good standing (NESC, 2009b).

Self-effacing and Depressive Tendencies of PSOs

Pride in membership of an organisation has a significant effect on employee awareness of their impact on corporate reputation (Helm, 2011). Quite often the poor reputation of PSOs may be due to self-perceptions of those concerned (Brunsson, 1989). In this regard the impact of reform and contraction, what Vaughan Whitehead (2013) has termed ‘public sector shock’, together with the impact of unending negative media representation and scapegoating of the public service, on the intrinsic motivation of public servants cannot be understated (O’Riordan, 2013). The media generally report bad news and the discrediting of PSOs is commonplace, despite general customer satisfaction with services being received (Ipsos MORI, 2009; Wilson, 1989). But this is only a

partial explanation for the self-effacing and depressive tendencies of PSOs, in general, as is evidenced in data generated in this study regarding construed reputation.

Employees in political organisations are said to be more inclined to uncertainty and lack self-confidence, whereas those in action-oriented organisations appear more optimistic and confident with a strong conviction that everything being done is right with work that leads to solutions, a situation which promotes happiness (Brunsson, 1989). However, most PSOs are largely concerned with challenges requiring adaptive rather than technical responses in the sense of learning and innovation (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz and Laurie, 1997), or wicked problems with no known solutions in the sense of definitive and objective answers, and involving multiple parties with conflicting values and interests (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Head, 2008; Head and Alford, 2013).

Strong reputations are often built on emotional appeal (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004) but it can be difficult for PSOs to develop organisational charisma or an emotional connection with their customers (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012). For example, having a strong procedural reputation may be especially crucial for PSOs that are rule and law oriented (Suchman, 1995; Brunsson, 1989) such as the PRA. In common with many state agencies the VO prides itself on the fairness and equity of its procedures. The requirement to attain non-economic objectives entails stronger regulation and greater accountability of PSOs. This inevitably generates an organisation culture obsessed by procedure and compliance, while responsiveness to the customer may suffer (Laing, 2003) and public outreach may be non-existent (Wright, 2010).

The issue of prioritising ministerial reputation was noted in Paper 3 and this would also contribute to the self-effacing tendencies observable in public managers.

Framing the Reform Agenda

The salience of effective property registration and timely completion of the National Revaluation project in terms of economic development emerges in interview data and is reflected in recent Irish Government policy, most notably in the Action Plan for Jobs 2014 (DJEI, 2014). The merger of these services with the OSi is part of continuing efforts to rationalise the governance and structure of state agencies to achieve efficiencies and added value (McCarthy, 2009; DPER, 2011) The establishment of *PeoplePoint* arises from Government initiatives which had their genesis in an OECD report published in 2008 on the Irish civil service (OECD, 2008; TPS, 2008)

This context of public service reform is reflected in the discursive repertoires of the interviewees. There are references to targets, business planning, customer charters and service delivery options in the interview data. These market oriented dimensions of performance are indicative of New Public Management (NPM) and are especially obvious in the OSi, which has an overtly commercial ethos and *PeoplePoint* in which there are management consultants as implementation partners.

It is less clear when interviewees might be drawing on Public Value concepts. However, these can be inferred from occasional references to added value or upstream customers such as the general

taxpayer or community at large. These are what Moore (2003) refers to as customers for social results rather than the achievement of individual satisfaction for agency clients. At the point of initial conceptualisation it was possible to state that public value had not to date received much overt acknowledgment by Irish academics or practitioners as a principle upon which to drive public sector reforms. However, in the most recent Public Service Reform Plan (DPER, 2014) the *Shared Services Key Objective* was framed in terms of growing and transforming public value. There is a default values discourse apparent in the VO signifying a deeply held public service motivation with a noted emphasis placed on the espousal of equity and fairness. However, as there is a strict interpretation of independence of function in this service, no corresponding interest is demonstrated in the ultimate outcomes of valuations. This is an example of where adherence to values can create distortions in public policy. A values discourse can form part of the sensemaking within an organisation as a justification technique (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996)

Governance

The original conceptualisation was focused on the interaction of legitimacy, reputation (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse and Carter, 2005; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008; King and Whetton, 2008; Ruef and Scott, 1998; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011) and public value (Benington and Moore, 2011; Moore, 1995). However, it became evident that governance in practice was a key concern for the majority of interviewees and generally regarded as of paramount importance. The word legitimacy did not emerge perhaps because PSOs are generally seen to be legitimated through constitutional and legislative provisions which may be assumed. Governance is a matter internal to each organisation and to the entire system and it feeds into the political process by way of accountabilities. However, there was evidence of tension where performance and morale might be impeded by rigorous approaches to governance both in the PRA and *PeoplePoint*.

For instance in the data gathered there was an account of small expenditure on retirement gifts in the VO which had been adversely commented upon by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG, 2011). In interview data this was considered too trivial to be highlighted as part of an audit. In the normal course in the private sector accountants would dismiss such small expenditure as not material, and, therefore, it would not be separately disclosed in accounts. However, in a PSO such expenditure, if made public can be represented as a reputational issue by the media and politicians in their oversight role. Power (2007) advocates vigilance regarding signals sent regarding trustworthiness and governance. He describes this process as managing reputation through the discipline of ethics. The realities of this type of ethical dilemma often may not be fully appreciated or accepted by all civil servants, as is evidenced in this research. The imperatives of reputation management demand that internal governance must become explicitly more outward facing and more formalised (Power, 2007).

Accountabilities

Reputation management has been described by way of emphasizing the possibility of account giving (Power, 2007). For Irish Government Departments and agencies this includes accountability to Parliament through the Committee of Public Accounts. Both the PRA and OSi also have governing boards to whom the senior management must report. Accountability can also extend in less formalised and unpredictable ways. Reputation management has a defensive dimension and according to Power (2007) this reflects a powerlessness in the face of reputational effects which can challenge the capacities of rational management. International rankings are externally constructed indicators which produce such effects.

The World Bank *Doing Business* Project referred to by interviewees commenced publishing annual rankings for ease of doing business in 2002. Its goal is to provide an objective basis for understanding and improving the regulatory environment for business globally. In respect of the year 2014 it covered 10 indicators across 189 economies (World Bank, 2014). As well as quantitative data, feedback provided by Government officials, academics, practitioners and reviewers is also used for assessment. Among the data collated are figures relating to property registration. Where property is informal and poorly administered it cannot be used as collateral for financing and becomes what has been referred to as 'dead capital' thereby limiting economic development in an economy. In 2014 Ireland's overall ranking for ease of doing business is 12th and for registering property is 57th. The UK, a similar common law jurisdiction, is 10th overall and 68th for registering property (World Bank, 2014).

The connection between Ireland's national attractiveness as a country in which to invest and the performance of PSOs is well understood by senior managers as is evident in the findings of this study. The Government have recently decided to improve Ireland's international competitiveness rankings in order to leverage increased foreign direct investment (Irish Times, 2014) and this has now become part of its Action Plan for Jobs (DJEI, 2014). There is now an increased emphasis on raising sectoral rankings which would, in turn, help advance Ireland's overall ranking (NCC, 2014). Business start-up or development is not dependent on having a registered title to property. There is an inherent challenge therefore for the PRA in the World Bank representation of this issue.

The often unpredictable and somewhat irrational interdependencies of reputation that can arise in a public sector setting is well illustrated by this example, which indicates the level of vigilance required. Another example of such interdependence arises in particular in regulatory agencies where regulators must take actions that enhance or diminish the reputations of the companies they regulate. Therefore, the regulatory reputation for instance has been said to be continuously forged and strategically defended (Gilad and Yogev, 2012).

Neutral Reputational Ideal

It remains a moot point whether the reputation of PSOs in countries other than Finland and those with similar codified legal systems, fit the ideal of neutral reputation. Luoma-aho (2007) refers to the Finnish context as having a large well-regarded public sector and high international competitiveness scores. Finland has one of the world's most extensive welfare systems and in 2013 was rated the third least corrupt country, out of one hundred and seventy seven ranked by Transparency International (CPI, 2013)¹¹. Its constitution is quite explicit in regard to transparency, the rights of citizens and the obligations of public servants (Finland, 1999). A civil servant is responsible for the lawfulness of his/her official actions. Everyone who has suffered a violation of right or sustained a loss through unlawful act or omission has the right to request that the offending official be sentenced and the particular agency held liable for damages. Such clear-cut mandatory provisions in a written constitution imply that decision making may be a more straightforward process in the Finnish public sector than in countries with common law systems which rely not only on constitutional and legislative provisions, but also on case law and precedent. A neutral reputational ideal may be more appropriate in a civil law system where there is little room for discretionary practice on the one hand, or error on the other.

Neutral implies a default status relying on minimal standards, whereas reputation is inherently competitive and relies on higher standards. Agencies ultimately serve the public and, in practice must constrain service to individuals in the public interest (Fountain, 2001). This implies impartiality as opposed to neutrality. And neutrality implies not judging, but impartiality is a principle of justice holding that decisions should be based on objective criteria. That said, in the US dispassionate neutral competence, the ability to do the work of government expertly, is regarded as a basic bureaucratic value in the decision making process (Kaufman, 1956). It is characterised by independence of judgement and indifference to political pressure, which is seen in constant tension with responsiveness in Government policy (Rourke, 1992).

Public expectations about an agency's accountability can be reduced, making it accountable not for perfect performance, but for constant improvement (Moore, 2013), a very different and reasonable goal. This does not, however, equate to managing expectations in terms of a neutral reputation. An agency, for example, can remain in good standing, which is positive not neutral, despite the occurrence of critical incidents. However, it must proactively manage its reputation, using such occasions for sustained learning and improvement and re-affirmation of values. Accountability according to Moore (2013) is not primarily for compliance with unreliable policies and procedures, but for learning how to improve practices. This learning model approach, with its public value emphasis and protection for conscientious error, is more pro-active and intuitively appealing, than settling for a neutral reputation.

¹¹ Other country rankings include - Denmark 1st; Sweden joint 3rd with Finland; Norway 5th; Ireland 21st; UK 14th.

Original Conceptualisation

The definition proffered for reputation in a public sector setting as part of my original conceptualisation efforts has proved to be sustainable for the purposes of this research –

“Reputation in a public sector organization may be defined as the aggregate assessment by constituents in its authorising environment, as to both the legitimacy of its mission and processes and the public value of its activities and performance outcomes”

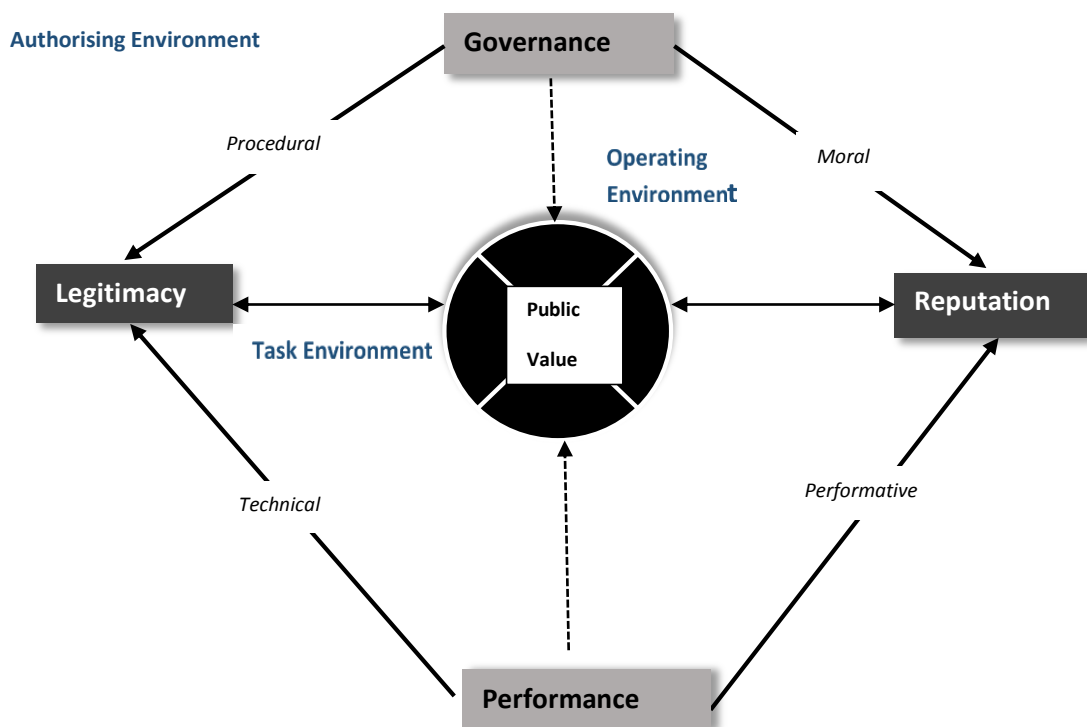
This study focuses on reputation management and the emphasis in this definition on legitimacy, public value and performance has been useful setting appropriate parameters on the rich data obtained through qualitative interviewing. Paper 1 culminated in the development of several propositions and in the light of the findings of this study Figure 16 now outlines some suggested revisions and additions.

Figure 16		Revised Propositions
Propositions		Following findings
P1	<i>Assessing reputation in the public domain is complicated because the authorizing environment of public sector organisations comprises layered accountabilities and a multiplicity of constituents up to and including society at large</i>	Supported
P2_a	<i>Legitimacy is a pre-requisite of reputation building and assumes greater importance in public sector organisations</i>	Revised Legitimacy in both its procedural and performative aspects is antecedent to reputation and assumes greater importance in public sector organisations
P2_b	<i>For public managers a trade-off arises between isomorphic pressures for an agency to conform and the differentiating requirement for reputation building</i>	
		Added P2_c For public managers a trade-off arises between governance requirements and performance expectations
P3_a	<i>As minimum accountability standards apply to legitimacy, it is easier to achieve than a good reputation</i>	Revised Accountability standards apply to legitimacy making it easier to achieve than a good reputation
P3_b	<i>Ideal standards relating to distinctiveness and performance are antecedent to reputation</i>	Supported
P4_a	<i>Impartiality is preferable to neutrality as a reputational ideal</i>	Partially supported
P4_b	<i>As a strategic objective, pursuing a neutral reputation is sub-optimal, as it does not address requirements of impartiality or public value</i>	Supported

Revised Model of Reputation Management

My original framework provided a foundational basis for conceptualising reputation management in the public sphere and set the parameters for the data generation phase which followed. It provided a focus for initial insights into the interface of reputation management and its interaction with institutional legitimacy and whether this interaction contributes ultimately to public value. My subsequent findings have facilitated a refined model which incorporates definitional elements of public sector reputation and integrates and extends existing literatures on reputation management and public value. Figure 17 illustrates this reconceptualization of reputation management in the public domain

Figure 17 Reputation Management in Public Sector Organisations: Revised Model



In putting forward a refined model I have taken into consideration the literature review, initial conceptual framework, my proposed definition and the propositions formulated in Paper 1. I have also taken into account my findings in particular in relation to the role of governance and performance and Moore's (1995) three specific public management environments - authorizing, task and operational. In addition Carpenter's (2010) four dimensions of a public agency's reputation viz. performative, moral, procedural and technical have also been superimposed on this model revealing dualities in respect of governance, legitimacy, reputation and performance. These dualities mirror that which is inherent in the notion of values which are focused in two directions that of discourse and explicit acts (Rescher, 1969). Reputation, therefore, has moral

and performative dimensions whilst legitimacy is shown as having procedural and technical dimensions.

Governance and performance outcomes are shown as instrumental in achieving both legitimacy and a positive reputation. In this model governance has a moral bearing on reputation and a procedural bearing on legitimacy. Performance, on the other hand, can be seen to relate to the performative aspects of reputation and the technical dimension of legitimacy. Moore's (1995) strategic triangle is also represented in this model. In Paper 2 Public Value was expressed as a relational concept (Meynhardt, 2009) and as a superordinate or end value (Rescher, 1969). As reconceptualised in figure 6 the realisation of public value is shown as valued for itself and both antecedent and a consequence of both legitimacy and a positive reputation.

Limitations

This research is limited by virtue of its sample size and being confined to organisations within the Irish public sector. However the criterion of emerging agencies in the throes of constructing new identities helped to focus this theoretically driven study. It does not, therefore, strive to be representative of all PSOs. Nonetheless, the choice of focused settings enabled qualitative interviewing of knowledgeable and accountable actors in a range of bureaucratic and commercial type agencies, two newly established and four with long and venerable historic traditions and functions.

Because the sample was purposively selected on the basis of salient criteria the data generated is specific to context, but is rich and detailed with the potential to have impact and relevance to practice (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The qualitative approach taken is novel in the context of a study of reputation, but useful for contextual understanding which allows for consideration of unintended consequences or trade-offs in what is essentially a policymaking arena (Rist, 1994).

It is accepted that a discourse sensitive perspective in the analysis of organisational activity (Marshak *et al.*, 2000) requires considerable reflexivity and the resulting output is, of necessity, subjectivist knowledge which is tentative and speculative in nature (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b). A qualitative interviewer is interested in investigating not truth *per se* but rather perspectives (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). The objective of discourse analysis is to capture the richness of social realities rather than making unsustainable claims regarding completeness or exhaustiveness. It has been useful to refer on an ongoing basis to the taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity challenges proffered in Paper 2 of this series. In addition the discourse analytic framework used has provided a valuable distancing technique to reduce bias where, as in this instance, the researcher is an actor in the chosen settings.

Future Research

Reputation in the context of public sector organisations remains an under-researched topic. Quantitative approaches have dominated reputation research (Walker, 2010) and a survey questionnaire would be very useful to achieve greater organizational breadth in examining

reputation management in PSOs. Further qualitative studies have also been suggested elsewhere (Carpenter, 2010; Clardy, 2012; Heil and Whittaker, 2011). Potential topics for investigation following this research could include identity construction in a post-merger situation and in the HR shared services agency following full transition by all Irish Government Departments and offices.

An interesting subject to investigate in an Irish context following Gilad and Yogev (2012) would be how regulation affects reputations. There is also a need to assess the impact of stakeholder differences on reputation management efforts in PSOs. An in-depth analysis of a neutral reputational ideal (Luoma-aho 2007; 2008) outside of Nordic economies and in common law jurisdictions is also warranted. A longitudinal study on the World Bank *Doing Business* rankings, across each discrete set of measures, to reveal how rankings are adjusted over time by use of judicious national bureaucratic interventions, would be of considerable value to reputation-seeking public sector managers.

Conclusion

Although none of the PSOs in this study would claim to have a reputation management strategy, the data generated would indicate an appreciation of reputational risk and interdependencies in the public domain. This study has also demonstrated how political imperatives in large central Government Departments take precedence in impression or perception management tactics (Elsbach, 2003). Furthermore public sector reputation management is shown as intertwined with the value system of organisations and involving trade-offs in a complicated authorising environment (Moore, 1995; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011).

The modern understanding of sovereignty no longer equates simply with the freedom to act independently but in “*Membership in reasonably good standing in the regimes that make up the substance of international life.*”(Chayes and Chayes, 1995 pg. 27). The recent recession has shown that the more credible and effective domestic governance is the higher a country’s international reputation (NESC, 2006). In the context of economic forbearance and renewal, this study’s findings demonstrate, through the discursive construction of reputation management by public sector managers, the key role played by governance in interaction with performance to create public value thereby facilitating national recovery.

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Part 3

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This concluding section will look back on the research pathway taken in this study, draw together the varying strands which have emerged to offer some conclusions and identify the contributions made. Recommendations for professional practice, arising from insights gained from extant literature and the data generated will be suggested, together with possible options for further research.

In the foregoing paper series the main aim has been to explore the issue of strategic reputation management in PSOs. In this risk averse public sector domain, the mitigation of reputational risk can often take precedence over concerted efforts to actively manage reputation. However, taking the context of a global economic crisis and so-called 'public sector shock' (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2013) into account, it has been contended, from the outset, that such an approach may no longer be defensible. In the face of declining international reputation, restoring institutional legitimacy and credibility has become an economic imperative for recovery in an open economy, such as Ireland, and consequently a political priority (Gilmore, 2011; Kenny, 2011).

The outputs delivered from the cumulative paper series will reviewed in the following section.

Cumulative Paper Series Outputs

The underlying objective of this study is to understand whether reputation management contributes to public value creation (Moore, 2013). The primary contribution of **Paper 1**, therefore, is that the outcome of the interaction between legitimacy and reputation was conceptualised in terms of public value theory. Within that contribution are three discernible outputs, a working definition, generalisable core propositions and an initial conceptual framework.

There has been a lack of academic attention paid to reputation in the public sphere, despite the transferring of many managerial ideas into public administration since the 1980s. Thus, in public administration literature, reputation-based research is relatively new. In the US historical-institutional political science tradition the historical analyses of large, seemingly powerful agencies with surprisingly fragile reputations such as the FDA and FEMA have led the field (Carpenter 2001; 2010; Maor, 2010; Roberts, 2006). In Europe research in Scandinavian countries where public institutions enjoy high trust capital is growing (Wæraas and Byrkjeflot 2012; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011; Luoma-aho, 2007; 2008).

As the contextual differences between public and private sector organisations cannot be ignored, it was not possible to rely solely on existing definitions relating to corporate reputation either in discrete academic articles (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997; Llewellyn, 2002; Mahon, 2002; Wartick, 2002; and Rindova *et al.*, 2005) or in three exhaustive definitional reviews published since 2006 (Barnett *et al.*, 2006; Lange *et al.*, 2011; Walker, 2010). Furthermore, it proved very difficult to find an appropriate definition for public sector reputation in the available literature which fully suited the purposes of this study. The paucity of literature and definitional deficit has been

adverted to by both US and Scandinavian authors (Carpenter and Krause, 2012; Luoma-aho, 2007; 2008; Wæraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012).

Paper 1, therefore, stepped into a breach in its consideration of the little-theorised and under-researched topic of reputation in the context of PSOs. Following examination of available scholarly characterisations of reputation in the public management, institutional, organisational and corporate reputation literature, part of the initial conceptualisation undertaken involved devising an appropriate working definition of public sector reputation, referred to as bureaucratic reputation in the American literature. (Carpenter, 2001; Maor, 2014). As indicated in the introduction to this thesis the intention here was not to reify or ascribe fixed attributes to the notion of public sector reputation, but to clarify the parameters to this particular research project and to open an academic discussion

In the American historical-institutional political science tradition the focus has been on the consequences of reputation such as autonomy and independence from politicians (Carpenter, 2001; 2010) and on the fragility of reputation (Roberts, 2006). Characterisation of reputation has emphasised actual performance, capacities, roles, mission and ability to address and anticipate public needs. In terms of building legitimacy and closing any trust deficit, the notion of procedural justice and the importance of fair process had to be included in any definition of reputation in the public sphere (Van Ryzin, 2011). Trust and legitimacy are also at the centre of the *public value scorecard* (Moore, 2003; 2013) and Talbot's *Performance Regimes* approach which also includes a process and equity focus (Talbot, 2010). Additionally, measuring performance on the basis of a mix of outcome, output, process and input measures is recommended by Moore (2003). It was also important to include the four dimensions of an agency's reputation, performative, moral, procedural and technical which had been identified in seminal work by Carpenter (2010). To this end, the following definition initially proposed in Paper 1 which has proved sustainable throughout this research process:

Reputation in a public sector organization may be defined as the aggregate assessment by constituents in its authorising environment, as to both the legitimacy of its mission and processes and the public value of its activities and performance outcomes.

The conceptual framework proposed in **Paper 1** initially provided insights into the interface between the orientating concepts of legitimacy, reputation and public value in the authorising environment of PSOs and was later revised in light of findings. Initial propositions arising from the conceptualisation process were also either supported or revised during the course of this research. Such use of *a priori* constructs or foundational theory was to initially ground topic focus and shape preliminary research design, whilst at the same time retaining theoretical flexibility in this study (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In **Paper 2**, through a process of philosophical reflection, the interpretive worldview of this research was made explicit. It was acknowledged that organisational reputation *per se* is assessed

externally by way of the perceptions held by stakeholders and that empirical investigation has, in the main, been positivist. The subject focus of the overall study is, however, endogenous strategic reputation management, an under-researched perspective to date (Maor, 2013). This angle of view was rationalised in terms of understanding the meanings ascribed by public servants, as constituents, to this issue and how subscription to a public value ideal might impact on their efforts to manage the reputation of their organisations.

The axiological or values-based underpinning of public value and its place in the history of public management was also clarified. Reputation was shown to be a subordinate value or key antecedent to further the extent of public value.

On the basis that validity is ascertained by examining the possible sources of invalidity (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), a taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity risks, suitable for use in qualitative studies generally, was offered as a methodological contribution. Not all options, as outlined, were required in practice in this particular study. For example, later at data analysis phase the use of software in data analysis was deemed unnecessary and somewhat restrictive in terms of learning curve and creative freedom in the design of an unfolding and emergent conceptual framework.

Paper 3 outlined the sampling strategy, the underlying rationale for which was described in terms of addressing the initial propositions and overall purpose of this study and of providing a potential contribution to practice. The sample frame comprising two settings, a merger of three exiting agencies and a new shared services centre was set out. It was acknowledged that the sample frame did not strive to be representative of all PSOs, but was theoretically driven and relevant to the conceptualisation in Paper 1. The legacy reputations of the organisations in the sample frame were then sketched.

Approaches to data collection were outlined comprising talk, text and context to be generated through aural, digital and print media including taped interviews, organisational publications, official reports and websites. A list of interviewees was provided as well as appendices which detailed organisational missions and espoused values, demonstrated the range of expressiveness evident in strategic website communication and listed secondary sources consulted.

Preliminary data generation revealed differing organisational logics and competing agency discourses, confirmed the complexities inherent in public sector management of reputation and facilitated an appreciation of organisational context and interviewee perspective prior to conducting interviews. Initial tentative thematic findings then emerging, as interviewing proceeded, were also presented. These included the prioritisation of ministerial reputation over corporate reputation in a government department and the discursive construction of a reputational dividend in respect of the merger.

In **Paper 4**, the final of the series, findings confirmed *inter alia* an appreciation among public managers of reputational risk and interdependencies. It was also evident that the inherent complexity and layered accountabilities of PSOs can, indeed, compromise reputation

management efforts. In terms of construed reputation interviewees were relatively negative and the depressive and self-effacing qualities of PSOs was discussed.

The propositions which emerged at the initial conceptualisation phase were also revised, as appropriate, and are reproduced in Figure 18.

<i>Figure 18</i> <i>Revised Propositions</i>	
P1	Assessing reputation in the public domain is complicated because the authorizing environment of public sector organisations comprises layered accountabilities and a multiplicity of constituents up to and including society at large
P2_a	Legitimacy, in both its procedural and technical aspects, is antecedent to reputation and assumes greater importance in public sector organisations
P2_b	For public managers a trade-off arises between isomorphic pressures for an agency to conform and the differentiating requirement for reputation building
P2_c	For public managers a trade-off arises between governance requirements and performance expectations.
P3_a	Accountability standards apply to legitimacy, making it easier to achieve than a good reputation.
P3_b	Ideal standards relating to distinctiveness and performance are antecedent to reputation.
P4_a	Impartiality is preferable to neutrality as a reputational ideal.
P4_b	As a strategic objective, pursuing a neutral reputation is sub-optimal, as it does not address requirements of impartiality or public value.

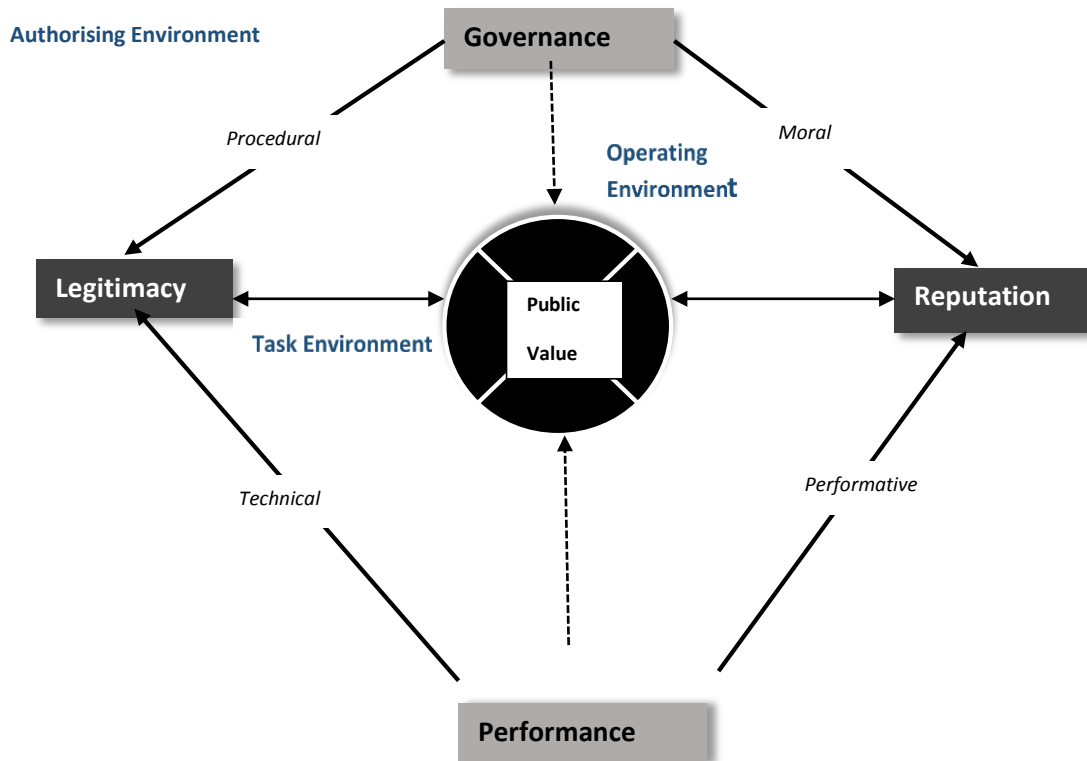
Governance emerged in all interviews as a key concern of public managers. Findings were integrated with existing literature to develop a new re-modelled framework for public sector management, which accounts for the relationship between legitimacy, reputation and public value and also how they interact with issues of governance and performance.

Reputation Management: Revised Conceptual Model

The revised model, shown in figure 19, incorporates definitional elements of public sector reputation including Carpenter’s four dimensions of agency reputation – performative, moral, procedural and technical (Carpenter, 2010). It also encompasses Moore’s three specific public management environments – authorising, task and operational (Moore, 1995). Public value is shown as a superordinate value and the finding that governance, in practice, is seen to be of paramount importance by public sector managers has been assimilated. Dimensions such as governance and performance, legitimacy and reputation are seen to be in tension and as antecedent to the creation of public value. The actual attainment of public value, of itself, as an end value, is shown to enhance both legitimacy and reputation. It can also be said that while

legitimacy is a pre-requisite for reputation management in the public sector, a positive reputation also legitimises the activities of an organisation (King and Whetton, 2008).

Figure 19 Reputation Management in Public Sector Organisations: Revised Model



The implications of research findings as outlined will now be discussed.

Discussion

The findings of this study support the contention that the appropriate superordinate or end value for PSOs is neither legitimacy nor a positive reputation, which are subordinate or intrinsic values, but rather public value. Furthermore, the findings have shown that a reputation-seeking agency should aim to legitimise itself first, through the context appropriate reconciliation of the inevitable tensions arising between performance and governance. Unfortunately, in the public sector there is a wide disparity in the aims and functions of organisations and public services are highly diverse. Therefore, the achievement of such equilibrium relies very much on the nature of the agency involved.

Organisational Diversity: logics and culture

Most PSOs would have a Role/Greek Temple culture under the Harrison/Handy typology, being typical bureaucracies, the organising principles of which can be regarded as logic and rationality (Brown, 1995). Technical expertise and depth of specialisation are highly regarded and role

cultures in general take pride in their processes. Moreover, depending on the type of services provided, PSOs can lie along a spectrum extending from a context where professional judgment dominates on the supply side, to where customer judgement dominates on the demand side (Laing, 2003). Alternatively, agencies could be viewed on a continuum from bureaucratic by reputation, to flexible by reputation (Luoma-aho, 2008). This particular agency spectrum has also been said to encompass four different types of PSOs according to their main functions - legislative, authority, research or semi-commercial. Another typology relates to degree of competition and perceived benefit and includes: society-keeper institutions, society-developer institutions, non-competitive service providers and competitive service providers (Gromark and Melin, 2013). In the US agencies have been grouped as either production, craft, procedural or coping (Wilson, 1989).

Therefore, PSOs are very diverse and can range from large central policy and service delivering Government ministries such as DJE to small regulatory agencies. More and more new agencies are established to deal with outsourced functions or shared services. The Report of the Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance (Rafter, 2014) recommends that greater clarity would be provided if Irish agencies were categorised according to function and funding arrangements.

Organisational culture has been defined as the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation's history and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members (Brown, 1995). The interviewees in this study were selected on the basis that they had the potential to assist in developing theoretical insights (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) into the complexities of reputation management in PSOs. In the merger setting under review the difference between the funding model arrangements of the OSi and its merging partners is striking. This difference alone has driven an entirely different institutional logic and organisational culture within OSi with a strong customer focus, confident commercial outlook and construed reputation. In this merger setting seven interviewees were selected, two from each of the merging agencies and one from the sponsoring Government Department. Only two had private sector experience and they were both from the OSi, which despite its historical military legacy, has the most overtly corporate outlook. In interview this is reflected in shared culturally based understandings in how both respondents identify with the customer and in their more optimistic portrayal of their agency. The issues of governance or political constraints, of major importance in most PSOs, are not expressed as concerns, indicating a general lack of awareness of their significance. By coincidence some weeks later following the interviews the OSi was summoned to appear before the Committee of Public Accounts. The Department of Justice official, on the other hand, a career civil servant appeared to more fully appreciate the political dimension of his role and the political imperative to protect the reputation of the Minister.

In the shared services setting, the new HR shared services centre, *People Point*, very quickly established a distinctive branding familiar to all civil servants. However, this did not guarantee responsiveness to its customers and it quickly became mired in poor performance, partly through

overly ambitious targets set for transitioning of all government Department under its remit. A decision was taken during 2014 to pause this process for several months following the transition of the third tranche of departments. A certain impatience with bureaucratic culture is in evidence in the shared services setting by two interviewees, newly appointed to the civil service with business backgrounds.

Political Dimension

A strong reputation is a valuable political asset for a Government agency and can result in both public and political support, increased resources and facilitate retention of valued staff. In addition an agency's power and autonomy can be upheld by a strong reputation (Carpenter, 2010). However, reputation is fragile (Roberts, 2006) and even well-performing agencies can be adversely affected by political decision particularly in a period of unfavourable macroeconomic conditions (Pandey, 2010).

The inherent political nature of PSOs also acts as a constraint in terms of reputation management. An agency can draw up a strategy and design a mission and vision, but it cannot depart from its political mandate (Waeraas and Byrkjeflot, 2012). This constraint also impinges on the notion of marketing public services, developing a customer orientation or confident outward facing role. However, it has to be borne in mind that the role of the state is to govern, not to produce or distribute services (Walsh, 1994). Put another way the fundamental purpose of the public service is government not management (O'Riordan, 2013). Therefore in marketing and developing a customer or service orientation a language must be developed which is consonant with the relationship between citizen and government. This relationship is not merely transactional, but based on mutual commitment and not just exchange. (Walsh, 1994) because, in the normal course, the so-called customer may, in fact, be an obligatee (Moore, 2013).

The findings of this study have shown that corporate reputation may not be a priority for PSOs. Indeed ministerial reputation can take precedence and pre-emptive actions so as not to embarrass the Minister may become a priority, to the detriment of the public interest and the true mandate of the Department concerned. Governance may, in such circumstances, also become secondary and there can be a failure to speak *truth to power*¹². A recent consultation paper on accountability (DPER, 2014) stated as follows:

'The nature of the administrative-political relationship in an environment where the doctrine of ministerial responsibility applies is characterised by researchers internationally as inherently one in which one of the main incentives for the administrative system is, above all, to seek to avoid mistakes that have the potential to cause controversy impacting directly on the minister.' (pg. 16)

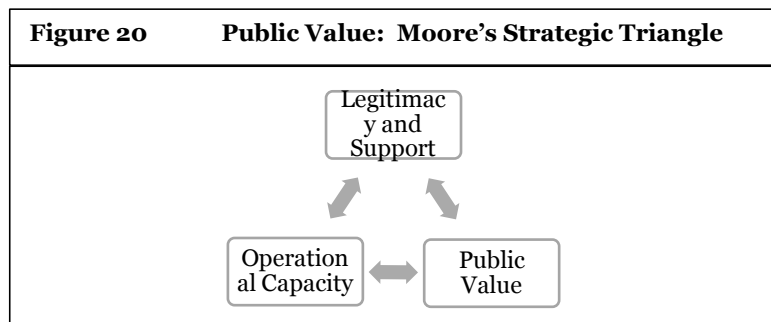
¹² Phrase can be attributed to the title of report prepared by the US Society of Friends (Quakers) in 1955 on the search for an alternative to violence

This can promote and reward risk averse and conservative behaviour and an administrative culture that values and rewards maintenance of the status quo more than political and public demands for responsiveness and delivery. The consultation paper suggests that the role of senior civil servants in objectively assessing and articulating the wider public interest could be reinforced. In so doing, I would argue that organisational reputation, and system-wide institutional and sector reputation should also be prioritised.

The Independent Panel on Accountability and Performance (Rafter, 2014) identified the lack of a formal corporate centre in the Irish civil service. This report points to the existence of a Head of the Civil Service in other Westminster-type administrations such as UK, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. It suggests that the Head of the Irish Civil Service should have ‘*a limited but highly focused and ambitious remit*’ (pg.16) which would include the following dimensions

- Leadership and values
- Performance Management
- Oversight of Implementation of Policy Priorities
- Enhancing Capability and Capacity

This is very reminiscent of the dimensions of legitimacy and support and operational capacity Moore’s (1995) original Strategic Triangle shown in Figure 20.



Moore further developed his ideas in terms of a public value scorecard (Moore, 2003; 2013). In relation to the legitimacy and support perspective Figure 21 shows Moore’s (2013) general report form or score card, which includes as a checklist the following factors, relating to reputation management, although he does not use this term:

- Standing with formal authorisers
- Standing with key interest group
- Standing with individuals in polity
- Position of enterprise in democratic political discourse.

In effect, what this form demonstrates is the direct connection between reputation management and the attainment of public value.

Figure 21

Public Value Scorecard: Legitimacy and Support Perspective

THE LEGITIMACY AND SUPPORT PERSPECTIVE: General form	
Mission Alignment with Values Articulated by citizens	<i>(Link to Public Value Account)</i>
Inclusion of Neglected Values with Latent Constituencies	<i>(Link to Public Value Account)</i>
Standing with Formal Authorizers:	
Elected Executives	
Statutory Overseers in Executive Branch (Budget, Finance, Personnel, Elected legislators)	
Elected legislators	
Statutory Overseers in Legislative Branch (Audit, Inspectors- General)	
Other Levels of government	
Courts	
Standing with Key Interest Groups	
Economically Motivated Suppliers	
Self-interested Client Groups	
Policy Advocacy Groups	
Latent Interest Groups	
Media Coverage	
Print	
Electronic	
Social	
Standing with Individuals in Polity	
General citizenry	
Taxpayers	
Clients	
• Service Recipients	
• Obligatees	
Position of enterprise in democratic Political Discourse	
Standing in Political Campaigns	
Standing in Political Agendas of current Elected Regime	
Standing in Relevant "Policy Community"	
Status of Key legislative and Public Policy Proposals to Support Enterprise	<i>(Link to Operational Capacity Perspective)</i>
Authorizations	
Appropriations	
Engagement of citizens as Co-Producers	<i>(Link to operational Capacity Perspective)</i>

The Independent Panel on Accountability recommend that a Head of the Civil Service could represent the core value of *speaking truth to power* which the Nyberg Report (2011) had identified as missing in official circles prior to the banking crisis. In terms of reputation management, I would contend that the incumbent could also act as the voice of the civil service when its standing is questioned or impugned. At present, civil servants have little opportunity to be heard collectively and rely on Ministers to defend the administration of their Departments, or on staff associations to defend their interests as workers. In view of the self-effacing and depressive tendencies of PSOs as described in Paper 4, a new Head of the Civil Service could play a key role in strategic reputation management in terms of these organisations, their staff and the public services provided, in particular, during the management of critical or discrediting incidents.

Implications for Impression Management in PSOs

The diversity inherent in PSOs also has many practical implications for impression management generally which encompasses image, and both intended and construed, identity, and reputation (Brown et al, 2006; Elsbach, 2003; 2006). Marketing and branding management, for example, can be problematical in a public sector context. Like reputation they are also somewhat under-theorised in this domain. The traditional transactional conceptualisations of marketing are seen as only of limited worth in relation to PSOs, as they fail to meet their specific contextual requirements (Laing, 2003). It has also been advocated that what is required is a language defined by the public domain '*rather than a pale imitation of a private sector approach within the public service*' (Walsh, 1994 pg. 70).

Any conceptualisation of marketing for the public domain should take account of societal outcomes, stakeholder and customer diversity and the existence of long term collaborative relationships (Laing, 2003). Therefore, evolving network based models of relationship marketing would appear to be the most apt.

A brand orientation, as opposed to a market orientation, has also been suggested for PSOs (Gromark and Melin, 2013), as it facilitates democratic values, thereby decreasing the risk of over-emphasis on economic values. New Public Management has been closely linked to a market orientation which can diminish other important values related to *inter alia* trust, legitimacy, justice and rule of law (Hood, 1991). It may be preferable for PSOs to respect their internal diversity in corporate branding rather than striving to have a consistent self-presentation. Multiple organisational identities and contradictory values make PSOs inconsistent, but also unique (Waeraas, 2008).

Managing customer orientation in the public sector is also problematical and its effectiveness is dependent on agency type. Delivery of public services such as education or health care are highly complex, encompassing as they do both societal and private benefits. As already adverted to, customer orientation in the public service is complicated by the fact that many customers are, in fact, obligatees (Moore, 2013). Results in an empirical study undertaken in a hospital setting demonstrate a disconnection between organisational customer orientation and employee

customer orientation (Whelan, *et al.*, 2008). This parallels the notion of the use of discretion by street level bureaucrats, whether professional or administrative staff, as being a critical dimension in the work of public sector employees who regularly interact with citizens (Lipsky, 2010). Understanding public policy requires analysis of not just organisational commitment through strategic communications, but also how all types of discretionary responses by frontline service employees combined with the rules, practice and procedures add up to the total customer experience, or what the public ultimately experiences as agency performance. In this sense, espoused values at the strategic apex of an organisation may or may not translate to being values-in-use at ground level. On the other hand findings from a study by Caemmerer and Wilson (2011) imply that a service orientation discrepancy similar to that found in the private sector exists also in PSOs. This relates to the difference in employees' perceptions of their own service orientation and that of the organisation. In this instance public sector employees in a UK agency perceive themselves as being more committed to delivery of a good service focused on the needs of the citizen as opposed to modernising initiatives introduced by Government.

Reputation Management and Agency Mergers

The Irish Government has committed to a programme for the rationalisation of certain state agencies and to develop an updated code of practice for the governance of such agencies. Guidelines for new agencies have also been recommended in the Rafter Report (Rafter, 2014). In addition I would also suggest that possible governance models, to include financial, HR, change management and legal protocols, should also be drawn up to steer the actual process of merging agencies, which, in the Irish context, at present, is ad hoc and dependent on key individuals in organisations. Furthermore, post hoc justifications, in lieu of appropriate prior cost benefit analyses, have become the norm, which carries significant financial and reputational risk. A code of practice for the governance of mergers would facilitate informed decision making. It would also assist with the momentum at which mergers proceed, both through the political process and on the ground and facilitate stakeholder buy-in, staff motivation, and credibility and standing with the general public.

Shared Services and Reputational Loss

Due to a mandated client base and political expectations, reputational risks are high in regard to flagship public sector projects, such as shared services. Stakeholder expectations require to be managed in terms of customer service on an individual and organisational level. However, as team working and customer orientation are essential in shared services settings, a hierarchical structure and civil service culture may stymie efforts in this regard. Furthermore, international experience demonstrates the limitations of shared services in terms of overly optimistic proposed benefits, underestimated costs and unrealistic roll out schedules (Boyle, 2013). Service level agreements are compromised during inevitable regressive phases, and such inherent risks should be factored into service commitments, which should not be oversold.

Need for Reputation Management Guidelines

Reputation management requires long range planning and should be part of the strategic process in PSOs. Guidelines should be devised which would outline protocols for actively managing organisational reputation. An example of such guidelines are those developed by the UK Local Government Association (LGA, 2010). This approach may not have been considered previously because of an emphasis on mitigation of reputational risk. Performance reporting and measurement should also include an indicator of actual standing among key constituents. It should not be sufficient to merely record reputational risk assessments. The public scorecard devised by Moore (2013) and in part reproduced in figure 4 is a useful model in this regard.

The absence of pro-active reputation management at strategic level in PSOs may have been exacerbated by the lack of a conceptual framework to stimulate and facilitate thinking on this issue. Public sector or bureaucratic reputation has been under-theorised to date in academic study and thus, may have been viewed, until quite recently, as essentially a private sector concept. That said, many ideas from the private sector, such as strategic planning and risk management, have already been successfully translated to public sector settings. This study now presents a model informed by qualitative data, existing scholarly work and professional practice, which firmly places reputational considerations within the tenets of public value theory.

Recommendations for Practice

Arising from the findings of this study and the foregoing discussion, recommendations are now offered under theme headings of reputation guidelines, reform agenda, risk assessment and mitigation, impression management, customer orientation, use of a public value scorecard and managing critical incidents/adverse reports.

Reputation Management Guidelines

This research has demonstrated the importance of managing reputation in PSOs and therefore a fundamental recommendation is that appropriate Reputation Management Guidelines should be devised for PSOs. Reputation management strategies and initiatives should, of course, defer at all times to what is legitimately feasible and appropriate in public sector settings. To this end corporate or organisational reputation, and indeed, system wide institutional and sector reputation should be emphasised as opposed to the political imperatives of ministerial reputation

Reform Agenda

The proposed Head of the Civil Service, if appointed in the Irish context, should also act as Chief Reputation Officer and give voice to civil servants and the wider civil service system at an institutional or sector level. However, it is not required that he/she should default to defending the indefensible.

In respect of the rationalisation of state agencies reputational issues should be addressed pro-actively by putting appropriate general protocols in place for merger processes.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Reputation building and managing in all PSOs should be pro-active in the public interest rather than purely re-active. The proposed National Risk Assessment to be published annually¹³ should ideally include reputational risk within the risks enumerated.

A strong administrative system can be oppressive, unresponsive and self-serving in terms of economic, managerial or political elites (Deleon, 2005). The possibility of ‘groupthink’ therefore should be formally risk-assessed in terms of reputational risk.

Governance is paramount in assuring decision making and, therefore, process assurance and quality assurance systems and structures should be in place in PSOs to mitigate the risk of error and to enhance learning capacity.

Impression Management

Impression management should be context-focused depending on organisation mandate. A brand orientation as opposed to a customer orientation may be more appropriate in emphasising democratic values where governance and responsiveness are in tension (Gromark and Melin, 2013).

Customer Orientation

The public value of reputation should be given due recognition in learning and development and, in particular, in relation to customer orientation initiatives. Customer orientation in shared services should be prioritised due to the existence of a mandated client base. Citizen satisfaction surveys should be conducted at regular intervals as part of system wide performance measurement and reputation evaluation. Customer satisfaction surveys should also be undertaken at regular intervals by individual organisations.

Public Value Scorecard

Utilising a Public Value scorecard approach with its emphasis on standing among diverse stakeholders should be considered. Performance measurement, as well as risk assessment, should include standing of PSOs in their authorising environment. To enhance reputation performance should be measured relative to social outcomes and ultimate public value.

Critical Incidents/Adverse Reports

Transparency requires that performance data include not just agency successes, but also instances where performance falls short of requirements. Critical incidents and discrediting predicaments occur and are part and parcel of governing and public management. As part of critical incident planning, organisations should have an overall strategy in relation to accounting procedures for

¹³ Draft National Risk Assessment published by the Department of the Taoiseach April 2014; personal submission made by author June 2014

adverse reports. Where critical incidents or adverse reports arise, planned and underway corrective actions should be highlighted and results subsequently reported.

Contribution

The ultimate worth of a qualitative research method lies in fulfilling not just the contextual, explanatory and evaluative functions *per se*, but also the generative function of inductively developing theories, strategies or actions (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This study can be said to make a number of contributions in terms of practice, theory and method. First and foremost research into endogenous reputation management in public sector settings has hitherto been somewhat overlooked and under-researched (Maor, 2013). This study, therefore, fills a research gap. In addition, the interpretive approach taken in this study has facilitated novel insights into reputation management theoretically, and also in terms of professional practice for public service managers.

The comprehensive definition offered provides clarity on how public sector reputation might be inclusively defined and builds on previous scholarly work. It encompasses the notion of procedural justice and the importance of fair process (Van Ryzin, 2011). Trust and legitimacy, which are at the centre of Moore's (2003; 2013) public value scorecard and the process and equity focus in Talbot's (2010) performance regimes approach are also incorporated. Furthermore this definition accounts for Carpenter's (2010) performative, moral, procedural and technical dimensions of an agency's reputation.

The final conceptual model presented in this study incorporates definitional elements of public sector reputation and integrates and extends existing literatures on reputation management and public value. It also encompasses elements from findings in this research, in particular, on the role of governance and performance which are integrated with Moore's (1995) three specific public management environments – authorising, task and operational. Carpenter's (2010) aforementioned dimensions have also been superimposed on this model to reveal the dualities inherent in the relationships between governance, legitimacy, reputation and performance. Such dualities can be seen to include, for example the procedural and moral aspects of governance or the moral and performative aspects of reputation. The tensions arising between reputation and legitimacy and/ or governance and performance are also evident. Accordingly, this model could inform and help populate reputational dimensions in future quantitative studies of public manager perceptions of reputation management.

In a recessionary period, in particular, this study's public value perspective provides an opportune and timely platform for translating a more highly theorised and arguably private sector imperative such as reputation into the public sphere, where legitimacy is more highly esteemed (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008) and isomorphic tendencies pervasive (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983; Wæraas and Sataøen, 2011). This research complements the public value scorecard approach which accounts for the standing of PSOs in their authorising environment. There is, therefore, significant potential to develop broad guidelines on reputation management within a public value framework.

In using a discourse analytic framework this study demonstrates the possibilities provided by a linguistic perspective on reputation management. In addition, a contribution to methodology generally is provided by virtue of the taxonomy of counter strategies to mitigate validity challenges, which could be effectively utilised in qualitative studies generally.

In terms of the application of theoretical knowledge to practice as a public sector manager this study has facilitated more informed recommendations in relation to issues for inclusion on my own organisational risk register. It has also assisted with more knowledgeable contributions to the merger process at working group level and at joint senior management fora. Furthermore, this research has prompted a submission for inclusion of reputational risk in the new proposed annual Draft National Risk Assessment.

At a wider level implications for public management practice generally arise from a shared international economic context of recession together with declining trust levels and associated reputational crisis in public institutions and government.

Future Research

Suggestions were offered in Paper 4 for further research which reflect the need for both quantitative and qualitative studies on public sector reputation. Topics already proposed include identity construction in agency post-merger situations, how regulation affects reputation and the impact of stakeholder differences. An in-depth analysis of the neutral reputational ideal (Luoma-aho, 2007; 2008) outside of the Nordic context and a longitudinal study of the impact of international rankings and consequent bureaucratic interventions were also recommended.

In addition to the suggestions already offered there are several other potential avenues for future research. In view of the many critical incidents that can occur in the political domain, which have their origins in a governance deficit, an empirically based critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to reputation building efforts in the public sector would be fruitful. An interesting study in this regard could encompass the dichotomies surfaced in this study, not least the emphasis on the protection of ministerial reputation to the detriment of corporate reputation in a Department of State.

In this research tensions between responsiveness as opposed to legal/procedural accuracy has been highlighted in the data generated. One avenue of investigation, in this regard, could be the process by which PSOs strike a balance among conflicting bases of reputation and between different aspects of their performance. Trade-offs arise between an agency's interest in using its expertise to produce accurate, valid decisions and also in protecting its long-run reputation for reliable expertise, as against its short term reputation for prompt action.

Construed reputations and how they relate to organisational logics and the underlying psychological connection to the notion of depressive PSOs, for example, would facilitate valuable insights on customer orientation and employee motivation in the public sector.

Concluding Comments

In the passage of time since the commencement of this study, signs of economic recovery are gradually emerging. At the end of 2013 Ireland exited from the EU/IMF Programme without the need for a pre-arranged backstop and returned to normal market funding. In January 2014, Moody's Credit Rating Agency restored Ireland's sovereign credit rating to investment grade and changed its rating outlook to positive. Ireland's performance in international business rankings has also either stabilised or improved (DF, 2014).

The data generated in this study demonstrated the internalising, at an individual level by public managers, of the necessity to restore institutional legitimacy and credibility in order to facilitate such national recovery. At an institutional level in 2011 the Department of Finance was heavily criticised for its role in Ireland's economic collapse, its lack of appropriate expertise and citizen outreach. By 2014 a new found confidence and expressiveness is evident in its revamped website¹⁴ which includes a performance scorecard for the citizen to access.

At this juncture a greater appreciation of reputational effects in the public sector has also found expression in recent official publications. One example is the Statement of Strategy 2011-2014 for the Department of the Taoiseach (DT, 2011) wherein trust is listed among eight strategic priorities with the following narrative -

'Helping to reform and restore trust in the institutions of the State, and in Ireland's reputation at home and abroad, learning lessons from the past' (pg. 6)

Quantitative research is about structured preparation and adherence to the plan laid at the start. In contrast qualitative research by its nature is about exploring ideas (Bansal and Corley 2012). In this study the idea of public sector reputation has been conceptualised and explored in detail against a backdrop of global recession. Bearing in mind Churchill's admonition to never allow a good crisis go to waste, it is hoped that the reputational lessons learned from economic misfortune will transform into more informed decision making, having particular regard to the overriding importance and public value of institutional good standing.

¹⁴ <http://www.finance.gov.ie/> (accessed on 10th July 2014).

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Appendix 1

Data Sources and Methods

Data Sources and Methods ¹⁵

No.	Research propositions	Data sources and Methods	Philosophical Underpinning	Justification
1	Assessing reputation in the public domain is complicated because the authorising environment of public sector organisations comprises layered accountabilities and a multiplicity of constituents up to and including society at large	<p>Data generation from interviews with senior managers in PSOs (<i>Constituents</i>)</p> <p>Exploring the interviewees' understandings</p> <p>Representation or account of individuals views and opinions</p> <p>Discursive repertoires/constructions Insights</p> <p>Documentary Analysis: Annual Reports Strategy Statements C& AG reports Proceedings of Oireachtas Committees (<i>Institutional intermediaries/mandates</i>)</p>	<p>Qualitative</p> <p>Interpretive</p> <p>Social construction</p> <p>Hermeneutics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To ascertain the social reality of the authorising environment from the lived experience and interpretation of senior officials. •To tease out the complexities in the authorising environment and whether these are regarded as onerous and act as constraints to managing reputation pro-actively •To ascertain how officials characterise the concept of reputation management? •To ascertain how they believe outsiders perceive the organisation. •To ascertain how they characterise their organisation's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identity -Intended image /projected image -Construed image/refracted image -Actual reputation •To explore any suppressed views •To provide evidence of whether official espoused values relate to values in use or as expressed •To provide evidence of whether construed image the same as that intended •To provide evidence of how reputation is inferred externally in the authorising environment by institutional intermediaries •To ascertain the similarities and understandings of an organisation's identity among different publics. •To ascertain whether there is a stereotypical view being promulgated. •To ascertain organisation legitimacy – whether the organisation receives unquestioned support from all constituents.

¹⁵ Based on Mason (1996) and Bouchiki *et al.* (1998).

		Media analysis		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To ascertain whether there is any impetus from the external environment in relation to reputation management. •To ascertain how organisation is represented in the media
2a	Legitimacy is a pre-requisite of reputation building and assumes greater importance in public sector organisations	<p>Discourse Analysis: Interviews with senior managers in PSOs <i>(Constituents)</i></p> <p>Documentary Analysis: Officially commissioned reports <i>(Institutional intermediaries)</i></p>	<p>Hermeneutics</p> <p>Pragmatism</p> <p>Hermeneutics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To ascertain the relative importance of legitimacy and good governance versus reputation in the eyes of those officials charged with strategic leadership in PSOs •To ascertain the depth of risk aversion To explore attitudes and values of officials •To ascertain how well they identify with their organisation and whether they are committed and attached •To broach sensitive issues i.e. to ascertain whether legitimacy of organisation has been challenged? •To garner details and corroboration of any such legitimacy challenges and external reaction and portrayal •To provide cultural frame. •To ascertain how the internal view compares with how PSOs are viewed externally.
2b	For public managers a trade-off arises between isomorphic pressures for an agency to conform and the differentiating requirement for reputation building	Interviews with senior managers in PSOs <i>(Constituents)</i>	<p>Social construction</p> <p>Pragmatism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To achieve depth and reflect complexity inherent in PSOs •Narrative accounts produced through in-depth interviews provide access to the reality and lived experience in PSOs •To ascertain the structure of beliefs held by those with an interest and responsibility for the controlled messages emanating from the organisation •To explore how such decisions are prioritised by public managers •To ascertain how the pressures arise, and from where, in their view, to conform to accepted institutional norms •To understand the contingency, the ambiguity and the unanticipated outcomes of human decisions
3a	As minimum accountability standards apply to legitimacy, it is easier to achieve than a good reputation in the public domain	<p>Interviews with senior managers in PSOs <i>(Constituents)</i></p> <p>Documentary Analysis: Annual Reports Strategy Statements</p>	<p>Pragmatism</p> <p>Hermeneutics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To provide access to attitudes and values •To reflect complexity •To establish the relative importance of compliance and to explore awareness of whether a compliance culture exists. •To establish whether there are official statements regarding reputation

		C& AG reports Proceedings of Oireachtas Committees (<i>Institutional Intermediaries</i>) Media analysis		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To ascertain whether any legitimacy challenges exist •To check media representations regarding the reputation of particular PSOs.
3b	Ideal standards relating to distinctiveness and performance are antecedent to reputation	<p>Interviews with senior managers in PSOs (<i>Constituents</i>)</p> <p>Documentary Analysis: Annual reports Official reports Customer surveys National/international rankings e.g. <i>Reprtrak</i>, World Bank etc. (<i>Institutional intermediaries</i>)</p>	<p>Pragmatism</p> <p>Hermeneutics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To establish awareness and understanding of reputation management issues •To ascertain the experience of officials with managerialism/NPM discourse and standards of excellence •To ascertain how officials view the competitive aspect of reputation •To establish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -external view of performance -Projected image of performance -Actual performance?
4a	Impartiality is preferable to neutrality as a reputational ideal	<p>Interviews with senior managers in PSOs (<i>Constituents</i>)</p> <p>Documentary Analysis: Official guidelines and Circulars (<i>Institutional intermediaries</i>)</p>	<p>Pragmatism</p> <p>Hermeneutics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To ascertain whether in their experience whether they view themselves as neutral officials •To ascertain how they would they understand their role - as neutral or impartial in their dealings with politicians and the public? •To ascertain whether they interpret a difference? •To ascertain their understanding of which is preferable in their view and in their lived experience a neutral or an impartial reputation
4b	As a strategic objective, pursuing a neutral reputation is sub-optimal, as it does not address requirements of impartiality or public value	Interviews with senior managers in PSOs (<i>Constituents</i>)	<p>Social construction</p> <p>Pragmatism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interviewing gives access to attitudes and values •To explore of any suppressed views •To achieve complexity and depth

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•To ascertain how they would describe the ultimate aim of their organisation?•to ascertain whether they view the customer as being served impartially or neutrally?•To ascertain how they interpret their role as influencers? |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Appendix 2

Website Strategic Communication: Differentiation in Expressiveness

Differentiation in Expressiveness in Website Strategic Communication¹⁶

Strategic communication Means/expressive tools	PRA http://www.prai.ie/	VO http://www.valoff.ie/	OSi http://www.osi.ie/	DPER http://per.gov.ie/	DJE http://www.justice.ie/	PeoplePoint
Logo	√	√	√	√	√	√
Vision						
Mandate		√	√		√	
Mission Statement				√	√	
Core Values					√	
Buzzwords/tagline/strapline			“National Mapping Agency” “Excellence in mapping since 1824”		“Working for a safer, fairer Ireland”	“Driving HR Capability”
Welcome page				Minister		
Organisational stories/narratives	√		√	√		
Customer case studies			√			
Identified staff			√	√	√	
Social Media Facebook/Twitter/Linkedin/ Google			√	√		
Blog				Secretary General’s blog “As per”		
Logics/ideals						
Civil service/bureaucratic		√		√	√	√
Professionalism/specific expertise	√	√	√		√	

¹⁶ Based on Blomgren *et al.*, 2013

Strategic communication Means/expressive tools	PRA http://www.prai.ie/	VO http://www.valoff.ie/	Osi http://www.osi.ie/	DPER http://per.gov.ie/	DJE http://www.justice.ie/	PeoplePoint
Market oriented			√			
Audience/Focus						
Customer/sales			√			
Professional stakeholder/rules	√	√	√	√	√	√
Client/end user/service		√	√	√	√	√
Citizen/information		√	√	√	√	

Appendix 3

Interview Extracts

Extract 1: Valuation Office

Interview Transcript

Thursday 1st August 2013

Q. I will start in the present and with your responsibilities at the moment. Can you describe for me what you consider is the current reputation of the Valuation Office? Your own thoughts on it..

A. I would say it's mixed. Hopefully it's on the.. it's being improved. Why I say its mixed, is that there is.. a good way of judging this is to look at the political process and see how others see you really, and not as you see yourself. There would have been a number of appearances by the Office in, I think, 2007, 2008 and 2011 before the Public Accounts Committee. The main theme of which ...the big programme here is what's called the national revaluation programme, which means essentially revisiting and revaluing every one of the commercial and industrial properties in the State with a view to modernising the valuations so that they form a more modern basis for the collection of commercial rates. And a consistent theme throughout those appearances before the P A C has been the pace at which the revaluation was taking place, which was undoubtedly unsatisfactory. Now happily I think we have been gearing up to and have improved our game considerably in that regard in the last two years. But, a second factor was that the reputation of the Office took a denting as well in 2010 when the C&AG did a chapter on a number of controls in the accounts area. Essentially the controls were not of the standard that one would require in respect of a public body. So, I would say that that's the political side of it. But, as a result of a recent visit I suspect that the reputation is a lot higher possibly now and we are now winning back some of the lost ground. Now we should also look at what our reputation is like among the other stakeholders out there. The rating authorities I think probably who would be a very important player again they would have a mixed view as well from the point of view that the priority from their point of view is that we would do revision work for them so that they can keep their rates base as wide as possible. And we have been doing that, but that has been playing second in priority to the revaluation programme, which we see as the top priority. So there is a bit of a juggling going on there. I think in terms of the quality of the work we do that would be fairly okay I think we would have a reasonably good reputation for that. The other key stakeholders would be the professional agents who would operate in this area. Many of them would be members of the Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland the SCSl. We have a pretty good working relationship with them and some of the things we have been doing in recent years the last year and a half in particular has been to have a more collaborative approach

Q And is that working ?

A. That's working, but it's still underway in the sense that it's only beginning we are at opposite ends of the spectrum here. This is an adversarial system, to some extent, we can work as well together but ultimately cases go before a tribunal or we are on different sides so there is a need to have a professional respect for each other but also to maintain our particular points of view.

Q. And your distance from them

A. Yea absolutely

Q. And ... your valuersmembers of the Chartered surveyors?

A. A number of them would be. Another body out there would be IPAV which would be the Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers. But we would have a lot of younger valuers who would be in the process of becoming chartered, that's what happens when you become a member of the SCSI. The SCSI act in partnership with the RICS, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, so between the two of them here in Ireland they are the main accrediting body. IPAV also have an accreditation system

Q. And what other stakeholders would you regard as important now in terms of reputation?

A. I would think that the Minister is very important. A couple of ministers are very important, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, our own Minister, Minister Howlin whom we keep up to date in any developments in that area. The Minister for the Environment is a stakeholder because under our revaluation system the commissioner has the legal power to initiate the process but he does so after consultation with the Minister for the Environment and the particular rating authority where he intends doing the revaluation. So once they are done its redone on a kind of a cyclical basis. So the Minister and his officials there would be very important. I think we would have a pretty good reputation in that..

Q. among them within the civil service ..

A. Within the civil service they would be the main, well it would be more the local authority arena than the civil service itself

Q. okay

A. so a key stakeholder would be the actual rating authorities which amount to the local authorities and the City and County Managers' Association which would be the body that would represent the city and county managers, that would be the main body to represent them they would be a stakeholder. We also regard the business representative groups as important stakeholders. So, Chambers Ireland, Retail Excellence.....

Q. IBEC?

A. IBEC, ISME, Vintners Federation of Ireland, Irish Hotels Federation, Nursing Homes Ireland, anything, any group that would represent a rate payer , a group of ratepayers. So, this is something that wasn't happening a lot up to maybe a year and a half ago so we've been building this up.....on the belief that good communications helps us get our message across ..

Q. Your reputation is at it is, as you have described it in your view. What would you like it to be ? At what stage would you like it to be ?

A. Oh I would like it to be at a stage where we had the broadest possible range of stakeholders happy, by which I mean that, whereas they might not always like the particular outcomes of a revaluation exercise and that's inevitable because there's winners and losers, that's what we're trying to achieve. But that they would have no issue over either the pace at which it is happening or the

professionalism with which it is being conducted. I don't think that there has been much issues of the second one there but there has been over the first one,

Q. the pace

A. Yes

Q. So in operational terms you would prefer to be doing a better job?

A. In operational terms I would think we should be doing it more quickly than we are doing it and that's what the strategic emphasis is on.

Q. Oka. I have asked you what you thought the reputation was, I have asked you what you would like it to be, what do you think it actually is, which is a slightly different question ?

A. I think it depends on who you ask.

Q. Yes, the public perception then..?

A. I think the public perception is ..I think the public don't understand what we do and nor is it that important that they do. To the public it is all about paying rates and we are only one part of that. We're meant to be the people who set the baseline, who do the objective analysis of rental evidence. Then with each rating authority strike the rate, if you like, based on their own particular requirements. I don't think we will ever get across the subtleties and distinctions of valuation law and how it happens and I think we can do that certainly with the representative bodies. But you know it's a ratepayer doesn't really want to necessarily have to understand everything like that at all.

Q. Your appearance last week, is it last week?

A. Two weeks now..

Q. Before the Public Accounts Committee. Can you describe that to me? As what is that like?

A. the preparation for it was quite considerable. It's.. it's quite pressurised before you go on the basis that you don't have an agenda. Ostensibly you are going in on the basis of in this case the 2011 appropriation Accounts for the Valuation Office. But, in the knowledge and in fairness they're perfectly entitled to raise anything that would be topical and relevant from that point of view. So you have to be as prepared as you possibly can be. I found the whole exercise I found it very civilised. I found it extremely courteous. Whereas the various deputies would have been pressing particular points, it was all done in a professional and perfectly acceptable manner. So, there's always a sense of relief when you're through it.

Q. and do you think there was any element of agenda fixing? It was a very political forum.

A. Yea, there would have been an element the actual revaluation that we had going on was the focus of the attention of most of the questions that were there. There were some questions, obviously as well on the accounts, some issues on the accounts. But you know that's part of the political process, that's a reality and I think that it's no harm whatsoever because it keeps us well- grounded in the realpolitik of local politics, yea. That's perfectly acceptable. I think however the questions that were being asked, in fairness to the deputies, even though they

were being asked in the context of particular constituencies and revaluations were of national application, so I would have no complaints, whatsoever, and I think all the questions were reasonable.

Extract 2: PeoplePoint

Interview Transcript

Wednesday 12th February 2014

- Q In the end what would you like what would be the desired reputation for Peoplepoint in the end? What would you like to see at the end of all of this? When things have evened out, stabilised passed through the regressive phases and that you are in a stabilised situation?
- A I mean to some extent it's back to the same thing, its simplicity I'd like people to turn around and say that's a very professional organisation it works well and it's customer focused and it's driven to do things better than they've ever been done. I'd like it to very much to be a driver of a better practice. And whatever that good practice is at a point in time that it's at the edge of it. . That it's out front and not reactive. That it's proactive in what it's delivering to the customers. And basically that it's working with the customers to make sure that they get the value out of it.
- Q Your tagline 'Driving HR capability' that really explains it doesn't it ?
- A. It does And to be fair you can have - fun is too strong a word when you get a green field organisation and we looked at that strapline that was something that we were passionate about as a team, a project team, a small team but we were passionate about HR and that's what we wanted . Our vision of this organisation is something that just brings it to a different level that we haven't seen yet and we want to see that
- Q That takes time in a project, a long time
- A. It does..
- Q. We were talking about reputations there talk me through the interlinks as you see them. The interlinking reputations again and the levels
- A. I suppose look reputationally what you 're trying to, the key thing I suppose first of all is to build trust and have an open relationship and then what you are trying to do then is through that relationship is establish a reputation for doing things well and have a kind of openness around the way you do things. To be honest it's challenging in our environment again it's an investment of trust by your customers in you but then you have to deliver for them and build that trust and that confidence And to be honest we've a funny system it doesn't come back and demand off the organisation and yet I'd be slightly concerned that at the back of it that they're not happy. Or your reputation is being damaged without someone coming up front to you to say ...or whoever that's not working well enough and I really need you to kind of step up
- Q. Would you see value in a user group that would actually report back and that type of user group situation how would that evolve?
- A. Well one of the things to say and we've been giving some thought to it here When we started on this like the governance model is that you have a Project Board. The board really its responsibility is to ensure that the project is

delivered. But we're also up and running. So it should also have an Operations Board and the Operations Board would represent the stakeholders and they're the customer departments and organisations

- Q. And you would have representatives on the board of the stakeholders
- A. Yes, because they are the ones who effectively have a vested interest in it working, but they also know where the difficulties lie. Now under that group, because that's a fairly high level group, in my view you could also have a user group that can feed back into that group and advocate for significant change or for different types of whatever
- Q. And that would help the reputation what you don't hear and what you don't see upfront. It's like tip of the iceberg you would be able to see that iceberg underneath
- A. And we are conscious because we're constantly evaluating what we're doing what is different about our set up currently that maybe doesn't happen for other shared services. So what we're conscious of is that in other shared services centres you go straight from project to go live to operations. But ours is a phased approach and there is a long engagement by the project which overlaps and is in parallel with the operations. We're now recognising that from a customer perspective while that is alright it's probably not the most effective. So we're actually looking at the board currently and saying well does the board change now and become the operations board and are we at the tipping point where we actually put the operations board and that user group in place, and the Project board almost take a back seat a bit like the project is. The tipping has come but certainly in other environments you are always trying to look and see what is almost different here and we think the long phase in has its disadvantage in that sense where ownership is almost being carried on two sides and that is not great
- Q. What I was thinking about there in terms of how you are interlinked – how many reputations are we talking about here? Does it go right back up to the government if you like because this is would this be a flagship project?
- A. Yes. And from the outset we're awfully conscious of that. We know it's a flagship project. Just the other day I spoke to about to some extent how that's weighed heavily on the project, the necessity to deliver exactly what we said, the necessity to deliver the timelines to ensure that we've met every timeline because we know reputationally in terms of reform the reform agenda is very strong and they do need to be able to show evidence that there is change that you're doing new ways of working. And we also need to show that the system, the civil service system that you can deliver on large scale projects within budget and on time.
- Q. And that they work in the end
- A. So we're conscious the government is looking at it as a vested interest it doesn't want us to fail. Obviously the Department is a new department it doesn't want a failure. To be fair the other thing I would say strongly is that our system wants it funnily enough, there was an assumption oh nobody wants this. From the outset people wanted it to do well and to make it work. Those are two different things

- Q. Very different. In terms of the identity of PeoplePoint do you feel these are all new recruits mainly that you have right are people identifying with the organisation? Has it got its own identity because it didn't have existing civil servants to draw on really, not very many?
- A. Not many . It's a bit of a challenge . I think it recognises itself and the people working in it recognise themselves as PeoplePoint. But do they recognise themselves as an entity that could create something a little different, probably not . And it's funny what we wanted here from the outset was that cultural change , a different way of working, just a different approach . I'd say we haven't that hasn't materialised as yet. And maybe a slightly different dynamic it's challenging. I'd be afraid I'll be honest that if we don't create something different and if we don't then we won't succeed because it is a different environment. In order to make a shared service work you have to work differently. You can't be as hierarchical, it needs to be a team based approach. There isn't a sense that - In the civil service we don't work in teams as well. And our middle to senior managers are struggling a bit with that to be honest. They're Civil servants and by their nature are likely to be structured and they like it to be very clear and delineated and they don't do team things and they don't do standing in front of a group first thing on a Monday morning kind of thing going "Lads we're a bit behind here what will we do?" It sounds like a strange way of describing something but that's culture that's not having the confidence to work in a different way and to find yourself even in a new organisation settling into a pattern of an old way in which you worked before.
- Q. Do you think that Civil servants in general suffer from that lack of confidence fear of actually not obeying the rules?
- A. Yea I would have a big issue if I was inputting to the renewal process I'd ask us to look at the type of people where we are delivering we need a different type of person . And we need to enable people to be those... . We don't enable them we don't give them the confidence. The interesting thing about it is that people continually say to me. Oh, they won't take a decision. They're afraid to take responsibility. And I'm not sure why that's happening in our system because actually we don't lose our jobs in the main to be fair. In the terms of justice they have made mistakes that have brought down governments there. So how we have become so fearful about making decisions that are not invested with lots of risk and still won't make them I am not quite sure . But we are doing something wrong

Extract 3: Ordnance Survey Ireland

Interview Transcript

Thursday 13th August 2013

Q. ... just a general question in the beginning. How do you see the reputation at the moment of the OSi?

A. I suppose reputation really I suppose OSi is probably very different than most organisations within the public sector. I know I am not answering your question directly, but maybe just to lead into it whereby we are probably one of the only organisations within the public sector that produce a product and gain commercial revenue. So reputation is basically our bottom line. It affects our funding model. Without a good reputation we don't have funding, we don't have an organisation. And I think unlike any other organisation, well maybe one or two in the public sector, we compete with alternative products from alternative suppliers, so reputation is very important. And within that then you have the issue of managing the reputation of your stakeholders. So you've got the reputation in relation to our commercial mandate which is the stakeholders are involving the Board and involving the department with our funding model. Then you have to compare that then to our reputation with the requirements of the wider public sector who want access to our data who don't particularly want to be involved in commercial activities with us. So, it's very difficult, it's a challenge to manage that reputation, of those competing stakeholders.

Q. And that's part of the dual remit?

A. Yea, so when I say what is our reputation, I think it's a changing one. In relation to commercial customers we've got quite a good reputation and we can validate that through customer surveys, but in relation to our reputation with I suppose the citizen who wants access to state mapping that is a changing one. I think that the whole industry is changing in relation to open data, access to data and I suppose vis a vis the merger and seeing OSi coming back into the centre is probably seeing a rise in our reputation for the non-commercial stakeholders

Q. Would you that's very interesting...ah

A. I would think so, yea.

Q. What sort of image do you like to project? You have explained what you think your reputation is. What is the image that you are trying to project?

A. Well first and foremost we're the national mapping agency. We have to portray an image of professionalism in surveying the national mapping, that is our core function our core role. It supports both our national interest and also our commercial activities, professionalism..If you are talking about you know obviously we produce a product which is the national map and we have to update it, so a lot of our reputation is around quality and consistency. Are we producing what we say we are going to produce and how consistent is it? Is it year on year improving Customer service is huge. Obviously you know it goes

hand in hand with customer service I mean we are a production organisation. So customer service is at the very front. You're also talking about corporate governance assuring you adhere to all governance it's best practice, a sense of fairness

Q. Can you explain that ?

A. Yea, fairness in relation to value for money to the stakeholders as in you know as public servants, we can't undercut the private sector we have to behave in a public sector fashion which is a proper, but fairness in relation to the commercial activities of the customer as in value for money and the cost of the products. And then I suppose linking that all up into our culture and our behaviours. It's around being responsive and innovative. When you are in a competitive environment you know you are looking at the likes of Google, Bing and Microsoft, the citizen producing its own mapping, unless you re-invent yourself all the time, so your three or five year strategies, I suppose which differentiates us maybe from other organisations. Our strategy has to be ahead of our user strategy. In other words we're a big ship we survey the whole country. If we want to change how we fundamentally do something for the whole country it's going to take us three to five years. So you are aiming ten years out and the customer is no way ten years out. So, that's where you really have to understand the customers' requirements and it's not technical arrogance it's a little bit of blue sky thinking. It is innovation. It is scenario planning. It is having an international network to compare your thinking, but really you have to aim ahead of what the current customers' understanding of your product is. By the time they give us their requirement we won't be able to react, because we're a big ship so you have to stay ahead of the game. These things like Prime 2 and these other

Q and Geoportal?

A. A lot of people don't fundamentally understand what they're about. We know it's for the next thirty years that we will be doing this

Q. So Prime 2 will be a thirty year....

A. Well the last data model we did stood well for thirty years, so we are really looking at the next thirty years so these are significant technical ..

Q. So this is the image you would like to project? Just tell me a little a bit about the past the associations let's say with defence and ..the old way, just a little bit about that ..where you're coming from originally

A. I think where we are now is made up of where of what you're trying to be, but also what you have been and that's all your culture your attitudes, your behaviour you know typically the way I describe it your know your culture is how we do things around here. And we have a military culture. You know we were established in 1824. You can go back prior to 1824, if you look at the Ordnance Survey outside of Ireland then you know it came to Ireland and I mean the foundation of the State, we had the setup of Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Then in 2001 we left the civil service and we became public servants and become Ordnance Survey Ireland. But within that we had a military culture. I know when I joined the organisation fifteen years ago, we were employing I think around 49 say 50 personnel in army uniforms sitting in desks doing production activity. It was one of the first, the survey corps, it was actually a

military corps in the Irish Army and I can get you the date, but that corps was one of the first corps to be stood down since the foundation of the State. So it would have been around 1998 approximately probably would have been around 2004 or 5. When actually that survey corps was actually stood down . There was a formal parade up here with senior military and defence and the options were go back to the military unit or become civil servants

Q. And that discipline that goes with army life did that find its way into your culture?

A. Yea, our culture from a surveying perspective this is really the introduction of technology . where surveying is really seen as an outdoor activity . Fundamentally now it's an indoor activity. It's to do with satellites, it's to do with 3D modelling. It's to do with computer graphics. it's to do with its nearly a gaming environment But that culture would have come from surveying out in the field which was military, yea, it was I suppose you know my own masters I did a masters in organisational behaviour and part of my masters was what was the title of it The Mapping of Innovation in Ordnance Survey but when I looked into that the military culture actually is quite a rich culture and it's one not to be forgotten about, not to be thrown out, because I think one thing we learned about looking into the military culture is that when an issue happens, or when something goes wrong the military culture is not a finger pointing exercise its get together and solve the problem and then analyse it afterwards . That's actually very important to a modern organisation.

Appendix 4

Interview Guide Sample

Interview Guide

Thursday 1st August 2013

1. Current reputation of Valuation Office

Relative standing among stakeholders?

What do you consider it is?

What would you like it to be?

What is it actually? What is the public perception of valuation services?

Previous reputation

2. Appearance before PAC

- Describe the experience

3. Stakeholders present?

Who were they within that forum?

Agenda fixing?

Actors, institutions, interventions

4. Political viewpoint?

5. Constraints

- Legislative
- policy
- Governance issues

Role of appeals

Financial controls etc. - effect on legitimacy?

Outsourcing and self-assessment QA and risk implications?

6. Impacts /Outcomes

7. Networked Governance

8. Customer of Valuation Services?

9. Underlying principles of valuation?

Redistribution in equitable sense?

10. Public value proposition of valuation

Neutral?

- Job is valuation pure and simple?
- Actual performance and obligations?
- Delivering valued outcomes?
- Type of reputation given constraints?

11. Constraints in managing reputation recap

12. Merger responsibilities

Reputation of PRA

Reputation of OSi7

13. Forging new identity, image and reputation

Reputation of merged entity?

Differing dimensions of reputation?

Similar constraints?

What can be leveraged?

Possible innovations, synergies?

Commonalities?

Appendix 5

Secondary Sources: Merging Agencies

Secondary Sources: Merging Agencies

Agency	Dáil Debates on Legislation	C&AG Reports	Parliamentary Committee meetings	Customer surveys	Media Representations
<p>VO</p>	<p>Valuation Act 2001: 2nd Stage Debate 15th February 2001</p> <p>Valuation amendment Bill, 2012: 2nd stage Dáil Éireann 7 June 2012, 11 October 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2006 Annual Report of Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: (Vote 15: Valuation Office) •Special Report no. 60 (2007) •2008 Annual Report of Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: Vote 15 valuation Office; Chapter 14 Valuation Output and Performance •2010 Annual Report of Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: Chapter 20 Financial Control and Governance •2011 Annual Report of Comptroller and Auditor General and Appropriation Accounts: (Vote 15: Valuation Office) 	<p>-Thursday 3rd April 2008 verbatim report available at: http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committeetakes/ACC2008040300003?opendocument</p> <p>-Thursday 10th December 2009 verbatim report available at: http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committeetakes/ACC2009121000003?opendocument</p> <p>-Thursday 20th October 2011 webcam available at : http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=19396&&CatID=127&StartDat=01%20January%202011&OrderAscending=0</p> <p>verbatim report available at http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committeetakes/ACC2011102000005?opendocument</p> <p>-Thursday 17 July 2013 webcam available at http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=24230&&CatID=127</p> <p>Verbatim report available at: http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debate%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/committeetakes/ACC2013071800005?opendocument#E01300</p>		<p>-Irish independent Tuesday 29th June 2011 <i>Hope for rate-payers in revaluation programme</i>, available at: http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/hope-for-ratepayers-in-revaluation-programme-26746821.html</p> <p>-Galway Independent 24th April 2013, <i>The National Revaluation Programme</i> available at: http://galwayindependent.com/20130424/news/the-national-revaluation-programme-S16806.html</p> <p>-Waterford Today 19th June 2013, <i>Valuation Office Team in Waterford to help local businesses</i>, available at: http://www.waterford-today.ie/waterford-business/19933-valuation-office-support-team-in-waterford-to-help-local-businesses-19933.html</p>

OSi	<p>Ordnance Survey Ireland Act 2001:</p> <p>2nd Stage Debate</p> <p>Seanad Éireann 3rd April 2001;</p> <p>Dáil Éireann 4th, 9th, 17th October 2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •C&AG 1996 Report no. 13 on value for Money Examination: Ordnance Survey available at http://www.audgen.gov.ie/documents/vfmreports/13_OrdnanceSurvey.pdf •C&AG2001 Annual Report Chapter 2 Ordnance Survey Ireland http://www.audgen.gov.ie/documents/annualreports/2001/Chap2.pdf •OSi Annual report 2011 C&AG appended report by exception on staff bonuses available at http://www.osi.ie/OSI/media/OSI/Annual_reports/AnnualReport2011.pdf?ext=.pdf 			<p>-RTE news report Wednesday 26th October 2011 <i>OSI criticised for failing to cut chief's pay</i> available at: http://www.rte.ie/news/2011/1026/307945-pay/</p> <p>-Irish Times (2001a) 25th October 2011 <i>State body's board tried to avoid pay cut for CEO</i>, available at http://www.irishtimes.com/news/state-body-s-board-tried-to-avoid-pay-cut-for-ceo-1.630963</p> <p>-Irish Times (2011b) 27th October 2011 <i>OSI staff disgusted' over chief's pay</i> available at: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/osi-staff-disgusted-over-chief-s-pay-1.632210</p>
PRA	<p>Registration of Deeds and Title Bill. 2005 :</p> <p>2nd Stage Debate</p> <p>Seanad Éireann 5th May 2005</p> <p>Dáil Éireann 24th November 2005; 31st January 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Special Report no. 58 on eGovernment Oct. 2007 		<p>Property Registration Authority (2011) Customer Survey Report available at http://www.prai.ie/eng/Publications/Other_Publications/Customer_Survey_2011_-_Report.html</p>	<p>-Irish Independent (a) 23rd May 2013, <i>Old registration system will deter new investment</i>, available at: http://www.independent.ie/business/commercial-property/old-registration-system-will-deter-new-investment-29289564.html</p> <p>-Irish Independent (b) 30th May 2013, <i>Over 90 percent of title deeds now online</i> available at: http://www.independent.ie/business/commercial-property/over-90pc-of-title-deeds-now-online-29307314.html</p>

Appendix 6

Organisational Missions and Espoused Values

Organisational Missions and Espoused Values

Organisation	Mission Statement /Vision	Values in full	Values as keywords
Department of Justice and Equality (DJE, 2011)	Working for a safer , fairer Ireland To maintain community and national security, promote justice and equity, and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with the common good.	We seek to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate access to justice • apply fair and equitable standards to all • respect and value the individual with whom we engage • show courtesy and integrity • provide excellent services and value for money to the public • demonstrate accountability for our actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to justice • Fair and equitable standards • Respect for individual • Courtesy and integrity • Excellent services and Value for money • Accountability
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER, 2011b)	To serve the country, its people and the Government by delivering well-managed and well-targeted public spending, delivered through modernised, effective and accountable public services.	<p>To manage public expenditure at more sustainable levels in a planned, rational and balanced manner in support of Ireland’s economic performance and social progress</p> <p>To have public administration and governance structures that are transparent, efficient, accountable and responsive</p> <p>We will give impartial and well informed advice to the Minister and the Government. We will endeavour to ensure that the national interest is represented in the decisions taken on spending and on public services. We will focus on achieving better overall national outcomes from the resources applied. We will lead and support those with responsibility for reform across the public service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable public expenditure • Transparent, efficient, accountable and responsive structures • Impartiality, national interest, effective resource allocation, public service reform
Property Registration Authority (PRA, 2013)	The Authority’s mission is to safeguard property rights and facilitate property transactions by maintaining and extending a comprehensive system of registration of title in Ireland.	<p>Service to customers The Authority is committed to providing its customers with an excellent service which is readily accessible through a variety of channels.</p> <p>Public interest The Authority is committed to carrying out its functions in the public interest in an open and transparent manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent service, Access • Public interest, transparency • Commitment to staff • Governance and value for money • Consultation • Dynamism

		<p>Commitment to staff The Authority values the dedication of its staff and is committed to supporting them in delivering a high quality service to its customers and in developing fulfilling careers within the organisation.</p> <p>Good governance and value for money The Authority is committed to compliance with high standards of governance and probity, and to conducting its business in a cost-effective manner.</p> <p>Consultation The Authority is committed to consultation with its stakeholders in the ongoing development and delivery of its services.</p> <p>dynamism The Authority is committed to the development and application of technological advances aimed at improving its efficiency and the customer experience.</p>	
<p>Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi, 2011)</p>	<p>Mission: Excellence in providing quality mapping and spatial information services to meet society's needs.</p> <p>Vision: "Ordnance Survey Ireland, the National Mapping Agency since 1824, will continue to provide essential expertise to underpin the Social and Economic Development of Ireland."</p>	<p>Responsiveness – the ability to anticipate, adapt and meet effectively the changing needs of our customers Enterprise – continuously developing the skills and expertise to interpret, shape and meet the needs of the market Innovation – the contribution of our people in continuously seeking improvements in how we develop our products and services Efficiency – productivity and effectiveness to ensure our viability in a competitive environment Results – the organisational performance to deliver on our commitments and achieve quality outcomes for our stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness • Enterprise • Innovation • Efficiency • Results
<p>Valuation Office (VO, 2011)</p>	<p>Our Mandate The core function of the Office is the production and maintenance of fair and equitable valuation lists of commercial and industrial properties under the provisions of the Valuation Act, 2001. These valuation lists provide the basis for the assessment and levying of commercial rates by local authorities.</p>	<p>Honesty and Integrity We are committed to carrying out our work in an impartial, objective, ethical and professional way Quality service to our stakeholders We are committed to meeting the needs of our stakeholders through the provision of a high quality service. Responsiveness and adaptability We will strive to ensure that our systems and processes are flexible and adaptable and are capable of responding to the demands of our stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty and Integrity • Quality service to our stakeholders • Responsiveness and adaptability • Positive Working • Commitment to personal and organisational excellence

	<p>Our Mission</p> <p>Our mission is to deliver a high-quality impartial valuation service.</p> <p>Our Vision</p> <p>To develop a high-performing and responsive organisation, with a shared culture and common purpose; we will deliver on our mandate, using leading-edge emerging technologies, through the provision of excellent services in a customer-friendly environment</p>	<p>Positive Working</p> <p>We are committed to the creation of a positive work environment which recognises that the basis of success is both teamwork and individual contributions.</p> <p>Commitment to Personal and Organisational excellence</p> <p>The Office acknowledges the contribution of each member of staff and is committed to fostering an environment where everyone is encouraged to reach their full personal potential. The Office is also committed to the safeguarding of an environment that develops and enhances the expertise, knowledge, competencies, capacity and capability of individual staff at all levels of the organisation to carry out their roles in a professional manner.</p>	
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Reflective Log Extracts

Omitted from final thesis in the interests of research participant confidentiality.

