UCD GEARY INSTITUTE
DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

Organisational Change in Irish Public Administration

Muiris MacCarthaigh

Institute of Public Administration
Dublin

Geary WP2012/08
February 2012

Organisational change in Irish public administration

Muiris MacCarthaigh

Institute of Public Administration
57-61 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
mmaccarthaigh@ipa.ie

Abstract

Capturing, mapping and understanding organisational change within bureaucracies is inherently problematic, and the paucity of empirical research in this area reflects the traditional reluctance of scholars to pursue this endeavour. In this article, drawing on the Irish case of organisational change, potential avenues for overcoming such challenges are presented. Drawing on the resources of a time-series database which captures and codes the life-cycle of all Irish public organisations since independence, the paper explores the evolution of the Irish administrative system since the independence of the state in 1922. These findings provide some pointers toward overcoming the challenges associated with studying change in Whitehall-type bureaucracies.

Introduction

The history of Western government over the last century, and certainly since the end of World War II, has been portrayed as one in which the 'reach' of the public sector has extended inexorably into ever greater aspects of citizens' lives, as well as the market. And as this reach has extended, the power of bureaucracies relative to other governing institutions, (such as parliaments and executives) is perceived to have grown (Peters, 2011, 14-20). Bureaucracies are increasingly recognized as having a determining effect on the type and nature of public services received by citizens. For many prominent theorists of bureaucracy, public organisations continue long after their usefulness has been realized (e.g. Downs, 1967) and, over the course of their lives, tend to seek to accumulate ever more resources (Niskanen, 1971). Others challenge this thesis and point to organisational terminations and the variety of factors that influence them (Peters and Hogwood, 1988; Lewis, 2002). Nonetheless, as the recent body of international research on agencification identifies, within bureaucracies organisational terminations remain a less frequently occurring phenomenon than organisational creations (Verhoest, van Thiel, Bouckaert and Lægreid, 2011).

The aggregate growth in public bureaucracy is primarily identified through the general appreciation in the numbers employed in public organisations, as well as the increasing amount of national resources they consume (in nominal terms as well as percentages of GDP). Of course, aggregate growth in populations and national wealth can explain some of this but the general resilience of bureaucracies to periods of economic decline and political change begs further explanation.

With few exceptions, detailed studies of bureaucratic change have tended to cover short time periods or present snapshots of change in particular policy sectors or functional areas or by way of response to a particular phenomenon. It is surprising, therefore, that more attention has not been given to understanding how bureaucracies in particular national settings have evolved in the way they have, and what this can tell us about the role of political-administrative culture within a polity, as well as the manner in which bureaucratic change occurs. In their work on organisational terminations, Adam et al. (2007, 228) argue that,

> …one should not lose sight of the possibility to enhance analytical leverage on the termination issue by comparing diachronically. There is a need for longitudinal analyses that compare termination during different periods of time.'

This paper demonstrates that longitudinal analysis of termination as well as other types of organisational change can open up new avenues for the study of administrative systems.

Organisational change in bureaucracies can provide indications of changing political priorities, shifts in state-society relations, and points of departure for new trajectories of state activity. We can identify patterns of behaviour and build up generalizable insights about the relationships between, for example, political partisanship and structural change. Capturing successive types of changes over time will therefore allow us to develop a more complete picture of how states evolve, and how they respond to changing pressures and priorities. It also allows us to compare how different states react organisationally to similar stimuli, and why.

In the next section, organisational change in Whitehall-based bureaucracies is addressed. This sets the scene for us to consider four phases in the evolution of the bureaucracy and of the political system in Ireland. We then consider in some detail the variety and frequency of organisational creations and terminations in Ireland over its history. We conclude with some reflections on the implications of relationships between politics and the public bureaucracy for the patterns of organisational change traced over time

Organisational change in Whitehall bureaucracies

Most Westminster democracies – those states which retain the British Westminster form of responsible parliamentary government – trace the origins of their legal and administrative systems to that of Whitehall. While New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa and of course the UK are normally associated with the prominent literature in this field (Rhodes, Wanna & Weller, 2009), a host of other states, including Ireland, also retain the core Westminster/Whitehall characteristics. Key features of the Whitehall system include the ministerial department, whereby ministers are politically responsible to parliament for the actions of their departments, and the separation of political and public service roles (Halligan, 2010, 131). A distinguishing feature of the Whitehall system, therefore, is the use of an extensive apolitical and generalist administration, with permanent tenure for staff elected on merit through open competition. While pressures for the introduction of greater specialist and technical skills into Whitehall systems remain keenly felt, an emphasis on the 'gifted generalist' who can move between roles and organisations persists as a distinguishing characteristic of these systems.

The Whitehall (or Anglophone) administrative system with its emphasis on the public interest and pragmatic administrative action, is facilitated by the common law tradition. Thus it is often contrasted with the continental European *Rechtsstaat* systems which utilizes extensively codified administrative law as the basis for action, and in which the legality of administrative action provides the basis for ensuring accountability (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, 52-4). For the purposes of this paper, the Whitehall tradition is relevant for the wide variety of organisational forms which it allows, and the comparative ease with which organisations can be created to meet particular political or administrative needs. The absence in law of formal organisational classifications is also matched by the absence of a clear framework or criteria for the creation of agencies or framing their relationship with parent departments.

While distinctive terms of employment are relatively clear for public servants in the Whitehall or 'Anglo' systems, there are blurred lines between public and private (including third sector) provision of public services. Private organisations may be involved in providing services under contract to public organisations (Wettenhall, 2003). Public organisations may have the same legal status as private companies (Hardiman and Scott 2010). In *Rechtsstaat* systems, the work of public agencies requires a clear mandate in law or statute because of their legitimacy and accountability requirements. The need for such mandates is less strict in 'public interest models'; a prominent example of this being the creation of numerous Next Steps agencies in the UK during the 1980s without the need for new legislation (James 2003). While there are several advantages to

this institutional flexibility, for the researcher it provides obvious methodological difficulties in terms of accurately capturing and quantifying change and causality.

The public interest tradition of Whitehall-based systems allows for institutional experimentation as a means of engaging with social interests and involving non-state actors in the policy process. Existing practice can be modified and reforms can be discarded as the need arises, creating complex layers of administrative variety and organisation (Halligan, 2010: 141). Thus while countries in this tradition have unique historical and political experiences determining the range and type of organisations available to governments to pursue policy goals, common concerns persist about political control, bureaucratic neutrality and parliamentary accountability.

Organisational proliferation in Whitehall-based bureaucracies, as elsewhere, is well documented (Verhoest, Van Thiel, Bouckaert and Lægreid, 2011) but as the paper by MacCarthaigh and Roness (2012) indicates, differences remain in terminology and in the classification criteria used to capture these phenomena across states. The term 'quangos' has gained currency internationally (Pollitt and Talbot, 2004). In practice, however, 'quangos' is merely an awkward term for a variety of organisational forms through which public power may be exercised. Recognizing organisational diversity is central to the comparative study of governance, which is concerned with understanding changing patterns of engagement between governments, organised interests, and private actors, as well as the changing scope of 'markets' and 'networks' in mediating these relationships

(Provan and Kenis, 2008; Kooiman, 2003). In this article, the concernis with how these changes have been institutionally manifested in a single state, Ireland.

The case of Ireland

For most of its early existence, Irish public administration was relatively simple and unchanging (Barrington 1980). While a number of Boards, Commissions and other arm's length-type organisations survived the transfer to self-rule, and a number of new bodies were created incrementally every year after 1922, for the first few decades of independence, ministerial departments remained the central focus of policy and administrative action. Today, however, Irish bureaucracy is a complex organisational maze, consisting of a considerable number and variety of public service organisations. Presenting the complete story as to how this has come to pass is not possible here. Instead, and building on earlier work by Hardiman and Scott (2010) which considers the influence of changing modes of state action on the deployment of state organisations in Ireland, this paper focuses on the role of changing government types and political-administrative regimes. And in order to unpack the changes over time, the development of the state is presented in Table 1 below according to four periods, with associated types of government and political-administrative relations for each. Though the phases are presented as distinctive periods, there are inter-linkages and path-dependencies between each such that after 'emergent', each phase in effect builds on that preceding it.

Table 1: State Development 1922-2010

Period	1922-47	1948-70	1971-90	1991-2010
Characterisation	Emergent	Development	Modernisation	Management and Reform
Type of Government	Single-party dominant	Alteration between single party and coalition governments. Mainly single-party.	Alteration between single party and coalition governments. Mainly coalitions.	Coalition government dominant.
Type of political-administrative regime	Emphasis on separation of political and administrative roles.	Emergence of policy formulating bureaucracy.	Emergence of managerial doctrines, some blurring of political and administrative roles.	Dominance of managerialism, increased blurring of political and administrative roles.

Source: Adapted from MacCarthaigh (2012 b)

The dominance of single party conservative governments during the early or 'emergent' decades of the state, and particularly of one party (Fianna Fáil) during the period 1932 to 1948, was a defining feature of these early years. A conservative approach to administration and explicit exclusion of public servants from politics resulted in considerable emphasis on demarcation between political and administrative spheres. Single-party government alternated with multi-party coalitions in the second or 'development' period identified here (1951-70). Change in the nature of political-administrative relationships during this period is illustrated by the fact that, when an influential report on economic development was published in 1957, it was known by the name of the civil servant responsible for it, rather than the relevant Minister.

The 'modernisation' period of 1971-90 was one of considerable social and political change in Ireland, which also featured the end of the long period of Fianna Fáil

dominance of the party system. The early part of the 1970s witnessed some attempts at administrative reform following the report of the Public Services Organisation Review Group (1969), which was heavily infused with popular contemporary ideas concerning managerial planning and functional separation within organisations. Ireland's accession to the then EEC in 1973, and an upturn in economic growth, seemed to signal a new era in public service development. But a period of recession in the 1980s resulted in extensive public service cutbacks.

The final period identified here is one characterised by an emphasis on greater awareness of management practice, and explicit commitment to reform of the public service. This was also a period of record economic growth between 1995 and 2008 in which governments had considerable resources at their disposal to pursue a wide array of policy goals. An NPM-styled reform initiative known as the Strategic Management Initiative was launched in 1994, and resulted in over a decade of regulatory and management reform packages being introduced in a bid to reform public services. Yet there was relatively little actual organisational reform, and almost no strategic use of autonomous state agencies (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh, 2011). From 2008 onwards, with the onset of economic recession, the number of state organisations contracted sharply. But rather than following from the strictures of NPM, they were the consequence of government efforts to reduce costs and rationalise the bureaucracy at all levels.

Capturing change: Methodological issues arising

Each of the four phases surveyed above features a particular pattern of organisational change. Yet capturing this change accurately is clearly quite problematic. Different ways of delineating the boundaries of the Irish public service have resulted in very different total numbers of state organisations (McGauran et al., 2005; Clancy and Murphy, 2006; MacCarthaigh, 2010a; Fine Gael, 2010). These can range from formally independent statutory bodies alone, to subsidiary companies of state-owned enterprises, to more transient taskforces and advisory bodies created to tackle specific policy issues. Indeed many attempts by prominent authors to distinguish state from non-state in Ireland have foundered on the issue of classifying public bodies outside of ministerial departments (Leon, 1963; Barrington, 1980; Chubb, 1992). The evolution of the Irish administrative system has therefore remained comparatively understudied.

Recognising this, the development of the Irish State Administration Database (ISAD - www.isad.ie, see Hardiman et al, 2011) has presented an innovative means for capturing bureaucratic change over time.[1] It contains two sets of inter-related data. The first set is the population of all public organisations that exist and have existed as part of the state apparatus since 1922 at national level. In order to delineate our population a dynamic interpretation of what constitutes a 'public organisation' is used (cf. Hardiman and Scott, 2010; 2012; MacCarthaigh, 2012a; 2012b) in order to reflect multiple possible dimensions of 'state-ness'. Hierarchical relationships, particularly those between departments and the agencies under their aegis, are also recorded. The second set of data

---

[1] The Database is a principal output of a project funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences from 2007 to 2010.

concerns the life-cycle events that occur in respect of each organisation, from its birth onwards. The database therefore presents a 'family tree' of the Irish administrative system, navigable by the events which each result in organisational changes. Over 700 discrete units are profiled in ISAD.

The ISAD population ranges from ministerial departments to advisory committees and even some privately-owned entities performing public service functions. In terms of the classification options presented elsewhere, ISAD thus includes organisations that could be classified along numbers 0 to 3 and 5 (but not 4) in van Thiels categorization (2011). Similarly, the organisations in ISAD span the full range of Gill's options (2002).

Each organisation (or 'unit') has an associated legal form, drawing on a classification developed to reflect the variety available within Whitehall-based systems. Units are also coded according to their primary function as well as the policy domain in which they operate (see also Hardiman and Scott 2010). (The UN Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) categories are also used, but are not part of the analysis presented here). The options in each case are set out below in Table 2.

Table 2: **Criteria for classifying 'units' in the Irish State Administration Database**

| Function (10)	Policy (16)	Legal status (12)
Adjudication/ grievance-handing	Agriculture, fisheries, and forests	Ministerial departments*
Advisory/ consultative/ representation/ advocacy	Communications	Executive agency (without independent legal personality)
Contracting	Defence	Statutory corporation

Delivery	Education and training	Statutory non-departmental body
Information-providing	Employment	Non-statutory non-departmental body
Policy formation/ policy execution (ministerial departments)	Enterprise and economic development	Statutory tribunal
Regulation (over public and private sectors)	Environmental protection	Non-statutory tribunal
Taxing	General public services	Constitutional and government offices and statutory office-holders
Transfer	Health	Chartered corporations
Trading	Housing and community amenities	Public limited company
	International services	Private limited company
	Public order and safety	Company limited by guarantee
	Recreation, culture, religion	
	Science and technology	
	Social protection	
	Transport	

* Recognising their unique status, Ministerial departments are identified as a distinct legal type in the classification.

The database reveals the aggregate growth in the population of all public organisations in existence in Ireland since 1922 (Figure 1 below). Ministerial departments are also included here, though their number tended to remain generally constant over the majority of the period. Of particular interest is the rapid increase in the number of organisations employed by successive governments since the early 1990s, a process that arrested and began to decline from 2008 onwards. While the reasons for this growth and the consequences of it are examined elsewhere (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh, 2011;

MacCarthaigh 2010b, 2011), in this paper, the concern is with the type of changes that determine the configuration of the organisational landscape.

Figure 1: Public Organisations in Ireland (including Ministerial Departments) 1923-2010

Number of public organisations 1923-2010
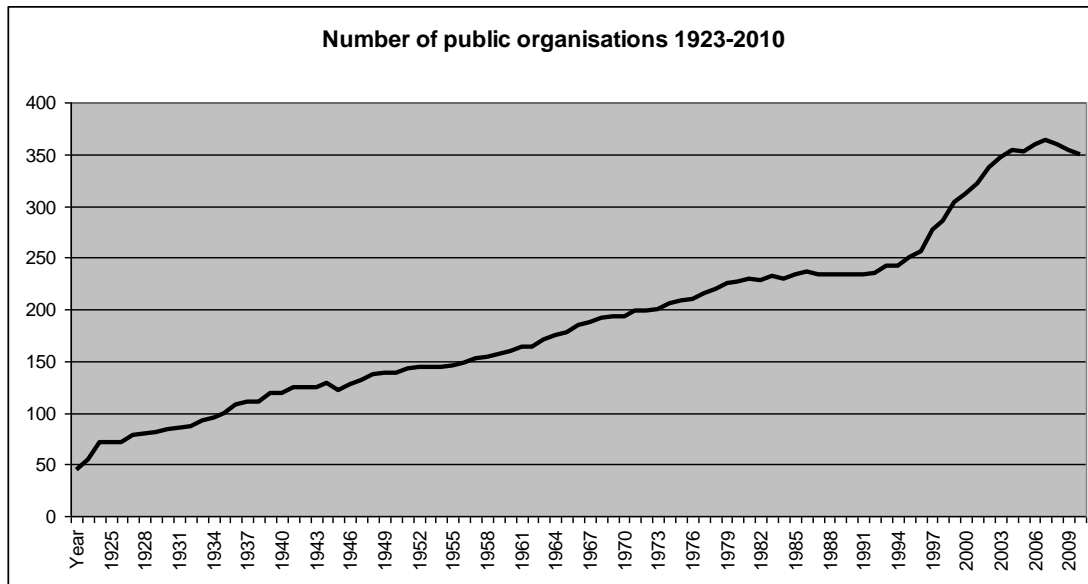
Source: Hardiman, N., MacCarthaigh, M. & Scott, C. 2011. *The Irish State Administration Database*. http://www.isad.ie. Accessed 24 November 2011.

In Whitehall systems, it can be difficult to establish which event types most accurately track a particular period of organisational change. Relying on change in the formal statutory framework may not always accurately capture the evolution of organisations. And when several events occur that are inter-related, the problem arises of deciding the relevant combination of events which most accurately describes a complex reorganisation.

The solution adopted by the Norwegian State Administration database has been to identify three principal forms of change (starting, maintenance and ending events) and to utilize a series of sub-types within each (Rolland and Roness, 2011, 404-7). As

13

MacCarthaigh and Roness (2012) identify, this results in 23 possible event types. However, even with relatively well-documented accounts of change, some inquiry is needed to determine what has happened and how it might best be faithfully represented in a database.

The ISAD distinguishes 12 distinct life-cycle event types. Every unit has at least one event (its birth) associated with it. The event types are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Event types used in ISAD

Event Type	Description
Birth	An organization is created without any connections to other organizations. Such an organization will have no predecessor as an organizational form in the database.
Secession	Some of the functions and resources of an existing organisation are transferred to create one or more new organisations while the original organization continues to exist, retaining its name and fundamental structure.
Absorption	The functions and resources of one or more organizations are fully transferred into another existing one.
Splitting	An organization ceases to exist through its division into two or more new organizations and the transfer of all its functions into these new units.
Merger	Two or more organizations are combined into one new organization which is given an independent standing / status. The combining organizations cease to exist.
Transfer of function*	The core functions of one or more organizations are transferred to a new organization.
Replacement	One organization is completely replaced by another. Normally, the new organization will adopt at least one of the following: a new name, new legal status, new structure or new core function, and may also expand the scope of its policy domain.
Nationalization	An organization that is not owned by the state, or in which the state has a minority ownership share, becomes completely or majority owned by the state.

Privatization	An organization that is completely or majority owned by the state is sold or transferred to majority or complete private ownership.
Transfer from sub-national	The functions and resources of one or more sub-national bodies are transferred into a national organization.
Transfer to sub-national	The functions and resources of one or more organizations are transferred into one or more sub-national bodies.
Death	A organization is disbanded, no replacement organization is created, and its functions are not transferred to another organization.

Source: Adapted from ISAD Codebook (www.isad.ie)
* This event is used exclusively in respect of changes in the arrangement of departmental portfolios which normally occur following changes in government, but increasingly also during governments' tenure.

An element of subjectivity and judgment arises here when attempting to determine what has happened to an organisation that has experienced change: what is a split as opposed to a secession? When can one say that an organisation has been replaced, or that what has occurred is in fact a death followed by a birth? The Whitehall public interest model allows for considerable institutional flexibility without the need for organisational changes to be codified in law. For example, some conceptions of state organisations only include statutory bodies, yet non-statutory organisations may play just as significant a role as statutory organisations. Equally, a reorganisation of functional responsibilities between two or more organisations may occur without any need for detailed legislative authorization.

Therefore, the allocation of an event type to an instance of organisational change is to csome degree a matter of judgment, particularly where historical and legislative records do not clearly discern the nature of an event. This was quite common for the early decades of the state, when changes in policy priorities were not always reflected

institutionally, and detailed records may no longer be available. A confidence scale of 1-5 (with 5 indicating full confidence) is used for all recorded events in the Irish database.

In complex changes, such as those involving a reshuffle of ministerial portfolios, a set of events involving redistributions of functional responsibility may be linked by a single piece of legislation. In this case, the Irish database provides a hyperlinked connection between these events to identify their common origin. This linkage is equivalent to the 'complex reorganisation' event type used in the Norwegian database.

The event type names used in ISAD provide a summary description of the outcome for the relevant organisation(s), as opposed to a detailed series of stages or steps. In other words, when an organisational secession occurs it is not recorded as a birth and a transfer of function. Equally, a merger implicitly records an organisational termination and thus it is not necessary to record the 'death' that has occurred. Hence, not all organisations in the database will have the specific 'birth' event capturing their emergence; many new organisations appear as a result of replacements, secessions, splits or mergers.

Organisational change in Ireland: Patterns emerging

We turn here to consider the profile of organisational events in Ireland from 1922 to 2010, drawn from the Irish State Administration Database. For the purposes of this analysis, we do not examine four of the event types: *Transfer to sub-national government*, *Transfer from sub-national government*, *Transfer of Functions,* and *Splitting*. There are only a limited number of occasions when functional responsibilities

have moved between national and local level organisations in Ireland, involving the death or birth of a national organisation. *Transfer of Functions* event type is used exclusively to capture the transfer of portfolio responsibilities between the legal entities that are ministerial departments, normally occurring after elections but on occasion as part of mid-term cabinet reshuffles. The database identifies only one occurrence of an organisational split, in which the prior organisational form was ended following the creation of two new entities.

We are therefore left with eight event types to consider:

- Birth

- Secession

- Absorption

- Merger

- Replacement

- Nationalization

- Privatization

- Death

Figure 2 below identifies the frequency of each event over the period of the state's existence. In line with the increase in the number of state agencies identified in Figure 1 in the period 1990-2008, Figure 2 shows that some events are much more frequent than others: there are many more organisational births and replacements than other events, but organisational absorptions and deaths become more frequent over time.

*Figure 2: Events by decade in Ireland 1920s-2000s*
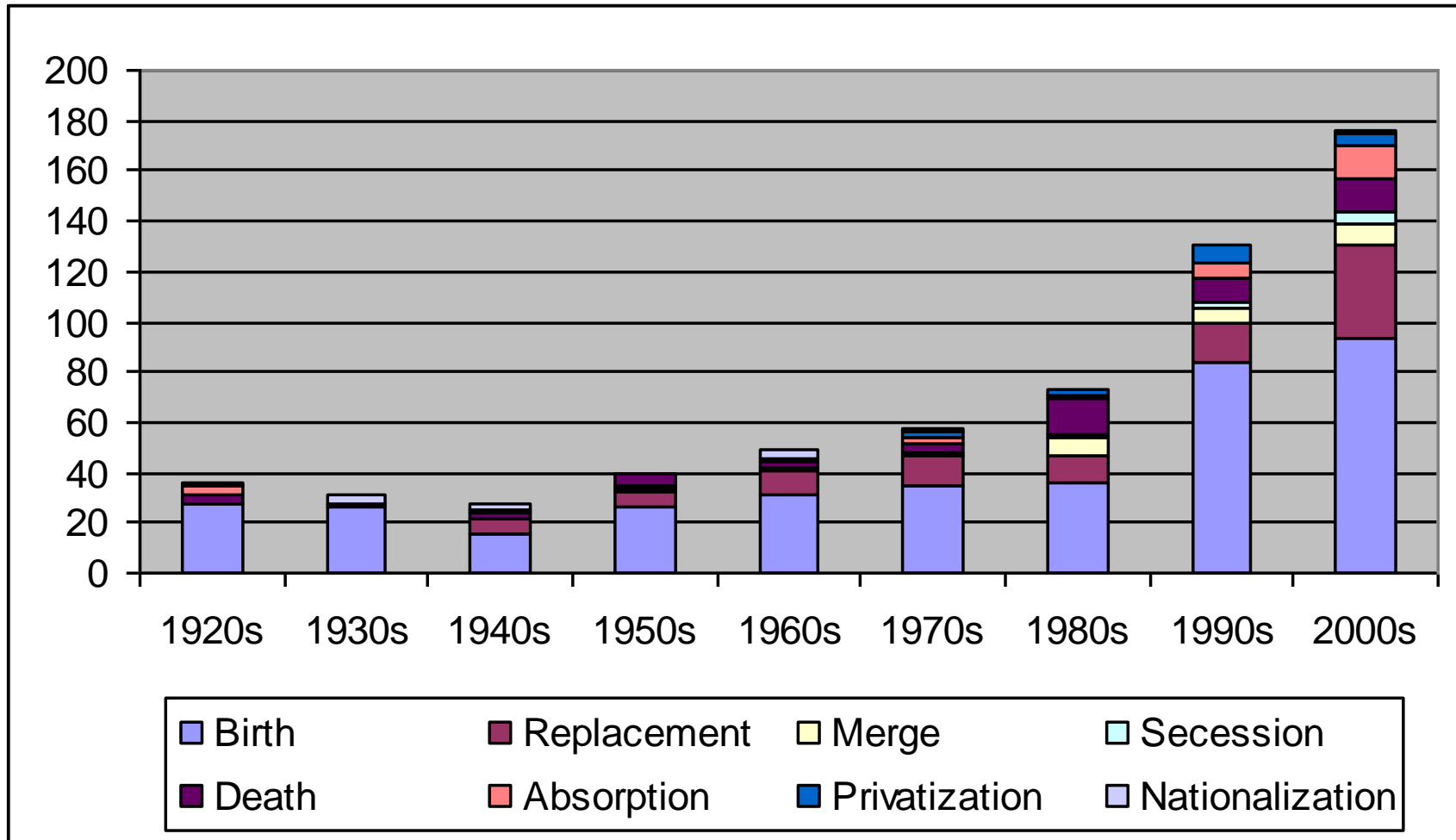
Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

By clustering the various event types, we can identify a number of patterns. We first consider the event types leading to organisational creations (births, secessions, and replacements), before turning to those event types which result in terminations (death, replacement, mergers and absorptions).. While privatizations and nationalizations are identified in Figure 2, the overall incidence of such cases is in fact low and no distinctive pattern emerges (MacCarthaigh, 2011).

Organisational creations

Figure 2 above identified the rapid rise in the number of new organisations created during the 1990s and 2000s. Figure 3 profiles the scale of the increase, combining new organisations with those emerging from replacements, as well as the small number of organisations that emerged as a result of secessions. This increase in the number of state agencies in Ireland raised new problems of governance, co-ordination and control, and a review of the Irish public service in 2008 by the OECD referred to the 'organisational zoo' that had emerged (2008: 297).

Figure 3: Organizational creations by decade
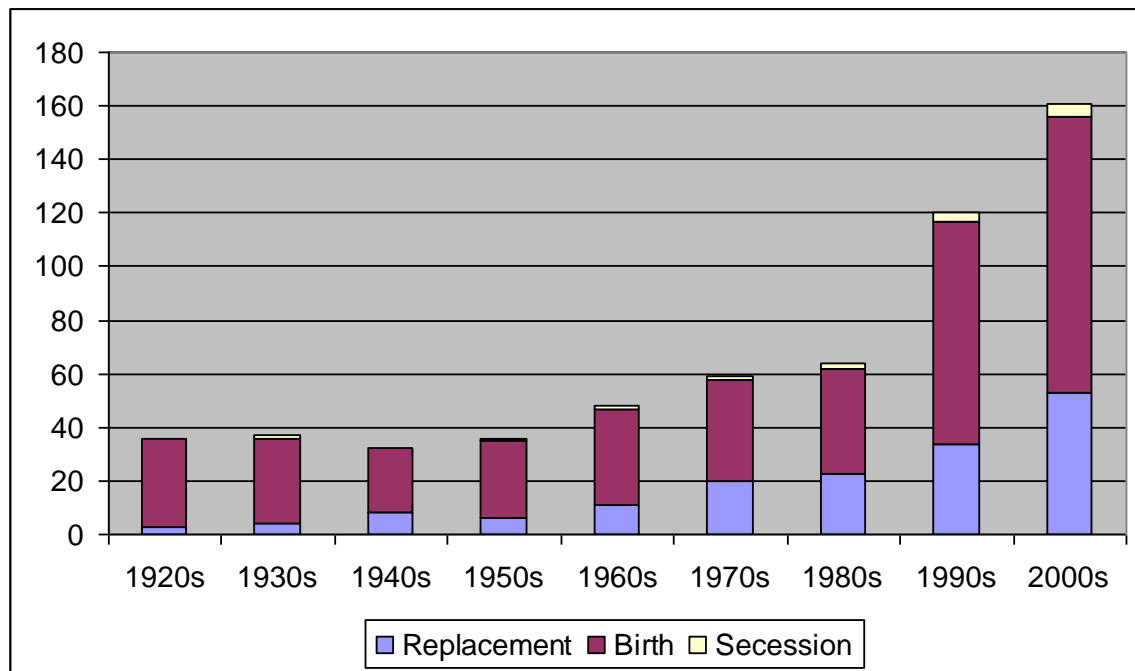
Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

The Irish State Administration Database also allows for examination of agency creation according to primary function, legal form and policy domain. Figure 4 below shows that the most common functions performed by terminated agencies (advisory, service delivery and regulatory tasks) are the functions most likely to be allocated to new agencies. Overall, however, many more agencies were created in these functional areas than were terminated (below). An interesting finding occurs in relation to the creation of adjudicatory bodies. These organisations include grievance-handling agencies which provide alternatives to the judicial courts such as, for example, ombudsman-type offices. Thus there is evidence for the recent emergence of an 'adjudicatory' state (Hardiman and Scott, 2010).

Figure 4: Number of creation events by primary function
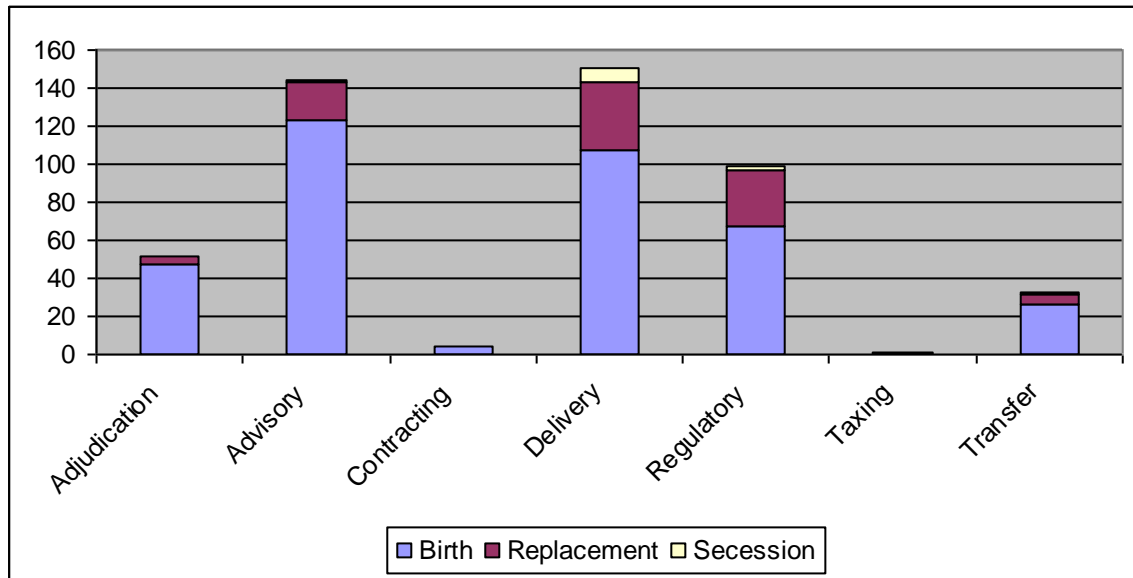
Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

Turning to the legal forms conferred on newly created organisations, Figure 5 reveals that the majority were recognised in statute, and adopted either corporate or (non-corporate) non-departmental forms. But a significant proportion were created by non-statutory means and adopted non-corporate forms. The bulk of the organisations created using these three legal forms were Type 1 and Type 2 organisations, according to van Thiel's classification. A further small number were created under companies legislation (Type 3).

Figure 5: Number of creation events by legal form
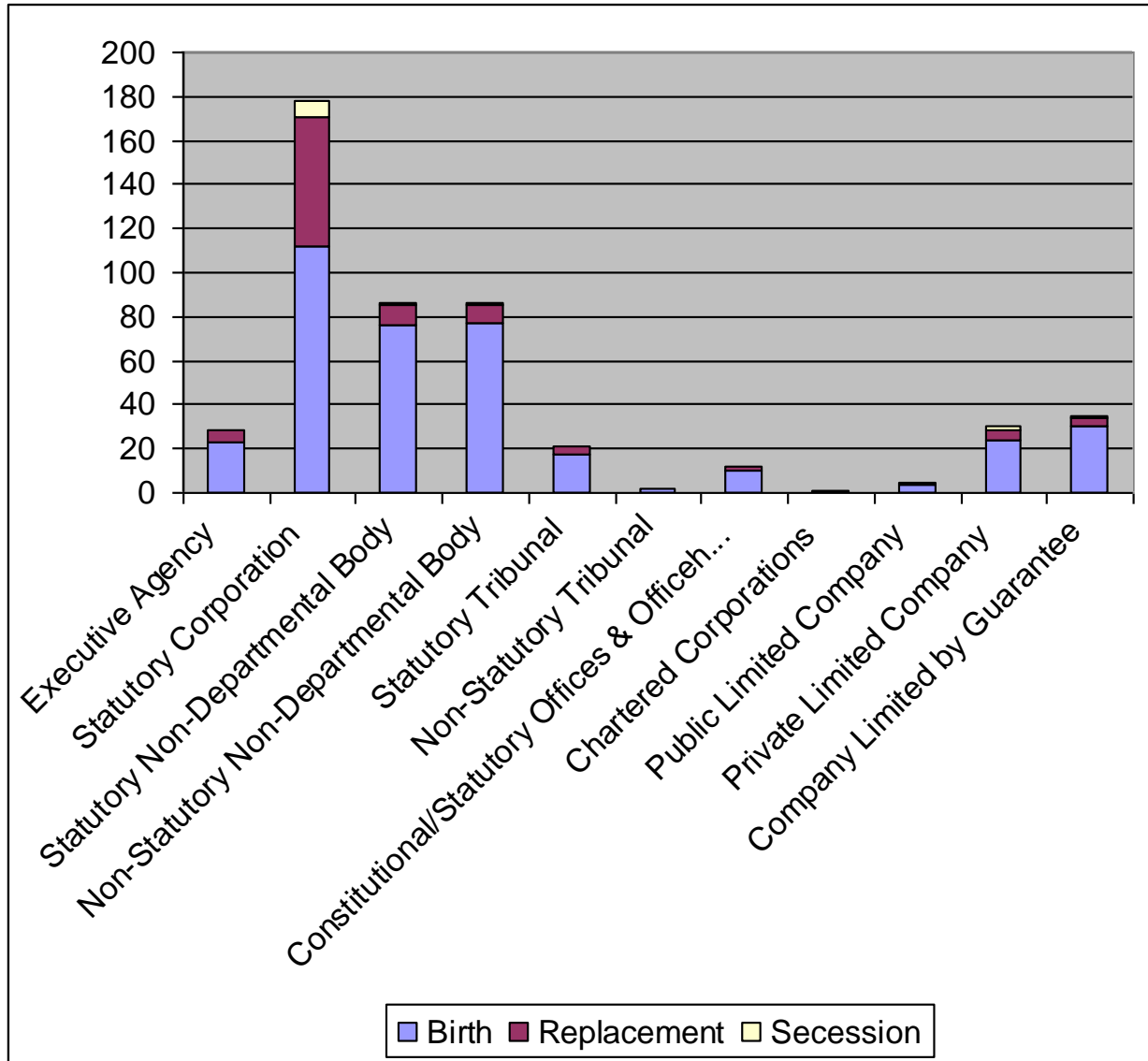
Disaggregating all of the new organisations by policy domain, Figure 6 shows that agencies were created in each of the sixteen policy fields coded by the Irish database, with the greatest number in health; enterprise and economic development; public order and safety; recreation, culture and religion; and education and training.

Figure 6: Number of creation events by policy domain
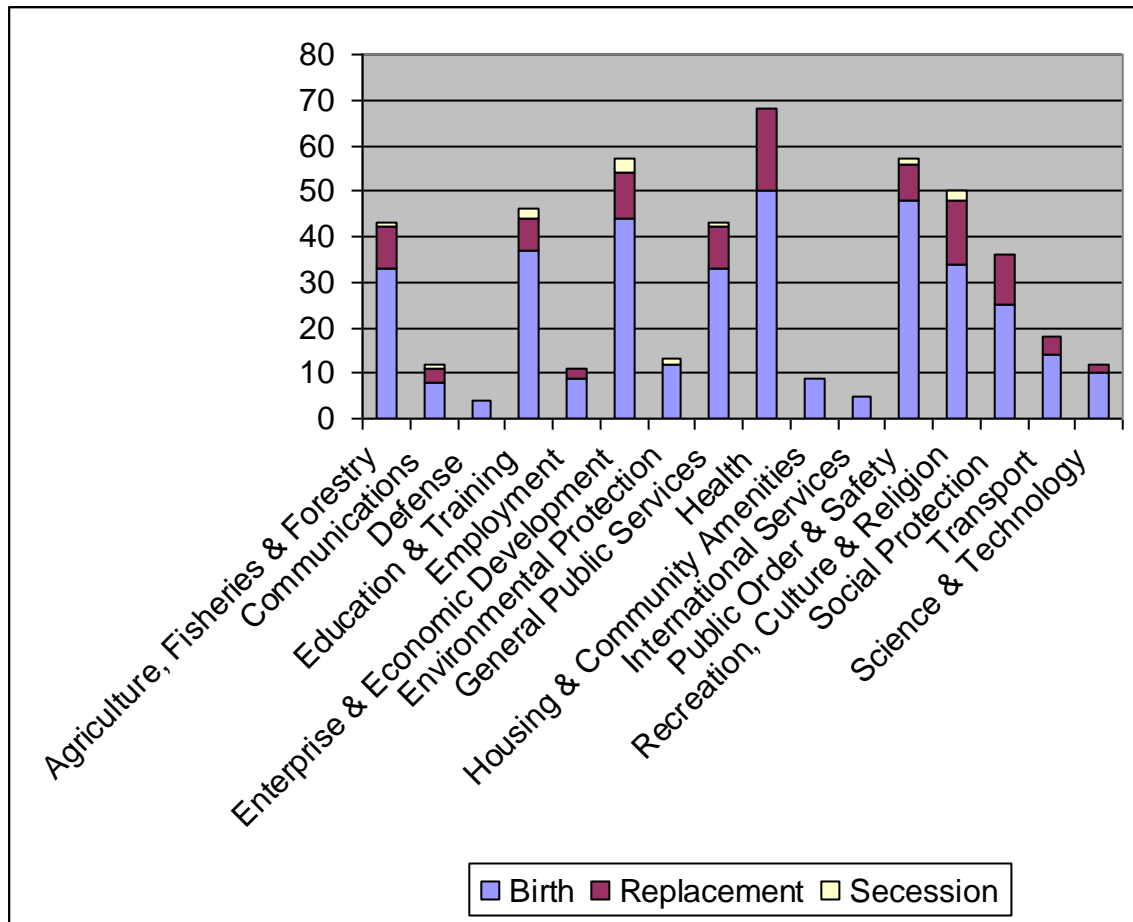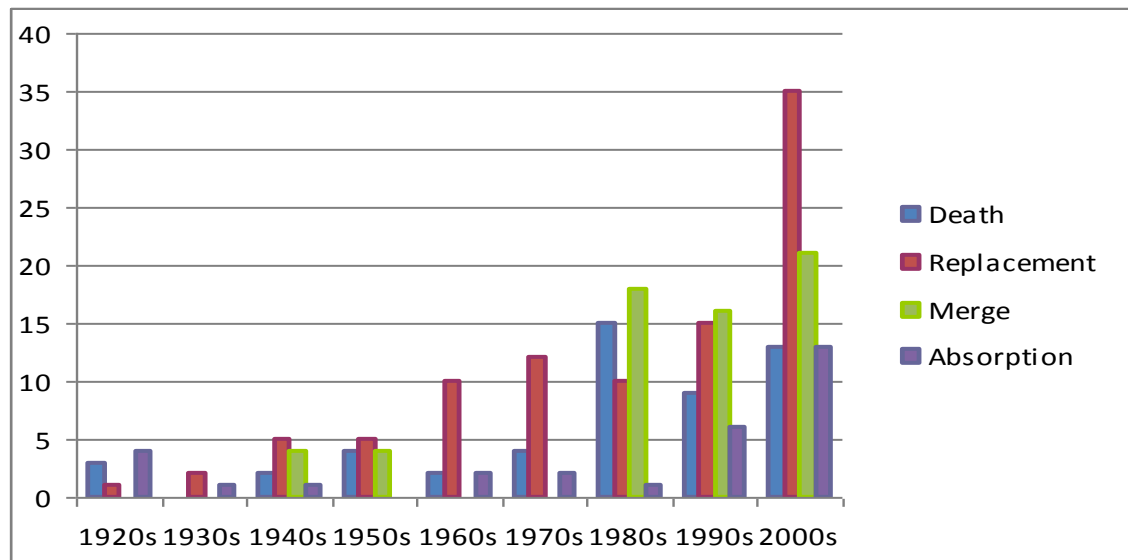

Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

Organisational Terminations

Turning to the four event types leading to organisational terminations (death, replacement, mergers and absorptions), Figure 7 aggregates the event types by decade. It shows that having spiked in the 1980s, the number of straightforward terminations (deaths) declined during the 1990s, and began to increase again in the 2000s. Government programmes for reducing public spending during both these periods involved a number of agency closures. Contracting public finances in the latter part of

the 2000s also explains the sharp increase in the number of organisational absorptions as government sought to reduce the size and cost of the bureaucracy.

A more complex story lies behind the trend toward more frequent organisational replacements. In most cases, these represent occasions when non-statutory bodies were conferred with statutory authority (and normally new functions also); the original organisation thus ceased to exist. Such legal recognition enhanced the autonomy and independence of such organisations, whilst at the same time conferring on them new accountability requirements. In other cases, pre-existing organisations were closed and subsequently re-launched under a new name and with additional functions, but with the same staff, premises and parent department.

Figure 7: Termination events by decade

Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

Since ISAD codes all of the organisations by a number of criteria, including their primary function, legal form and policy domain, these different forms of termination can be combined, as is shown in Figures 8-10. Figure 8 identifies that agency terminations were more likely to occur in those organisations which were involved in the provision of advice to government, and in direct service delivery. A large number of regulatory bodies also ceased to exist, though in almost half of these cases, they were replaced by new regulatory authorities. In contrast, there were few termination events relating to those organisations involved in adjudicatory (grievance-handling) activities, contracting of services, transfers of funds, or taxing matters.

*Figure 8: Number of termination events by primary function*
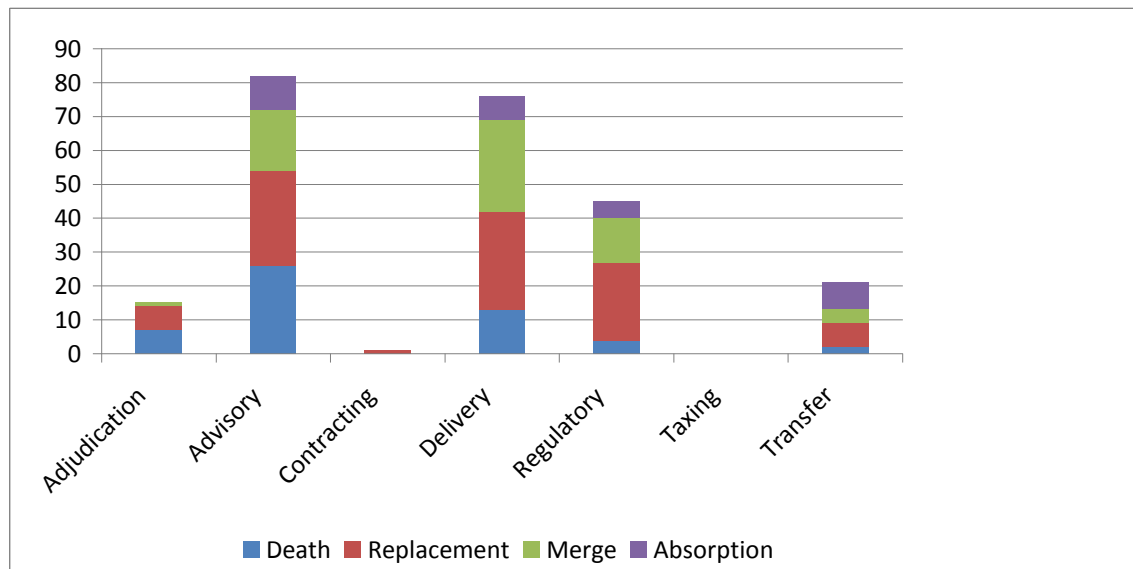
Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

Reflecting the wide variety of legal forms available in Whitehall systems noted above, Figure 9 shows that straightforward deaths happened most frequently in the case of statutory and non-statutory non-departmental bodies (which do not have a separate legal

identity), as well as in the case of organisations created under companies legislation (private limited companies). However, statutory corporations, though normally enjoying considerable autonomy and protection from political interference by virtue of their legal independence (an issue emphasised in Kaufman's work), were not immune from organisational change through replacements and mergers. Unsurprisingly, there were few terminations of constitutionally-created or quasi-judicial offices.

Figure 9: Number of termination events by legal form
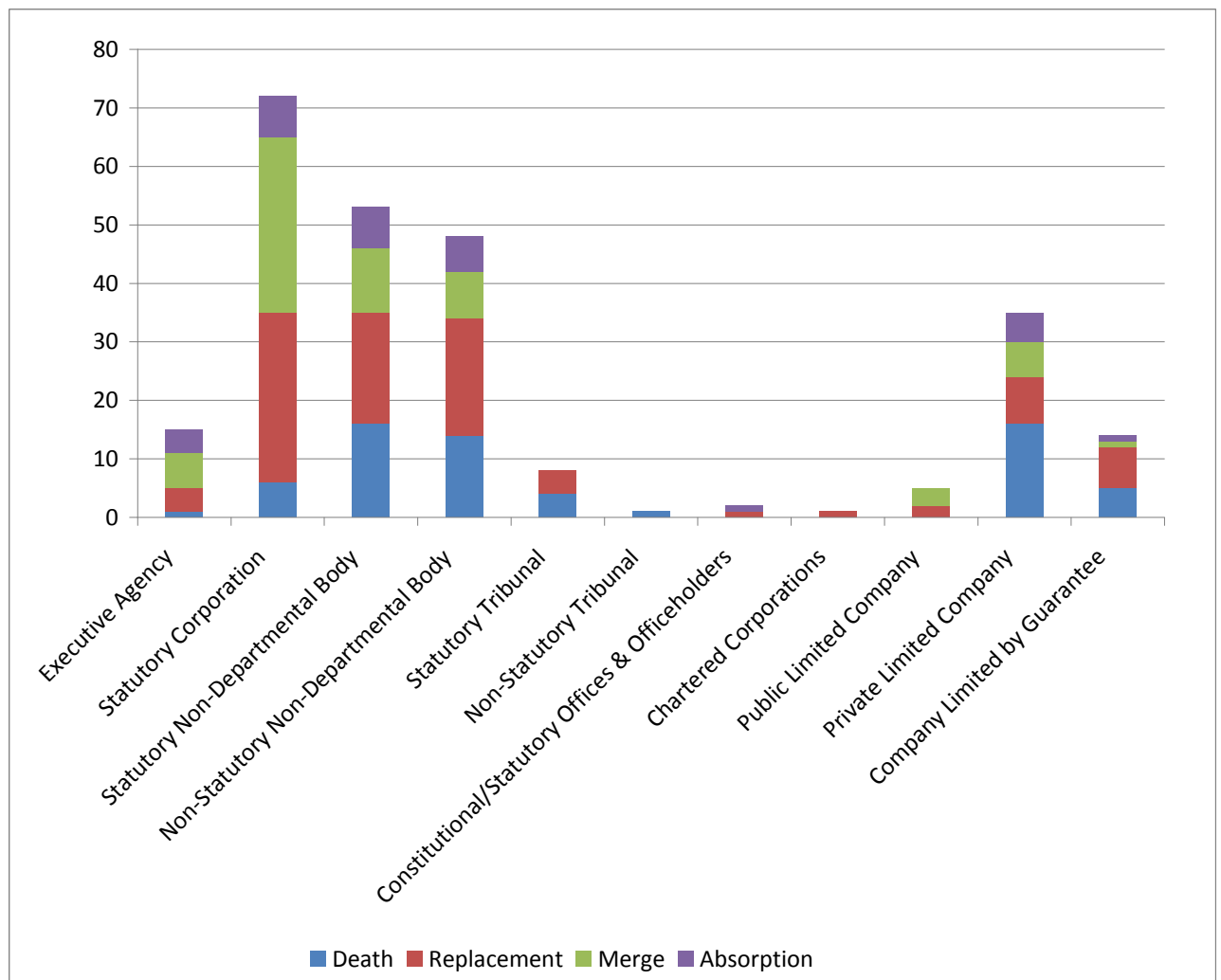
Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

Finally, Figure 10 profiles organisational terminations coded by each of the sixteen policy domains used in ISAD. It reveals quite a number of terminations in respect of organisations working in health; enterprise and economic development; agriculture, fisheries and forestry; and recreation, culture and religion.

Figure 10: Number of termination events by policy domain
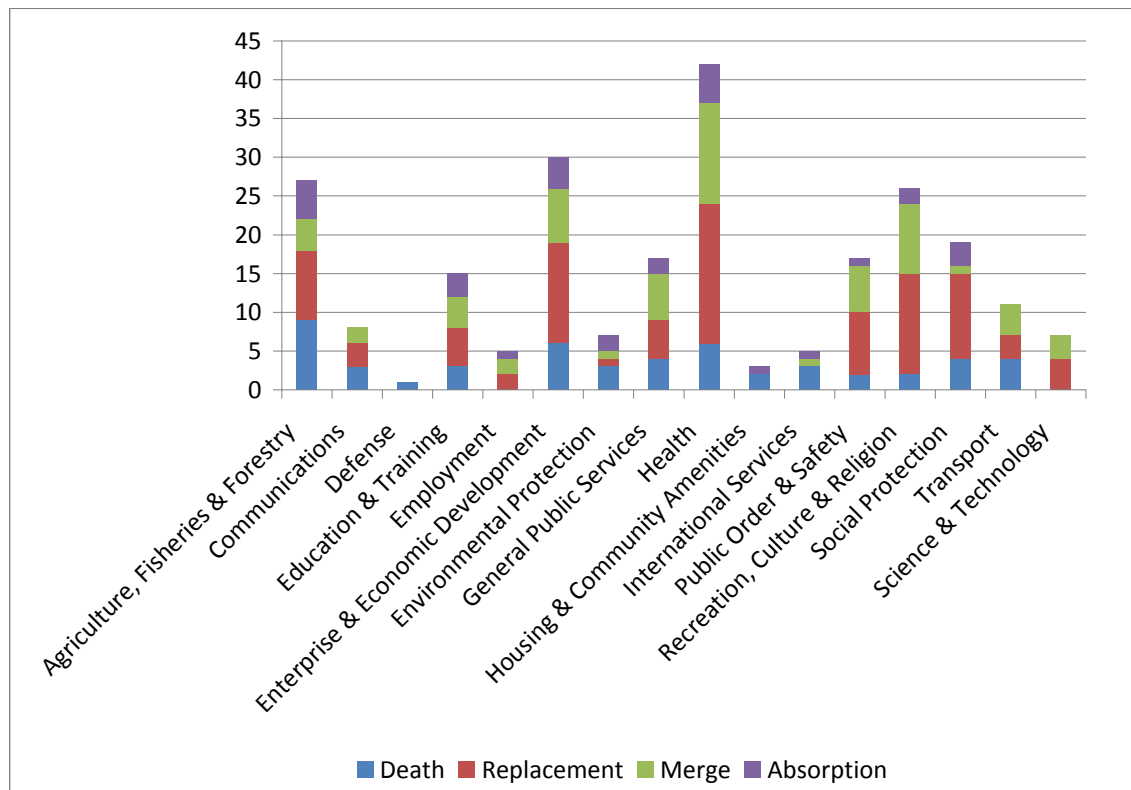
Source: Hardiman et al. (2011)

Towards a greater understanding of organisational change

Kaufman (1976) found that organisational births and deaths occurred in spurts, but subsequent work by Peters and Hogwood (1988) and Lewis (2002) uncovered a more nuanced picture. The longitudinal analysis presented here using the Irish case also reveals a complex picture over the ninety years of the state's existence. While we can identify considerable acceleration in the pace of agency creation and termination over the

last two decades, the gradual appreciation in agency numbers spanning the emergent, development and modernisation periods identified here between the 1920s and the 1980scan only be fully understood with regard to the simultaneous occurrence of organisational terminations and creations. Table 4 summarizes the average number of organisations in existence and the average number of organisational changes taking place in each of the four time periods outlined in Table 1.

Table 4: State Development 1922-2010

Period	1922-47	1948-70	1971-90	1991-2010
Characterisation	Emergent	Development	Modernisation	Management and Reform
Type of Government	Single-party dominant	Alteration between single party and coalition governments. Mainly single-party.	Alteration between single party and coalition governments. Mainly coalitions.	Coalition government dominant.
Type of political-administrative regime	Emphasis on separation of political and administrative roles.	Emergence of policy formulating bureaucracy.	Emergence of managerial doctrines, some blurring of political and administrative roles.	Dominance of managerialism, increased blurring of political and administrative roles.
Average no. of public organizations in existence per year (other than Ministerial Departments)	88	146	204	285
Average no. of events* per year	5	5	9	17

* The events under consideration here are the 8 identified in Figure 2 (Birth, Secession, Absorption, Merger, Replacement, Nationalization, Privatization, Death)

The conservatism which dominated the first quarter-century of the state's 'emergent' phase (1922-47) resulted in very little structural change either at the Ministerial department level (i.e. very low levels of portfolio inter-changing) or in terms of administrative re-organisation. A number of state organisations outside of Departments were inherited from the British regime and were gradually added to, albeit at a much reduced rate than was to occur later. The reluctance of successive government to engage in administrative restructuring meant that on average, very few organisational changes occurred, and those that did were mainly birth rather than maintenance or termination events.

In the second or 'development' period (1948-70), Table 4 identifies an overall average increase in the number of public organisations in existence. Interestingly, however, the pace of annual organisational change during this time did not increase but remained largely static. The ongoing accumulation in the number of public organisations resulted in a major review of the organisation of the bureaucracy which, amongst other things, advocated more integration of agencies with their parent Ministries (Public Service Organisation Review Group, 1969).

In many other developed states, the period from 1971 to 1990 was one in which widespread reforms of the public sector were initiated, including the privatisation of public enterprises and the outsourcing of many public functions. In Ireland, the early part of this 'modernisation' period also witnessed some administrative reforms (though not privatizations) resulting from the Review Group's report. Unsurprisingly, therefore, we

find an overall increase in the pace of organisational change. The increase in the average number of public organisations between the 'emergent' and 'development' periods and the 'development' and 'modernisation' periods is exactly the same. But the number of event changes per year almost doubles. This higher volatility is also reflected in the political domain with an increasing number of coalition governments, many of which were short-lived.

The final 'management and reform' period is characterised by unprecedented economic prosperity and successive ideologically diverse coalition governments. We also find a rapid but unregulated growth in the number of public organisations created by these governments. Arising from this rapid agencification, the average number of organisational events effectively doubled within a short period of time, again involving a considerable degree of organisational replacement. A period of de-agencification involving agency termination, absorptions and mergers began in 2008 which maintained the number of organisational events at this historically high level (MacCarthaigh 2010a). And while proposals for a limited rationalization of the state administration were initiated in 2008 (OECD, 2008), the onset of economic crisis served to accelerate and expand this process, particularly through processes of agency terminations. Thus organisational change remains a prominent feature of the contemporary Irish public administration, though the consequences of this for policy coherence and co-ordination has yet tobe determined.

Bibliography

Adam, C., Bauer, M., Knill, C. & Studinger, P. (2007). The Termination of Public

  Organisations: Theoretical Perspectives to Revitalize a Promising Research Area.

  Public Organisation Review, 7(3), 221–236.

Barrington, T. J. (1980). *The Irish Administrative System.* Dublin: Institute of Public

  Administration.

Boin, A., Kuipers, S. & Steenbergen, M. (2010). The Life and Death of Public

  Organisations: A Question of Institutional Design? *Governance,* 23(3), 385–410.

Chubb, B. (1992). *The Government and Politics of Ireland*. (3rd ed.). London: Longman.

Clancy, P. & Murphy, G. (2006) *Outsourcing Government: Public Bodies and*

  Accountability. Dublin: TASC/New Ireland.

Downs, A. (1967). *Inside Bureaucracy.* Boston: Little Brown.

Fine Gael. (2010). *New Politics*. Dublin: Fine Gael.

Halligan, J. (2010). The Fate of Administration Tradition in the Reform Era. In

  Anglophone Countries in Painter, M. and Peters, B.G. *Tradition and Public*

  Administration. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp.129-42.

Hannan, M. T. & Freeman, J. (1989). *Organisational Ecology.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard
University Press.

Hardiman and Scott (2012). Ordering Things: The Irish State Administration Database
Irish Political Studies, 27 (1), xxx-xxx.

Hardiman, N. and MacCarthaigh, M. 2011. The Un-Politics of New Public Management
in Ireland. In *Administrative Reforms and Democratic Governance*, Jean-Michel
Eymeri-Douzans, and Jon Pierre. (Eds), London: Routledge, pp.55-67.

Hardiman, N. MacCarthaigh, M. & Scott, C. 2011. *The Irish State Administration
Database*. http://www.isad.ie. Accessed 29 July 2011.

Hardiman, N. and Scott, C. (2010) Governance as Polity: An Institutional Approach to
the Evolution of State Functions in Ireland. *Public Administration* Vol. 88 (1):
170–189.

James, O. (2003). *The executive agency revolution in Whitehall*. Basingstoke: Palgrave
Macmillan.

Kooiman, J. (2003). *Governing as Governance.* London: Sage.

Leon, D.M. (1963). *Advisory Bodies in Irish Government.* Dublin: Institute of Public
  Administration.

Lewis, D. E. (2002). The politics of agency termination: Confronting the myth of agency
  immortality. *The Journal of Politics*, 64: 89–107.

MacCarthaigh, M. (2010a). *National Non-Commercial State Agencies in Ireland*. Dublin:
  Institute of Public Administration.

MacCarthaigh, M. (2010b). Parliamentary Scrutiny of Departments and Agencies. In
  MacCarthaigh, M. and M. Manning (Eds), *The Houses of the Oireachtas: Parliament in
  Ireland*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, pp.358-76.

MacCarthaigh, M. (2011). Managing State-owned Enterprises in an Age of Crises: An analysis
  of Irish experience. *Policy Studies.* 32(3), 215-230.

MacCarthaigh, M. (2012a). From Agencification to De-Agencification: The Changing
  Bureaucratic Model. In O'Malley, E. and MacCarthaigh, M. (eds) *Governing
  Ireland: From Cabinet Government to Delegated Governance*. Dublin: Institute
  of Public Administration, pp.128-51.

MacCarthaigh, M. (2012b). Politics, policy preferences and the evolution of Irish
  bureaucracy: A framework for analysis' *Irish Political Studies*, 27 (1), 23-47.

MacCarthaigh, M. & Roness, P. G. (2012). Analysing longitudinal continuity and change in public sector organisations. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 35(x), xxx–xxx.

McGauran, A.-M., Verhoest, K. & Humphreys, P. C. (2005) *The Corporate Governance of Agencies in Ireland: Non-Commercial National Agencies.* Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Niskanen, W. A. (1971). *Bureaucracy and Representative Government* Chicago, IL: Aldine-Atherton.

OECD (2008) *Ireland: Towards an Intergrated Public Service*. Paris: OECD.

Peters, B.G. (2010). *The Politics of Bureaucracy.* London: Routledge.

Peters, G. B., & Hogwood, B. W. 1988. Births, deaths and marriages: Organisational change in the U.S. Federal Bureaucracy. The American Review of Public Administration, 18: 119–133.

Pollitt, C. and G. Bouckaert. (2004). *Public Management Reform. A Comparative Analysis*, 2nd Edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Pollitt, C. and Talbot, C. 2004. (eds) *Unbundled Government: A Critical Analysis of the Global Trend to Agencies, Quangos and Contractualisation* (Routledge).

Pollitt, C., Caulfield, J., Smullen, A., & Talbot, C. (2004). *Agencies: How Governments Do Things Through Semi-Autonomous Organisations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Provan, K. G. & Kenis, P. (2008) Modes of Network Governance: Structure, Management, and Effectiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory,* 18**,** 229-252.

Public Service Organisation Review Group (1969) *Report of the Public Service Organisation Review Group* (Dublin: Stationery Office).

Rhodes, R. A. W., John Wanna, and Patrick Weller. 2009. *Comparing Westminster*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rolland, V. W. & Roness, P. G. (2011). Mapping Organisational Change in the State: Challenges and Classifications. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 34(6), 399-409.

Van Thiel, S. (2011). xxxx. In Verhoest K., van Thiel S., Bouckaert G. and Lægreid P. (Eds.), *Government Agencies in Europe and Beyond: Practices and Lessons from 30 Countries.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. xx-xx.

Verhoest, K., Ronesss, P. G., Verschuere, B., Rubecksen, K. & MacCarthaigh, M. (2010). *Autonomy and Control of State Agencies. Comparing States and Agencies.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Verhoest K., van Thiel S., Bouckaert G. & Lægreid P. (Eds.) (2011). *Government Agencies in Europe and Beyond: Practices and Lessons from 30 Countries.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wettenhall, R. 2003. Exploring Types of Public Sector Organisations: Past Exercises and Current Issues, *Public Organisation Review,* 3, 219–45.