

The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

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Certification

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of PhD at the University of Technology Sydney Business School, Management Discipline Group. This represents the original work and contribution of the author, except as acknowledged by general and specific references within the dissertation.

I hereby certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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This thesis is dedicated to

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Table of Contents

Certification.....	ii
List of Research Publications	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables.....	xii
List of Figures	xiii
Abstract	xiv
List of Abbreviations.....	xv
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1. Context and Background.....	1
1.2. Research Rationale.....	7
1.3. Theoretical Framework.....	7
1.4. Research Questions.....	9
1.5. Research Methodology	10
1.6. Research Contribution	11
1.7. Outline of Thesis.....	12
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	13
2.1. Introduction.....	13
2.2. Economic Rationalism: The Seeds of Public Sector Reform Across Anglo-American Polities	15
2.3. Public Sector Reforms Across Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia).....	21
2.3.1. United Kingdom (UK).....	21
2.3.2. The United States of America (USA).....	28
2.3.3. Canada	34
2.3.4. New Zealand (NZ).....	40
2.3.5. The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work Across Anglo- American Polities (Excluding Australia).....	47
2.4. Public Sector Reforms in Australia.....	57
2.4.1. Policies, Processes and Practices of Public Sector Reform.....	57
2.4.2. Outcomes of Public Sector Reform	65
2.4.3. Implications for the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work ...	68
Chapter 3 Methodology	74
3.1. Introduction.....	74
3.2. Research Strategy.....	74
3.3. Research Paradigm Justification	78
3.4. Research Questions.....	90
3.5. Research Design Framework	90
3.6. Data Collection Methods	91
3.6.1. Unit of Analysis.....	91
3.6.2. Selecting Participants	92
3.6.3. Gaining Access and Rapport Building	93
3.6.4. Purposeful Sampling.....	94
3.7. Data Collection	95
3.7.1. Semi-Structured Interviews	95

3.7.2. Document Analysis.....	96
3.8. Data Analysis.....	97
3.8.1. Coding.....	99
3.9. Limitations, Risks and Evaluation.....	100
3.9.1. Risks and Limitations.....	100
3.10. Evaluating the Quality of the Research.....	103
3.11. Trustworthiness Criteria.....	104
3.12. Ethical Considerations.....	107
3.13. Summary.....	109
Chapter 4 Departmental Secretaries: The Public Actors who Constitute Public Sector Management Work.....	110
4.1. Introduction.....	110
4.2. Departmental Secretary Backgrounds – Demographics.....	111
4.3. Recruitment of Departmental Secretaries – Public Service Archetypes....	114
4.4. Appointment by Ministers.....	116
4.5. Technical-Professional Knowledge – Professionalisation.....	122
4.5.1. Technical Expertise and Professional Knowledge.....	122
4.5.2. Experience Gained From Practice – Learning on the Job.....	124
4.6. Departmental Secretaries and Cultural Tribalism.....	126
4.7. Public Service Ethos – Ethics.....	130
4.8. Discussion and Conclusion.....	137
4.8.1. Discussion.....	138
4.8.2. Conclusion.....	144
Chapter 5 The Environments in Which Departmental Secretaries Constitute Public Sector Management Work.....	146
5.1. Introduction.....	146
5.2. The Political Environment.....	148
5.3. The Constitutional, Legislative and Regulatory Environment (Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Administrative Arrangements Orders)– Legislation.....	167
5.4. The Financial Environment–Appropriated Funds and Allocated Budgets– Cost Management.....	174
5.5. The Modern Media and ‘Social Media’ Environment–Complexities and Vicissitudes.....	182
5.6. Discussion and Conclusion.....	189
5.6.1. Discussion.....	189
5.6.2. Conclusion.....	200
Chapter 6 Roles and Responsibilities – Boundary Riding a Duality of Activities on a Spectrum.....	202
6.1. Introduction.....	202
6.2. Rational-Instrumental Activities.....	205
6.2.1. Transformational or Transactional Leadership.....	205
6.2.2. Assurance via Governance.....	211
6.2.3. Subordination of Administration.....	214
6.3. Political-Interpretive Activities.....	217
6.3.1. Trojan Horse of Stewardship.....	217
6.3.2. Stakeholder Management – Concurrence or Conflict.....	222
6.3.3. Contestability of Policy.....	228
6.4. Substantive Constitution Within the Spectrum.....	234

6.5. Discussion and Conclusion	235
6.5.1. Discussion	235
6.5.2. Conclusion	241
Chapter 7 The Impact of Contemporary Management Ideas: Their Influence on the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work ...	243
7.1. Introduction	243
7.2. Disposition to Contemporary Management Ideas	244
7.2.1. Fads and Fashions	245
7.2.2. Exposure to Local and Globalising Webs	247
7.3. Legitimacy and Acceptance of Contemporary Management Ideas	252
7.3.1. Role of Government and the Four Central Agencies	252
7.3.2. Role of the Public Sector Workforce	256
7.4. Adoption of Contemporary Management Ideas	257
7.4.1. Tailoring, Translation and Transformation	257
7.4.2. Equilibrium and Incremental Change	263
7.5. Discussion and Conclusion	266
7.5.1. Discussion	266
7.5.2. Conclusion	273
Chapter 8 Conclusion, Conceptual Model, and Contributions.....	275
8.1. Summary	275
8.2. Conceptual Model of the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work	277
8.2.1. Primary Factors	280
8.2.2. Influencing Factors and Mediating Processes	284
8.2.3. Impacts	286
8.2.4. Competing Logics	286
8.3. Contributions to Theory and Practice	287
8.3.1. Contribution to Public Administration Theory	287
8.3.2. Contribution to New Institutional Theory	288
8.3.3. Implications for Practice – Reform	289
8.3.4. Implications for Practice – Contemporary Management Ideas	290
8.4. Recommendations for Future Research	291
References	294
Appendices	344
Appendix A : Literature Review Travel, Translation and Transformation of Ideas	345
A.1 Introduction	345
A.2 Role of Imitation/Copying and Diffusion of Contemporary Management Ideas	345
A.3 The Translation and Transformation of Contemporary Management Ideas as they Travel.....	351
A.4 Implications of Translation for the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work.....	356
Appendix B: Documents Analysed	359
Appendix C: Extended Literature Review: Influences, Objectives and Outcomes of Public Sector Reform in Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia).....	360
C.1 United Kingdom.....	360
C.2 United States of America	369

C.3	Canada.....	383
C.4	New Zealand	396
C.5	Summary of Components that Comprise the Constitution of Public Sector Management in Australia.....	405
Appendix D:	Departmental Secretaries’ Demographic Details.....	408
Appendix E:	Departmental Secretaries’ Public Service Career Details.....	410
Appendix F:	Empirical Findings from a Public Actor Perspective.....	412
Appendix G:	Summary of the Impact of the Environments and Their Elements on the Constitution of Public Sector Management	414
Appendix H:	Empirical Findings from the Public Sector Environment Perspective	417
Appendix I:	Government Leadership Forums.....	419
Appendix J:	Departmental Secretary Stakeholders	420
Appendix K:	Empirical Findings from a Roles and Responsibilities Perspective.....	421
Appendix L:	Empirical Findings from a Contemporary Management Ideas Perspective	423

List of Tables

Table 1.1 The Essence of New Public Management as Proposed by Pollitt	4
Table 2.1 The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work Across the Anglo-American Polities (excluding Australia) Post Reforms: Common and Uncommon Elements.	51
Table 3.1 Characteristics of Qualitative Research	76
Table 3.2 Philosophical Assumptions with Implications for Practice	79
Table 3.3 The Methodology of Constructivist Inquiry	88
Table 5.1 Overview of the Impact of the Environments and their Elements on the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work.....	147
Table C1. United Kingdom: Influences of Public Sector Reform	362
Table C2. United Kingdom: Objectives of Public Sector Reform.....	364
Table C3. United Kingdom: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform.....	368
Table C4. USA: Influences of Public Sector Reform	375
Table C5. USA: Objectives of Public Sector Reform.....	377
Table C6. USA: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform.....	382
Table C7. Canada: Influences of Public Sector Reform	385
Table C8. Canada: Objectives of Public Sector Reform.....	389
Table C9. Canada: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform.....	395
Table C10. New Zealand: Influences of Public Sector Reform.....	398
Table C11. New Zealand: Objectives of Public Sector Reform	400
Table C12. New Zealand: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform	404
Table C13. Constitution of Public Sector Management Work in Australia Post Reforms	406
Table D1. Current Departmental Secretaries' Demographic Details.....	408
Table D2. Former Departmental Secretaries' Demographic Details	409
Table E1. Current Departmental Secretaries' Public Service Career Details	410
Table E2. Former Departmental Secretaries' Public Service Career Details.....	411
Table F1. Empirical Findings From a Public Actor Perspective	412
Table G1. Summary of the Impact of the Environments and their Elements on the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work.....	414
Table H1. Empirical Findings from the Public Sector Environment Perspective..	417
Table J1. Departmental Secretary Stakeholders.....	420
Table K1. Empirical Findings from a Roles and Responsibilities Perspective.....	421
Table L1. Empirical Findings from a Contemporary Management Ideas Perspective	423

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 The Data Analysis Spiral	98
Figure 5.1 Model Depicting Dilemma of the Urgent Over the Important	186
Figure 6.1 Execution of Departmental Secretaries' Roles and Responsibilities Across a Spectrum	203
Figure 8.1 Conceptual Model of the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work	278
Figure A1. Ideal Types, Arrayed by Degree of Resonance, and Latitude for, Translation of "new" Managerial Practices.....	350

Abstract

Public sector management work contributes directly to political systems of western democracy. This contribution has far-reaching consequences for the public sector, other sectors and citizens. From the 1980s public sectors have experienced significant reforms by successive governments across Anglo-American polities. Such reforms and the contemporary management ideas on which they were based, including new managerialism and ‘new public management’ (NPM) travelled, were translated and transformed, some accepted and others rejected. These reforms have changed the public sector, but how these reforms have influenced and changed the constitution of public sector management work is less clear. This research sought to understand ‘*how do current and former Departmental Secretaries in the Australian Public Service (APS) constitute public sector management work, in the context of evolving reforms?*’ using a qualitative case study. What it finds is that Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work to suit the institutionalised, governmental, bureaucratic and political domain of the public sector, in which they work, rather than the market-oriented managerialism or new public management advocated by reformers. This research makes an original contribution to public administration theory and also to a lesser extent to new institutional theory as it pertains to the travel of ideas.

List of Abbreviations

AAOs	Administrative Arrangements Orders
AHRI	Australian Human Resources Institute
AICD	Australian Institute of Company Directors
AIM	Australian Institute of Management
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
CAC	Commonwealth Authorities Corporations of Australia Act
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DS	Departmental Secretary
EQ	Emotional Intelligence
FMA	Financial Management Act (1997)
FMIP	Financial Management Improvement Program
FOI	Freedom of Information
G20	Group of 20
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRM	Human Resources Management
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSEAD	Institut Européen des Affaires d'Administration
IPAA	Institute of Public Administration Australia
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ITC	Information and Communication Technology
JCPAA	Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audits
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KRA	Key Results Area
MAC	Management Advisory Committee
MBO	Management by Objectives
MTM	Market-type Mechanism
NPM	New Public Management

NPR	National Performance Review
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PART	Program Assessment Rating Tool
PGPA	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (2013)
PM	Prime Minister
PM&C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
PMB	Program Management and Budget
PMS	Performance Management System
PPBS	Planning Programming and Budgeting System
PRP	Performance Related Pay
PS	Public Sector Management
PSA	Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013)
PSR	Public Sector Reform
SES	Senior Executive Service
SRA	Strategic Results Area
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
TQM	Total Quality Management
W.O.G	Whole of Government
WB	World Bank

Chapter 1 Introduction

‘Public and private management are fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects.’ (Allison 1984, p. 14 drawing on Sayre)

1.1. Context and Background

Context

This thesis examines what constitutes public sector management work¹ in the empirical context of the Australian Public Service (APS). The research is important because it will provide evidence of how management is practised three decades on from supposed major reforms. From the early 1980s, public sector reform processes in Anglo-American² polities were initiated as governments were embracing economic neoliberalism. Governments, consultants, supranational organisations and some academics promoted a new managerialism that purported to involve the adoption of modern private sector management practices in the public sector (Barzelay 1992; Osborne & Gaebler 1992). It was claimed that government needed to be reinvented with the adoption of these management techniques and that in doing so there would be a paradigm shift from public administration to public management (Emy & Hughes 1993).

In the intervening years, there has been considerable speculation as to what now constitutes public sector management work and there have been polemical debates in the public sector reform literature about what techniques could be adopted and how such techniques could be or not be practised. Much of the recent research is desk-based, rational–normative in narrative and underpinned by assumptions that new managerialism has or has not been adopted. The focus of the recent research may also be on the techniques rather than on what actually constitutes public sector management work, as carried out by the most senior public officials. In this research, therefore, I

¹ The phrase ‘the constitution of public sector management work’ denotes the unit of analysis. This phrase is used throughout this thesis but it will be referred to in a number of different ways including ‘public sector management work’, ‘public sector management’, ‘management work’ and ‘work’.

² Anglo-American polities in this thesis refer to the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Canada, New Zealand (NZ), and Australia.

intend to address this gap in the literature, making an original contribution to theory and practice through a qualitative case study.

Background

Management, whether in the public or private sector, has an important part to play in our economic, social, and political wellbeing and the consequences of management are far-reaching (Drucker 1965; Ghoshal 2005; Khurana 2007). As Spender (2007, p. 36) proposes, ‘everything we have and do depends on our organisations as engines of wealth and social order, and these have to be managed’. Our society is one of ‘organisations, not of markets’ (Spender 2007, p. 36, drawing on Simon 1991). Public sector management is of significant consequence, albeit with a fundamentally unique remit.

Across the Anglo-American polities the public sector, its management, and its employees are responsible for the delivery of products and services for citizens (Hagen & Liddle 2007; Peters & Pierre 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Talbot 2001) and, in effect, are responsible for supporting the continuing function of our democracy, in a constitutional sense (du Gay 2006). As former Australian Prime Minister Hawke argued:

the public sector is a substantial employer and producer in its own right and its functions in regard to the private sector, such as taxation, regulation, economic analysis and policy advice, have assumed critical importance in determining the overall efficiency of our economy. (1989, p. 8)

Our economic, political and social wellbeing is dependent on the public sector and its management practices. Thus, the public sector through its management and employees touches all our lives in direct and indirect ways.

The public sectors of Anglo-American polities have experienced significant reforms over the past century and especially from the 1980s to 2010. During this period, a range of influences indicated the need for public sector reforms. Greater demands for better performance were made of our public sectors and of public sector managers and such demands were and continue to be a ‘moral imperative’ (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 90). Pressure on public resources from the 1970s translated into misdirected anger at public sector managers who were asked to justify ‘what social good they serve[d]?’

(Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326). In particular, the influences of microeconomic theories took centre stage and were accepted by many as appropriate for the reform of Anglo-American public sectors. At their heart, these microeconomic theories advocated managerialism and a 'new public management' (NPM), based essentially on the principles and practices of private sector management. Little, if any, attention was placed on the appropriateness of such private sector management principles and practices for the public sector.

Pusey (1991) argued that Australian management and public sector management, in particular, became obsessed with an economic rationalism that wreaked largely negative consequences on society. Most of the top public sector bureaucrats in the Australian Public Sector (APS), with a median age of 46 (in 1986), were influenced by an undergraduate curriculum of predominantly positivist economics (Pusey 1991) that predisposed them to economic rationalism. A preference 'for an economically rationalist orientation' towards policy and government was observed in the highest echelons of the APS of the 1980s (Pusey 1991, p. 63). These senior bureaucrats held views similar to those of the 'New Right' managerialists towards the involvement of the state in social and economic matters: they were in favour of smaller government, less involvement by the state, incentives for individuals, and an economy less controlled by government (Pusey 1991, p. 64). Economic rationalism and its 'vocabulary of a new *laissez-faire* minimalist state' were also observed in the central agencies of the APS in the 1980s (Pusey 1991, p. 107).

Various interpretations of the NPM exist. 'New public management' (NPM) is described by Borins (1995, p. 122) as a

normative reconceptualization of public administration consisting of several inter-related conceptions providing high-quality services that citizens value; increasing the autonomy of public managers, particularly from central agency controls; measuring and rewarding organisations and individuals on the basis of whether they meet demanding performance targets; making available the human and technological resources that managers need to perform well; and, appreciative of the virtues of competition, maintaining of an open-minded attitude about which public purposes should be performed by the private sector, rather than the public sector.

Dinsdale (1997, p. 372) proposes that the elements of NPM include 'collectively: 1) cultural change; 2) structural change; 3) market-type mechanisms; and 4) accountability

and performance measures'. Hood and Jackson (1991, p. 178) argue that 'NPM is a neologism [being] a convenient but impressive shorthand term to denote a philosophy of administration' which dominated the public sector reforms across Anglo-American polities from the 1980s. Further comprehensive coverage of the elements of NPM is offered by Borins (1995), Dinsdale (1997), Hood (1991), Pollitt (1995) and Savoie (1995). Table 1.1 captures the essence of NPM as proposed by Pollitt (1995, p. 134):

Table 1.1 The Essence of New Public Management as Proposed by Pollitt

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost cutting, capping budgets and seeking greater transparency in resource allocation (including activity, formula and accruals based accounting). • Disaggregating traditional bureaucratic organisations into separate agencies ('executive agencies'; 'government business enterprises'; 'responsibility centres'; 'state-owned enterprises', etc.) often related to the parent by a contract or quasi-contract ('performance agreement', 'framework document', etc.). • Decentralisation of management authority, <i>within</i> public agencies ('flatter' hierarchies). • Separating the function of providing public services from that of purchasing them. • Introducing market and quasi market-type mechanisms (MTMs). • Requiring staff to work to performances targets, indicators and output objectives (performance management). • Shifting the basis of public employment from permanency and standard national pay and conditions towards term contracts, performance-related pay (PRP) and local determination of pay and conditions. • Increasing emphasis on service 'quality', standard setting and 'customer responsiveness'.
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Source: Pollitt 1995, p. 134.

According to the literature, the NPM movement has heavily influenced public sector reform efforts. NPM simplified concepts of 'administration' that for more than a century were the responsibilities of senior public bureaucrats (du Gay 2006, p. 166, note 7). Administration previously was comprised of both 'policy advising' *and* 'management', whereby management involved the planning, coordination, and overseeing of resources to implement the policies of government (ibid). However, under public sector reforms influenced by the NPM, senior public bureaucrats are expected to simply 'manage' as per their counterparts in the private sector, whose focus is limited to predominantly being business responsive (du Gay 2006). Management, rather than administration, is what is expected of public sector bureaucrats post reforms and this is

encapsulated in the oft quoted phrase of public sector reformers across Anglo-American polities: to ‘just let the managers manage’. But *exactly* what this new public sector management is remains unclear. We know what NPM is meant to be from a conceptual perspective, but we do not know what it is and how it is practised in the APS.

Public sector reform efforts across Anglo-American polities have largely been founded ‘on a lack of knowledge of what public sector management really is’ (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 89). Many have challenged the soundness of trying to resolve the problems and concerns of the public sector by simply importing or grafting private sector management policies, processes and procedures (that is, NPM or new managerialism) to the public sector (Allison 1984; Mascarenhas 1990; Savoie 1994b; Weller 2001). These academics have argued that private sector management principles and practices are not appropriate for the public sector *because* this sector is fundamentally different from the private sector from which such NPM approaches have been drawn (Allison 1984). These challenges are akin to and build on the proposition put forward by Sayre ‘that public and private management are fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects’ (Allison 1984, p. 14; Bower 1977). Others argue that a paradox has developed across public sectors in Anglo-American polities, particularly in the UK over the past three decades (from 1980 to 2010), ‘that everything has changed and nothing has changed’ (Talbot 2001, p. 299).

Public sector reforms were implemented across Anglo-American polities with little attention paid to the environment or context in which public sector management operated. The public and private sectors and their environments or contexts are different in a number of ways (Clark 2001; Mascarenhas 1993; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 1995). These differences are observed across a number of domains such as politics, governance, constitutional frameworks, institutional/interpersonal relationships, accountability of parliamentary government and principles of democracy (Foley 2008; Goodsell 1985; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Kettl 1997; Maor 1999; Mulgan 2008b). These differences make management in the public sector more complex. Public sector management has to incorporate ‘balancing political, economic, and social concerns for equity, ethics, and fairness, as well as integrating perspectives for bettering “the public good” in complex, highly diverse, competitive, and inequitable environments’ (Ott, Hyde & Shafritz 1991, p. xvi, in Bertelli & Lynn 2003, p. 262).

What is often forgotten is that a core aspect of public sector management is the implementation of constitutional obligations (du Gay 2006; Lynn 2007; Peters & Pierre 2007, p. 6). As du Gay argues: ‘the pursuit of better management, different from the pursuit of better bureaucratic public administration, has to [acknowledge] the political and governmental limits to which it is [...] or should be [...] subject’ (2000, p. 144). Further, as Rohr argues ‘this does not [mean] a complete renunciation of contemporary managerialism but [instead] involves an attempt to [moderate] its excesses by subjecting it to the discipline of constitutional scrutiny’ (1998, p. 104). Across Anglo-American polities, the quest of reformers to modernise public sector administration paid perhaps inadequate attention to some or all of the differences between the two sectors (Julliett & Mingus 2008, p. 218). Reformers failed to appreciate the different and complex nature of public sector management and the environment in which it is practised (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 325). There is a need to better understand the public sector environment, which forms the context in which public sector management work is constituted (Bouckaert & Halligan 2008; Hagen & Liddle 2007; Lynn 2006; Pollitt, Van Thiel, & Homburg 2007; Savoie 1994b; Wilson 1989).

Reformers may have used an ‘irrelevant yardstick’ for the assessment and measurement of the public sector and its management (Peters & Pierre 2007) as this ‘yardstick’ was based on limited knowledge of the public sector and what constitutes public sector management work. Adequate assessment measures for the evaluation of the public sector are rare, and, where such measures do exist, they are largely subjective, anecdotal in nature and inadequate (Mascarenhas 1993). Sound measures of public sector performance aligned specifically to the public sector, including the performance of its managers, are required (Carter 1989; Downs & Larkey 1988). To develop such measures, there is a need to determine what public sector management is and what it is not, to be able to compare and contrast it with the private sector and hence determine what, if anything, is appropriate to import from the private sector (Allison 1984, Elmore 1986; Mascarenhas 1993). As the United Nations warned, however, ‘private sector practices must be imported “judiciously” in a way that respects’ (Foley 2008, p. 299) ‘the unique character of the public sector, its workforce, esprit, and values’ (Lavalle 2006, p. 217).

Some research (see for example, Weller 2001 and Weller & Rhodes 2001) has been undertaken in Australia on what constitutes public sector management work. It does not,

however, present a comprehensive empirical picture of the constitution of public sector management work, especially of the work of the most senior public sector management cadre, the Departmental Secretaries, in the context of evolving reforms.

1.2. Research Rationale

While previous studies contribute to our understanding of the public sector and its management work they do not appear to address directly how public sector management is constituted contemporarily in the context of evolving reforms. In spite of the reform fervour of the 1980s and beyond, the participants in this research, current and recently former Departmental Secretaries, work within the economic rationalist framework that still exists structurally; however, how they actually constitute public sector management work is unclear. In particular, there is a gap between what reform movements and initiatives indicate and what is actually practised in the constitution of public sector management.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

Public administration³ theory frames this research. Public administration is used as a broad and all-encompassing term in the thesis to denote that body and related bodies of knowledge including public management, public sector management, public sector management reform, and public sector reform. The context of the research is public sector management work in the APS. The participants in the study are heads of APS organisations (commonly known as Departmental Secretaries). The Departmental Secretaries comprise the most senior management cadre in the APS and hence their management work is of considerable consequence for this research area. The APS was chosen as a research setting because the researcher is currently employed within this sector and so has knowledge of and access to its senior participants. By confining the research to Australia it was feasible that the research could be conducted and completed

³ Public administration is used as a broad and all-encompassing term in the thesis to denote that body and related bodies of knowledge including public management, public sector management, public sector management reform, public sector reform and the travel of management ideas. However these related bodies of literature are referred to specifically throughout this thesis.

within the timeframes and budget. Nonetheless, the research can be seen in the wider context of reforms in the English-speaking world.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two is broader than Australia, covering the Anglo-American polities of the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Canada, New Zealand (NZ) as well as Australia, during the period 1980 to 2010. This literature provides a background against which public sector management and its constitution are considered in the light of ongoing public sector reforms. The literature covers the multiplicity of public sector reform initiatives and movements in Anglo-American polities during the period of interest, and is reviewed in order to determine what public sector management might actually be in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The literature analyses the various phases of reform and their variations that have occurred during the period. These include the beginning of the adoption of a public sector management paradigm informed by neo-classical economic theories and relate to marketisation and the more focussed adoption of contemporary private sector management techniques.

Anglo-American polities have been chosen as the appropriate focus for the literature review because of the way reform initiatives transfer from one location to another within these arenas, often on the basis of the exchange of ideas that lead to a range of isomorphic practices but in which national polities retain, to some extent, a country-specific approach. However, the effect of such reform initiatives on the constitution of public sector management work is not well known. Another body of literature, covering new institutional theory and contributing to the travel of contemporary management ideas, is also considered albeit to a lesser extent (see Appendix A). This literature considers how the ideas associated with these public sector reforms travelled and were translated and transformed to align with the different polities' environments and contexts, and the effect they have had on the constitution of public sector management work, especially in the Australian context. A number of references are used from this literature as the research has an interest in what stimulated Departmental Secretaries in the APS to consider contemporary management ideas in their work.

The empirical enquiry seeks to assess whether there is a gap between what reform movements and initiatives indicate that the constitution of public sector management might be and what is actually practised. The analysis of the literature allows some

conclusions to be drawn in terms of formal statements concerning the constitution of public sector management in these Anglo-American polities, particularly how these often vague or general concepts are translated into the current Australian context.

1.4. Research Questions

The research will explore how current and former Departmental Secretaries constitute 'public sector management' work in the APS by considering the actors, the environments and the roles and responsibilities associated with such work. It will consider what influence contemporary management ideas have had on the constitution of public sector management work. In the absence of any comprehensive empirical research undertaken in Anglo-American polities and included in the body of knowledge concerning what constitutes public sector management work, the research will contribute to our knowledge in this area, empirically inform public sector reform efforts and provide insights for the further development of public sector managers.

The central research question is: *how do current and former Departmental Secretaries in the APS constitute public sector management work, in a context of evolving reforms?*

The supporting research questions that will be considered in this research are:

1. Who are the Departmental Secretaries who practise public sector management work?
2. How does the environment and context of the public sector in which Departmental Secretaries practise, shape their public sector management work?
3. How do Departmental Secretaries construct or perceive their roles and responsibilities in the context of continuing reforms?
4. How have contemporary management ideas influenced Departmental Secretaries and their work?

1.5. Research Methodology

Qualitative methodology will be used for this research. The research design framework will be a qualitative case study (Goodrick 2012) comprised of a ‘methodological congruence’ (Morse & Richards 2002) such that the research purpose, questions, strategy and methods are interconnected and interrelated in a unified and cohesive manner (Creswell 2007). In order to develop a collective story about the constitution of public sector management work the researcher will collect qualitative data via participants (Huber & Whelan 1999) using semi-structured interviews and some supporting document analysis.

The unit of analysis will be the constitution⁴ of public sector management work, as practised by Departmental Secretaries in the APS. They represent a clearly understood level and discrete group of public ‘managers’ and ‘management’ (that is, the highest level of public sector management, which is equivalent to a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in the private sector).

The researcher will adopt both constructionist and pragmatist paradigms for the purposes of this research (Crotty 1998; Goodrick 2012; Guba & Lincoln 1989). The choice of these two perspectives was made for a number of reasons. The constructionist perspective posits that social actors construct knowledge by interpretations they make of phenomena in their environment over time and place (Crotty 1998; Goodrick 2012; Guba & Lincoln 1989) and hence that ‘there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it’ (Crotty 1998, p. 8). The constructionist position to be adopted by the researcher acknowledges that social actors construct knowledge of management work through the interpretations they make, which allows this research to be conducted by considering the views (via storytelling, narrative and discourse) of the various actors, in this case both former and current Departmental Secretaries in the APS, as well as those of the researcher. The pragmatist paradigm also places the role of social actors as central, as it has been developed from the work of Mead (1863–1931) on symbolic interactionism (Crotty 1998, p. 62). A central tenet of symbolic interactionism is the need to ‘always consider situations from the point of view of the actor’ (Cosser 1971, p.

⁴ The ‘constitution’ of public sector management work encompasses the actions or processes of designing and doing public sector management work. The term also relates to the physical ‘make up or composition’ of public sector management work (Macquarie Dictionary 2015a).

340). The pragmatist paradigm is in sympathy with the constructionist paradigm and so together the two perspectives will offer a complementary set of perspectives for this research and the ‘diversity of perspectives’ provided for richer research (Lather 2006).

1.6. Research Contribution

The contribution of this research will be to advance:

1. an original contribution to the body of knowledge and literature on public administration through empirical research and the development of knowledge about what constitutes public sector management work in the APS;
2. an original contribution to literature on new institutional theory, albeit to a lesser extent than the abovementioned contribution to public administration theory, by the empirical identification of a range of factors that affect the choices made by public actors to adopt, adapt or reject public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas to which they are exposed;
3. an original contribution to the literature on new institutional theory by the empirical identification of the use of ‘globalising webs’ (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214);
4. a number of original contributions to the public administration literature by the identification of a number of elements pertaining to the public actors, the political environment and the duality of activities that have an effect on the constitution of public sector management work;
5. a further original contribution to the public administration literature, built on the work of Pollitt (2011, p. 35), that empirically challenges the applicability of a ‘context-free genericism’ being applied to the public sector as proposed by reformers and advocates of the ‘NPM’;
6. an appreciation of what constitutes public sector management work in the APS that can assist practitioners to consider the suitability or otherwise of private sector management principles and practices for application in future public sector reform efforts. It will enable such reform to align more closely

with actual public sector management practices enabling translation of ‘best practices’ from one sector to the other.

1.7. Outline of Thesis

This research will address the constitution of public sector management work. The public administration literature covering public sector reforms in Anglo-American polities (United Kingdom, UK; the United States of America, USA; Canada; New Zealand, NZ; and Australia), during the period 1980 to 2010 (as reviewed in Chapter Two) will form the background literature for this research. The literature on new institutional theory as it pertains to the travel of contemporary management ideas will also be considered, but to a lesser extent (see Appendix A). A qualitative (case study) methodology involving interviews and some document analysis will be used (as discussed in Chapter Three). The following four chapters cover the empirical research. Chapter Four covers the public sector actors who constitute public sector management work. Chapter Five covers the environments in which public sector management work is constituted. Chapter Six covers the roles and responsibilities that comprise public sector management work. Chapter Seven covers the contemporary management ideas that influenced the constitution on public sector management work. The final chapter covers the conclusion to the empirical research including a conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work, contributions and implications for theory and practice, and provides recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the multiplicity of public sector reform initiatives and movements in Anglo-American polities over the latter part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first century to determine what might constitute public sector management in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Anglo-American polities have been chosen to limit the research to the most relevant environments in which reform initiatives transfer from one location to another. Such an exchange of ideas has led to a range of broad isomorphic public sector management practices with a country-specific approach. The polities covered are the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Canada, New Zealand (NZ) and Australia.

The analysis will allow some conclusions to be drawn in terms of what the constitution of contemporary public sector management is stated to be in these polities and, empirically, how translation into the contemporary Australian context occurs. The reforms cover the period from the beginning of the adoption of a new public sector management paradigm in the early 1980s up until 2010.⁵ These are the reforms that were informed by neo-classical economic theories relating to marketisation and the more focussed adoption of private sector management techniques. The chapter also analyses the various phases of reform and the variations that have occurred since that time, as well as considering the extent to which such public sector reforms and associated contemporary management ideas travelled, were translated, and transformed. This analysis forms the basis of the empirical enquiry to assess whether there is a gap between what reform movements and initiatives indicate that the constitution of public sector management might be, and what is actually practised.

This chapter will also consider how the ideas associated with these public sector reforms travelled and were translated to align with the different polities' environments

⁵ Although the reforms of interest for this thesis cover the period from 1980s to 2010, the literature review makes reference to some earlier reforms as these provide context for the latter reforms.

and contexts, and their impact on the constitution of public sector management. It is envisaged that these ideas travelled to and influenced the Australian Public Service (APS) together with reforms initiated in the Australian context.

The term public sector reform has been interpreted and defined in a variety of ways in the literature in terms of influences, objectives, policies, processes, procedures, practices, and outcomes. Despite differences of opinion, for the purpose of this thesis the holistic definition of public sector reform offered by the United Nations that deals with its multiple components will be used. The United Nations (1983, p. 1) defines public sector reform as ‘the deliberate use of authority and influence to apply new measures to an administrative system so as to change its goals, structures, and procedures with a view to improving it for developmental purposes’.

The terminology used includes public sector reform, public administration reform, public management reform, public sector management reform, public service reform, civil service reform, administrative reform, for example (Caiden 1991; Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). For the purpose of this thesis the term public sector reform⁶ is adopted because it is commonly used in the literature as a comprehensive and all-encompassing term. Closely associated with ‘public sector reform’, is new public management (NPM). NPM draws much of its inspiration from neo-classical economics, managerialism and the private sector (Johnston 2000); advocates managerialist principles and practices; and is primarily focussed on functional efficiency and effectiveness (Courpasson & Clegg 2006; Wilenski 1986). NPM features in many public sector reforms across the Anglo-American polities and will be discussed in some detail throughout this chapter.

The structure is as follows: first, the influence⁷ of economic rationalism on public sector reforms will be considered; second, the policies, processes, practices and outcomes of public sector reforms at the national level in each Anglo-American polity (excluding Australia)⁸ and their impact on the constitution of public sector management will be

⁶ Although the term public sector reform is used throughout this chapter, it is acknowledged that not all changes labelled as public sector reform were actually instances of public sector reform.

⁷ Public sector reform influences are covered in a limited sense in this thesis due to space restrictions. An extended literature review with a comprehensive coverage of reform influences across the Anglo-American polities is provided in Appendix C.

⁸ The literature review covers the multiplicity of public sector reforms across Anglo-American polities (excluding Australia) for the period 1980s to 2010. The reforms covered include both administrative and

addressed; third, the travel and consequent diffusion, copying, translation and transformation of contemporary management ideas across these polities and especially to the Australian context will be discussed; fourth, the thesis will enquire into the policies, processes, practices and outcomes of public sector reforms at the national level in the Australian polity.

The literature review is confined to the national level of public sector reforms because each subject country instituted reforms at this most critical level of government. The period 1980 to 2010 was chosen because it was the period during which notable episodes of public sector reform took place. The chapter's structure has been chosen to provide a comprehensive coverage of public sector reforms; to allow for comparison, contrast and analysis; as well as to provide a holistic view of these reforms as they travelled and were implemented over time. The literature covered is broad, complex, diverse, lacking in consistency and continuity of coverage.

2.2. Economic Rationalism: The Seeds of Public Sector Reform Across Anglo-American Polities

An environment of evolving reforms frames the context in which public sector management has been constituted. These reforms, underpinned by contemporary management ideas, were based on what has been termed an economic rationalism, including principles and practices derived from the private sector, replete with its focus on the perceived efficiency and effectiveness of this sector. Economic rationalism⁹ is defined by Pusey (1993, p. 14) as

broader public sector reforms because these are difficult to separate, are often interdependent, and generally can have an impact on the constitution of public sector management work. Many of these reforms travelled to Australia. These reforms are covered at the end of the literature review, to allow for an analysis of how such ideas travelled to Australia to be made.

⁹ Economic rationalism is defined formally as 'a theory of economics which opposes government intervention and which maintains that the economy of a country works better when it responds to marketplace forces in such matters as utilisation of resources and industrial relations' (Macquarie Dictionary 2015b). Economic rationalism encompasses 'economic policy based on the efficiency of market forces, characterised by minimal government intervention, tax cuts, privatisation, and deregulation of labour markets' (The Free Dictionary 2015). The term is not necessarily linked to managerialism but in practice it often is because of the importance assigned to performance management aspects as market performance surrogates. While the term managerialism, an initially critical term, has been somewhat co-opted by neo-liberalism, economic rationalism is still largely used as a term of critique. For a comprehensive discussion of the term and its associated meanings and uses see Stokes (2014).

a doctrine that says that markets and prices are the *only reliable* means of setting a value on anything, and further, that markets and money can *always*, at least in principle, deliver better outcomes than states and bureaucracies. (Italics in original)

Across Anglo-American polities there was an underlying assumption that private sector business management is similar to, but fundamentally better than, its equivalent in the public sector (Box, Marshall, Reed, & Reed 2001; Kettl 1997; Light 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Thayer 1978). The quest for efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector along the lines of the private sector was evident (Arnold 1995; Kettl 1997; Light 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Pautz & Washington 2009).

Although earlier forms of managerialism associated with the work of Taylor and Gulick across the Anglo-American polities existed for many decades prior to the 1980s (Pollitt 1993), from the 1980s onwards ‘economic rationalism’ was accompanied by new managerialist reforms to the public sector. These reforms were influenced by classical microeconomic approaches or an ‘economic imperialism’ (Udehn 1996, p. 1). Classical microeconomic theories¹⁰ such as agency theory, rational choice theory, public choice theory, and transaction cost theory, exerted a strong ‘normative influence’ on public sector reforms (Box et al. 2001, p. 611; Nigro & Kellough 2008). The influences of microeconomic theory are anchored in a ‘market-based model’ advocating downsizing of government, applying private sector management principles to public sector administration, viewing citizens as customers, divorcing policy-making from administration implementation and viewing government as akin to a ‘business within the public sector’ (Box et al. 2001, p. 611; Kettl 1997). Reforms, especially of the Reagan and Clinton Administrations in the United States of America (USA), incorporated many of these market-based model characteristics such as ‘decentralisation, competition, deregulation, [downsizing], privatisation, user fees, and [entrepreneurial] culture’ (Rosenbloom 1993, p. 506; Box et al. 2001) innovation and empowerment (Williams 2000). As Zifcak (1994, p. 19) suggests, ‘right wing think tanks began to play prominent roles in debates about government and public affairs’ in the mid-1980s, shaping reform ideas in the USA as well as in the UK.

¹⁰ Economic theories, especially those of the new institutional economics (agency, transaction costs, property rights), were a significant influence on public sector reforms across the Anglo-American polities. Although considered, for the purposes of this thesis they are not discussed in depth.

The reforms that took place in the UK were a catalyst to public sector reform across the Anglo-American polities (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 24; Talbot 2001, p. 291). In the UK from the early 1980s, new managerialist influences, drawing on economic theories such as new institutional economics, new classical macroeconomics, and public choice, became predominant following the earlier election of the Thatcher Conservative Government in 1979 (Gregory 2007; Wallis & Dollery 1999; Weller 2001). Prime Minister Thatcher adopted and vigorously promoted the teachings of economic liberalism originating from ‘the Austrian theorist Friedrich Hayek, and the American economist Milton Friedman’ (Kelly 1994, p. 35). A range of advisors was engaged to work with the Thatcher Government, with her first efficiency advisor being Rayner (a businessperson) (Metcalf & Richards 1990). ‘Radical liberal ideas were [advocated and] espoused, if not always implemented’ (Kelly 1994, p. 35) by Prime Minister Thatcher and her counterpart President Reagan in the USA. Such economic ideas and theories focussed on government failure and a concern with a growing ‘Leviathan’ government (Wallis & Dollery 1999, p. 16; Gregory 2007). To address this perceived failure, such as a government’s uncontrolled growth, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, it was argued that private sector management principles were required (Ackroyd, Kirkpatrick, & Walker 2007; Bogdanor 2001; Caiden 1991; du Gay 2006; Gregory 2007; Wallis et al. 1999). Both Prime Minister Thatcher and President Reagan embraced with great ‘intellectual and political ferment’ the new managerialism inspired by neo-liberalism (Kelly 1994, p. 35; Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Pollitt 1990a, 1990b). Managerialists advocated ‘generic managerialism’, a view based on assumptions that there is something called ‘management’ and that such management is a ‘generic, purely instrumental activity embodying a set of principles that can be applied to a public business, as well as in private business’ (Painter 1988, p. 1; Wallis et al. 1999; Weller 2001). This view of generic managerialism became a prevalent and strong influence on public sector reform in the UK (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Bogdanor 2001; Caiden 1991; Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt 1990a; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Public Services Trust 2009; Wallis et al. 1999).

The growing pejorative view held by many in the UK and the USA towards the bureaucratic nature of government allowed these right-wing leaning governments, in favour of reducing the power of their public sectors and supporting greater participation of the private sector in the delivery of public services, to undertake extensive public

sector reform that was electorally popular. In particular, two popular texts *Reinventing government* (Osborne & Gaebler 1992) and *Banishing bureaucracy* (Osborne & Plastrik 1997) were promoted by consultants, giving rise to what is considered by some to be the reinvention movement of public sector reform (Brudney, Herbert & Wright 1999; Brudney & Wright 2002; Calista 2002; Saint-Martin 2004) although this has been challenged on the basis that the ideas promoted by such texts were ‘devoid of a knowledge of public administration and its historical context’ (Williams 2000, p. 522; Coe 1997; Fox 1996; Goodsell 1992; Kobrak 1996; Nathan 1995; Russell & Waste 1998; Wolf 1997). Other consultants and ‘management gurus’ who participated in the reinvention movement and NPM also strongly influenced reforms and, in turn, the constitution of public sector management work, especially during the 1980s, when the growth of management fads and fashions¹¹ was exponential (Abrahamson 1991; Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999; Donaldson & Hilmer 1998; Hilmer & Donaldson 1996; Furnham 2004; Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Pascale 1991; Saint-Martin 2004; Strang & Macy 2001; ten Bos 2000; Williams 2004). The growth was directly related to the vast amounts of monies that were to be made by the management consultancy industry who depend on continued government contracts for public sector reform (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Saint-Martin 2004). For example, in the UK public sector some £2.8billion was expended on management consultants in 2005/2006, which was a 33% increase on the previous two years of such spending by the government and was comparatively more per employee than that spent by the private sector (National Audit Office 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011).

A conflict of interest arose between consultants, whose intellectual property was guarded in order that further monies could be made, and the managers that they advised. These consultants and the industry that has grown around them have often driven management theory and its practices; in doing so, rather than following practices based on academic concepts and theories, they have espoused ideology (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Saint-Martin 2004). Seemingly without question some public sector managers sought out such management consultants and adopted their advice and NPM practices, perhaps because

¹¹ Although there is a comprehensive body of literature on management fads and fashions, this literature is not covered in depth in this thesis due to space limitations.

many people who end up in middle managerial positions are promoted not for their managerial skills but for their excellence in other jobs, as engineers or lawyers or editorial writers [...] so they turn to people who “know” [...] buying a book on management, then organising a conference, with say a consultant from McKinsey to act as a “facilitator”. (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996, p. 65)

The consequences for public sector management were that such ‘management ideas are now an institutionalised part of government’ (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996, p. 351).

In Canada, the Mulroney Progressive Conservative Party Government, which came to power in 1984, was much influenced by the public sector reform ideas emanating from the UK and the USA (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 222; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 17) and ‘borrowed’, albeit partially, their public sector reforms (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 248). Prime Minister Mulroney’s rhetoric reflected the anti-bureaucratic and pro-private sector managerialism of these two nations’ administrations (Savoie 1994b). During the 1990s the dire financial and economic situation Canada faced – especially as a result of the creation of the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) between Canada, the USA and Mexico, with a high percentage of gross domestic product going into debt servicing by government – together with a constitutional crisis (possible secession of the Province of Quebec), directed further attention and reform efforts to public sector and its management practices. Those responsible for reform efforts, Aucoin (1995) argues, focussed less on what actually constituted public sector management and more on what government constituted as Canada’s political/economic agenda (Aucoin 1995).

In New Zealand (NZ) also, during the 1980s there was pressure for public sector reform growing from neo-liberal or conservative governments (Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1993, 1990; Pollitt 1990a), especially from within Treasury, whose focus at the time was on theoretical economic arguments proposed by ‘new institutional economics’ (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 80; Gregory 2007; Hood 1991; Scott & Gorringer 1989; Treasury 1987). Professionals from within NZ Treasury, with experience of neo-liberalism and the ideas of managerialism at institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), brought these ideas to NZ (Scott 2008b) largely unquestioningly and strongly promoting the ideology of NPM (Hood 1990, p. 7; Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 324; Treasury 1987; Wallis, Dollery, & McLoughlin 2007).

In Australia, the key influences leading to public sector reform were an emerging dissatisfaction with the growth and perceived inefficiency of the public sector, ideological views that the public sector was crowding out the private sector, and the example of public sector reform by neo-liberal or conservative governments such as the Thatcher and Reagan administrations that adopted NPM, with great fervour (Hood 1991; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Pollitt 1990a). The growing global paradigm of NPM, with its focus on economic rationalism, which swept the globe from the 1980s onwards, played a significant part in influencing governments of both persuasions in Australia, but especially the Australian Liberal National Coalition Government (ALNCG), to adopt public sector reforms (Carroll 1992, p. 10; Johnston 2000, p. 348; Pusey 1992, p. 38; 1993, p. 14).

Australia's public sector reform agenda drew on and reflected studies that were made by the *Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration* (RCAGA), also known as the Coombs Commission of 1976, the *1979 Report of the Standing Committee on Expenditure and the Review of Commonwealth Government Administration* 1983 (Johnston 2000; Keating 1989; Mascarenhas 1993; Wilenski 1986). These studies and papers reflected a general dissatisfaction with the nation's public services and were especially prominent in 'developing public awareness of the need for reform' (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 79; Wilenski 1986).

The advocacy by 'political and bureaucratic *managerialists*, representing the government' (Johnston 2000, p. 359) in Australia, exerted a degree of influence on public sector management reforms (Carroll 1992; Considine 1990; Johnston 2000; Nethercote 1989; Painter 1988; Pusey 1991, 1993; Yeatman 1987). Departmental Secretaries,¹² senior bureaucrats and former bureaucrats of the time, especially those operating in central government agencies, became enamoured with and drove public sector reforms (Codd 1988; Holmes 1989; Keating 1988, 1989, 1990; Paterson 1988; Shand 1987). As Pusey (1991) found, these bureaucrats came from predominantly privileged social backgrounds, (although this finding has been challenged anecdotally by Watt [2012]), had an education anchored in economics and commerce, and reflected 'conservative' rather than espoused 'committed centrist' political dispositions. These

¹² For the purposes of this research, the generic title of Departmental Secretary is used when referring to a number of position titles such as Portfolio Secretary, Departmental Secretary, Secretary, Commissioner, Agency Head, and Chief Executive Officer reflecting the nomenclature relevant in public sector organisations.

Mandarins were supporters and conduits of managerialism into the APS stimulated by government's adoption of economic rationalism. They promoted and led the process of instituting NPM ideas in the public sector, sometimes speaking at conferences such as the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) to lend their voices to the reform process. Indeed a debate ensued in the 1980s in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration* (AJPA) between a number of these Mandarins and others, with academics who questioned the basis and merit of these reforms. These debates were known as the managerialist–anti-managerialist debates (Johnston 2000).

The reforms advocated by the managerialists incorporated changes to the constitution of public sector management such as contracting out, contract employment, performance management and measurement, program budgeting and evaluation, effectiveness reviews, financial management, corporate planning, strategic management, divisional organisational structures, devolution of functions, grouping of activity by outputs or outcomes, human resources management, a senior executive service (SES), generalist managers, results-oriented remuneration, and a focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Alford 1993; Codd 1991; Davis 1992; Hughes 1992; Paterson 1988; Weller & Lewis 1989). It was argued that a paradigm shift from the old public administration to the NPM should ensue. The evidence of how these Departmental Secretaries constituted public sector management work is of particular empirical interest to this research, in assessing whether there is a gap between what reform movements and initiatives promoted and what is actually practised.

2.3. Public Sector Reforms Across Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia)

2.3.1. United Kingdom (UK)

The following section covers UK public sector reform during the latter part of the twentieth century by considering their policies, processes, practices and outcomes and the effect of such reforms. To achieve public sector reform objectives a range of practices were introduced and adopted over time by successive UK governments. The radical public sector reforms of the UK Thatcher Conservative Government (Bogdanor 2001; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001) marked a

watershed¹³ in the UK experience of public sector reforms and largely set the scene for future public sector reforms and the evolving constitution of public sector management work.

Policies, processes and practices of public sector reform

The radical reforms of the early 1980s under the Thatcher Government fell into a number of broad categories, including those identified by Talbot (2001) as organisation and structure (comprising ‘constitutional; privatisation; market-type-mechanisms; and NPM’), regulation, and information management.

Organisation and structural reforms included the reduction of the public sector workforce that fell from 7.5 million in 1979 to 5.1 million in 1997 (Talbot 2001, p. 288) although these ‘headline’ figures were controversial and debated at the time. Although the workforce was downsized, the actual percentage was tempered by the fact that many jobs that had been shed from the public sector continued to be funded by government (Flynn 1997). From 1983 the Thatcher Government planned and from 1987 gave effect to privatising a range of publicly owned industries and utilities, including automotive, airline, aerospace, telecommunication, gas, electricity and water (Jenkins 1995; Talbot 2001). Where privatisation was not politically or structurally possible, market-type mechanisms or marketisation reforms were introduced. Government claimed that these reforms were intended to bring market principles/disciplines to the provision of public services to meet citizens’ demands for quality and accountability (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Public Services Trust 2009), to establish ‘competition’ and, in turn, greater ‘efficiency, economy, effectiveness and customer services’ (Talbot 2001, p. 291). A range of ‘quasi-markets’ were established via the *Education Reform Act* (1988), the *Housing Act* (1988) and the *Local Government Acts* (1980) and (1988). This marketisation, especially via the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT), introduced ‘a new style of management in [the] key delivery agencies of the welfare state, encouraging [...] the introduction of market mechanisms and disciplines’

¹³ Public sector reform in the UK can be discerned over two core periods (1850s to 1980 and 1980s to 2010). From the 1980s, which marked the beginning of a ‘departure from many of the axioms of the post war consensus’ (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 16) public sector reforms became more innovative and have been described by some as ‘a genuine revolution in Whitehall’ (Bogdanor, 2001, p. 291). For the purposes of this thesis, the public sector reforms of the latter period only are considered.

(Butcher 2002, p. 123; Ackroyd et al. 2007; Gregory 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001).

The introduction in 1988 via the Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit (du Gay 2006, p. 151/158; Bogdanor 2001; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001) launched the Next Steps program. The central civil service was divided into approximately 140 'Executive Agencies' that were expected to operate along the lines of the private sector, adopting its business principles, and with agency chief executives to be held accountable to their ministers for their performance (financial resource management and service delivery) (Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001). This program of reform separated the service delivery or administration/implementation functions of public servants from the policy-making functions previously completed together within large government departments. The NPM reforms had begun, and during the 1990s the UK was viewed as one of the key creators of the NPM (Bogdanor 2001; Hood 1991; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Pollitt 1990a; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001).

The Conservative Government, re-elected in 1992 under Prime Minister Major, built on and extended the NPM reforms that were initiated by the Thatcher Government. The Major Government focussed on changing the culture of the public sector with the introduction of the 'Citizen's Charter', which contained six core principles for transforming the public services along private sector lines (Public Services Trust 2009). These were to refocus the provision of public services to centre on the citizen and covered published standards, consultation with users and consumers, increased dissemination of information, better choice, greater accessibility and greater responsiveness to citizens' requirements. Such principles were an attempt to support marketisation of public services, produce greater accountability on the part of public service providers and to confirm the government's commitment to responsive and quality customer services (Clark & Newman 1997; Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009). Observers determined that the introduction of the Citizen's Charter had another purpose, including the attempt by Prime Minister Major to moderate the former highly unpopular rhetoric of the Thatcher Government, which had become destabilised through some former reform attempts, notably the 'Poll Tax'. Towards the end of this period of reform, 41 national charters had been introduced across the public sector (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 26).

The Blair New Labour Government that came to power in 1997 after 18 years of Conservative Party rule inherited a buoyant economy and an opportunity to embark on new directions for public sector reform, with less focus, if any, on the need for changes to economic management (Public Services Trust 2009). However, the commitment to public sector reform and free market economics was continued with Blair's Government but also (after Giddens' 'Third Way' tempered their approach) with a commitment to social justice (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Giddens 2000; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Public Services Trust 2009). A commitment was given to, and significant investment made in, the public services using the previously established Public Finance Initiative (PFI) within the Public Private Partnerships Strategy (PPPS), with the caveat that some services would be delivered by the public sector, some devolved to the private sector and others delivered in partnership (Prime Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office 1999). The need to bring about a coordinated 'joined-up' or 'whole of government' approach was introduced to the debate as part of this government's reform agenda (Bogdanor 2001). Although Prime Minister Blair's Government had numerous initiatives for reform in place (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011), Seldon (2007) argues that the Blair Government had no specific ideological narrative or plan for reform and it was only towards its last two years in office that it delivered a comprehensive program of reforms. These were focussed on developing further choice, competition, diversity of supply, transparency and incentives in the provision of public services, especially in education, health and welfare services (Public Services Trust 2009).

When the Labour Government under Brown's Prime Ministership took office from 2008, it advocated an agenda of change to meet the supposedly changing priorities and aspirations of the citizenry for 'choice of public services' (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 317; Cabinet Office 2008; Public Services Trust 2009). Prime Minister Brown followed the 'rhetoric of change' (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 3) and 'commitment to fair rules, fair chances, and a fair say for all' (Brown 2008, p. 2; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). The Cabinet Office's *Excellence and fairness: Achieving world class public services* report (2008) touted a new model and focus for the public service, incorporating a 'new professionalism', 'citizen empowerment' and 'strategic leadership' (Cabinet Office 2008; Public Services Trust 2009) with an underlying agenda to cut the costs of service delivery less articulated.

The aforementioned mechanisms, policies, processes, and practices of reform did not fit neatly with the public sector because many had their genesis in the private sector. These mechanisms were imported from the private sector with little, if any, consideration of their fit in the public sector and were in part occasioned by hostility towards a perceived managerially incompetent civil service and its established bureaucratic culture (du Gay 2006, p. 158). There appeared to be limited knowledge of, or interest in, understanding the actual work of public sector managers, especially senior executive public managers, to determine whether the reform agenda, with its changed policies, processes and practices, was feasible (Pollitt 1993; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011).

Reformers made a number of assumptions but what they did not do was determine whether what they were proposing had relevance and coherence for the constitution of public sector management work, or whether what was being asked of public sector managers was actually doable. Public sector managers were rarely, if ever, consulted about the reforms. It was not clear whether these reforms were germane to public sector management practices and, in fact, practices of public sector management may not have altered that much (Talbot 2001). What was developed applied the discourse of NPM replete with its lexicon and ideas (Brunsson 2006; Moe 1994; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Savoie 1994a; Sundstrom 2006). As the mixed outcomes of public sector reform discussed below indicate, there was dysfunction between the policies, processes, and practices of reform and their outcomes.

Outcomes of public sector reform

There have been few systematic and comprehensive evaluations of the outcomes and consequences of public sector reforms in the UK¹⁴ (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Bogdanor 2001; du Gay 2006; Pollitt 1990a; Pollitt 2002, p. 281; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2004; Wallis et al. 2007) although some exceptions exist (see Ackroyd et al. 2007, p. 9; Boyne, Farrell, Powell, & Walker 2008; Halligan 2003, p. 205; Wallis et al. 2007, p. 40). Evaluations tend to focus on separate cases of public services reform or general trends across the entire sector, rather than detailed empirical studies or research that consider

¹⁴ A number of authors have proposed methodological approaches for evaluating NPM (see for example Pollitt 1995; and Boston 2000) encompassing the use of assessment criteria, benchmarks and counterfactuals. These approaches provide an alternative framework for assessing the outcomes of public sector reforms (specifically related to NPM).

‘comparative analysis across different domains’ (Ferlie & Martin 2003, p. 3; Ackroyd et al. 2007; Talbot 2001). Where evaluations have been conducted of the purported changes to UK public services as a result of public sector reforms, their impact is difficult to gauge because the espoused changes have been ‘broad, often ill-defined and contradictory’ (Talbot 2001, p. 292; Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew 1996; Pollitt 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000). However, some argue that the UK public sector has changed as a result of the reforms (Halligan 2003, p. 205; Wallis et al. 2007) in relation to its ‘internal shape, organisation, and management’ and, in particular, towards the NPM mode of operating, replete with its private sector type management values and priorities (Broadbent & Laughlin 2002; Pollitt 1990a; Powell et al. 1999; Talbot 2001). Others challenge the notion that public sector reforms have translated into substantial changes in values, work and organisation, especially for some professionals operating within the public services (Ackroyd et al. 2007). They argue that little has changed (Eichbaum 2000; Faux 1999; Reich 1999; Talbot 2001; Wallis et al. 2007) in many cases, as continuities continue to exist despite the changes that have occurred.

The outcomes attributed to NPM are also difficult to identify because of the inherent contradictions associated with its conceptual framework and the poorly defined, very general, and ambiguous changes to the public sector with which NPM is associated (Bogdanor 2001; Ferlie et al. 1996; Pollitt 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000). Bogdanor (2001) and du Gay (2008, p. 350) identify a weakening of the ‘responsible operation of a state and [...] the effective running of a constitution’ as the consequences brought about (in the UK) from the ‘contemporary passion for the “ethics of enthusiasm”’ which the NPM and its supposedly ‘value neutral’ concepts ushered into the public sector. These researchers explain that the bureaucratic ethos, with its formal rationality, is predicated not on ‘an amoral instrumentalism, a willful obstructionism, or a lack of care or recognition, but [instead on] a positive, statist “ethics of responsibility”’ (du Gay 2008, p. 351), one that they deemed as having been disregarded by the reform movements. Yet other researchers argue that the often touted premise of NPM to augment ‘managers’ right to manage’ (without political interference from above and employee autonomy from below) (Talbot 2001, p. 292; Gregory 2007) made little difference. Instead, Talbot argues that ‘managers’ right to manage’ has either been reduced or not changed at all (Talbot 2001, p. 292, 1994, 1997).

Unintended outcomes have also resulted from the introduction of NPM initiatives, such as agencification, which reduced bureaucratic hierarchical systems ‘within’ the public sector but led to an increase in regulatory mechanisms imposed on public sector agencies from ‘without’; for example, via ‘... audits, inspections, standard setting, and review[s] ...’ (Talbot 2001, p. 293; Gregory 2007; Hood, Scott, James, Jones & Travers 1999; Olsen 2005). Furthermore, Talbot, as du Gay, contends that the ability of ministers to make direct appointments of temporary civil servants, to act as political advisors (‘special advisors’) for the term of the minister or government, called into question public ethics (Prime Minister 2000, Talbot 2001, p. 299), and posed challenges for this dimension of public sector management work.

Implications for the constitution of public sector management

The outcomes of UK public sector reforms were often mixed, contradictory and unintended, although it is possible to surmise that reforms modified the context and constitution of public sector management work. Marketisation via deregulation, privatisation, public private partnerships, and contractualisation took place as did restructuring and reorganisation, which modified the context in which public sector managers operated, placing expectations on them to constitute public sector management in ways that resembled the private sector. The introduction of citizens’ charters meant that public sector management had to be more customer or client focussed in its orientation and responsive to their needs. The establishment of an SES management cadre and the formation of the Management and Personnel Office (MPO) to replace the Civil Service Department meant the adoption of more flexible approaches to personnel management and financial management and the reduction of some centralised controls for the most senior public sector managers, giving them greater autonomy and discretion in the management of their departments.

There is limited evidence of interest in questioning, critiquing or challenging the outcomes among reformers, and their implications for the constitution of public sector management were rarely considered. Regardless, as will be discussed in subsequent sections, public sector reforms and the NPM were implemented (in large or small part) and became institutionalised across the UK and other Anglo-American polities. With

this institutionalisation came the isomorphism of NPM, regardless of its suitability or otherwise to the public sector and its management.

2.3.2. The United States of America (USA)

The USA had in place a long history and culture which accepted and valued the principles and practices of managerialism and the free market as the broader domain within which the public sector should operate (Gualmini 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Indeed, the USA's public sector model is considered an 'entrepreneurial' one which is greatly inspired by and aligned to the private sector, such that managerial premises and practices have continuously pervaded the way in which public sector organisations have operated and public sector management work was constituted (Gualmini 2008, p. 86). At the top levels of the American public bureaucracy is a 'highly politicised and transient set of [managerialist] officials' (Peters 2010, p. 120). As such, reform policies, processes and practices were rarely considered to be drastic, nor were they often challenged (Kettl 1997), and at the micro level, policy, process, and practice changes were considered to be less radical than in other parts of the world, such as the UK (Gualmini 2008, p. 92).

Public sector reformers in the USA tended to examine the global reform efforts in other parts of the world such as the UK and NZ for inspiration and approaches on which to develop their own reform efforts (Kettl 1997). Reform took place in a manner of continuous adjustment rather than as a radical change (Gualmini 2008) over the period 1980 to 2010. Of particular note in the history of public sector reform in the USA is the role played by the states¹⁵ in taking up and implementing many reforms associated with the NPM and reinvention movement. Reinvention was directed at microelements of administration and so was implemented with much more fervour at that level by individual agencies across state and local governments (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 550; Thompson 1993; Thompson 2000) rather than by federal government.

¹⁵ State-based public sector reforms were of significance in shaping the constitution of public sector management in the USA. However, for the purposes of this thesis, they have not been reported as the focus of the thesis is on the constitution of public sector management at the federal level.

Policies, processes and practices of public sector reform

Unlike other nations, the USA's public sector reforms were limited as they focussed on formal structural, civil service organisation and administrative procedure changes (Gualmini 2008, p. 80–81, 83, 86). Structurally, the USA's public sector already had in place decentralised and flexible arrangements whereby departments and agencies operated in what might be termed 'governments within governments' (Gualmini 2008, p. 80). The move to incorporate business-type human resource organisation and management approaches was already well-established in the USA's public sector and, as such, reform simply built on this base (Thayer 1978). Reform of administrative procedures also did not feature greatly in the USA's public sector reforms because earlier public sector reform efforts had already implemented many efficiency-based measures such as performance targets and performance audits for better management of the administrative arm (Gualmini 2008, p. 83).

Public sector policies, processes and practices that were recommended in the 1980s augmented an already managerially oriented public sector. President Carter's public sector reform proposals just before the 1980s¹⁶ culminated in a Final Staff Report which proposed that public sector management practices could best be improved if more effective private sector management practices, methods and techniques were sought out, understood and further implemented in the public sector (Thayer 1978). President Carter's *Civil Service Reform Act* (CSRA) 1978 established a 'professional policy establishment' via the introduction of the SES; a management cadre which comprised 7,000 public servants incorporating both 'political appointees and career public servants' (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 321; Ingraham & Ban 1984; Light 2006; McGregor 1983; Thayer 1978). Management practices for this cadre that were recommended within the CSRA 1978 included bolstering the merit system, restricting political appointments, new performance evaluation processes, annual performance appraisal processes, wages policy flexibility such as incentive-based rewards for performers, changes to mobility policies, and demotion or dismissal for non-performers (Gualmini 2008; Ingraham & Ban 1984; Thayer 1978). Streamlined procedures to increase efficiency and reduce red tape were also put in place, sometimes compromising other

¹⁶ Although the literature review is focussed on reforms which took place from the 1980s, earlier reforms such as this one provide context for the latter reforms, and so are covered here briefly.

measures that had been established to bolster public management accountability (Deleon 1998).

The scene for the NPM had already been well-established in the USA by the 1980s and the NPM became even more entrenched as the decade progressed. However, elements of the NPM as identified by Box et al. (2001), stemming from ‘ideas of American public choice economists’ (Orchard 1998, p. 20) and ideas associated with managerialism generated from the earlier work of American scholars such as Taylor and Gulick (Box et al. 2001; Pollitt 1993), have not been implemented primarily in the USA but have occurred instead in other parts of the world (Box et al. 2001, p. 612). NPM initiatives were introduced at national levels of government in other Anglo-American polities such as the UK, NZ, and Australia. In the USA, these initiatives began at the local government level (Box et al. 2001, p. 613; Osborne & Gaebler 1993) largely due to the USA’s highly decentralised federal structure of government (Box et al. 2001, p. 613).

Public sector reforms introduced by President Reagan’s Republican Administration from the 1980s promoted a continued effort oriented towards efficiency and effectiveness related to the NPM movement in ways that were characteristic of past public sector reforms in the USA (Gualmini 2008, p. 83). The modernisation of internal administrative processes and practices and a focus on improving the relationship between the government and its citizens, although not new to the USA (Gualmini 2008, p. 83), tended to reflect and reiterate the concepts of NPM. President Reagan’s administration, which was particularly anti-bureaucratic (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011), introduced the President’s Council on Integrity and Efficiency (1981), and the Council on Management and Administration (1982). These councils served as forerunners to the President’s Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (consisting of 36 task forces established to pursue efficiency measures). Furthermore, the Reagan administration introduced the Performance Management and Recognition System (1984) and the President’s Productivity Program (1985), which promoted performance assessment and locked components of public sector employees’ remuneration to these assessments (Gualmini 2008, p. 83). In addition, in 1988, President Reagan’s Reform 88 plan introduced prescribed standards for the delivery of public services, and promoted ‘delegated budgeting and management by objectives’ (Gualmini 2008, p. 83) as core practices governing the behaviour and actions of public sector employees, further

embedding these management techniques in the public sector. Further reforms associated with federal public sector human resources practices were recommended via the Volcker Commission (1989) (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 555). What became evident across the USA's federal public sector was a greater blurring of differences between public and private sectors with consequences for the constitution of public sector management (Arnold 1998).

In 1993, President Clinton's Democratic Administration launched the National Performance Review (NPR), which effectively differentiated little, if at all, between the role government should play and that of the marketplace (Box et al. 2001; Kettl 1997; Light 2006). The NPR supported many of the tenets and promoted many of the features of the 'reinventing government' movement originating from consultants Osborne and Gaebler in 1992 (Brudney & Wright 2002, p. 353). Clinton's NPR recommended a set of policies, processes and practices that were 'neo-populist' in nature in that they focussed on public choice economics and the primacy of the marketplace, including 'decentralisation, competition, deregulation, load shedding, privatisation, user fees, and enterprise culture' (Rosenbloom 1993, p. 506; Box et al. 2001) and further reinforced and enhanced techniques of 'rational planning and management by objectives' (Gualmini 2008, p. 88). In its quest to reform government along the lines of the reinvention movement, the Clinton administration led 214 federal government agencies to redefine customer service standards to refocus the efforts of managers externally on delivering customer service to citizens, rather than inwardly on the needs of the public bureaucracy (Clinton & Gore 1995; Gore 1993). The NPR also introduced the *Acquisition Streamlining Act* 1994 (relating to procurement) that remains in use today across the public sector (Light 2006). Thus, elements of President Clinton's reform focussed on introducing quality and productivity enhancement (Cohen & Brand 1993), government budget performance measures (Epstein 1992; Kiel & Elliott 1999), and entrepreneurial management behaviours (Gualmini 2008; Kiel & Elliott 1999). What emerges is somewhat of a 'hollow state' notion of reforming government (Milward, Provan & Else 1993) where public sector reform becomes a re-engineering or reinventing of public sector management to align with the then current flavours of the reform era where the public sector sheds 'traditional responsibilities to improve efficiency and service to citizens' (Kiel & Elliott 1999, p. 632).

Continuing the focus of the NPR on reinventing government, the Grace and Gore Commissions (1993) recommended modernising the internal practices of public sector agencies to achieve greater efficiency and further promoted taking up business-like styles of management (Gualmini 2008). Attempts to increase accountability in government, akin to private sector regimes of accountability, were made via the introduction of the *Government Performance and Results Act* of 1993 (GPRA) which requires that federal government agencies prepare strategic plans and measure their outputs and outcomes against such plans (Kettl 1997). Later attempts to increase accountability in government built on these reforms, on the assumption that these reforms had been implemented and, in 2001, the government introduced the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) (Pautz & Washington 2009). The Bush Republican Administration, which came to power in 2000, continued the managerial reforms previously initiated under the NPM and reinvention movements but also adopted what was termed a National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPRG) (Gualmini 2008) that recommended similar administrative reforms.

These practices and programs of public sector reform at the federal level have broadened the USA's already managerial orientation to public sector management. These mechanisms were imported from the private sector with an acknowledged view of their fit and superiority for the public sector (Thayer 1978). The constitution of public sector management in the USA, via these reforms, reflected a further embedding of managerial principles and practices including flexible administrative procedures/processes, greater accountability, decentralised organisation, increased competition, deregulation, privatisation, user pays, and an entrepreneurial culture. This managerial constitution of public sector management was enshrined with the earlier establishment of the SES in the USA. The constitution of public sector management that comprised managerially oriented principles and practices was unique to the USA given its long-established acceptance of managerialism as appropriate for the public sector (Gualmini 2008).

Outcomes of public sector reform

As with other public sector reform efforts across Anglo-American polities, there exists little comprehensive empirical research that evaluates or reviews the outcomes and

consequences of such reforms in the USA (Kiel & Elliott 1999; Light 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008). This may, in part, be related to lack of funding available for longitudinal evaluative studies of public sector reform (Nigro & Kellough 2008), especially in relation to federal public sector reforms, where there is more rhetoric about the outcomes of reform than the actual production of such results (Clark 1994; Kettl 1997; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Neither do measures appear to be in place with which to evaluate reform efforts. In particular, the degree of success with which federal statutes have been implemented is a critical measure that is not in place in reform databases such as those produced by Light (1997, 2006). Other complicating factors such as a lack of time, complex variables and poor databases prevent a 'rigorous empirically grounded' understanding as to what are the outcomes and consequences of public sector reforms in the USA (Condrey & Battaglio 2007, p. 427).

Some knowledge of reform outcomes can be gleaned from within the literature more broadly (see *Review of Public Personnel Administration* Summer 2002 and Summer 2006, in Condrey & Battaglio 2007, p. 426) but most refer to state-based reforms (and relate specifically to personnel systems), albeit indirectly (Barrett & Greene 1999; Brudney & Wright 2002; Nigro & Kellough 2008). Instead, what exists are a range of views and opinions sourced from federal public employees and public sector reformers such as those obtained in surveys conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates (2001), whereby public sector reform, reorganisation and/or reinvention are acknowledged (Light 2006) and both positive and negative outcomes and consequences noted. Thus, while there exists a gap between the rhetoric of public sector reform and its real outcomes and consequences, Kiel and Elliott (1999, p. 635) argue that public sector managers understand public sector reforms to be a reality rather than simply a phase of reform rhetoric.

The sheer volume and pace of public sector reform in the USA has proved a barrier to an understanding of its outcomes and consequences. It inhibits reformers from considering and analysing the value of proposed reforms before implementation (Light 2006, p. 17) and hence creates a situation where new reforms and statutes are simply mandated onto past reforms. In essence, public sector reforms have not been implemented in a systemic manner to address perceived problems and issues of the public sector but rather a 'market for reform' has evolved whereby more and more reform is produced in a frenzied quest to meet the public and Congress's demands

(Light 2006, p. 17) for better government. The results of the NPM/reinvention movement are ambiguous and diverse at both the local and national levels (Brudney & Wright 2002, p. 355; Kearney, Feldman & Scavo 2000; Thompson 2000), although a range of disparate outcomes and consequences have been identified, with some being positive and some negative.

Implications for the constitution of public sector management

Given the lack of systematic and comprehensive evaluations and the mixed outcomes reported, public sector reforms have shed little light on the constitution of public sector management. The USA already had in place a decentralised system of government and an established entrepreneurial and managerial public sector that was focussed on efficiency and effectiveness principles and practices reflecting those of the NPM. The changes made to personnel management systems, delegated financial and budgeting systems as well as corporate planning systems (such as management by objectives) further promoted private sector management approaches. The establishment of a cadre of senior managers (the SES) brought about changes for the most senior public sector managers, such that their performance was further linked to pay. The reforms led to a reinforcement of NPM and market-based models of public sector management, but their extent is not confirmed by empirical research. Where public sector managers were left to their own devices to make sense of many public sector reforms and to implement them as best they could, it is not clear what this meant for public sector management work. Yet the USA's public sector reforms, similar to the UK's public sector reforms, influenced other Anglo-American polities and their public sector management practices. These are discussed below.

2.3.3. Canada

As Julliet and Mingus (2008, p. 217) argue, Canadian public sector reforms were influenced by public sector reform efforts and developments in other Anglo-American polities. Canada led the way in relation to public sector reforms, especially the NPM, well before this movement had become popular across the globe. The Royal Commission on Government Organisation, (the Glassco Commission) in 1960, reflected the view that public sector managers were bound by too many rules and controls, which

limited their ability to deliver public services in an efficient, effective, and economical manner (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 216). The Commission considered that the public service had become too staid in its ways and that its systems were old fashioned, bureaucratic and out of step with modernity (ibid.). The Commission made calls for more modern public administration, with a focus on management, accountability, objectives and the achievement of results (ibid.). These were the beginnings of public sector reform in Canada and of managerialism or NPM, as it became known. This ‘invest[ment] in public administrations’ management capital’ continued to influence Canadian public sector reforms over time (Maor 1999, p. 14; Kamensky 1996).

Policies, processes and practices of public sector reform

A recurring policy approach to public sector reform in the Canadian public sector was the quest to enable public managers to manage better and with less centralised controls from within the bureaucracy (Julliet & Mingus 2008). But with time and worsening economic circumstances in Canada, as in other parts of the Anglo-American world, public sector reform policies became more and more anchored in economic and financial management of the public sector, with a growing emphasis on expenditure and cost controls. Less consideration appeared to be given to other components that comprise public sector management.

In 1984, the Mulroney Progressive Conservative Government refocused public sector reforms on the need to ‘simply govern and let the managers manage’ (Savoie 1990b, p. 117). It removed from departmental managers many central controls and delegated greater authority to them with which to manage their departments. A ministerial Task Force on Program Review, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Nielsen, was established to assess government programs with a view to identifying where expenditure cuts could be made (Julliet & Mingus 2008). It was composed of private sector business executives who, it was considered, would be able to advise the government on ways in which it might streamline public sector bureaucratic processes and innovate and advance its management practices (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Savoie 1990b; Saint Martin 1998). The Nielsen Task Force recommended CAD\$7bn worth of spending reductions and approaches for contracting out services but realised little by way of actual public sector reform, as it failed to get the traction required due to resistance from senior bureaucrats

and limited parliamentary support. Instead, the government turned its attention to engaging with senior bureaucrats to bring about public sector reform and established the Increased Ministerial Authority and Accountability (IMAA) project in 1985 with the intention of streamlining and modernising administration of the public sector (Julliet & Mingus 2008; Paton & Dodge 1995). The IMAA sought to increase the authority and accountability with which senior managers and ministers would operate, so that they could, in a more flexible and fluid manner, realise their program deliverables and implement Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) policies (Paton & Dodge 1995; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 1988). The IMAA reviewed TBS policies to remove bureaucratic controls on departments and managers, to increase efficiency, to emphasise risk management and focus on departmental results (Paton & Dodge 1995). It established memoranda of understanding with departments to confirm ways in which TBS policies would be administered within broad accountability mechanisms (Caiden, Halley & Maltais 1995; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Paton & Dodge 1995). The IMAA, similar to earlier reform efforts, achieved mixed results.

In 1989, the Mulroney Government launched another administrative reform proposal called Public Service 2000 (PS2000) and a White Paper published in 1990 called *The renewal of the public service of Canada* (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 86; Foley 2008; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Maor 1999; Paton & Dodge 1995). Ten task forces comprising senior public administrators were established to work on ten core themes addressed by PS2000 (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 87). The PS2000 challenged the commonly regarded public sector principles: a career public service built on merit-based appointments, security of tenure, and protected from external competition (Kernaghan 1991; Maor 1999). The PS2000 was an attempt to transform the nature of public management in the Canadian public sector and its operational modes (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 86; Maor 1999, p. 11). The PS2000 White Paper recommended a range of measures such as relaxing or removing bureaucratic rules, controls and red tape on departments and departmental managers; providing greater autonomy and delegating more authority to departmental managers thus empowering them; a client-oriented approach to service delivery; innovation in management practices and processes, technology and systems; and a focus on ‘new blood’, succession planning and development across the public sector (Barnes 1997; Caiden et al. 1995; Foley 2008; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Maor 1999; Paton & Dodge 1995; Tellier 1990). What was being called for, in effect, was the need for a

change in public sector culture so that it could become more effective by preserving the best of the past and adopting, where applicable, the best of ‘private sector management practices’ (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 87; Maor 1999).

When the Chretien Liberal Government came to power in 1993 the financial pressures of the times were great. These enabled the Chretien Government to introduce a new public sector reform proposal called the Program Review Exercise (PRE) (Julliet & Mingus 2008; Smith 1997). This was undertaken between 1994 and 1996 and led to a considerable reorganisation of the Canadian public sector, including its structural configuration and its processes of government and public service administration (Julliet & Mingus 2008; Smith 1997). The PRE comprised a review of a broad range of programs in order to reduce expenditures across these programs (Julliet & Mingus 2008). Masse, the Public Service Renewal Minister, and a former public servant who was strongly supportive of the public sector, was asked to conduct the PRE and he involved not private sector representatives but instead a selected committee of ministers. Senior departmental managers were asked to contribute directly to the reforms by developing plans for delivering expenditure reduction targets (set by Department of Finance and the Treasury Board Secretariat) in their respective departments (Julliet & Mingus 2008). The implementation of the PRE was documented in a paper called *Getting government right* in 1994, which incorporated the reductions to be made to government programs, the establishment of new service agencies, and the development of external partnerships and efficiency improvements (Smith 1997, p. 37). This was an ‘evolutionary strategy [of public sector reform]’ based on four principles: 1) managing the deficit, 2) promoting regulation, 3) strengthening policy capacity and 4) alternative and direct approaches to service delivery including privatisation and commercialisation of some functions (Smith 1997, p. 37; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011).

Later reform policies of the Chretien Government included attempts to introduce to the public sector the private sector discipline of business planning; changes to the accountability framework and the introduction of service standards to encourage a results orientation; as well as changes to human resources management, including the introduction of performance-based pay for management and delegation of authority to frontline managers for human resource management (Foley 2008; Julliet & Mingus 2008). Prime Minister Martin’s Liberal Government, which came to power in 2003, introduced the Action Plan for Democratic Reform 2004 that recommended

parliamentary committees become more active. Much of his reform efforts focussed on increasing public management accountability for results and bringing back public confidence and trust in government (Julliet & Mingus 2008).

The Harper Progressive Conservative Government, which took office in 2006, also engaged in continuing efforts to reform ethics and accountability regimes in the public sector via the introduction of the ‘flagship’ *Federal Accountability Act 2006* (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 255; Franks 2009; Julliet & Mingus 2008; McCormack 2007). These latter reforms made senior bureaucrats more directly accountable to parliament and its parliamentary committees (Julliet & Mingus 2008; McCormack 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011).

Canadian public sector reform initiatives attempted to introduce policies, processes and practices to modernise the public sector and its management practices. The public sector was to become less bureaucratic and its culture was to be transformed. A focus on efficiency and effectiveness prevailed. Management was to be more accountable for its performance, have more decision-making authority, improve its processes, and practise economic and financial management. The extent to which such modernisation was actually implemented or became a part of the constitution of public sector management is unclear. As will be discussed next, there is *little* evidence to suggest that the constitution of public sector management changed *significantly* as a result of these reforms; it appears that it was rhetoric *more than* reform that was institutionalised across the Canadian public sector and other such sectors across the Anglo-American world.

Outcomes of public sector reform

Consideration of the outcomes of public sector reforms in Canada has been made by a number of academics (Aucoin 1995; Barnes 1997; Borins 1988; Caiden et al. 1995; Dinsdale 1997; Foley 2008; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Heintzman 2007; Kernaghan 1995; Maor 1999; Paton & Dodge 1995; Smith 1997) indicating mixed results that have changed the public sector of Canada somewhat, but often in unexpected ways and with unintended/undesired consequences (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 218). As Dinsdale (1997) argues, one consequence was that public servant morale plummeted, disillusionment and cynicism grew and loyalty to the public service was damaged.

Borins (1988) argues there is little evidence to suggest that the ‘alphabet soup’ of public sector reforms and NPM have been a success. Kernaghan (1994) argues that values associated with the NPM have permeated the existing and traditional values system of the public service and that although some of the new values are complementary many of them are in conflict with or challenge more traditional values. These mixed results were, in part, related to public sector reform processes in Canada being less systematic or ‘technocratic’ than in other countries such as in NZ, and the UK (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Lonti & Verma 2004; Mascarenhas 1990; Wallis, et al. 2007). As Mascarenhas (1990, p. 77) argues, technocratic approaches to reform were inspired by administrative theory with its focus on ‘design of administrative structures and procedures to facilitate the efficiency of and effectiveness of bureaucratic’ structures (March & Olsen 1986, p. 282; Gregory 2007; Salamon 1981). Administrative approaches stand in contrast to political approaches to reform inspired by ‘realpolitik’ in which ‘all administrative structures are seen as a reflection of various interests or groups’, hence viewed as political. Thus, rather than being a planned and controlled strategy of reform as well as one that did not necessarily engage with ‘realpolitik’, Canadian public sector reform processes were somewhat ad hoc and reactive, leading to varied outcomes. Juliet and Mingus (2008, p. 228) argue that Canadian reform efforts did not often secure significant and substantive reforms because they sometimes failed to give ‘sufficient consideration [to] the realities of administering the state in a parliamentary political system’. Additionally, the difficulties of synchronising or synergising the directions, views, commitments and capabilities of the political and bureaucratic arms of government led to poor reform outcomes.

Kroeger (1996, p. 24) argues that many reforms had mixed results because, in the early 1990s, the continuous political commitment that such public sector reforms required was missing, as the following quote makes clear:

The ministers in office in the early 1990s, like virtually all of their predecessors since Confederation [that is, the constitutional founding of Canada], had little interest in the workings of government or the design of programs. These are simply not subjects that readily capture the attention of hard-pressed people at the political level. Unfortunately, in the absence of sustained attention by Ministers, the scope for significant changes in the workings of government or the definition of its functions is very limited.

As Aucoin (1995, p. 15) further points out, the conservative governments:

did not see [public management reform] as centrally connected to the dilemmas they faced. Nor did they see any votes in advancing good management. For them management reform was essentially an internal bureaucratic preoccupation that could be tolerated so long as it did not detract from their political agenda.

Implications for the constitution of public sector management

The outcomes of public sector reform in Canada suggest an attempt to reform the public sector and its management practices along the lines of NPM but, as with other Anglo-American polities, there is little empirical research to suggest what such reforms meant in practice. The reforms may have modified public sector management work by requiring business-like planning processes, higher service standards, a client orientation, greater accountability frameworks, greater autonomy and delegation for departmental managers, and the reduction of bureaucratic controls and ‘red tape’. However, the extent to which the constitution of public sector management changed appears to be confined to micro process changes related to finance and budgeting, personnel administration, information and infrastructure, and goods and services management (Clark 2001; Edwards 2001; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Silverman 1993). Beyond these changes, the results are not clear. Reformers desired the adoption of NPM but it did not necessarily become fully implemented in Canada as it did in other Anglo-American polities such as NZ and, to some extent, Australia.

2.3.4. New Zealand (NZ)

The NZ experience of public sector reform followed a similar trajectory to that of Australia (discussed later) but with a number of strikingly different components. Successive governments in NZ were strongly influenced by and advocated for the NPM movement which had originated in other Anglo-American polities (Hood 1991; Mulgan 2008a), initially believing this movement could provide answers to NZ’s economic and constitutional problems of the day. In NZ the mandate for public sector reform came from inside the government (that is, Treasury and the State Services Commission), which adopted a planned, formal and structured approach to public sector reform (Boston 1995; Kettl 1997; Gregory 2007; March & Olsen 1983, p. 282–283; Mascarehnas 1990; Salamon 1981, p. 472; Wallis et al. 2007). There was little open discussion or debate via usual mechanisms such as commissions, committees of inquiry

or studies encompassing consultation with the broader community. Consequently, NZ adopted and applied public sector reforms quickly and comprehensively, advocating and institutionalising the managerialist agenda of the NPM without questioning its assumptions, principles, or practices.

Policies, processes and practices of public sector reform

NZ public sector reform policies, processes and practices incorporated a range of measures that were put in place in a determined ‘one shot’, thorough and consistent manner (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 81; Mulgan 2008a) during the 1980s, albeit in a number of phases. Three major pieces of legislation introduced during the 1980s enabled public sector reforms in NZ. The legislation comprised the *State Owned Enterprises Act 1986*, the *State Sector Reform Act 1988*, and the *Public Finance Act 1989*. This legislation was an important (formal) catalyst for the three phases of reform that ensued.

Phases one and two of reform took place during the first term in office of the Lange Labour Government (1984–1989). During the first phase, attention was placed on reconsidering the role played by the public sector in the broader economy, relative to the private sector. A demarcation was made between the public and private sectors. The market was restored as the dominant platform for guiding and determining economic and business matters, diminishing the position previously held by the state (Mascarenhas 1990). The second phase, facilitated by the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986, saw the break-up of public sector policy, regulatory, and commercial functions from their traditional public sector domain and the establishment of ‘former trading departments and corporations’ into independent state-owned enterprises (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 303; Boston 1987; Mascarenhas 1988, 1990, 1993; Scott & Gorringer 1989). State-owned enterprises were placed on a similar standing to their private sector counterparts and tasked with unambiguous business goals (Scott & Gorringer 1989). The third phase of reform took place during the second term of the Labour Government’s time in office (post 1989) under Prime Minister Palmer.

During phase three, the focus was on reforming the public service administration. The State Sector Reform Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989 provided the foundation for this phase of the reforms that were intent on bringing about private sector management principles to the public sector. This phase contained two components: the

introduction of the State Sector Reform Act 1988 and the separation of policy functions from operational functions across a range of departments (Mascarenhas 1990). The State Sector Reform Act 1988 allowed for the establishment of the SES. It also radically changed the former management practices associated with permanent tenured departmental heads by introducing a system of limited-term contract appointments for chief executives, replacing the former career public servant model. Chief executives were afforded greater autonomy and discretion for the management of their departments, in a way similar to chief executives in the private sector who are free to manage their organisations as they see fit. Many of the constraints associated with expenditure, recruitment, selection, and promotion were removed (Mascarenhas 1993; Scott & Gorringer 1989) leaving the chief executives freer to manage (Osborne & Gaebler 1992).

The State Sector Reform Act 1988 also provided for the establishment of performance agreements for chief executives and their departments. A distinction between outputs and outcomes was considered important in order to measure the performance of both bureaucrats and politicians in much the same way as private sector management performance is measured via outputs of operating divisions such as production, sales, and marketing, and outcomes of profitability and growth (Scott & Gorringer 1989). Chief executives were to become ‘more [...] accountable to ministers for the output and the efficiency of their departments’ (Scott & Gorringer 1989, p. 82). Ministers were to be accountable for the outcomes of their department or their ability to achieve broader economic and social objectives (Mulgan 2008a; Scott & Gorringer 1989, p. 82). This distinction between outputs and outcomes was central to the public sector reforms and its measurement was thought enhanced via the Public Finance Act 1989.

The new financial management system brought about by the Public Finance Act 1989, incorporated a greater discipline regarding measurement of outputs, greater transparency about financial results, the introduction of accrual-based accounting, adoption of different modes of resource appropriation based on cost or profit centre models, department responsibility for cash management, and the incorporation of financial data for performance review and evaluation. In effect, the Public Finance Act 1989 connected chief executive operational decisions with financial considerations (Mascarenhas 1993; Scott & Gorringer 1989). This Act further developed the notion of performance accountability and performance measurement that was imposed on the

chief executives by stipulating the data required for the evaluation of performance (Mascarenhas 1993).

Some further considerations came into play during the public sector reforms specifically aimed at controlling and overseeing the operation of departments: four considerations were proposed (Scott & Gorringe 1989). The first consideration was to augment public sector contestability, which was to be achieved via the promotion of competitive neutrality between government-owned suppliers and others; the removal of barriers of entry to private sector competitors, and contracting out. The second consideration was to limit outputs of government departments including via imposing legislative limits, requiring statements of intent, and putting in place departmental supply agreements. The third consideration was to deter the 'capture' (Posner 1974) of politicians and government agencies by rent-seeking pressure groups via increased transparency, separating policy from regulatory operations, and centralising policy advice. The fourth consideration was to enable and encourage the monitoring of public sector departments via increased internal and external reporting, imposing freedom of information legislation, use of ombudsman functions and oversight via such departments as Treasury, State Services Commission, Auditor-General, members of parliament, the press and the public.

Further changes took place in the NZ public sector which, although they did not alter the fundamentals of the earlier public sector reforms of the 1980s, resembled more of a conservative and mainstream approach which aligned more closely with other Westminster systems such as the UK, Canada, and Australia (Ryan 2002, pp. 4–5). As Gregory (2007) argues, these later changes appear to have been drawn from the 'whole of government' approach adopted by the UK, which is somewhat different from the former NZ approach in that it focuses on complex networks and partnerships, collaborative systems, 'joined-up' government, and shared values (Gregory 2007).

NZ public sector reforms became subject to revision by the Bolger Labour/National Alliance Government, which came to office in 1990. It created a Review Centre Advisory Group (Mulgan 2008a, p. 3) that recommended an alignment between accountability for outputs and outcomes. The output/outcome structure of responsibility was overturned in 1994 when the Bolger Government adopted a public sector-wide framework for strategic planning incorporating the use of Strategic Result Areas (SRAs)

and Key Result Areas (KRAs) (Boston, Martin, Pallot & Walsh 1996; Gregory 2007), which was aimed at broadening the domain for which departmental heads were to be held accountable. Later in the 2000s, the Labour-led Coalition Government under Prime Minister Clark, went further in overturning the output/outcome structure of responsibility by introducing departmental ‘statements of intent’. These ‘statements of intent’ include consideration of outcomes as well as outputs, although the core accountability for outcomes rests with ministers (Robinson 2002). NZ public sector reforms appear to be in a continual state of augmentation and hybridisation.

Public sector reforms incorporated mechanisms and techniques that had been originally designed in and were imported from the private sector; again there was little, if any, consideration of their fit with the public sector. Many notions associated with proposed reform were presented as rational but were complex, problematic conceptually and not straightforward. Some reforms were, in effect, proposing a move from a demand model to a supply model, again reflecting the tenets of neoclassical ‘theory’. The pace¹⁷ of reforms was great and this became a debilitating factor, not allowing for evaluation before other reforms were introduced. No sooner had one proposed reform been introduced, then the government changed, or the reform was overturned, or renamed. The extent to which they changed the constitution of public sector management was considered to be significant (Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011), although as will be discussed later many reforms were eventually reconsidered over time.

Outcomes of public sector reform

There has been some evaluation of the outcomes of early public sector reforms in NZ via several major reviews by government and a number of comprehensive examinations by academics (Boston et al. 1996; Logan 1991; Mulgan 2008a; Schick 1996; Scott 2001; State Services Commission 1991; Steering Group 1991). Collectively, these evaluations have identified a number of strengths and benefits as well as a number of weaknesses of public sector reforms. Some of the strengths and benefits and, in particular, their association with the NPM have been contested (Jesson 1999; Kelsey

¹⁷ It is important to acknowledge that foundational reforms in New Zealand in the late 1980s were distinguished internationally by ‘contract’ and ‘market’ orientation, not simply ‘managerialism’ (Di Francesco 2015).

1997) and some strong criticisms have been levelled at the public sector reforms (Mallard 2003). Recommendations for minor modifications as well as for major changes to the public sector have ensued but these recommendations did not necessarily change the constitution of public sector management.

Although NZ governments achieved what some regard as ‘probably the most comprehensive and practical public management reforms of an OECD country’ (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 302) many outcomes were considered to be less than beneficial and in parts were regarded as debilitating for the NZ public sector and its public service employees. In particular, while the theoretical perspective and principles adopted to frame public sector reforms in NZ were considered comprehensively, the practical implications were not well thought through (Mascarenhas 1993). As a result of public sector reforms founded on predominantly economic theories, introduced via a technocratic strategy (as discussed previously) and largely without consultation, (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Mascarenhas 1990; Wilenski 1986), much anxiety, uncertainty, resentment and confrontation took place across the public service. The values of the public sector were fundamentally challenged as a result of public sector reforms (Mascarenhas 1990; Schick 1996). Public service employees were at odds with the government that had adopted a market-oriented philosophy to public sector reforms that conflicted with their more social and humanistic values.

Public sector reform outcomes in NZ introduced a greater managerialist agenda into the public sector, but the public sector reform outcomes in NZ might be considered as an ‘unsuccessful attempt to ground public management on clear assumptions and unambiguous principles’ (Mulgan 2008a, p. 2) and ‘ideal models of [...] private sector’ management (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326; Bogdanor 2001; Gregory 2007), replete with their focus on accountability. In Westminster systems such as the NZ public sector, established conventions of ministerial accountability and responsibility are deeply embedded in the prevailing political culture and cannot easily be uprooted by technocratic reforms. Furthermore, a government may change to one that does not have the same reforming zeal or strong commitment to neo-classical economic ideals such as ‘Rogernomics’. In addition, the complexities and ambiguities of the public sector in NZ as in other Anglo-American polities are such that public sector reforms anchored to simple replications of private sector practices will inevitably not be a neat fit and so be contested.

Implications for the constitution of public sector management

While the outcomes of public sector reforms in NZ were mixed, as in other Anglo-American polities, reforms did challenge the way in which public sector managers were expected to operate, and hence the constitution of public sector management, although empirical evidence for this is scant. In particular, the managerialist agenda became prevalent in NZ's public sector. The establishment of a SES management cadre brought about changes for the most senior public sector managers, such that their employment became non-tenured, creating potential for politicisation¹⁸ of their appointments and their management work. Their work was linked to performance objectives and measures and they took a greater focus on outputs but 'sometimes at the expense of some loss of attention to outcomes' (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 302; see also State Services Commission 2001, 2002). The State Services Commission's role became one of 'employer of the chief executives and advisor to government on general management and personnel issues' (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 303) requiring chief executives to become more autonomous and accountable for the performance and results of their departments. Strategic planning and its associated key result areas and statements of intent were adopted for public sector management. As in other Anglo-American polities, market-type mechanisms were introduced in NZ, including outsourcing, corporatisation and privatisation, which modified the context of public sector management.

Policy advising was decoupled from the administration of departments, removing this responsibility from public sector managers. The policy administration dichotomy, which has been contested by academics on the basis that policy-making and administration cannot be separated and instead are a shared domain for both politicians (ministers) and public servants (chief executives/departmental heads), was at the heart of damaged relationships (Campbell 1988; Gregory 1998, p. 524; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993; Mulgan 2008a, p. 15; Riggs 1986) between the ministers and their chief executives/departmental heads (Mascarenhas 1990). Reforms that allowed ministers to

¹⁸ A comprehensive discussion of the term politicisation, as it applies in the Australian and New Zealand contexts is provided by Weller in his 1989 article, 'Politicisation and the Australian Public Service' appearing in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration* (Weller 1989). Weller argues that politicisation can be viewed as the opposite of political neutrality. Two aspects of politicisation which tend to contradict political neutrality are argued to be: 1) the use of public servants for party political purposes and 2) and the use of party political influence for the appointment, promotion and tenure of public servants. The latter aspect resonates with the term politicisation as it is used in this thesis.

appoint policy advisors and seek external advice that to some extent subordinated their chief executives/departmental heads, gave rise to concerns about possible political interference and partisanship (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 89).

This review of the literature has allowed some conclusions to be drawn but it is difficult to determine what the actual effects of reforms were due to the limited evidence available. A summary of these conclusions is provided below.

2.3.5. The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work Across Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia)

Public sector reform efforts have been heavily influenced by the NPM movement that has simplified the concept of ‘administration’, which, for more than a century, was the responsibility of senior public bureaucrats (du Gay 2006, p. 166, note 7). Administration previously comprised both ‘policy advising’ *and* ‘management’ where management involved the planning, coordination, and overseeing of resources to implement the policies of government (du Gay 2006, p. 166, note 7). However, under public sector reforms influenced by the NPM, senior public bureaucrats are expected to simply ‘manage’ as per their counterparts in the private sector, whose focus is limited to predominantly being business-responsive (du Gay 2006). Management in this sense is a generic function, rather than one related to the organisational mandate. Therefore, management rather than administration is what is expected of public sector bureaucrats post reforms and what is encapsulated in the often quoted phrase of public sector reformers across Anglo-American polities: to ‘just let the managers manage’. But *exactly* what this new public sector management is remains unclear.

The constitution of public sector management post public sector reforms across the Anglo-American polities has resulted from changes to public sector organisation structures and functions; policies, processes and practices; and the terms and conditions of employment (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Organisation structure and function changes incorporated centralisation and decentralisation, restructuring, and the use of market-type mechanisms such as privatisation¹⁹, agencification²⁰, and contractualisation²¹

¹⁹ Privatisation is defined as ‘the transfer of ownership and control of government or state assets, firms and operations to private investors’ (Khemani and Shapiro 1993).

²⁰ Agencification is defined as ‘the use of an organisation to undertake functions on behalf of a government ministry with special conditions or objectives ... The basic features are: an explicit function,

thereby changing the context in which public sector management work is constituted. Policies, processes and practices associated with strategic planning, personnel management, financial management, and industrial relations were introduced to provide greater autonomy and accountability to public sector managers for the management of their departments and the achievement of results. Terms and conditions of employment, especially those associated with the introduction of a SES, led to a loss of tenure and the introduction of performance appraisal and performance-based pay for the most senior executives, potentially politicising their work (Kernaghan 1994).

The constitution of public sector management appears to have changed as a consequence of the changes made to Public Service Commissions. Many of these commissions ceased to be responsible for the centralised policies, administration, and management of public service personnel and instead became advisors to Departmental Secretaries and government. The requirement that Departmental Secretaries focus less on policy formulation and advice and instead be accountable to the parliament for the management of results (outputs and outcomes) of their departments is likely to have had an impact on the constitution of public sector management. But as Allison (1984, p. 218), Allison and Zelikow (1999), Stewart and Ranson (1988), and more recently Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue, while such changes are ‘relevant to the problems that confront public managers, these terms [derived from the private sector, that is, strategic planning, personnel management, financial management, and accountability for results] do not map the territory [of public sector management] directly’.

The reform literature for these various polities suggests that the constitution of public sector management work would involve all or some of the following elements. These are summarised in Table 2.1, showing those that are common and uncommon. This table is based on an analysis of the literature reviewed previously. Much of this literature portrays public sector management work as simplistic ‘context-free genericism’ (Pollitt 2011, p.35) taking place in an environment which is value-neutral, objective, rational and clinical as proposed by the proponents of NPM (Barzelay 1992; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Osborne & Plastrik, 1997). This literature clearly shows a

an accountable chief executive and a framework that establishes goals and targets. Associated features are a distinction between policy and operations and a purchaser-provider relationship based on contractualisation’ (Halligan 1997c, p. 4).

²¹ Contracting is defined as entailing ‘the use of a competitive tendering process in which an organiser of a service selects an operator to provide all or part of a service, under contract’ (Task Force on Management Improvement 1992, p. 292).

positive bias towards support for the raft of so-called reforms going under the name of the NPM (among others), which implies to some extent that these are actually reforms.

A more critical literature, however, questions the fundamental basis of these so-called reforms from a conceptual, theoretical and practical basis. This more critical literature reviewed argues that context, especially the political environment in which public sector management work is constituted, is important (Allison 1984; Aucoin 1994; Caiden 1991; du Gay 2000; Kettl 1997; Mascarenhas 1988, 1990, 1993; Mulgan 2008a, 2008b; Pollitt 1990, 1993, 1995; Savoie 1994a; Wilenski 1986a). The more critical literature challenges the tenets of public sector reforms that advocate changes to the constitution of public sector management work based on a managerialist agenda, abstract neo-classical ideas and a denial of the existing bureaucratic, governmental and political context which pervades such management work on the basis that public sector work differs vastly from managerialist portrayals.

The literature overall does not provide evidence to what extent these intended reforms might have been implemented. What is clear is that a strong managerialist language has been adopted in each polity that suggests a strong level of implementation not supported by evidence. What is evident across these Anglo-American polities is that public sector reform movements and initiatives have resulted in a multitude of confounded elements (common and uncommon) that have coalesced to indicate only loosely what the constitution of public sector management work might be, post such reforms. These confounded elements are the result of reforms, many derived from the private sectors, clashing with the public sectors in the Anglo-American polities. Each polity will have a context encompassing government, legislation, politics, bureaucracy, and other dimensions, together with reform initiatives that will influence and determine which parts of the enormous and far-reaching agenda covered by the term NPM will be implemented. As Friedland and Alford (1991) argue, competing and challenging institutional domains or logics across the private and public sectors serve to stipulate the ways in which actors and organisations operate, suggest principles of organisation, put forward notions of identity, and propose a language to guide motives and behaviours (Powell, Gammal & Simard 2005, p. 236). Several other authors propose studies of such

challenged and competing logics²² (see Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Davis, Diekmann & Tinsley 1994; Emery & Giaque 2014; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980; Scott, Reuf & Caronna 2000; Thornton 2004; Thornton & Ocasio 2008; Westney 1987). For the constitution of public sector management across other Anglo-American polities, including in the Australian context, the notion of competing logics is a critical aspect because public sector reforms inspired by private sector concepts competed with very different logics operating in the public sector. As a consequence, a set of confused organisational responses is evident across the Anglo-American polities regarding the constitution of public sector management, post reforms.

²² Although the body of literature on institutional logics is comprehensive, for the purposes of this research it is not covered in depth, due to space limitations.

Table 2.1 The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work Across the Anglo-American Polities (excluding Australia) Post Reforms: Common and Uncommon Elements.

The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work Across Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia) ²³	Common ²⁴ Elements	Uncommon Elements
Structural and organisation changes to the public sector, and associated administrative procedure/process changes having an impact on the constitution of public sector management work. These comprise constitutional changes, regulation and deregulation, decentralisation, marketisation or contractualisation and agencification, corporatisation, commercialisation, privatisation, outsourcing, competition, public private partnerships, and user pays mechanisms. Public sector management work expected to reflect private sector management principles post these changes.	UK Canada USA NZ	
'Let the managers manage' and 'make the managers manage' mantra introduced creating an expectation on public sector managers to manage rather than administer, adopting continuous and incremental approaches of managerialism (or NPM).	NZ USA	
De-coupling of public sector policy, regulatory, and commercial functions, and separation or further separation of policy advising from administration. Hence, public sector management work expected to be rationalised to predominantly administration management and devoid of its policy, political and governmental dimensions.	UK USA NZ	
Ministerial appointment of policy advisors and sourcing of external policy advice creates contestability of policy work and reduces this component of public sector management work. Such changes challenge the relationship between ministers and their chief executives/department heads and hence their public sector management work.	UK NZ	
Established public sector principles and values challenged and in some cases changed, and an identified weakening of the 'responsible operation of the public sector' via the introduction of NPM. Some dimensions of public sector culture innovated, modernised, and transformed and the introduction of an entrepreneurial culture reflecting characteristics of NPM requiring entrepreneurialism in public management work. However, there is a lack of systematic change to the public sector culture nor of a 'roll [ing] back of the state'. Public sector managers continue to operate according to an institutionalised public service culture and ethos.	NZ Canada UK	
'New professionalism', and 'citizen empowerment' concepts introduced as well as national charters of customer service with		UK

²³ For the purposes of this research the content of the table is limited to the critical elements of the empirical research only.

²⁴ The number of common and uncommon elements highlights the underlying tension between reforms aimed at centralising/strengthening political control and reforms aimed at decentralising/strengthening managerial autonomy (see Aucoin 1990) which poses a dilemma for NPM. This dilemma may be pertinent to the way public sector management work is conceptualised.

The Constitution of Public Sector Management Work Across Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia)²³	Common²⁴ Elements	Uncommon Elements
expectations that public sector management work be more customer or client focussed in its orientation.		
Establishment of a SES cadre and limited-term contract-based employment for chief executives/department heads replacing a career public service creating potential for politicisation of appointments and hence public sector management work. Establishment of performance agreement and appraisal processes for SES requiring them to establish performance objectives and measures and adopt an outputs/outcomes focus, pertaining to their management work.	USA NZ	NZ
Greater expectation and prominence by agency/department heads and managers on objective setting, planning and strategy development. Increased management autonomy, delegated authority and accountability via introduction of various Acts.	USA Canada	
Streamlining and removal of bureaucratic and administrative controls/processes/policies (incorporating ‘finance, personnel, informatics, infrastructure, the introduction of single operating budgets, [and] supply management’) on departments and managers simplifying management work, improving operations management and service delivery management. Some deregulation of human resource management policies/processes (such as ‘simplified job/position classification system[s]’) facilitating management decision making in relation to resources.	USA Canada	
Introduction of new/re-regulatory mechanisms on public sector management work increasing management reporting requirements.	USA UK	
Greater expectations required of chief executives/departmental heads to focus on economic and financial management and control of expenditures/costs via new financial management systems which connect operational decisions with financial management.	Canada NZ	
Centralised systems of control across the public sector including a range of measures to control and oversee the operation of departments, constraining public sector management work.	Canada NZ	

Source: Original table derived from literature.²⁵

²⁵ There were many references associated with the table and as such they have not all been reproduced above. A comprehensive list of references is provided in the reference list at the end of the thesis.

The elements analysed from the literature reflect post reform public sector management work being performed by a SES cadre of chief executives/department heads whose employment is based on limited-term contracts replacing their former tenured career public service (Light 2006, p. 6; Mascarenhas 1990; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 321; McGregor 1983; Scott & Gorringer 1989; Thayer 1978). However, because of their loss of tenure, the appointment of this cadre, and hence their work, is potentially open to politicisation (Kernaghan 1994). Public sector management work is appraised and performance managed via the introduction of performance management systems akin to those applying in the private sector. The introduction of performance agreement and appraisal processes for the SES now requires them to establish performance objectives and measures pertaining to their management work (Light 2006, p. 6; Mascarenhas 1990; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 321; McGregor 1983; Scott & Gorringer 1989; Thayer 1978). As du Gay (2008, p. 35) argues, the introduction of managerialist principles and practices has caused a weakening of the 'responsible operation of the public sector'.

Managerialist reformers have advocated that this cadre adopt entrepreneurial management behaviours, take risks and focus on outputs and outcomes (Box et al. 2001; Gualmini 2008; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Rosenbloom 1993) such as innovation and empowerment (Stone 2014; Williams 2000) in a quest to 'promote an entrepreneurial culture' and that intrapreneurs (Thomson 2014b) and greater innovation are needed for the public sector. Rhodes (2011, p. 199) argues a language of managerialism pervades the public sector and its management, and this language 'express[es] beliefs about ... reforms'. Many others argue the language of managerialism expressed in such mantras as 'let the managers manage' and 'make the managers manage' has been introduced creating an expectation on public sector managers to manage rather than administer, adopting continuous and incremental approaches of managerialism and NPM, but its implementation is less evident (Bogdanor 2001; Box et al. 2001, p. 613; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326; Mulgan 2008a, p. 2; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Savoie 1990b). Furthermore, as Talbot (2001) argues, there is a lack of systematic change to the public sector culture nor is there a 'roll [ing] back of the state' and public sector managers continue to operate according to an institutionalised public service culture and ethos, although Kernaghan (1994) argues that new values have permeated the traditional public service values and that they have coalesced. Furthermore, as Acroyd (2007) argues, public service professionals in the UK resisted reforms and associated

challenges to their values, work practices, and culture which were based on a ‘social service ethos’ as opposed to a commercial or managerial-based ethos, and reverted to their former professional values and institutions.

Public sector management work is constituted in an environment deemed by some reformers as conceptually and generally devoid of political, bureaucratic and governmental constrictions (Pollitt 2011). As Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue, this environment has been structured and organised to allow for multiple market-type mechanisms to flourish and public sector managers are expected to work within and with such mechanisms. Structural and organisation changes and associated administrative procedure/process changes comprise constitutional changes, increasing regulation and deregulation as well as decentralisation, marketisation or contractualisation and agencification, together with corporatisation, commercialisation, privatisation, outsourcing, competition, public private partnerships, and user pays mechanisms. Public sector management work, according to managerialists, is now managerial, loosely regulated, largely delegated, predominantly decentralised and less prescribed than traditional public sector administration (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 100; Gregory 2007; Gualmini 2008, pp. 80, 81, 83, 86; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225; Mascarenhas 1990; Mulgan 2008a, p. 3; Public Services Trust 2009; Smith 1997, p. 37; Talbot 2001, pp. 288–291). As Caiden et al. (1995), Foley (2008), and Julliet and Mingus (2008) argue, this prognosis is contested given the greater centralised systems of control across many areas of the public sector, including a range of measures introduced to control and oversee the operation of departments, constraining public sector management work. Other commentators, such as Banham (1994), Gregory (2007), Hood et al. (1999), Olsen (2005), Peterson (1992) and Talbot (2001), have commented on the prevalence and consequences of regulatory controls on public sector management work arguing that the introduction of new and/or re-regulatory mechanisms on public sector management work have increased rather than decreased constraints and prescriptions in this environment, for example, increasing management reporting requirements.

As Kettl (1997) and others argue, public sector policy, regulatory and commercial functions have been decoupled and separation or further separation has taken place in relation to policy advising and administration (Boston 1987, p. 423–442; Dinsdale 1997; Kettl 1997, p. 456; Mascarenhas 1988, p. 35–47, 1990, p. 83, 1993; Public

Services Trust 2009; Scott & Gorringe 1989; Talbot 2001). Hence, public sector management work is expected to be rationalised to predominantly administration or management and is conceptualised as devoid of policy, political and governmental dimensions. However, as Pollitt (2011) argues, this conceptualisation portrays public sector management work as simplistic, devoid of its context and generic in nature, when, in reality, as others have argued, it is complicated, context rich, and specific in nature (Caiden 1991; du Gay 2000; Weber 1978). The introduction of ministerial-appointed policy advisors and the sourcing of external policy advice have created contestability for policy work. Policy advice is supposedly no longer a primary component of the constitution of public sector management work and instead it is presumed that this advice is best left to others such as policy advisors and external consultants, supposedly reducing this component of work from the Departmental Secretaries' purview (Boston 1987, p. 423–442; Kettl 1997, p. 456; Mascarenhas 1988, p. 35–47, 1990, p. 83, 1993; Public Services Trust 2009; Scott & Gorringe 1989; Talbot 2001). However, as many have argued, such changes have challenged the relationship between ministers and their chief executives/department heads and hence created confusion for public sector management (Campbell 1988; Gregory 1998, p. 524; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993; Mulgan 2008a, p. 15; Riggs 1986).

Others argue there is now a greater expectation on chief executives/departmental heads to set objectives and develop strategies and plans (Kettl 1997, p. 449; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 8; Pautz & Washington 2009, p. 657; Schick 1996, p. 23–26; Treasury Board Secretariat 1988). Various Acts have apparently provided management with greater autonomy, delegated authority and accountability. There are now greater expectations required of chief executives/departmental heads to focus on economic and financial management and control of expenditures/costs via new financial management systems which connect operational decisions with financial management (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). While there has been some deregulation of human resource management policies/processes (such as 'simplified job/position classification system[s]') facilitating management decision-making in relation to resources (Foley 2008, p. 284–285; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 227; Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 555), such changes have been limited. As Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue, the introduction of concepts such as 'new professionalism' and 'citizen empowerment' to the public sector have created expectations that public sector management work be more customer or client focussed

in its orientation. The expectation of the delivery of customer service is expressed in 'citizens' charters' and 'customer service agreements' (Dunleavy et al. 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Williams 2000).

To what extent the representation of public sector management work gleaned from the literature resembles actuality is not clear. Public sector reforms that took place throughout the abovementioned Anglo-American polities during the period of interest, and the contemporary management ideas which underpinned them, have travelled and been diffused, copied, translated and transformed across the organisation field (Powell, Gammal & Simmard 2005, p. 234) of these public sectors. Scholars such as Micklethwaite and Wooldridge (1996) and Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue that such reforms, especially those which promoted contemporary management ideas associated with the NPM advocated by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Osborne and Plastrik, (1997) were institutionalised in Anglo-American polities from the 1980s onwards. However, these ideas were received in a differential manner (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233), some resembling institutional isomorphism, isopraxis and isonymism, whereas others resembled institutional polymorphism and polypraxis. It is envisaged that public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas from these Anglo-American polities travelled to and influenced the Australian polity, together with reforms initiated in Australia, and that collectively these have had an impact on the stated constitution of public sector management work in the Australian context. It is also expected that some mimesis (Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Scott 1987, 2003b, 2008a, 2010) of contemporary management ideas took place in the Australian polity²⁶.

The next section will discuss public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas in the Australian context and how these had an impact on the constitution of public sector management work to provide an indication of what public sector management is stated to be. It is assumed that what constitutes public sector

²⁶ The body of literature covering new institutional theory has contributed to the travel, translation and transformation of contemporary management ideas across the organisation field of the public sector and provides another theoretical lens that could be used to understand how contemporary management ideas influenced the constitution of public sector management (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005a, p. 8; 2005b; Hansen & Salskov-Iversen, 2005, p. 214; Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002; Solli, Demediuk, & Sims, 2005, p. 195). However, it is not the purpose of this thesis to cover this literature comprehensively nor to conduct empirical research on the travel of contemporary management ideas. Instead a limited review of this literature has been conducted (see Appendix A). A number of references from this limited literature review are used in this thesis as the research has an interest in what stimulated Departmental Secretaries in the APS to consider contemporary management ideas in their management work.

management in the context of the APS will be a conglomerate of local and global ideas (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin 2005, p. 195).

2.4. Public Sector Reforms in Australia

Early public sector reforms in Australia drew on a range of commissions, committees of inquiry and studies that dealt with administrative reform. These commissions, committees and studies took place during the late 1970s and early 1980s and were conducted by both Commonwealth and a majority of state governments (Wilenski 1986, p. 258). Australia unlike NZ, the UK, and the USA adopted an incremental and consultative approach to public sector reform engaging in discussion and debate with a range of parties incorporating senior public servants (especially the most senior bureaucrats, the Mandarins, as they were called), their departments and the public. Australia's approach to the NPM, which featured in its earlier public sector reform efforts, was a considered one, although it eventually accepted and rolled out many of its tenets.

Public sector reforms in Australia reflected a willingness to adopt private sector management principles and practices advocated by the NPM but in a reasonably judicious manner. Reformers within Australia's governments wanted to augment public sector management from its bureaucratic origins to a more modern professional type. As in other Anglo-American polities there was a desire to both 'let the managers manage' and to 'make the managers manage' (Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001).

2.4.1. Policies, Processes and Practices of Public Sector Reform

To establish phase one of its public sector reform agenda, in the 1980s the Australian Labor Government, under Prime Minister Hawke, focussed on reform of the APS by introducing a number of measures and innovations (Budget Reform 1984; Howard 1986; Mascarenhas 1990). Hawke's Labor Government was seemingly less influenced by the wave of 'Ricardian' or neo-classical rational choice approaches to reform than later Australian governments, or other governments such as those of New Zealand (Castles et al. 1996). This was because the Hawke Government initially adopted a corporatist and pragmatic approach to reforms and was more focussed on bringing

together parties such as business and the trade unions (Johnston 2000; Kelly 1994) to develop an Accord, hence it adopted a more moderate or ‘cautious’ approach to the early reform agenda (Boston & Uhr 1996, p. 61). However, over time, the influence of right-wing think tanks from the USA and UK with their generic managerialism and rational choice concepts was apparent in the debates on public administration and government (Zifcak 1994, p.19).

The measures principally addressed by the Australian Labor Government covered three areas of public sector reform: democracy, efficiency, and equity (Wilenski 1986a). However, a first priority was ‘to re-establish ministerial control [and redress the balance of power] and [secure] greater responsiveness to government policies and priorities’ (Halligan 1997a, p. 31) from the bureaucracy. Reforms focussed on diversifying the sources of policy advice to the government, reducing public servants’ permanency, and developing the management capability and responsiveness of public servants to the priorities of the government of the day (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). It is clear that these measures were put in place as a reaction to a growing generalised consensus of a concern that the bureaucracy elite held too much power and was becoming a ‘law unto themselves’ (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 232) and that the public sector therefore needed reform, allowing this government and successive governments to assert its political control over the APS bureaucracy (Halligan 2002; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). The government’s White Paper on the public service and its *Public Service Reform Act* of 1984 clearly articulated these concerns (Commonwealth 1983; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Anti-public service sentiment was thus a precursor to the public sector reform agenda that followed.

The measures included:

- giving ministers greater control over their departments via the introduction of legislative amendments and administrative arrangements;
- modifications to the procedures associated with the appointment of department/agency heads to provide government with greater autonomy in making these appointments;
- introduction of a system for the appointment of a greater number of ministerial advisers/consultants such that ministers would be assisted directly by such advisers;

- the establishment of the SES which provided opportunities for members of the general public to compete on the basis of merit for senior positions in the public sector;
- the establishment of a Merit Protection and Review Agency which was tasked with ensuring the merit principle was applied across the public sector;
- amendments to the Public Service Act's 'chief objects' clause to introduce equitable administration as well as efficient administration;
- the introduction of a statutory requirement to ensure all departments had a range of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity plans in place for implementation (covering women, immigrants, Aboriginals, and people with disabilities);
- a new statutory requirement for all departments to develop and implement in partnership with unions, industrial democracy plans;
- the introduction of permanent part-time employment arrangements to the public sector. (Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986a)

What was not articulated was that many of these measures were designed to move the power held by the bureaucracy to ministers in the political sphere. For example, measures were designed to remove permanency of employment for Departmental Secretaries to allow ministers to source policy advice from outside the public service, as well as to develop managerial competency in the bureaucracy and create the circumstances whereby the public service would become more responsive to the political priorities of the government (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

The second phase of public sector reform introduced by the Australian Labor Government from 1987 incorporated a range of measures that were more focussed on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the machinery of government somewhat along private sector lines (Mascarenhas 1990). These changes have modified the machinery of government and introduced new financial and budget management processes to the public sector requiring a greater focus on managerialist techniques in the constitution of public sector management work.

This phase saw:

- the introduction of the Efficiency Scrutiny Unit (ESU) in 1986 to improve the efficiency of the public sector;
- the introduction of the Financial Management Improvement Program (FMIP) which covered a range of policies and practices derived from the private sector and intended to redirect the public sector's attention on 'managing for results' (Australian Public Service Board 1986, p. 11);
- the launch of Program Management and Budget (PMB) which was to provide ministers and senior public servants with greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy for the efficient management of their departments' resources and overall performance;
- the creation of super departments by amalgamating 26 departments into 16 super departments which in concept would enable financial devolution and portfolio budgeting; and
- the abolishment of the centralised Public Service Board and instead the creation of a Public Service Commissioner, with fewer functions and powers than the Board (Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986a).

As Painter (1988, p. 1) identified, in official circles a general consensus existed about the 'desirability of [these] "management reforms" in the public sector' and most senior managers welcomed such reforms (Keating 1989; Yeatman 1987) although they were not 'universally subscribed to' (Paterson 1989, p. 287). Many were accepted and subscribed to by a number of Mandarins from central agencies, such as Michael Codd, Michael Keating, and David Shand, and other Departmental Secretaries (Codd 1988; Considine 1990; Holmes 1989; Keating; 1988, 1989; Nethercote 1989; Paterson 1988, p. 287; Shand 1987; Yeatman 1987). Paterson (1988, p. 287), himself a managerialist, used the phrase 'the leaders of the [new] managerialist school' to describe these Mandarins operating from within the bureaucracy. 'Globalising webs' (Barry 2001, p. 12) of senior public sector bureaucrats or 'crosscutting organisational arrangements premised on interconnectedness and alignment' (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214) have facilitated and, on occasions, driven the contemporary management ideas underpinning public sector reforms (Codd 1988; Holmes 1989; Keating; 1988, 1989; Paterson 1988, p. 287; Shand 1987). Those bureaucrats exposed to managerialist ideas from such international economic organisations such as the OECD, General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT), the IMF and the World Bank (Pusey 1991, pp. 226–227)

were provided with experiences which, it was considered, would have a lasting and significant effect on their 'orientations to their work' as well as enabling them to communicate, promote, and initiate such ideas back in the Australian context (ibid.) thus modifying the constitution of public sector management work to be more managerial in its orientation.

The reforms of the Commonwealth public administration of this period were ostensibly those advocated by the government of the day (Keating 1989). Some former Mandarins and other senior public servants acknowledged their support for these reforms, recognising them as introduced by government on the basis of careful consideration of the *Review of the Coombs Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration* (RCAGA 1976), the 1979 *Report of the Standing Committee on expenditure and the Reid Review of Commonwealth Government Administration* (RCA 1983) (Keating 1989). As Keating (1990, p. 391) proposes, these Mandarins, like all public servants, were in effect responding to the political process and the 'prerogative of the men and women who have been elected to be our political leaders' as it is their duty to do (Parker 1989, p. 343). By accommodating such reforms, these Mandarins and other Departmental Secretaries may have reflected acceptance for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons. Furthermore, Keating (1989) argues that anti-managerialist critics focussed on narrow aspects of the reforms, such as measurement and 'management for results' which have 'led these critics to coin the phrase the "new managerialism"' although this label does not represent the broader program of reforms (Keating 1989, p. 127). As Keating (1990, p. 388) proposes, 'many of [the] criticisms are mistaken, or at the very least represent a serious distortion'. Keating (1990, p. 392) provides a comprehensive treatise on the reforms, especially those relating to 'managing for results', arguing from an empirical perspective that the fundamentals of the Weberian and Northcote-Trevelyan models of bureaucracy and public service are still relevant and applicable together with these reforms (see also Alford 1993). These reforms, Keating (ibid., p. 392) points out, were focussed on a traditional concern with concepts such as 'efficiency and economy' and *also* with a new emphasis on concepts of 'effectiveness and outcomes' and he points to previous reference to the importance of such concepts by Wilenski (1988).

Although it was the Australian Labor Government in the 1980s which recommended reforms associated with the financial management of resources (including the

transitioning of the Commonwealth budgetary practice of ‘appropriation method budgeting to a program budgeting system’ in the early 1980s), the devolution of personnel management, and the reorganisation associated with the machinery of government, so-called ‘new managerialists’ from within the public sector bureaucracy were perceived to be responsible for such initiatives (Nethercote 1989, p. 363; Yeatman 1987). Nethercote (ibid., p. 363) argues that these ‘new managerialists’ were converts of an expenditure budgeting system who became ‘ardent and public protagonists of their new faith’. However, as Nethercote (1989) concludes in relation to former Departmental Secretary of Finance Michael Keating’s views about these initiatives and reforms, many members of the public sector senior leadership also shared concerns expressed by critics at the time (see also Considine, 1990).

Others, such as the former senior official from Finance, Andrew Podger, who argued for consideration and attention to be placed on human resource management as a focus of attention under the FMIP (Podger 1989), provide an example of a more tempered view of the reforms (Nethercote 1989). Other examples are offered of critics from within the bureaucracy who held a sceptical view of administrative reforms, such as former Commonwealth Ombudsman (Professor Pearce), former First Assistant Commissioner of the Public Service Commission (John Baker), former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Stuart Harris), and former members of the SES such as Jenny Stewart and Kelleher (a pseudonym) (Kelleher 1987, 1988, 1989; Nethercote 1989; Stewart 1988). This shows there was a mixed reaction from within the bureaucracy to these early reforms.

Further reforms were implemented during the latter term of the Australian Labor Government under Prime Minister Keating. These reforms focussed more on macroeconomic policy and globalisation than earlier reform efforts, which were more related to microeconomics and management issues pertaining to the APS (Johnston 2000). During this second phase of reform, a number of efforts were made to address issues associated with the productivity and efficiency of government business enterprises (GBEs). The view by Prime Minister Keating was that GBEs (which operated at national, state, and local government levels) and which comprised 10% of GDP (ICI 1993) were in need of a national policy, and significant reform to address their uncoordinated procedures and structures (Johnston 2000, p. 353). Therefore, in 1992 newly elected Prime Minister Keating established a Committee of Inquiry to look

into the reform of GBEs, which led to the preparation of a National Competition Policy (NCP) (ICI 1993; Moran 2010; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). From this policy came the commercialisation of GBEs in particular, focussing on restructuring them so as to remove existing monopolies by creating or at least opening up markets for their products and services (Johnston 2000). Concerns with regulating and overseeing the business operations of such GBEs was considered secondary to the creation of competition by structural reform. These reforms were furthered by the then incumbent Australian Liberal National Coalition Government (ALNCG), which took office in 1996.

A third phase of public sector reform was introduced by the ALNCG under Prime Minister Howard from the time of its election in 1996 (Johnston 2000). It was focussed on progressing policies, processes and practices that followed a neo-liberal ideology with a commitment to the NPM (Johnston 2000). These included continued focus on contracting out, the introduction of accrual-based accounting, and the progression of performance-measurement frameworks (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). The ALNCG also introduced a range of reforms covering foreign affairs, industrial and workplace relations, significant downsizing of the APS, and privatisation of the core functions of the APS (Barrett 2000; Singleton 2000). Spurred on by the initial progress made by the ALP Government in relation to structural reforms of GBEs, the ALNCG accelerated the pace of such reforms by reconfiguring and restructuring the remaining GBEs into statutory government corporations with a view to privatisation (Johnston 2000).

Further reforms via a fourth phase were announced by the Australian Labor Government that came to power in 2007, under the leadership of Prime Minister Rudd. The Rudd Government acknowledged it had no particular preference for any particular mode of provision of services and that they could be delivered by either the private or public sectors but would determine which sector was to provide the services based ‘on the available evidence on how to deliver services efficiently and effectively’ (Rudd 2008, p. 5). Prime Minister Rudd announced the *Reform of Australian Government Administration: Staying Ahead of the Game; Blueprint for Reform of Australian Government Administration*, commonly known as ‘the Blueprint’, (Commonwealth of Australia 2010a) in May 2010. The Australian Labor Government accepted in total the 28 recommendations across nine core areas for the reform of government administration, as documented in ‘the Blueprint’ Report.

These covered:

- delivering better services for clients;
- creating more open government;
- enhancing policy capability;
- reinvigorating strategic leadership;
- introducing a new Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to drive change and provide strategic planning;
- clarifying and aligning employment conditions;
- strengthening the workforce;
- ensuring agency agility, capability, and effectiveness; and
- improving agency efficiency. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010a, 2010b; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011)

Essentially, the Blueprint was intended to achieve for the Rudd Government what might be considered a sympathetic quest to improve participation by citizens, develop a strategic policy-making capability, reinstate the independence of the public service, improve integrity and accountability across the public sector, and base decisions on evidence (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p.235). However, such reforms were dependent on budget funding of \$38.7M over three years for the APSC and \$98.4M over four years to foster the Commonwealth Australian National University Strategic Relationship. These funds were initially approved and provided for in the 2010–2011 Budget by the Rudd Labor Government but were subsequently repealed by the Gillard Labor Government, when faced with a budget deficit post the global financial crisis.

The reforms were to be implemented via a package of changes to systems, organisation structures and work practices (Commonwealth of Australia 2010a). They were the responsibility of a collective including the Departments of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Finance, and the Treasury, the APSC, the Secretaries Board (comprising all Secretaries and the Australian Public Service Commissioner) and the APS 200 (‘a senior leadership forum comprising the Secretaries Board, Band 3 SES and selected Agency Heads at Band 3 or above’) and an expert advisory panel (comprising ‘high calibre public, private and community sector leaders’) (Commonwealth of Australia 2010a, p. 71). These reforms were ‘vigorously promoted’ by former Departmental Secretary of Prime

Minister and Cabinet, Moran and the former Australian Public Service Commissioner, Sedgwick (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 236).

The policies, processes and practices implemented across Australia's public sector reflected many of those of the NPM. What was implemented included machinery of government changes via amalgamation of departments and downsizing; organisation structure and function changes; policies and processes associated with finance, budgeting, personnel recruitment, performance appraisal and management; practices of enterprise bargaining and industrial relations frameworks, and APS terms and conditions of employment (Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Public sector management work has been modified as a result of such reforms; however, there seemed to be neither appreciation of what these changes meant for practicing managers nor confidence that such changes went to the heart of actual public sector management (Allison 1984; Aucoin 1990; Savoie 1990a).

2.4.2. Outcomes of Public Sector Reform

Similar to the USA and the UK, there appears to have been little evaluation of the outcomes of public sector reforms in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2010b; Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1993; Painter 1988) although some important exceptions have been noted (Halligan 1996; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Task Force on Management Improvement 1992; Zifcak 1994). The Task Force on Management Improvement (TFMI 1992) was at the time, despite its limitations, lauded by academics such as Pollitt, as a model of systemic evaluation. As with other polities, public sector reforms in Australia sometimes reflected more of a concern with the rhetoric of reform or isonymism than the actual substance of the reforms (Clark 1994; Kettl 1997; Kiel & Elliott 1999) and the application of reform names and terms to different practices and forms (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 48). Thus, Solli, Demediuk and Sims (2005, p. 45) propose that it is the name of the reform that gives rise to an understanding of reforming because 'names in themselves give identity, while apparently different local circumstances legitimate a disengagement from the activities of the "original"' (Solli et al. 2005, p. 45–46). In Australia, as across all Anglo-American polities, a myriad of concepts, ideas, and techniques existed that were presented as part of the NPM name. These included joined-up government, e-government, market-type mechanisms, competition, privatisation, contractualisation, decentralisation, disaggregation,

empowerment, performance measurement, performance appraisal, incentivisation, performance pay and bonuses, entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity, total quality management (TQM), management by objectives (MBO), planning programming and budgeting systems (PPBS), accrual accounting, citizens' charters, and customer orientation (Dunleavy et al. 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Williams 2000). Many of these concepts, ideas, and techniques were possibly nothing more than the 'buzz words' or jargon that accompanied the NPM (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996).

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue that the public sector in Australia has changed, albeit gradually and incrementally, as a result of the various reforms. Ministerial control has been augmented by incorporating the appointment of ministerial advisers and the opportunity for non-tenured senior appointments by ministers into departments, assisting ministers to become more involved in the strategic planning, resource allocation, and management of their departments (Mascarenhas 1990; Wilenski 1986a, p. 275). Greater ministerial control has also provided greater opportunities for program and administrative reviews (Dawkins 1985) but at the same time one needs to question the motives for such reviews.

As Wilenski (1986, p. 275) argued, the introduction of the SES opened up opportunities for members of the public to compete on the basis of merit for senior roles, to provide, in theory, a broader base of capable and service-oriented senior management cadre. However, very few externals have joined the APS SES (Australian Public Service Commission 2014). As Mascarenhas (1993) argues, senior public servants have been given greater autonomy, accountability and responsibility for the way in which they manage their departments and for its performance but they are still constrained to deliver only what they believe their minister(s) will allow.

The augmentation of a system of administrative laws is in place and affirmative action and industrial democracy programs have been mandated via legislation (Wilenski 1986a, p. 275). However, although these laws and programs prescribe significant requirements on public sector management work their availability is no guarantee they will be adhered to by relevant parties. Some, such as former Prime Minister Hawke, have suggested that reforms have brought about significant 'improvements in the quality of policy development work, to the capacity for cooperation and coordination within the public service, and to the degree of accountability and flexibility for

managers' (Hawke 1989, p. 9; Mascarenhas 1990); however, there is scant evidence for such assertions. Furthermore, Mascarenhas also comments on the challenges to the working relationships between ministers and their Departmental Secretaries brought to the working relationships between ministers and their Departmental Secretaries brought about by the introduction of ministerial-appointed policy advisors which further impaired the policy administration dichotomy.

The end result of Australian public sector reforms of the period may well be viewed as an amalgamation or 'hybridization' (Boyer, Charron, Jurgens, & Tolliday 1998; Djelic 1998) of the USA, UK, Canadian and NZ models of public sector reform while displaying some unique and quintessentially Australian components. In this regard, the Australian experience with public sector reform was one based on an initial conscientious effort to realise responsible public administration incorporating values associated with 'ministerial responsibility, bureaucratic neutrality and independent policy advice' in a collective sense (Johnston 2000, p. 359; Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1993; Wilenski 1986b). However, while early efforts at public sector reform in Australia focussed on realising responsible public administration, it seems that later efforts were less so focussed. Instead, later efforts of public sector reform in Australia were more geared to a 'new public management' paradigm incorporating 'contestability, markets, [...] private sector management [practices] and labour market approaches' (Johnston 2000, p. 359).

More recent reforms such as the Blueprint initiated by the Rudd/Gillard Labor Governments are yet to be fully implemented. A comprehensive report prepared by the APSC in June 2012 lists a vast array of reform projects, programs, activities and initiatives, originally forming the Blueprint which are either in progress or deemed completed (see Australian Public Services Commission, 2012). Reform activities that have been completed reflect those that are more simplistic, rational, instrumental and transactional in type (for example: development of websites, principles, networks and partnerships; revised APS values, modifications to duty statements and employment arrangements; published workforce planning guides; conduct of capability reviews; the launch of templates aimed at reducing red tape; provision of policies, and the issuing of estimates memoranda). Such reform activities do not pertain to the substantive core of public sector management, which might encompass diffuse elements, including the nature of the actors, the environment and roles and responsibilities. It is also debatable

whether what has been reported as completed or in progress for each of the nine core areas of reform actually addresses the intended outputs and outcomes as no evaluation or measures of success have been developed. Today, Australia's public administration system resembles closely either a 'Washminster' or a 'Westington' system, implying it is a hybrid based on the features of the two models Washington and Westminster Whitehall (Hughes 1994; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1993; Uhr 1987; Wanna, O'Faircheallaigh, & Weller 1992).

2.4.3. Implications for the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

In Australia, public sector reforms have had several implications for the constitution of public sector management work. These reforms encompass a conglomerate of global and local ideas (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195) that have been either translated from the Anglo-American polities across to the Australian context or generated locally in Australia.

A senior management cadre has been established within top echelons of the public sector. As Hawke (1997) argues, the establishment of the SES, who are now employed on fixed-term employment contracts, has challenged their provision of 'frank and fearless' advice because Secretaries can now be replaced if their advice is not regarded well by ministers, as they no longer have tenure. Additionally, by removing tenure of employment that provided permanence to the top echelons of the public service, the potential for politicisation has increased. The language and artefacts of managerialism pervade the work of this cadre of public sector managers, stipulating how they are to execute their work, applying private sector management principles. Performance management and performance-based pay systems have been introduced with the intention of holding these public sector managers to account for their work and to reward them in a monetary sense for achieving fixed accountabilities (Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986b). But such intentions appear to be flawed and the systems on which they are based seem to remain problematic given the potential for politicisation and the myriad of decisions made on personal rather than rational levels. The amendment of the Public Service Act's 'chief objects' clause to introduce equitable administration as well as efficient administration emphasises the use of managerial principles and practices in public sector management work (Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas

1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986b), inferring this management cadre will operate in managerial ways. However, as du Gay (2000) argues, such managerialism remains incompatible and hence problematic within the public sector.

Mascarenhas (1993) and Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue the management culture of the public sector changed, in part, from one that was less focussed on results and more on inputs and processes to one that was more about ‘managing for results’ or outputs and outcomes while at the time maintaining some regard for public sector ethos, the common good, and the public interest. But critics argue that the reforms have favoured an economic rationality while compromising the common good and other public service values such as impartiality, integrity, ethics, and probity (Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Pusey 1991). Critics such as Hood (1990), Mascarenhas (1990), and Pollitt (1990a) point to the introduction of a new managerialist or NPM culture as having led to a shift from a traditional bureaucratic public sector culture based on an ethos of public service, solid experience in the sector, deep knowledge of the public service, loyalty to the public service, and a focus on the public interest, towards a private sector corporate culture based on economic efficiency, incentives, and performance measurement. This new culture, they say, is underpinned by rational choice and generic managerialism that aligns with the private sector focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness but which is promoted in the public sector at the expense/cost of the public interest. The culture shift has been ushered in ‘without knowledge on what public management really is’ (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 89; Bogdanor 2001; Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001) replete with its unique complexity, externalities, institutions, myriad of interdependent relationships, requirements for continuity, cross jurisdictional problems, expectation of neutrality, nexus between policy and administration, constitutional basis, and political overlays.

The environment in which public sector management is constituted has also been altered. As in other Anglo-American polities, a range of market-type mechanisms were introduced to the Australian public sector modifying its context, such as deregulation, privatisation, user charging, outsourcing, and benchmarking, as did restructuring and reorganisation, creating a more managerially oriented environment in which public sector management is constituted. Such changes were considered to be a necessity by various governments although in fact they were choices made for a multitude of reasons including ideology. The establishment of the Australian Public Service Commission

with significantly fewer powers than the Public Service Board it replaced has meant devolution of power with which to manage for the most senior public sector managers. Public sector managers were given greater autonomy, discretion, accountability and responsibility for the way in which they manage their departments and for its performance (Mascarenhas 1993). However, as Mascarenhas (1993, p. 326) and Hawke (1989) argue, many 'question the inconsistency of encouraging departmental autonomy within a parliamentary system of government whereby ministers are accountable to parliament' and the extent to which such autonomy is a practical reality for public sector managers is not supported by evidence. Furthermore, public service political neutrality has become compromised and therefore the risk of political interference in the form of partisanship behaviour has the potential to grow as a result of charging government with the appointment of senior public servants, rather than the former approach whereby such appointments were made via a centralised personnel agency (Mascarenhas 1990). Where such appointments are considered political, a concomitant politicisation has permeated the work of such appointees.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior management cadre have been inexorably affected by the introduction of managerial techniques and mechanisms. Management roles and responsibilities now encompass the arenas of corporate strategy, personnel management, industrial relations, enterprise bargaining, as well as accrual-based accounting and financial/budget management (Barrett 2000; Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Singleton 2000; Wilenski 1986b). The augmentation of a system of administrative laws, industrial democracy programs mandated via legislation, the introduction of a statutory requirement for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity plans, and the introduction of permanent part-time employment arrangements are all required to be factored into public sector management work (Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986b).

The separation between policy-making and administrative implementation, which traditionally have been intertwined and interdependent, means that public sector management work is expected to be focussed on implementation of policy rather than policy advice and development work. So while the reforms have supposedly increased the accountability and autonomy of the senior management cadre vis-a-vis the management of their departments, they have seemingly reduced their policy advisory roles. At the same time, the reforms have asserted further the dominance of ministers by

allowing them to appoint ministerial advisers who in turn now advise on policy. As Mascarenhas (1990) argues, the relationships that existed between ministers and senior public servants are a casualty of these reforms, challenging them by subordinating senior public servants to their ministerial advisers and damaging the close nexus of the relationships that previously existed between the politically elected executive and senior public servants.

While this summary is informed by the literature, there is a need for empirical research on the constitution of management in the APS in the context of evolving reforms to understand how Departmental Secretaries *actually* constitute public sector management work. Today, as in the past, there is scant empirical data on the work of public managers in the APS (Allison 1984; Weller & Rhodes 2001) in the context of evolving reforms, although some exceptions are the work of Weller (2001) and Weller and Rhodes (2001). Coupled with this scarcity is limited empirical research on the public sector, its environment, its issues, concerns and problems (Gregory 2003; Hagen & Liddle 2007; Hood & Peters 2004; Kelman et al. 2003; Lynn 2006; Pollitt, Van Thiel & Homburg 2007; Savoie 1994b; (see also Bouckaert & Halligan 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Wilson 1989) and limited research on the ‘lived experience’ of public sector managers and professionals (Clegg, Hardy & Nord 1996; Thomas & Davies 2005). There is still much debate on ‘whether the public sector is different from, the same as the private sector or a complex conflation of the two’ (Hagen & Liddle 2007, p. 326). Without appropriate research and measures of assessment of the public sector, its management work and reforms, our understanding of the sector can only be subjective, speculative, anecdotal and limited (Mascarenhas 1993; Waldo 1978).

Some studies have been completed on public sector management work, including the work of the most senior public sector managers that, although they provide indications of this work, are not couched in the context of evolving reforms. Studies completed on the work that public sector managers do in Anglo-American polities other than Australia are by Heclo (1977), Kaufman (1981), Lynn (1981, 1982, 2007), Terry (1995) and Rhodes (2011). Heclo (1977) established that ‘working at the seams’ of government via the establishment and development of relationships was critical to the public sector manager’s work. Kaufman (1981) proposed that the work of public sector managers fell into four categories: decision-making; information management; representation, and employee motivation and engagement. Lynn (1981, 1982) identified ‘gamesmanship’ as

encompassing the work and capabilities required of public sector managers. His (2007, p. 15) work on public management as structure, craft, and institution, provides an analytic framework for understanding what public sector managers do. Terry (1995, p. 183) argues that public sector bureaucrats are administrative conservators who as well as having managerial and legal accountabilities are responsible for 'administrative conservatorship' which he describes as 'statesmanship guided by a moral commitment to preserve the constitutional balance of power in support of individual rights'. Rhodes (2011) reports comprehensively on the everyday working life of ministers and senior civil servants in British government to provide us with an understanding of what it is that these members of the political and administrative echelons of society do and how they make sense of their worlds. He provides an analysis of the Westminster, managerial and network governance narratives using a set of organising concepts identified from his research, including beliefs, practices, traditions and dilemmas, showing how the traditional narratives of the workings of British government have been embedded in modern narratives.

Other studies examine the background, profiles and work of Departmental Secretaries in the Australian polity (Hawke 1997; Hyslop 1993; Pusey 1991; Spann 1976). Such work includes the commentary provided by Spann (1976) to the Coombs Royal Commission on Government Administration of 1976. Pusey (1991) presents a comprehensive picture of the background and profiles of these top public servants suggesting that their ranks are of a homogeneous type. Hyslop (1993) provides a considered view of the perception of the role of former Australian Mandarins before 1980, providing a practitioner's perspective on how these roles should be performed in comparison to how they were seen to be performed, providing a point of reference for determination of changes since that period. Hawke (1997) provides his views on the perceived changes in the provision of 'frank and fearless' policy advice by Departmental Secretaries as a result of the contract-based employment of these most senior public servants. Further studies by former public sector officials provide a reflective view of the role or aspects of the role, and challenges facing Australian Departmental Secretaries (Cooley 1974; Crawford 1954; Podger 2009) including a more formal documentation of the role which focussed on problems and concerns facing the latter as a result of post 1980 changes (Codd 1990). A more recent study into the work of the Australian Departmental Secretaries (Weller & Rhodes 2001) provides a six-country comparison of the roles and

accountabilities of these senior public sector managers. Furthermore, Weller (2001) provides a view of Australia's Departmental Secretaries covering five key debates (responsiveness to ministers; professionalism as managers, policy advisory capacity, the career service, and politicisation) that have influenced the work and role of the Departmental Secretaries. His study was based on a collection of data gathered over the past thirty years and three levels of analysis were used (systemic or macroeconomic; intermediate or legislative; and intimate pertaining to relationships).

While these studies contribute to our understanding of the public sector and its management work they do not appear to go directly to how public sector management is constituted in the context of evolving reforms in the APS. In spite of the reform fervour of the 1980s and beyond, to what extent the participants in this research, the current and recently former Departmental Secretaries, working within the economic rationalist framework which still exists structurally, accept and regard the reform aspects is unclear. In particular, there is a gap between what reform movements and initiatives indicate that the constitution of public sector management might be and what is actually practised.

The next chapter provides comprehensive coverage of the methodology used to conduct the research.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This research focuses on how Departmental Secretaries in the Australian Public Service (APS) constitute public sector management work. A representative sample of current and former Departmental Secretaries participated in this research. It was conducted using a constructivist/constructionist²⁷ perspective and a pragmatist paradigm and a qualitative case study. The method included the use of interviews and some (limited) document analysis.

This chapter provides a discussion of the methodology employed in conducting the research, incorporating its strategy, underpinning constructionist and pragmatist paradigms, and its qualitative methodology and design framework. A discussion of the data collection and data analysis techniques used, as well as the methodological limitations, is provided. Finally, the ethical considerations are presented.

3.2. Research Strategy

As Creswell (2007, p. 35) states, qualitative research is metaphorically akin to an ‘intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colours, different textures, and various blends of material’. More formally, qualitative research is defined as:

... [beginning] with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a

²⁷ As Patton (2002, p. 79) suggests ‘there is no definitive way to categorise the various philosophical and theoretical perspectives that have influenced and that distinguish types of qualitative enquiry’. Crotty, (1998, p. 58) proposes that the term constructivism be reserved ‘for the epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on “the meaning-making activity of the individual mind” and to use constructionism where the focus includes “the collective generation of meaning”’. In this thesis both terms are referred to interchangeably as they are both relevant to the approach adopted by the researcher.

complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action. (Creswell 2007, p. 37)

This definition focuses predominantly on the process of qualitative research, including its research design and approaches. However, qualitative research can result in significant impacts and outcomes that can and do change the world (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 3). This research will also endeavour to bring about some change in the field of public administration by contributing to its body of knowledge.

Many authors have described the characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell 2007; Guba & Firestone 1993, p. 22; Hatch 2002; Le Compte & Schensul 1999; Lincoln 1989; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010; Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 19). The characteristics and their application to this research are outlined in Table 3.1. This research was conducted based on the application of all these characteristics.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Characteristics	Application	References
Natural Setting (field focussed), a source of data for close interaction	Data were collected at the offices where the current Departmental Secretaries work and at a number of workplaces/offices to accommodate former Departmental Secretaries' requirements. Interaction was face to face via the use of interviews.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Hatch 2002; Le Compte & Schensul 1999; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.
Researcher as key instrument of data collection	The researcher collected data directly via document analysis and the conduct of interviews.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Hatch 2002; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.
Multiple data sources in words or images	The data were sourced from documents and interviews. The data were considered by the researcher and made sense of by the establishment of patterns, categories and themes.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Le Compte & Schensul 1999; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.
Data analysis inductively, recursively, and interactively	The data were analysed by the researcher in an inductive or 'bottom up' manner working towards greater levels of abstraction.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Hatch 2002; Le Compte & Schensul 1999; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.
Focus on participants' perspectives, their meanings, their subjective views	The focus was on seeking out and making sense of, or learning what is the meaning that Departmental Secretaries hold regarding the constitution of public sector management work.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Hatch 2002; Le Compte & Schensul 1999; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.
Emergent rather than tightly prefigured design	A broad plan for the research was developed allowing for changes to be made post entry to the field and as the data were collected. The questions, data collection forms, individuals studied varied or changed as the research design was emergent.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Hatch 2002; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010; Strauss & Corbin 1990.
Theoretical lens based on framing of human behaviour and belief within a socio-political/historical context or through a cultural lens	The theoretical lens adopted was that of public sector reform across Anglo-American polities. The social, political and historical context of the constitution of public sector management work was considered.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Le Compte & Schensul 1999; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.

Characteristics	Application	References
Fundamentally interpretive inquiry – researcher reflects on her or his role, the role of the reader and the role of the participants in shaping the study	Multiple views of the constitution of public sector management work emerged, as the researcher, the readers and the Departmental Secretaries made their diverse and possibly divergent interpretations.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.
Holistic view of social phenomena	A complex composition of the constitution of public sector management work was developed. This incorporated the reporting of multiple perspectives, identification of many complex factors, and the interaction of these on the research problem.	Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Hatch 2002; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Patton 2002; Silverman 2010.

Adapted from Creswell (2007, p. 38)

The research also applied the concept of triangulation. ‘Triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We know a thing only through its representations’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 5). Triangulation is neither a tool nor a strategy of validation; instead it is a substitute for validation that provides credibility and greater confidence in qualitative analysis (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Flick 2002, p. 227; Patton 2002). Triangulation in a research study incorporates the combination of multiple methods, data sources, theories/perspectives, and analysts, and is an approach or strategy that ‘adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any [research] inquiry’ (Flick 2002, p. 229; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). For this research, triangulation was achieved via the use of multiple methods, data sources, and theories/perspectives.

3.3. Research Paradigm Justification

Qualitative research requires that researchers make a number of philosophical assumptions that will have consequences/implications for their research activity (Cresswell 2007). These philosophical assumptions include: a position towards the nature of reality (ontology), the researcher’s views about the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the values of the researcher (axiology), the language that will be used for the research (rhetorical) and the methods to be used for the research process (methodology) (Cresswell 2003, 2007). Table 3.2 provides an indication of the philosophical assumptions adopted by the researcher for this research and their practical implications.

Table 3.2 Philosophical Assumptions with Implications for Practice

Assumption	Question	Characteristics	Implications for Practice
Ontological	What is the nature of reality	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study	Researcher used quotes and themes in words of participants and provided evidence of different perspectives
Epistemological	What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?	Researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched	Researcher collaborated, spent time with participants, and became familiar with their environment/ context
Axiological	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that biases are present	Researcher openly discussed values that shaped the narrative and included her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of participants
Rhetorical	What is the language of research?	Researcher writes in a literary, informal style using the personal voice and qualitative terms and limited definitions	Researcher used an engaging style of narrative, used first person pronoun, and employed the language of qualitative research
Methodological	What is the process of research?	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design	Researcher worked with particulars (details) before generalisations, described in detail the context of the study, and continually revised questions from experiences in the 'field'

Source: Adapted from Cresswell (2007, p. 17)

In an ontological sense the nature of reality has been considered along a continuum bounded by objectivism at one end and constructionism at the other (Goodrick 2012). Objectivism posits that reality stands apart from society and its actors, and can be known. Constructionism posits that reality is intricately connected to society and its actors, and that, because it is always changing, and conceptualised differently by the various social actors, knowledge is indeterminate (Goodrick 2012). The field of enquiry for this research, the constitution of public sector management work, was one where multiple actors (Departmental Secretaries, ministers, ministerial advisors, members of government, public servants, the public, the media, and many other actors) operate in

interdependent and connected ways to create a continuously changing reality of what constitutes management work in the public sector. The researcher sought the views of current and former Departmental Secretaries to interpret the field of enquiry from these various perspectives. The ontological position adopted by this researcher is a constructionist position suggesting an indeterminate position on the reality of management work such that the research reflects the reality of the interviewees interpreted and analysed by the researcher.

From an epistemological perspective, that is, the nature of knowledge and what constitutes knowledge, three broad perspectives are available: objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism (Goodrick 2012; Patton 2002).

Objectivism is the epistemological view that things exist as *meaningful* entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects ('objective' truth and meaning, therefore), and that careful research can attain that objective truth and meaning. (Crotty 1998, p. 5–6)

The constructionist perspective posits that social actors construct knowledge by interpretations they make of phenomena in their environment over time and place (Crotty 1998; Goodrick 2012; Guba & Lincoln 1989) and hence 'there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it' (Crotty 1998, p. 8).

What is at stake for the constructionist is systems of representation, social and material practices, laws of discourses, and ideological effects. In short, constructionists are concerned above all with the production and organisation of differences, and they therefore reject the idea that any essential or natural givens precede the process of social determination. (Fuss 1989, p. 3)

Subjectivists offer yet another perspective that suggests that knowledge production should serve the purpose of driving social change by challenging that current knowledge, confirming and preserving the status quo (Goodrick 2012). The subjectivist position tends to be comparable to structuralist, post-structuralist, and postmodernist, critical forms of research production (Crotty 1998). With subjectivism, 'meaning does not come from the interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject' (Crotty 1998, p. 9).

The epistemological position adopted by this researcher is a constructionist position that acknowledges that social actors construct knowledge of management practices by those interpretations they make, as sense making (Weick 1969) is discursively constituted. The ontological and epistemological perspectives adopted for this research have implications for the choice of research strategy, the research paradigm adopted, framing of research questions, the design framework chosen, data collection and analysis techniques and the judgements made about the quality of the research undertaken, as will be discussed below.

The epistemology chosen by the researcher influences the paradigm selected and, indirectly, the paradigm's assumptions provide direction in the choice of measures of research quality and the basis for its evaluation (Goodrick 2012; Potter 1996). A paradigm can be considered 'as a basic set of beliefs [and] assumptions we are willing to make, which serve as touchstones in guiding our activities' (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 80). A range of contemporary paradigms include post positivism, which adopts a scientific approach; social constructivism sometimes combined with interpretivism, which adopts a subjective approach; advocacy/participatory research, which contains an action-oriented agenda of change and reform; and pragmatism, which adopts an outcomes orientation for the research (Creswell 2007).²⁸ These perspectives have evolved and continue to evolve with time (Cresswell 2007; Goodrick 2012). Together, each enables the constitution of possible 'multiple ways of knowing' (Goodrick 2012, p. 9 drawing on Lather 2006; Seale 1999). Lather (2006) also argues that while there is an abundance of competing and complementary perspectives, researchers need to accept the 'diversity of perspectives' they offer collectively. Hence, multiple paradigms can be used where there are compatibilities, such as with constructionist and participatory types (Creswell 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). For the purposes of this research, both the constructivist and pragmatist paradigms were adopted.

Constructionism is a view that

all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between

²⁸ There is comprehensive coverage of each of the four paradigms in the literature (see for example Crotty 1998; Schwandt 2001; Cherryholmes 1992; Murphy 1990; Lincoln & Guba 2000; Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998; Neuman 2000; Phillips & Burbules 2000). However for the purposes of this research the constructionist and pragmatist paradigms only are elaborated.

human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty 1998, p. 42)

Meaning is, therefore, neither objective nor subjective but instead is constructed from the world and the objects within it (Crotty 1998). Objects in themselves are considered meaningless but they play a critical role in the ‘generation of meaning’ (Crotty 1998, p. 48). However, constructionism advocates ‘that there is *no* true or valid interpretation’ although interpretations can be ‘useful’, ‘liberating’, ‘fulfilling’, ‘rewarding’, and hence in contrast to objectivism or subjectivism (Crotty 1998, pp. 47–48). Instead the researcher who adopts a constructionist paradigm is somewhat of a ‘bricoleur’ as proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 4) in their citing of Levi-Strauss’s *The Savage Mind*. The ‘researcher-as-bricoleur’ must consider, in a sustained manner, objects of research in order to ‘approach the object in a radical spirit of openness to its potential for new or richer meaning’ thus relaxing our conventional understanding or meaning of objects and instead perhaps reinterpreting them anew and with a curious and creative mind (Crotty 1998, p. 51). Hence the bricoleur or researcher ‘interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his/her treasury is composed to discover what each of them could “signify” and so contribute to the definition of a set which has yet to materialise’ (Levi-Strauss 1966, p. 18). Furthermore, as Levi-Strauss proposed, the bricoleur must engage in a form of dialogue with his/her existing tools/objects/materials and reconfigure or reconstruct them in a manner to resolve the problems/questions faced (Crotty 1998, p. 50). The constructivist paradigm was adopted in this research because it fit with the indeterminate nature of the field of enquiry whereby the meaning to be constructed was dependent on the interaction between the researcher and the social actors responsible for the constitution of public sector management work.

The pragmatist paradigm developed in part from the work of Mead (1863–1931) on symbolic interactionism (Crotty 1998, p. 62). Symbolic interactionism, for Mead, is ‘pragmatism in sociological attire’ as ‘every person is a social construction’ (Crotty 1998, p. 62). A central tenet of symbolic interactionism is the need to ‘always consider situations from the point of view of the actor’ (Cosser 1971, p. 340) and so ‘methodologically, symbolic interactionism directs the investigator to take, to the best of his/her ability, the standpoint of those studied’ (Denzin 1978, p. 99) or to view ‘things from the perspective of others’ (Crotty 1998, p. 76). The position adopted by the researcher is thus a symbolic interaction as it is based on dialogue with actors, in this

case the Departmental Secretaries, through the use of a range of ‘significant symbols’ such as our words, language, and other symbolic tools with which we communicate and conduct the dialogue (Crotty 1998, p. 75). Via this symbolic interactionism the pragmatist will be concerned with ‘applications [or] “what works” and solutions to problems’ (Patton 2002) and hence, rather than a specific focus on methods, the researcher will be concerned with the problem being studied and the questions asked about this problem’ (Creswell 2007, p. 23, drawing on Rossman & Wilson 1985). Some characteristics of the pragmatist that the researcher has adopted in this research are:

- a commitment to a variety of philosophical positions;
- a willingness to use multiple research methods, techniques, and procedures;
- subscription to qualitative approaches for data collection and/or analysis;
- acceptance that research is couched in multiple contexts including social, political, historical, technological, and economic contexts;
- ‘A focus on the practical implications of the research’;
- ‘[An] emphasis [on] the importance of conducting research that best addresses the research problem’ (or ‘the “what” and “how” based on its intended consequences’) (Creswell 2007, p. 23; Cherryholmes 1992; Murphy 1990).

Management and organisation studies comprise a diverse field that has been characterised by some scholars as one in which the ‘dominance of the functionalist paradigm in organisational research’ has and continues to marginalise the ‘socially constructed nature of [management and] organisations’ (Karreman & Alvesson 2001, p. 60; see also Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 129). Other scholars suggest that the fields of ‘industrial and organisational psychology and economics’ still hold a dominant position in management and organisation studies whereby forms of positivist social science result (Prasad 2005, p. 289; see also Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 129). However, although a ‘vast share of contemporary theory and practice in organisational science is still conducted within a modernist framework’, other approaches such as postmodernism, enable a ‘social constructionist’ perspective to be adopted for the study of management and organisation science (Gergen & Thatchenkery 2006, p. 39; Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 129). In particular, the role that language plays in the construction of reality, meaning, and sense making of ‘everyday life’ (Berger & Luckman 1967, p. 35–36) provides a possible ‘entry point for management and organisation studies scholars’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 130).

Language is acknowledged as a key resource used in ‘situated practices’ (Schatzki 2005, Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny 2000), which constitute the world of organisations and their members (including managers). As some scholars argue:

managing is conceptualised as a conversational process with the manager as a key “author” who “creat[es] from a set of incoherent and disorderly events a coherent ‘structure’ within which both current actualities and further possibilities can be given an intelligible “place”. (Shotter 1993, p. 152; see also Samra-Fredericks 1994, 1996; Watson 1994)

Hence, management is constructed via ‘continuous conversations with all the others who are involved’ in management, rather than in an isolated manner ‘alone’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 132) as ‘organisations are speech communities sharing socially constructed systems of meaning’ (Barley 1983, p. 393). Furthermore, from a constructionist perspective, organisations are not comprised of people per se but rather they are ‘nets of collective action undertaken in an effort to shape the world and human lives’ (Czarniawska 1997, p. 41) via the use of talk (Heritage 1997; Tsoukas 2005, p. 102). Thus, organisations are conceptualised by constructionists as:

a phenomenon constituted by a complex and dynamic mix of relationally generated processes in which culturally and historically established meaning systems are instantiated as organisational members negotiate (talk) and manipulate technologies and artefacts and so forth as they endeavour to complete specific tasks and meet goals. (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 134)

Such language, conversations, narratives, and discourses enable organisation members such as managers to make sense of phenomena such as ‘what it is to be a manager’ or what constitutes management (Watson 1995, p. 816; see also Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 133).

The constructionist perspective allows for this research into the constitution of public sector management work to be conducted by considering the views (via conversation, dialogue, discourse, and discussion) of the various actors, in this case both former and current Departmental Secretaries of the APS. Unlike much of the current and prevalent functionalist positivist paradigms that pervade the field of management and organisation studies and much research on managers and management, the constructionist paradigm does not ascribe ‘facticity to concepts that are socially constructed’ (Thomas & Linstead 2002, p. 72–73). Rather than focussing on accuracy and correctness in their study of

public sector middle managers (in the UK), Thomas and Linstead (2002) used a social constructionist perspective to understand, via dialogue, how participants ‘reflexively make sense of organisations and organisational life and infuse their working lives with meaning’ (drawing on Rhodes & Brown 2005, p. 171; Boje 1991; Czarniawska 1999; Gabriel 1999; Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 136; Watson 1994). What Thomas and Linstead (2002) achieve is to depict core components of the constitution of the ‘complex organisational world’ of managers (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 135).

The research problem of understanding how public sector management work in the APS is constituted by Departmental Secretaries (the most senior public sector management cadre) requires clarification. The constructionist paradigm lends itself well as a framework for exploring the constitution of public sector management work. It allows the participants of the research, via a qualitative research perspective using qualitative research, to construct and make sense of this constitution of public sector management work. Furthermore, the constructionist paradigm encourages the giving of voice to actors such as, in this case, the most senior public sector managers/bureaucrats, in order that the meaning they ascribe to the constitution of public sector management work can be articulated.

Justification for Use of Qualitative Interviews

A social constructionist frame was applied to the conduct of this research, which used semi-structured interviews (individually) as the primary method for data collection and analysis. The social constructionist perspective adopts a stance that ‘knowing occurs during socially negotiated processes that are historically and culturally relevant and that ultimately lead to action’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 430). This aligns with the context in which the constitution of public sector management work takes place. Furthermore, the social constructionist perspective focuses on the role of relationships, a multiplicity of realities, consultative and collaborative interdependencies, and dialogue and discourse, in order to know (Gergen & Gergen 2003, p. 158). Everyday life is founded in an intersubjective world in which individuals cannot exist without interacting and communicating (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 430, drawing on Berger & Luckman 1967). As such, ‘constructionist interviews are dialogical performances, social meaning-making acts, and co-facilitated knowledge exchanges’ (Holstein &

Gubrium 2008, p. 430). Interviews allowed the participants in the research, the Departmental Secretaries, together with the researcher (as facilitator), as the “knowing subjects”, to construct the constitution of public sector management work. Two implications of the socially constructed interview approach used are that, all participants have responsibility for the knowledge that they create, and all knowing participants are actively and intentionally engaged and involved in the production of knowledge during the interview process (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 430).

Several scholars have acknowledged the ‘socially constructed character of interviews’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 431). These scholars variously view interviews as: a ‘collaborative, contextual, and active process involving two or more people’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 430; Fontana & Frey 2005); a ‘partnership on a conversational research journey’ (Miller & Crabtree 2004, p. 195), and as an emergent, ‘continuous and dynamic unfolding of the participants’ perspectives’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 431; Anderson & Jack 1998). Hence, the constructionist approach to interviews legitimates both parties (the interviewer and the interviewee) as actively knowing and co-creating meanings (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 431). This ‘polyvocality’ of interviews and knowing suggests to the constructionist researcher that their ‘analytic and interpretive focus’ will be based on the ‘shared knowledge and meaning making’ generated during the course of the interview process (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 432). This was the approach adopted by the researcher.

Interviews also legitimately served to create a collaborative understanding of the constitution of public sector management work by Departmental Secretaries, via the active production of narratives (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 431). An implication of interview narratives is that they are a situated, constructed account rather than true or factual representations of experience (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 431); all representations are ‘partial perceptions of realities’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 433; Clegg, Hardy, & Nord 1996). However, although ‘knowledge is interactive, co-constructed, [...] negotiated, [...] historical, situational, changing, [...] difficult to duplicate, [...] plural and fallible’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 432) it is conversations, dialogues, discourses, discussion, talk and social interactions which provide the ‘contexts in which knowledge and meaning are produced and understood’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 432; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Rorty 1979). In relation to this research, interviews serve the purpose of knowledge production well.

However, interviews require several considerations to be met by the researcher. The considerations that were met by the researcher include the following:

- The researcher should facilitate ‘transformative, interactive, and dialogical practices’, suggesting that participants of the research process contribute to the decision making associated with: the design, topics for discussion, methods for analysing the data, contributing to the analysis, and ways of data representation (Kvale 2006).
- The researcher and participants maintain an ‘openness and acceptance of diverse opinions, experiences and worldviews’ and to approach the interview questions from a position of curiosity and enquiry (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 443).
- The researcher/interviewer consulted and collaborated with participants because the process of co-construction might result in unexpected ‘areas of inquiry, scholarship, or action’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 443; Gergen 2001).
- The researcher/interviewer acknowledged and communicated the responsibilities associated with knowledge co-construction (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 443), thus enabling participants to recognise the unpredictable, uncertain and fallible nature of knowledge co-construction.

The social constructionist interview approach can provide a sound and productive opportunity for the conduct of research that results in ‘growth, transformation, and socio-political change’ (Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 443), in this case in the arena of the constitution of public sector management work.

The constructivist paradigm and its methodology contain a number of elements as depicted in Table 3.1 (Guba & Lincoln 1989) that were applied in this research. These elements include entry conditions, research inquiry processes, and research inquiry products (Guba & Lincoln 1989).

Table 3.3 The Methodology of Constructivist Inquiry

Entry Conditions	Conduct of the research in a natural setting; Humans as the core subjects/participants; Qualitative methods; Tacit knowledge products	Continuously shaped and tested by negotiation; Discovery and verification continuously interwoven
Research Inquiry Processes	Hermeneutic dialectic circle; Multiple constructions; Recycling until consensus reached; Production of case reports (in this case a thesis); and other outputs	
Research Inquiry Products	Joint construction; Vicarious experience	

Source: Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 174)

Entry conditions incorporate the conduct of the research in a natural setting, the use of humans as the core subjects/participants, the use of qualitative methods, and the use of tacit knowledge products (Guba & Lincoln 1989; Polanyi 1966). Research inquiry processes include the hermeneutic dialectic, reflecting an ‘interpretive [...] character, and [... a representation of] comparison and contrast of divergent views with a view to achieving a higher level synthesis of them all ... ’ (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 149). These processes incorporate purposive²⁹ sampling (Patton 2002) to provide a broad base of understanding of the relevant subject matter; a constant interaction between data collection and data analysis; anchoring the outcomes of the research to the ‘constructions of the respondents themselves’ (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 179; Holstein & Gubrium 2008) and an ‘emergent design’ based on the recurring interplay between the data gathered, the analysis made and the construction of a synthesis. A final element of the research inquiry processes includes the production of a case report or paper, a thesis in this case. The thesis is a co-construction that results from the hermeneutic dialectic process. It forms the core product of the research inquiry processes. It is prepared using ‘thick description’ that allows others to understand its context and also to experience in a vicarious sense the content (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 181; Creswell 2007). It becomes a ‘vehicle for the dissemination, application, and (individual) aggregation of knowledge’ (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 181).

²⁹ The research conducted incorporated a number of sampling strategies which collectively were purposive or purposeful. These included: intensity rich sampling, homogeneous sampling, criterion sampling, and snowballing or chain sampling, as discussed later.

The constructivist paradigm allows for and is bounded by research processes and products that are ‘continuously shaped and tested through [the use of] negotiation [and collaboration] between [researcher and subjects]’ (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 182; Holstein & Gubrium 2008). The constructivist paradigm uses a system of continuous and well-coupled interplay of discovery and verification between the data, the analysis, the researcher and the subjects. What is characteristic of the constructionist paradigm is a complex, rigorous, disciplined ‘iterative, interactive, hermeneutic, at times intuitive, and [...] open’ methodology (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 183; Holstein & Gubrium 2008). Although this research adopted a degree of collaboration with the research participants, this collaboration was bounded because participants’ time was limited post the initial interviews.

The axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions adopted by researchers are also of importance as they shape the research and the interpretations made of the research. The axiological position of the researcher in qualitative research is generally acknowledged as the ‘positioning’ that s/he adopts towards the research (Creswell 2007). The researcher makes explicit the values they will bring to the research. Generally, these values are evident within the research via the articulation of researcher values; the reporting of values, predispositions, and biases in the reporting of the research; and acceptance and acknowledgement that the information gathered is value-laden in nature (Creswell 2007). The rhetorical character of the research refers to the language that is used by the researcher for the research. In qualitative research, the rhetorical assumptions adopted by researchers tend to be ‘that the writing needs to be personal and literary in form’, that an informal and personal voice style be adopted, that qualitative language terms such as ‘credibility’, ‘transferability’, ‘dependability’, ‘confirmability’ (Lincoln & Guba 1985) and ‘validation’ (Angen 2000) are used (Creswell 2007). Qualitative terms such as ‘understanding’, ‘discover’, and ‘meaning’ form the lexicon which the qualitative researcher adopts and are used in the development of research purpose statements and research questions (Creswell 2007, p. 19). Methodological components of the research deal with the procedures to be used and, for qualitative research, are often characterised as being ‘inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analysing the data’ (Creswell 2007, p. 19). The axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions adopted by this research will be discussed below.

3.4. Research Questions

The central research question was: *how do current and former Departmental Secretaries in the APS constitute public sector management work, in a context of evolving reforms?*

The supporting research questions that were considered in this research are:

1. Who are the Departmental Secretaries who practise public sector management work?
2. How does the environment and context of the public sector in which Departmental Secretaries practise, shape their public sector management work?
3. How do Departmental Secretaries construct or perceive their roles and responsibilities in the context of continuing reforms?
4. How have contemporary management ideas influenced Departmental Secretaries and their work?

3.5. Research Design Framework

The research design framework adopted was a qualitative case study (Goodrick 2012). It comprised a ‘methodological congruence’ (Morse & Richards 2002) such that the research strategy, purpose, questions, and methods were interconnected and interrelated in a unified and cohesive manner (Creswell 2007).

The qualitative case study enabled the voices of the Departmental Secretaries, as individuals, and as a group, to be heard so as to understand in complex and detailed ways what constitutes public sector management work (Grube 2011, 2012, 2013). The voices of the Departmental Secretaries are integral to this study as they constitute the most senior group of managers in the public sector, akin to their Chief Executive Officer colleagues in the private sector. Such voices are less prevalent in the literature on public administration and yet their stories and the organisations (Public Sector Departments) from which they told their stories represent a critical component for study (Boje 2008; Clegg, Hardy & Nord 1996). The importance of the contexts and the

broader settings in which the Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work is of relevance to understanding further the constitution this work. Boje suggests that storytelling organisations are a ‘collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members’ sense making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory’ (1991, p. 106). In addition, the limited understanding which public administration (public sector reform) theory provides of the complexity of what constitutes public sector management warranted the choice of a qualitative case study. While there have been a number of studies, including mixed methods studies, on what constitutes public sector management work, this work and public administration theory do not yet present a comprehensive picture of the constitution of public sector management (and especially of the work of the most senior public sector management cadre, the Departmental Secretaries) in an empirical sense in the context of evolving reforms (see for example Cooley 1974; Codd 1990; Crawford 1954; Hawke 1997; Hyslop 1993; Podger 2009; Pusey 1991; Spann 1976; Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001). The use of a qualitative case study allowed for a ‘fit’ to be achieved between the problem being researched and the design framework.

3.6. Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods used in this research, are discussed in the following section. They included a range of activities such as determining the unit of analysis, selecting participants for the study, purposeful sampling, gaining access and rapport building, data collection, recording information, and storing data (Creswell 2007).

3.6.1. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for a study enables the researcher to focus or bind the research (Stake 1994, p. 236) to a particular arena. The unit of analysis can include individual people, groups of people, programs, institutions, events, occurrences, incidents, concepts, processes or organisational situations (Merriam 1988, p. 44–46; Patton 2002). Different units of analysis suggest a particular type of data collection, particular focus for the research analysis, and a different level at which findings and conclusions can be drawn (Patton 2002). In essence, the key concern in considering and choosing an

‘appropriate unit of analysis is to decide what it is you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study’ (Patton 2002, p. 229; Merriam 1988, p. 44). The unit of analysis reflects the boundary of the research problem to be studied and the analysis to be completed. This research therefore focussed on the constitution of public sector management work, as practised by current and former Departmental Secretaries in the APS, as its unit of analysis.

3.6.2. Selecting Participants

The selection of participants was based on a number of factors including the accessibility of participants, their willingness to provide information, and the participant being ‘distinctive for their accomplishments and ordinariness or who shed light on the phenomenon or issue being explored’ (Creswell 2007, p. 119). The participants for the study were the current and former Departmental Secretaries in the APS. The Departmental Secretaries comprise the most senior management cadre in the APS and hence their management practices were considered to be of consequence for this research. By selecting both current and former Departmental Secretaries the researcher attempted to find inconsistencies between the two groups of participants. The researcher envisaged that current Departmental Secretaries might have been less candid and somewhat more guarded in their commentary as they were currently employed in the APS, whereas it was possible that the former Departmental Secretaries were more outspoken and less ‘encumbered’ given they were no longer employed in the APS. The researcher is currently employed in one such APS organisation, and so has knowledge about, and access to, such Departmental Secretaries (current and former) as a public servant, as well as knowledge of reform in the APS over many years. Preliminary informal discussions with the researcher’s own former Departmental Secretary were positive and the researcher was advised by the Departmental Secretary that he was willing to participate in the research and to assist with facilitating access to his colleagues and counterparts. It was envisaged that the other Departmental Secretaries would be as willing to provide information and participate in the research, as they are generally responsive to such requests. They were in a position, had the experience, and capabilities with which to contribute to the research exploring the constitution of public sector management work.

3.6.3. Gaining Access and Rapport Building

To gain access to Departmental Secretaries for the purposes of conducting the research a number of steps were required. These steps included: the need to secure ethics approval for the conduct of the study; making an initial approach to current and former Departmental Secretaries (via their 'gatekeepers'/Executive Assistants) (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995), or directly where they had no such gatekeepers; obtaining permission/consent from the participants to participate in the research; communicating the purpose of the study and researcher motivations for choice of participants; and the granting of confidentiality and anonymity where requested/required (Creswell 2007). By diligently completing these various steps the researcher established a degree of rapport with the participants from which she then leveraged further rapport during the conduct of the study via interviews (Creswell 2007).

Initial approaches to the Departmental Secretaries were made by securing an informal meeting with the researcher's own former Departmental Secretary and seeking his views on the best way he might facilitate access to his colleagues and counterparts. This step in the process was considered to be of significance to the initial acceptance by participants of the researcher and the study. However, at the commencement of the research this Departmental Secretary's contract came to an end and was not renewed. As such the researcher felt it was not appropriate to seek his facilitation for access to his colleagues and counterparts. Instead the researcher approached the two former Departmental Secretaries of the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) for their views on facilitation of access. Each of these former Departmental Secretaries made the same comment that to use their name as an endorsement for participation in the research could be problematic as they were looked upon favourably by some Departmental Secretaries and not by others. As such the researcher decided to abandon this type of facilitated access and instead directly approached Departmental Secretaries.

Following the granting of ethics approval, a letter of introduction was prepared and emailed to chosen Departmental Secretaries via their 'gatekeepers' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995) based on the abovementioned direct access. The letter of introduction sought permission/consent from the participants to participate in the research, communicated the purpose of the study and the researcher's motivations for choice of participants, and granted anonymity where requested/required. Follow up with the

‘gatekeepers’ was required and, at that point, further rapport building which involved providing a profile of the researcher and her motivations, discussing more fully the role to be played by the participants in this research, offering a copy of the research on completion, and expressing appreciation for the assistance of the ‘gatekeepers’ was critical to the acceptance by the Departmental Secretaries to participate in the study. The research was conducted with participants during 2013.

3.6.4. Purposeful Sampling

Qualitative research uses ‘purposeful’ sampling as ‘it focuses in depth on relatively small samples, [... which are] selected purposefully’ (Patton 2002–230; Creswell 2007). Sampling is purposeful when the researcher chooses participants and places for study on the basis that such will ‘purposefully inform [and contribute to] an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study’ (Creswell 2007, p. 125). Many strategies exist to conduct purposive or judgment sampling, the latter being about the decision the researcher makes about the purpose they want the participants to serve and then seeks participants to fill that purpose (Bernard 2000, p. 176). Such strategies include sixteen different types (Creswell 2007, p. 127; Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 28; Patton 2002, p. 243–244). As Creswell (2007, p. 127) suggests ‘researchers might use one or more of these strategies in a single study’.

This research adopted several of these sampling strategies such as intensity rich sampling, homogeneous sampling, criterion sampling, and snowballing or chain sampling. Intensity rich sampling is considered to lend itself well to the study of the constitution of public sector management work, as such sampling provided the researcher with information rich cases comprising the phenomenon for study in an intense and concentrated form (Patton 2002, p. 234). The selection of Departmental Secretaries from across the APS provided the researcher with participants who had in-depth information, rich knowledge, experiences and capabilities in the phenomenon of interest, public sector management work. The researcher used homogenous sampling via subgroups. One subgroup was comprised of current Departmental Secretaries who were invited to participate in interviews. The other subgroup was comprised of former Departmental Secretaries who were also invited to participate in interviews. Such homogenous sampling enabled the researcher to compare and contrast the data collected on the phenomenon under study. Criterion sampling was also used to ensure that all

those selected to participate met at least the criterion of being or having been a Departmental Secretary with the APS. This criterion-based sampling enabled the researcher to be in a position to conduct ‘in depth, qualitative analysis’ of the phenomenon of public sector management work as practised by Departmental Secretaries (Patton 2002, p. 238). Finally, snowballing or chain sampling was considered to allow participants chosen for the study to be recommended by those who knew and could refer the researcher to Departmental Secretaries who might be able to provide the information rich data for the study.

There were two groups of participants for this research: 1) current Departmental Secretaries and 2) former Departmental Secretaries. The researcher planned to recruit more participants for this research than might be required to achieve a ‘saturation’ point, that is, the repetition of themes, information and concepts (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Patton 2002) to allow for a lower than expected response rate. The researcher envisaged that the ‘saturation’ point, (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Patton 2002) would be realised from a lesser number of participants than that recruited. As the research was qualitative, the number of participants for ‘saturation’ point was likely to result in ‘rich’ description (Patton 2002; Strauss & Corbin 1990). The researcher secured 13 participants for the current Departmental Secretaries group and 12 participants for the former Departmental Secretaries group, providing a total of 25 participants collectively for this research.

3.7. Data Collection

In order to develop a collective story of the constitution of public sector management work the researcher collected qualitative data via participants (Huber & Whelan 1999) using semi-structured interviews and conducted some (limited) document analysis obtained from documents secured from participants and available on the web.

3.7.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews were audiotaped, and transcribed. The process for interviewing incorporated a number of procedural steps as outlined by Creswell (2007, p. 132–134). Participants were identified via the purposive sampling described previously, and invited to participate in a one-on-one face-to-face interview conducted at their

workplaces, and if possible, in their boardrooms/quiet office to reduce the potential of interruptions. Recording equipment included the use of a modern tape recorder that is sensitive to the acoustics of the workplace. An interview protocol was used for the conduct of the interview. A pilot interview was conducted first and a review of the questions and interview approach was made after considering the outcomes of the pilot (Creswell 2007; Yin 2003).

The Departmental Secretaries were also provided with a copy of an abridged version of (executive summary and conclusions) the work of Andrew Podger (2009) 'The Role of the Departmental Secretaries: Personal Reflections on the Breadth of Responsibilities Today'. They were asked to provide their own reflections on this work.

3.7.2. Document Analysis

'Learning to use, study, and understand documents and files is part of the repertoire of skills needed for qualitative inquiry' (Patton 2002, p. 295; Holstein & Gubrium 2008, p. 467). Miller (1997, p. 77) suggests that 'qualitative researchers are uniquely positioned to study [...] texts [and documents] by analysing the practical social contexts of everyday life within which they are constructed and used'. Qualitative research is generally anchored to a broader context and such contexts are often documented (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 209). The systematic access to and retrieval of various documents and records can result in valuable data for informing interview questions and in turn for elaborating on matters discussed during interviews (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 209). In this sense, document analysis provided a useful 'synergism' for the analysis of this qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 209).

A (limited) range of documents was sourced and analysed to gain a further insight into the constitution of public sector management work (see Appendix B). These documents provided a rich source of information on the legislated roles and responsibilities of the Departmental Secretary, their formal and legislated accountabilities and the way in which they are remunerated and rewarded for their performance. The analysis of these documents prompted further enquiry and questions during interviews (Patton 2002, p. 294). Furthermore, an advantage of this document analysis was that the researcher was able to consider and make sense of the documents unobtrusively (Patton 2002, p. 191). A document summary form was used for the document analysis conducted.

However there were challenges associated with such documents including:

- securing access to the documents;
- gaining appreciation of the reasons for the development of the documents and the process by which they were developed;
- establishing the accuracy of documents;
- connecting ‘documents with other sources, including interviews;
- Deconstructing and demystifying [documents]’ (Patton 2002, p. 499).

For this research, it was envisaged that only those documents that were not in the public domain might encounter some of these challenges. These were the Departmental Secretary Employment Contract and associated Performance Agreement templates. Negotiating access was envisaged to be the biggest challenge for these. However access was negotiable for the latter of these two documents as confidentiality and anonymity were assured in their analysis. It was envisaged that the former document might be able to be totally or partially anonymised before it was provided to the researcher, and that this could be done without concealing important aspects of the positions. However this former document was not provided.

3.8. Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis process has been described as ‘not off the shelf; rather it is custom built, revised, and “choreographed”’ (Creswell 2007, p. 150; Huberman & Miles 1994). There is often a close interplay between the collection, analysis and writing up of qualitative data as they are interconnected and often taken place in a simultaneous manner (Creswell 2007, p. 150). This interconnection has been described as a data analysis ‘spiral’ and so ‘the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach’ (Creswell 2007, p. 150). Figure 3.1 captures the essence of the ‘spiral’ data analysis process in the constructivist approach in which the researcher engaged for this research:

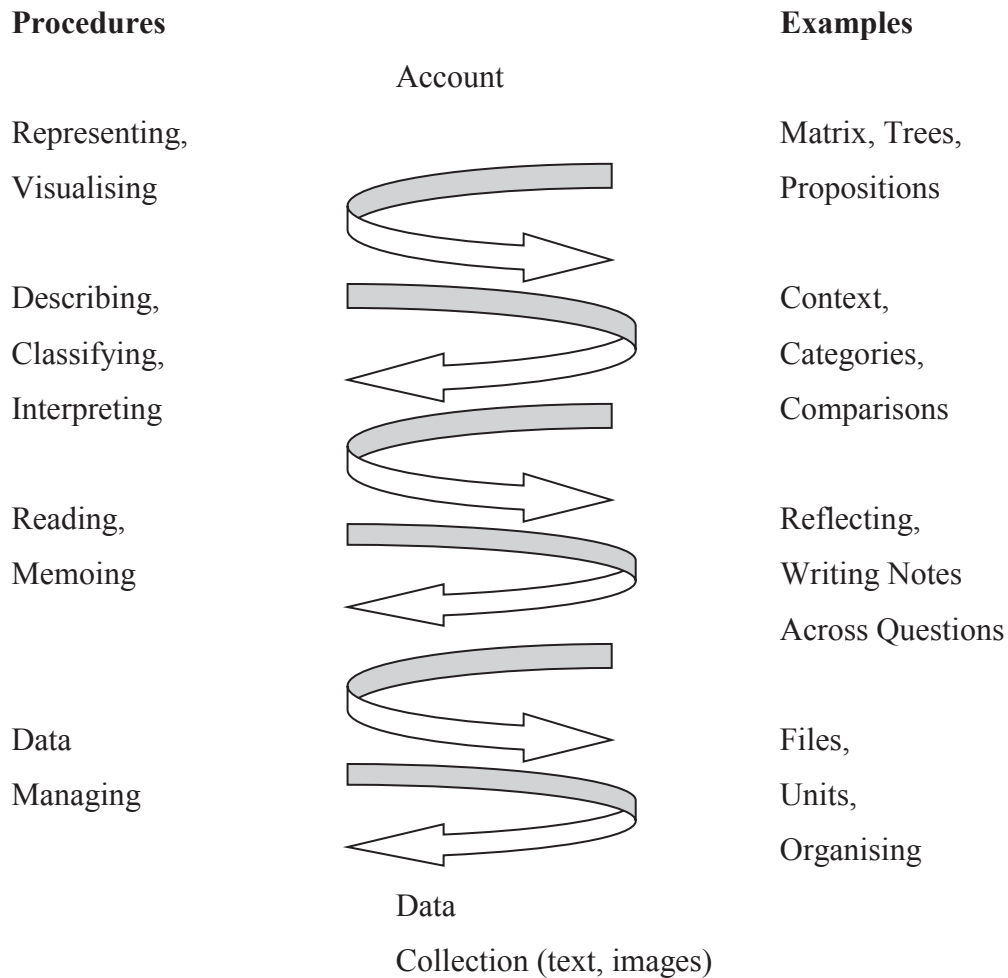


Figure 3.1 The Data Analysis Spiral (Creswell 2007, p. 151)

For this research, qualitative data analysis started from the beginning of the research process by analysing currently available public data, reviewing secondary or other researchers' data, and analysing this researcher's data as it was gathered (Silverman 2010). Data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and document retrieval formed the core component of the analysis.

Interview data were viewed and treated as the narratives or stories by which the participants view and describe their reality (Holstein & Gubrium 2008; Riessman 1993). This data was manually transcribed by an external transcriber. The researcher read and then re-read the transcripts to cross check and edit them against the original taped interviews. Making ready the data involved putting the text into a 'crunchable form' (Van Maanen 1988:131). To achieve this crunchable form, the interview data were first roughly transcribed in their complete form, including all the words and nuances, and

then selected sections were transcribed again to achieve more comprehensive analysis (Riessman 1993). Analysis of data is not ‘easily distinguishable from transcription’ (Riessman 1993, p. 60) with the researcher conducting the analysis by working continuously between the transcriptions and the analysis. The process of analysis after transcribing, incorporated the ‘testing, clarifying and deepening [of the researcher’s] understanding of what [was] happening in the discourse’ or narrative (Mishler 1991, p. 277) to interpret the data. Consideration of concepts and theories was made concurrently during the transcribing and analysis phase (Riessman 1993). The researcher developed a set of first-order concepts and then used these to develop second-order themes and eventually developed aggregated overarching dimensions. The thematic analysis process was documented in a data structure table.

The researcher also conducted analysis of data collected via a range of documents and records as mentioned in Section 3.6. The data from these documents were considered for the content and/or context they might provide on the constitution of public sector management work. The data were formal and legal in form and provided another perspective on the constitution of public sector management work. The analysis consisted of a search for new and emerging constructions that presented themselves in the documents (Guba & Lincoln 1989).

3.8.1. Coding

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 56) define codes as the ‘tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study’. Two sets of codes were developed. The first set comprised coding the raw data/quotes relevant to the thesis using a system which reflects the transcript number and page number, and where there was more than one quote per page number per transcript, the addition of the letters a, b, or c follows the page number. Therefore (1.1a) refers to transcript (or interview) number one (1.), page number one of the transcript (.1), and the first of several quotes on the same page of this transcript (a). These raw data/quotes are referred to either in full in the thesis or they are referred to via their codes at the end of the relevant sentence and paragraph to which they pertain within the thesis. These quotes are italicised to differentiate them from other quotes in the thesis. The raw data/quotes can be made available for participants but are not all included in full in the thesis.

The second set comprised allocation by the researcher of descriptive labels to the raw data/quotes, to reflect the first- and second- order themes/concepts developed and eventually aggregated as overarching dimensions. The researcher sorted these raw data/quotes using their descriptive labels and codes into a data structure table.

3.9. Limitations, Risks and Evaluation

3.9.1. Risks and Limitations

A number of risks and limitations existed for this research on the constitution of public sector management work. The first risk was the difficulty of securing sufficient time with the participants who are current Departmental Secretaries. This group of participants is considered to be an elite group of the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the APS. They have large and busy schedules of work which can often incorporate between fifty and sixty hours per week working in their offices or elsewhere across the public sector and between ten and fifteen hours per week working from home (Podger 2009). As such, the request for a period of a maximum of four and a half hours of these participants' time for the conduct of the research and their involvement in semi-structured interviews, and a validation exercise, was considered to be somewhat of an impost. However this group tends to accept the value of research, actively participates in research as part of their day-to-day working lives, and many members have published. As they value research, the researcher was confident that Departmental Secretaries would make themselves available for the requested time period. Departmental Secretaries were obliging and spent quality time with the researcher and this risk was negated.

A second risk was the perceived difficulty of obtaining frank, true and candid responses to questions about the constitution of public sector management work from a group of Departmental Secretaries who are currently employed in the Australian public sector. It was envisaged that the work and world of the Departmental Secretary incorporates considerable power and politics. Although the current Departmental Secretaries are bound by the APS Code of Conduct and the APS Values and Responsibilities which both delineate the importance of operating at all times with honesty and integrity, there may be legitimate concerns with presenting a full picture of the constitution of public

sector management work (Clegg, Courpasson & Phillips 2006; Stablein 2006). Political and professional ramifications could result if the representation offered is perceived by others to be inappropriate or inadequate.

Riessman (1993, p.p. 15–16) argues there are limits to representation in that:

all forms of representation of experience are limited portraits. [...] Meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal. All we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively and imperfectly. [Hence representation offers a view of] the constructed nature of social scientific work.

As Said (1979, p. 272–273) argues:

[The] real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representor. If the latter alternative is the correct one [...], then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is eo ipso implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the “truth,” which is itself a representation.

Hence an understanding of representation suggests a need ‘to be more conscious, reflective and cautious’ in the assertions we make as researchers (Riessman 1993, p. 16). From the researcher’s own experience located in the public sector, it was considered that the Departmental Secretaries generally presented candid assessments of their world of work, and represented fairly the political dimension that permeates their work. This allowed the researcher to be less cautious or concerned about the representations made, as they tended to reflect a reality with which the researcher was also familiar. However, on occasions, the researcher did detect commentary that indicated the creation of a persona, a degree of self-preservation and some instances of political correctness. This meant that the researcher has had to carefully reflect on and analyse deeply these representations to secure as best as possible the underlying ‘reality’ and accept the limitation of this social construction of reality.

In addition to the risks associated with the research, a number of limitations were envisaged which are associated with the limits of the researcher’s information processing capability or cognitive limitations (Patton 1990; Sadler 2002). These limitations can include misperception, misaggregation, and defective inference with the possibility that such will lead to suboptimal assessments (Sadler 2002, p. 127). Sadler

(2002) suggests that these limitations may be due to intuitive thinking and judgmental processes associated with:

- Data overload;
- Effects of first impressions;
- Quantity and format of available information;
- Confirmation or disconfirmation of positive and negative instances;
- A quest for internal consistency which disregards conflicting data;
- Varied reliability of information;
- Disregard for missing information;
- Conservative or excessive revision of tentative hypotheses, evaluation or diagnosis;
- Natural variability in sampling considerations;
- Unwillingness or inability to modify a judgment /decision;
- Distinguishing between co-occurrences and correlation;
- Consistency and predictable intransitivity of judgment. (Sadler 2002, pp. 127–133)

Awareness of these cognitive limitations required the researcher to put in place a range of mechanisms to minimise or eliminate them where possible. The limitations encountered by this researcher were data overload and a quest for internal consistency, which leads to disregard of conflicting data. To deal with the first of these limitations the researcher adopted many of the procedures of the spiral data analysis process (Creswell 2007, p. 150). The researcher eventually culled almost thirty percent of the data originally chosen to analyse, after conversations with her supervisor, recognising that any such research usually uses only five percent of the data collected (S Clegg 2014, pers. comm., 5 June). To deal with the second limitation, the researcher adopted a conscious stance of seeking out instances of conflicting data and reflected on such to ensure that the analysis incorporated such instances.

Another limitation envisaged was researcher bias associated with what Sadler (2002, p. 125) terms ‘value inertias’. These are embodied within a researcher’s makeup or character and they can include general background and knowledge, experience, emotional disposition, and worldview or outlook (Sadler 2002, p. 125). Such value inertias can translate into a range of idiosyncratic behaviours and presuppositions that

researchers will bring to their research. A number of strategies have been developed to reduce the consequences of these value inertias, including: new methodologies, better training, disclosure of value positions and conflicts of interest (Sadler 2002, p. 125). The researcher therefore discloses that her background and general work experience and education are anchored in management in the public sector. The researcher has worked for large and prominent public sector organisations in the APS. The researcher has qualifications in human resources and general management obtained in Australian universities. This background has meant that the researcher has been privy to first hand exposure to the practice of public sector management across a number of departments. This exposure has led to a concerned and critical view of the capacity and capability of public sector managers.

The researcher as a practitioner had developed a positivist and functional view of the field of management and public sector management. However over the recent past, the researcher has been exposed to alternative views of management and public sector management that represent a postmodern and social constructivist perspective, which offer a very different view. The researcher has been challenged by her supervisor and co-supervisor to consider this non-positivist view and has accepted that it offers a much more sensible and realistic perspective from which to research and contribute to the field of public administration. The thesis reflects this acceptance as the researcher has used a qualitative, constructionist and pragmatic approach to the research.

3.10. Evaluating the Quality of the Research

The researcher has endeavoured to ensure the research is valid and the results are of value, in the sense that the findings (which are themselves representations) have been co-created by the researcher and the participants to represent the views of the respondents, accurately, without researcher bias in the process of interpretation and analysis (Creswell 2007). The qualitative validation of the research was made possible by the adoption of foundational criteria (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 233) with which to determine the processes employed in conducting the research and its quality or goodness (Angen 2000) rather than confirmation of the research (Creswell 2007, p. 207). The foundational criteria are considered to be the trustworthiness criteria and deemed to be equivalent to the traditional criteria associated with determining the rigor

of quantitative research such as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Such traditional criteria are ‘unworkable for constructivist, responsive approaches on axiomatic grounds’ (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 236; Guba & Lincoln 1981; Lincoln & Guba 1985). The following trustworthiness criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1986) and their application to this research are discussed below: credibility, transferability (or applicability), dependability, and confirmability.

3.11. Trustworthiness Criteria

The trustworthiness or authenticity criteria applied to this research incorporate credibility, transferability (or applicability), dependability, and confirmability.

The credibility criterion is akin to an internal validity criterion and seeks to establish a match between the ‘constructed realities’ of participants and the representations made by the researcher of these constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 236; Patton 2002). Several techniques to achieve this match are available.

The first technique involves substantial engagement at the place of the research in order to immerse oneself in and comprehensively understand the cultural context in which one is researching, to develop the rapport and trust required to develop appropriate constructions, and to avoid misinformation and misrepresentation (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 237). The researcher in this case has had significant experience in the APS, the place where the research is anchored, and so has a deep understanding of the environment in which the research is couched.

A second technique incorporates prolonged and persistent observation ‘to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem being pursued and [to focus] on them in detail’ such that depth can be achieved with the research (Lincoln & Guba 1986, p. 304). The researcher has spent over twenty years in the APS, and has, during this time, developed working relationships with members of the SES including with a number of Departmental Secretaries. Hence, the researcher has already had and continues to develop a deep understanding of the cultural context in which the research took place, bringing to the research a depth of knowledge about the phenomena studied.

A third technique is that of debriefing or reviewing with a disinterested peer in order to provide an external perspective and a check of the research process. This provides a similar process as that of interrater reliability as is produced in quantitative research (Creswell 2007; Lincoln & Guba 1989; Merriam 1988). This peer debriefing involves the peer in 'ask[ing] hard questions about the methods, meanings, and interpretations; and provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher's feelings' (Creswell 2007, p. 208; drawing on Guba & Lincoln 1985). The researcher secured the views and perspectives of a reputable peer from within the ranks of the Departmental Secretary cadre of the APS with whom she debriefed and sought to sound out the development of the research. This peer was deemed appropriate because of his extensive knowledge and experience in the APS, especially at the Departmental Secretary level, and due to his active constitution of public sector management work, which allowed him to provide sufficient insight and guidance. This was relatively easy to realise as the researcher is currently employed in one such APS agency and had ready access to such a peer(s).

A fourth technique is the search for negative case analysis whereby the researcher continuously refines and redrafts their working hypotheses as the research progresses in order to seek out and identify any 'negative or disconfirming' data (Creswell 2007, p. 208; Guba & Lincoln 1985; Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). The researcher looked for negative or disconfirming data during the conduct and analysis of interviews and the sourcing and analysis of documents. Anomalies, exceptions and outliers were identified and these informed the development of working hypotheses.

A fifth technique is 'progressive subjectivity' or 'the process of monitoring the researcher's own developing construction' (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 238). The researcher sets out a priori constructions and assumptions and these are regularly developed as the research progresses. A comparison of the original and developing constructions by the researcher can suggest whether or not too much privilege has been afforded to the original or researcher construction as opposed to that of the participants (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 238). The researcher ensured that the participants' constructions were those that were privileged and hence represented in the research. This was of significance as the researcher did have a priori somewhat strong normative views about the constitution of public sector management work. Her supervisor pointed

these out during the initial proposal phase of the research and the researcher sought to 'bracket' these in the research process.

Finally, member checks can be employed such that participants are asked to provide their 'views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations' (Creswell 2007, p. 208; Guba & Lincoln 1985; Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). This technique is considered to be paramount 'for establishing credibility' (Guba & Lincoln 1985, p. 314). Participants should be asked to consider and comment on the accuracy and credibility of the data collected, the analyses made, interpretations constructed, and conclusions drawn (Creswell 2007). The research process encompassed the use of member (participant) checking post the conduct of semi-structured interviews with current Departmental Secretaries and former Departmental Secretaries. The researcher asked all participants to confirm the transcriptions and to comment further where required on the data gathered.

The transferability or applicability criterion seeks to establish an external validity or generalisability for the research (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 241). To achieve transferability, qualitative researchers use 'thick description' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Geertz 1973; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Patton 2002; Seale 1999). 'Thick description' is provided by researchers 'through [complete], rich, detailed, and concrete descriptions of people and places' to enable readers to make sense of the phenomenon being studied, and to 'draw their own interpretations about meanings and significance' (Patton 2002, p. 438; Guba & Lincoln 1989). Thick description 'should include analytic attention to the multiple codings and structuring principles through which social life is enacted and represented' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 832). In providing a 'thick description' of the research phenomenon, the researcher enables others to determine the transferability of the research for application to their own or other situations and settings 'because of shared characteristics' (Erlanson et al. 1993, p. 32; Creswell 2007; Guba & Lincoln 1989). The researcher has used thick description during the write up phase.

The dependability criterion seeks to establish and achieve reliability. The dependability criterion is concerned with the 'stability [or constancy] of the [research] data over time' (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 242). As such, the researcher is expected to document the process well (that is, in a traceable manner) such that an external audit could be conducted on the research 'to examine both the process and the product of the account,

assessing their accuracy' in order to make a determination on 'whether or not the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data' (Creswell 2007, p. 209; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Merriam 1988; Miles & Huberman 1994). The researcher has documented the process used and the research outcomes to enable others to clearly identify links between the data and the findings, interpretations, and conclusions reached.

The confirmability criterion is akin to the conventional criterion of objectivity (Guba & Lincoln 1989). 'Confirmability is concerned with assuring the data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the [researcher]' (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 244). In the constructivist paradigm, it is the data rather than the method that provide the assurance of integrity and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln 1989). The data, which might include constructions, assertions, facts and figures, must be able to be 'tracked to their sources, and that the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit in the narrative of [the research]' (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 243). In essence, what is required is for the qualitative researcher to make available to others/reviewers, the 'raw products' and the 'processes used to compress them' (Cronbach & Suppes 1969) so that they can make their own assessments and confirmations (Guba & Lincoln 1989). The researcher has documented such products and processes in a data structure table.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

The researcher accepts and has adhered to the highest ethical standards for the research. Patton (2002) raises a number of ethical issues that must be considered when conducting research. These ethical issues include explaining the purpose and process by which the research would be conducted, the making of promises and the offering of reciprocity to participants, the assessment of a range of risks (psychological, legal, and political) that may prevail, differentiation and complexity of confidentiality and anonymity, the requirement of informed consent, rights of data access and ownership, researcher mental and physical wellbeing, the use of an ethical confidant or advisor, determining data collection and access boundaries, and the adoption of ethical versus legal frameworks and philosophies (Patton 2002, pp. 408–409). Consideration of each

of the abovementioned ethical issues formed the foundation for the acceptance of six ethical principles that were adopted for this research.

1. Approval from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC UTS 2012 457A). This approval was sought before beginning the research.
2. Recruitment of Research Participants. Research participants were identified and recruited according to the procedures discussed in this chapter. Participants invited to interviews were provided with an introductory letter that incorporated a no obligation to participate statement.
3. Securing Consent. Participants were asked to complete and sign a written consent form as required by the UTS HREC. All participants were advised of their right to terminate their participation in the research at any point of the research process.
4. Participant Validation of Transcripts. Participants were offered the opportunity to review the interview transcript and notes for validation and authentication purposes. Where anomalies were found the researcher ensured that these were corrected by the researcher and participants advised. Any specific requests made by participants pertaining to their interview responses were honoured to the extent possible and in keeping with the UTS HREC guidelines.
5. Data Storage. Data collected was electronically stored on computer and backed up. Any hardcopy documentation of the data was also stored in a secured locked cabinet. The data were coded for ease of retrievability and to ensure privacy and confidentiality was maintained. The data will be stored and secured for a minimum period of five years after publication, in a manner that will ensure the privacy of participants. After the required period the data will be disposed of using a secure and confidential waste disposal mechanism.
6. Assurance of Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity. The researcher provided assurance that the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants and their responses was respected at all stages of the research. Interview transcripts were de-identified and codes stored separately.

3.13. Summary

The research problem, its purpose and questions have been delineated and explored via the use of a qualitative research strategy using a qualitative research case study design. The central research question answered by this research is: *how do current and former Departmental Secretaries in the APS constitute public sector management work, in a context of evolving reforms?* The constructionist and pragmatic perspectives have been presented in this chapter as the lenses through which the constitution of public sector management was considered and researched. The data collection methods included the use of semi-structured interviews and the sourcing of some documents. To evaluate the quality of the research several techniques were used to achieve trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability (or applicability), dependability, and confirmability as developed by Lincoln and Guba (1986).

The following four chapters cover the empirical research conducted using the methodology outlined previously. Chapter 4 covers the public sector actors who constitute public sector management work. Chapter 5 covers the environments in which public sector management work is constituted. Chapter 6 covers the roles and responsibilities that comprise public sector management work. Chapter 7 covers the contemporary management ideas that influenced the constitution on public sector management work.

Chapter 4 Departmental Secretaries: The Public Actors who Constitute Public Sector Management Work

Well this is why I spent my career in the public sector, it's much more interesting. Much more interesting and much more challenging and much more worthwhile. Well you have a chance to make a real difference to the country. Your motivation is not the bottom line but what you can do in terms of a very competitive, sustainable Australia economy that improves the wellbeing of Australians. (9:22)

4.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question: who are the Departmental Secretaries who practise public sector management work? The chapter explores who these public actors are and how a range of factors, such as their demographic backgrounds, their membership of a specific culture, how they were recruited into the public sector, as well as the dispositions, behaviours and principles deemed necessary for employment in this sector influence the way they constitute public sector management work. There is a common assumption in the public administration literature covering public sector reform that implies that actors, such as Departmental Secretaries, are simply obedient/passive facilitators who act in the same way as private sector managers to implement prevailing generic management ideas of the NPM. The empirical findings show that this portrayal is incorrect and that they are independent agents who share certain backgrounds and ideas derived from their common public service interests and shared values about what should constitute public sector management work.

The background to their appointment to positions of Departmental Secretaries will be discussed and the qualifications and experiences they bring to these positions will be considered: these inform our understanding of the constitution of public sector management work. The chapter also explores the processes by which Departmental Secretaries learn or practise public sector management work, and their perspectives on the nature of this work. The chapter also considers the values and ethical positions, which Departmental Secretaries adopt and apply to their work as this underpins their constitution of public sector management work.

The literature on public sector reform will be considered at the end of the chapter and the extent to which it pays attention to the public actors who constitute public sector management work is discussed. In particular, how the literature takes account of background characteristics; culture; dispositions and behaviours; experiences, qualifications, and knowledge; professions, values or ethos, which characterise public sector managers and their approach to public sector management work, will be discussed. These components, which in part make up and shape the people who practise public sector management in the APS and in turn, the constitution of public sector management work, emerged from the empirical data and will be discussed below.

4.2. Departmental Secretary Backgrounds – Demographics

Departmental Secretaries' practice is senior level public sector management work. Their demographic and career backgrounds shape who they are and the persons that they are in turn shape what they do when they constitute public sector management work. The twenty-five participants interviewed for this research were heads of portfolios, departments and/or agencies of the APS, which were either policy, or service delivery based. They had a number of position titles such as Portfolio Secretary, Departmental Secretary, Secretary, Commissioner, and Agency Head, reflecting the nomenclature relevant for the particular organisations that they headed. For the purposes of this research, the generic title of Departmental Secretary is used when referring to these participants. These portfolios, departments, and agencies covered a majority of the functions of the APS and were predominantly large in size and scale.

The Departmental Secretaries had similar demographic backgrounds (see Appendix D). The Departmental Secretaries were mostly males (current 92% and former 75%) aged in their 50s, 60s and 70s, while a minority (current 8% and former 25%) were females in their 40s, 50s and 60s. The Departmental Secretaries, with one exception (a European-born naturalised Australian citizen), were all Australian-born citizens with Anglo-Saxon family antecedents. Many of these Departmental Secretaries (current 85% and former 75%) were born, educated, and had lived their lives in Canberra, the primary location of the APS. Only one current Departmental Secretary, who had recently joined the ranks of the Departmental Secretaries from another jurisdiction, did not 'fit' the abovementioned

profile. The majority of Departmental Secretaries' educational qualifications were in economics and law.

Given that most Departmental Secretaries hold qualifications in such fields as law, economics, science, and other professional technical domains³⁰ they do not have a formally substantive knowledge of the discipline of management (2:6). While participants were not directly asked how their academic qualifications³¹ influenced the way they constitute public sector management work, examination of the basic demographic details of these public actors is revealing. Their 'qualifications' show that only one current and no former Departmental Secretaries have a qualification grounded in management theory and practice. This participant is the only member of the youngest demographic (40–49 years), and also the only public actor, within this study with a formal education encompassing any likely knowledge of managerial techniques consistent with the NPM.

The majority of participants have formal educational qualifications based in law (20%) and economics (48%). Both of these areas are relevant to the public sector. Law, it can be assumed, would provide an awareness and knowledge of legal and regulatory responsibilities, especially those outlined in the Australian Government Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013, S.15). This Act, however, is silent in terms of any specific managerial responsibilities directly related to the NPM. Instead, there are just two broad managerial responsibilities, first, for the efficient, effective, economical and ethical management of the 'Department' and second, 'to manage' consistent with APS policies. The closest Secretaries' responsibilities come to the NPM is in the provision of 'leadership, strategic direction and a focus on results for the Department', but, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, their constitution of public sector management work is focussed predominantly on serving their minister.

Similarly, an 'economics' qualification could provide a deep understanding of the neo-classical economic tenets underlying the NPM and economic rationalism and how Secretaries might achieve efficiencies and economies in relation to their departments. In

³⁰ The term technical domain is used in this thesis to denote non-management fields of expertise and knowledge that apply within the APS. In particular, this term relates to the field of public policy as it pertains to the various portfolios.

³¹ Demographic details were collected simply to provide a profile of the public actors and not to determine, directly, how various demographic details might influence the way they constituted public sector management work.

detail though, economics, as an academic discipline, does not equate to management knowledge encompassed in the NPM, nor does a qualification in ‘Arts’ (28%), ‘Science’ (16%) or ‘Psychology’ (4%). It is unlikely therefore, that formal university education is a major determinant of the constitution of public sector management work, if that work is directly aligned to the NPM.

The career profiles of the Departmental Secretaries were remarkably similar in their public service longevity (see Appendix E). Public service longevity was a dominant feature of the career profiles of the Departmental Secretaries. The majority of Departmental Secretaries (current 76% and former 58%) had joined the public service some thirty or forty years ago (during the 1970s and 1980s). However, some former (28%) Departmental Secretaries had joined the public service some fifty or sixty years ago (during the 1950s and 1960s). Both current and former Departmental Secretaries had spent most of their entire working lives in the APS. A minority of these Departmental Secretaries in the current cohort (23%) had worked in only one organisation for their whole careers, while 100% of the former cohort had worked in more than one organisation. That their work experience had been predominantly based in the APS means that their constitution of public sector management work is framed by this experience.

All current and former Secretaries had joined or been part of the APS during the years of the supposed paradigm shift from public administration to public management (Emy & Hughes 1993), when ideas of the NPM were being enthusiastically embraced in Australia and the APS. On the surface, it could be assumed that the NPM would be a defining determinant of how public sector management might be perceived by this group. Yet the age demographic of these public actors shows that they would have been only at the beginning of their careers (64%), or mid-career (36%) at this time. Whether ideas of the NPM were transferred to these public actors then and continued to have some influence is not evident from demographic information about age cohorts but is explored later in Chapter 7.

That Departmental Secretaries have an identity rooted in common demographics and career backgrounds is one reason they are attracted by and attractive to the public sector and gives rise to their similar constitution of public sector management work. Their demographic and career backgrounds are, and have remained, similar over the years,

which suggest the presence of broader institutional forces. These institutional forces may serve to reinforce the type of persons recruited to the public service, developed therein and in turn appointed to these Departmental Secretary positions. This will be the subject of the next two sections.

4.3. Recruitment of Departmental Secretaries – Public Service Archetypes

Not only has the recruitment of Commonwealth public servants been linked to common criteria for entry defined in legislation but this has also occurred through a central recruiting body, the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). This means that there is a fairly standard public service type, which inevitably has an impact upon how the Departmental Secretaries, as public actors, constitute public sector management work.

Most of the Departmental Secretaries were recruited into the APS between thirty and fifty years ago. They were recruited from the ranks of applicants who were largely Canberra based. In Australia there existed, as across most Anglo-American public sectors going back to the mid-1880s, a defined set of attributes for employing public servants. The past practices, some still in place today, of recruiting and selecting for a particular public service disposition or personality type and technical domain capabilities, meant that they were chosen on the basis of these criteria rather than a disposition for management or possession of a perceived management personality type and management domain³² capabilities.

Section 34 of the Australian Public Service Act 1922 (since repealed), provided that:

A person is not eligible for appointment to the Service unless the Board is satisfied that the person is a fit and proper person to be an officer of the Service. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 119)

The public service requirements included an attention to minutiae and detail, an ability to analyse facts and figures, a disposition to risk aversion and avoidance, as well as a predisposition and preference for command and control type behaviours. These

³² The term ‘management domain’ is used in this thesis to denote management fields of expertise and knowledge. In particular, this term relates to the field of management as it pertains in the private sector.

dispositions and capabilities were considered to be of value to the public service and especially to the minister and the government of the day because of the political context and nature of work and management in the public sector.

Some former Departmental Secretaries confirmed their experience with such recruitment practices and acknowledged that they, in turn, had recruited similar people into the public service. These recruitment practices were in place because such people were considered reliable and dependable types, able to follow directions given and to assist their department in meeting the needs of the minister and government of the day (13:4a; 13:4b; 20:10). These practices are a self-perpetuating system with like employing like, based on their conception of what constitutes suitable public service types (and those who eventually become public sector ‘managers’).

The Departmental Secretaries who joined the public sector from the 1960s onward were people who had been chosen on the assumption of their future professionalism in public service rather than their extant professionalism in management per se. Public service values were to be abided by and upheld at all times once recruited to the public service (Public Service Act 1999, amended 2013). Thus, the Departmental Secretaries were recruited into the public sector because they met and reflected the criteria of a ‘public service archetype’ as ‘fit and proper persons’ to serve the Commonwealth Government of Australia (5:33). The basis on which they were recruited is the opposite of the prerequisites for entrepreneurship and innovation, which are so central to the NPM.

[Former Departmental Secretary] *he’s a terrifically bright mathematician [who has an] ingenious ability in numbers, really really terrific, and a very very professional public servant. A very professional public servant you know. An epitome of what the old style public servant was expected to be. No mistakes. Get the numbers right. Be precise. (13:30)*

These recruits would, over time, become appointed as the Departmental Secretaries, responsible for the constitution of public sector management work. As the evidence confirms, their primary stimulus for constituting public sector management work is clearly not the NPM. Inevitably, they take a cautious approach based on the tenets of public service, and as the next section outlines, are motivated largely by an attention to policy rather than management, per se.

4.4. Appointment by Ministers

An essential qualification for appointment at the level of Departmental Secretary in the APS is policy experience and advice. The necessity of possessing this experience and the ability to offer that advice is not just something that is anecdotally mentioned, according to participants, but is a primary requirement under the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013). In accordance with that Act, Departmental Secretaries are the nominated principal policy advisors to ministers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the public actors interviewed emphasised this aspect of their role. Given that the Act does not specify management responsibilities (outlined previously), it is also not surprising that participants (80%) reiterated the importance of policy advice to ministers. In effect, the highest frame of reference for this group is a policy perspective and to a considerable extent, management as such, is irrelevant. Thus, it follows that policy advice, rather than management, is critical to the way that this group constitutes public sector management work. Public sector management, therefore, is taken generally, not literally. There is a certain irony in this finding that suggests that public sector management, in the context of the NPM, does not figure strongly in public sector management work.

The preference for a particular public service disposition and associated technical domain knowledge and experience, rather than a management disposition or management domain knowledge and experience, followed the Departmental Secretaries throughout their careers. Departmental Secretaries commented on the fact that development and progression to a Departmental Secretary was dependent on their experience and capability in the policy arena. The policy arena rather than the management arena mattered to ministers, the vast majority of whom were themselves experienced with and capable in the political rather than the management domain (13:16). Hence it is policy and politics that Departmental Secretaries are groomed in to secure appointment to their roles, not management.

Because essentially the people they (Ministers) usually pick for Secretaries are people who have a lot of policy experience. Not always. But most of them, if you shine in policy then you are going to have a faster rise than if you shine in administration or if you shine in program management or whatever. (13:9)

When it came to the appointment of Departmental Secretaries by ministers, there is a view by some Departmental Secretaries that this penchant for competencies and experiences other than in management is a consequence of a lack of understanding, appreciation and limited interest (especially by ministers) in the role of Departmental Secretaries as managers of their departments. Ministers and others who have a role in making judgements about potential candidates for appointment to Departmental Secretary and other senior executive roles in the public sector are mostly interested in the ability of the candidates to provide personal and policy advice. Ministerial focus is on politics and policy and so they look to appoint Departmental Secretaries for their ability to provide the minister with such advice. Therefore the technical domain knowledge (especially a semi-expertise in policy) and the predisposition to command and control type behaviours are preferred and dominate the criteria for selection of candidates for these roles, rather than management domain knowledge (13:5). This finding of the research shows that the first barrier in the transfer of contemporary management ideas into the public sector, at least in the APS, occurs at the ministerial level. It is likely that ministers will simply use rhetoric as a way of demonstrating that they are making a commitment to the managerial paradigm (ministerial responsibility) when in practice they are not. Secretaries are not going to work against their ministers. The Westminster system therefore acts against transfer of contemporary management ideas and managerialism at the ministerial and Departmental Secretary levels.

... most of them [Secretaries] believe that Ministers have just no interest in management. ... like one Secretary for whom I have the highest regard once said, if you can sustain a conversation with the Minister about management for more than thirty seconds, you're doing extraordinarily well. (25:3a)

Ministerial lack of interest and knowledge about the management accountabilities of the Departmental Secretaries is also attributed to the fact that most ministers themselves are from non-management backgrounds. Many ministers come from legal, farming, or political backgrounds that limits their experience, knowledge, capabilities and interest in management (13:17a; 15:5a; 15:12). Thus, few ministers appreciate the need for Secretaries to have capability in management. This is in complete contrast to the principles of the Senior Executive Service (SES). These principles included the opening up of opportunities for members of the public to compete on the basis of merit for senior roles, in order to provide a broader base of capable and service-oriented senior

management cadre (Wilenski 1986a). However, as per the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013), Departmental Secretaries are appointed to their positions ‘by the Governor General, by written instrument, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister’. Prior to such recommendation, the Prime Minister must receive a report from the Secretary of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The report is to be prepared in consultation with the APS Commissioner and the relevant minister of the department for which the position is being filled. Although the process described above is expected to be rational and objective, in reality the process may have become politicised (MacDermott 2008; Mulgan 1998a; Mulgan 1998b; Mulgan 2013; Podger 2007; Wiltshire 2014), as the views of the minister consulted for the recommended appointment of Departmental Secretaries are of significance. The formal managerial framework in which the Senior Executive Service and such appointments were meant to operate is no more than rhetoric (although this was debated in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration* circa 1997-1998 - see Halligan 1997b; Mulgan 1998a; Podger 1997; and Weller and Wanna 1997, p. 18).

There are conflicting forces supporting and militating against the inclusion of generic management ideas as part of what constitutes public sector management work. Two competing logics (Friedland & Alford 1991; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980; Thornton & Ocasio 2008), are operating in tandem: a formal rational managerial actor framework and an informal ‘governmental bureaucratic political’ actor framework (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999). From the responses of the Departmental Secretaries it is apparent and, in many ways, obvious that the political actor framework prevails even though the legislative framework and strong managerial discourse would suggest otherwise.

Ministers achieve their positions via a political process largely removed from the management of the public sector and it is a political framework that guides ministers rather than a management framework. The ministers’ focus is on the making of political decisions rather than technical or management decisions. Departmental Secretaries commented further that ministers do not understand the management role of the Departmental Secretary because of the ‘political prism’, the political ‘hot-house’ environment and the ‘political pipeline’ in which they operate. Ministers are, in effect, so busy, given their responsibilities with parliament that they have little, if any, time to

think about anything else. The political nature of the minister's role is what dominates his/her world, rather than the management of their departments.

[Ministers do not understand the management role of the Departmental Secretary] in part because of their background and in part because of their prism. There's a pipeline coming into their office, which is briefing notes and advice. Most of them because they're so busy and their hot house environment in Parliament under threat in question time [and the like] haven't got the time to think what's at the other end of that pipeline because there's so much stuff coming out of that pipeline they have just got to manage it. (13:17b)

Some Ministers are entirely detached from what happens in their Department because they are only interested in the political framework. (20:13)

In particular, the management, structure, people and productivity of their departments are considered only in a secondary sense, if at all (13:17c), by the minister. This lack of deference to management is the case even though formally ministers have accountability for the management of their departments, as do their Departmental Secretaries, as part of the functioning of the SES. Ministers typically undervalue the Secretary's role in managing the productivity of their organisations (13:16; 25:3b).

Hence, the progression and appointment of Departmental Secretaries to their roles presents them with two competing and often compartmentalised roles in terms of how they constitute public sector management work: they have to be both policy advisors and managers.

Departmental Secretaries have an ongoing responsibility, once appointed, to manage their departments. The requirement to manage their department has been ongoing in terms of 'legislative provisions and practical working arrangements' (Commonwealth of Australia 2001, p. 142). Because they are appointed by ministers whose interest and focus is predominantly on the political arena and public policy this becomes the focus of their minister's attention. Hence, Departmental Secretaries are groomed and appointed for their ability to provide personal and policy advice even though they are expected to also manage their departments (25:3c).

The appointment of Departmental Secretaries, in essence, is a means to an end in which the end is to serve the needs of the political machinery of government for which their

ministers are responsible³³. The assumption made by the proponents of NPM is that ministers as principals will reinforce managerial influence with their Departmental Secretaries as agents. Ministers seek political influence, however. Thus, one of the fundamental assumptions on which the NPM is based does not hold in the case of the Departmental Secretaries. Therefore, it is the political rather than management dimension for which Secretaries are recognised and appointed by the ministers, so that they can serve their political ‘masters’³⁴ (10:6b; 18:14) and enable their political ‘masters’ to realise their political objectives.

Furthermore, the proficiency of the Departmental Secretary in his/her political environment is fundamental to their ability to execute their public sector management work. The uniqueness of the public sector environment is considered to be a critical factor in the Anglo-American world for the limited success of external senior management appointments to the public sector (whether from the private sector or the non-government organisation sector). In Australia for example ‘... only three appointments to the position [of Departmental Secretary] have been made in the past fifteen or more years from outside the Government sector’ (Egan 2009, p. 20). Furthermore, the nuances of the public sector environment in which most Departmental Secretaries operate, with its primary political logic and its secondary managerial logic, is recognised as a major reason why most Departmental Secretaries are not appointed directly to their positions from outside the public sector. External appointments hold a differentially rational view of the world in which it is thought that management is the priority. They do not understand that there are always two, often competing, logics operating in the public sector at any given time. The ability to understand and deal with this duality is the critical aspect, gained from years of public service experience. External appointments are blind to this duality and thus on many occasions do not satisfy the minister (13:7d; 23:7b). A limited number of appointments from outside the public sector have been made but they are usually at lower levels such as First Assistant Secretary or Deputy Secretary levels, where there is an opportunity over time to develop and transition from such appointments to Departmental Secretary levels. Such

³³ See also the work of Weller and Grattan (1981) and Tiernan and Weller (2010), which provides longitudinal data on the views and functions of ministers and secretaries. This work further informs the discussion on political imperatives for ministers and how these imperatives frame their expectations of secretaries.

³⁴ The term ‘master’ is used in this thesis not in a gender-specific sense but instead in a contemporary sense to denote the hierarchical nature of the relationship between the Departmental Secretary and the relevant minister(s).

appointments and transitions require judgement calls on behalf of the government as to whether transitions are possible (13:8; 23:7b).

That's why it's very unusual, very unusual, in government for a Secretary ... to come in from outside and be successful because people coming from outside have such huge difficulty accommodating to the complexity of the context within which senior public servants work. Often [also the] ambiguity around how you get things done [is difficult to master]. (23:6a)

There may be a number of other reasons for the limited number of external senior management appointments and their apparent lack of success in Australia's public service. These include the past closed system of appointments to the public service, the Canberra-centric nature of many senior management appointments to the APS (12:23), the limited backgrounds of many of the past senior management appointees (Pusey 1991), the relatively low levels of senior public sector remuneration compared to the private sector, the inability to attract a suitable calibre of applicant for these relatively low levels of remuneration, as well as the apparent lack of interest by applicants external to the public sector. However, it is recognised that experience and a fit with the public sector environment is fundamental to success in the role of Departmental Secretary and, in particular, an ability to cope with the political 'hot house' framework and environment of the 'city of government and politics' and the public sector (13:7d; 5:32). Hence the public actors appointed to these roles are able to constitute public sector management work as a result of their having 'lived' and therefore understood and experienced over a considerable period of time, the peculiarities of the unique public sector frame which provide them with the appropriate grounding for success in the public sector.

The lack of interest in management by the ministers responsible for appointing Departmental Secretaries is one reason why the majority of Departmental Secretaries have little or no desire to gain management qualifications, management experience and/or management knowledge. Instead they rely more on technical-professional knowledge.

4.5. Technical-Professional Knowledge – Professionalisation

Beyond formal tertiary qualifications (discussed previously and presented in Appendix D) Departmental Secretaries indicated that technical expertise in their field, professional knowledge of public service and experience gained from practice are the most valued or valuable qualifications for the job. These aspects are critical in terms of how they constitute public sector management work.³⁵ This section covers these aspects and is divided into two subsections: technical expertise and professional knowledge; and experience gained from practice via learning on the job.

4.5.1. Technical Expertise and Professional Knowledge

Many Departmental Secretaries commented that their professional and technical expertise was valued because it allowed them to focus on what mattered to their ministers, the minutiae and detail associated with the technical content of their portfolios. Akin to what Elmore (1986, p. 77) has suggested, Departmental Secretaries are expected to have mastered knowledge and be proficient in the ‘technical core’ covering content and procedural knowledge in their administrative arenas. Furthermore, they are expected to be knowledgeable about ‘substantive issues’ related to the policy arena in which they operate; the ‘institutional sphere’ consisting of the established practices of their sector; and the ‘modes of influence’ appropriate to the public sector (Elmore 1986, p. 77). All of these areas of expertise are technical in focus. However, this technical expertise provides challenges and dilemmas for the Departmental Secretary because it means that they are generally not attending to the broader and more general aspects of the management domain, which one might expect from this senior executive management cadre; instead they are focussed on the narrower and more specific and micro aspects of their department’s technical domain work.

... but the temptation in lots of professional lines of work is to become more and more expert in a particular area. You delve deeper and deeper and you get further down in the mire. It’s a challenge for us . . . (1:10)

³⁵ The actual constitution of public sector management work (which will be discussed further in Chapter 6) comprises both rational-instrumental and political-interpretive activities: where rational-instrumental activities encompass leadership, governance and administration of the department and political-interpretive activities encompass the provision of policy advice and development, stewardship and stakeholder management.

Specific qualifications for the position are inconsistent with the expectations one might have from the rhetoric of the NPM and with the promotion of generic management competencies. There is no requirement for Departmental Secretaries to be proficient in the field of management. Current Departmental Secretaries acknowledged their lack of management domain knowledge and qualifications. They stated that they knew little about leadership or management when they commenced in the public sector, not having a background, experience, qualifications, development or training in management when they joined. Many Departmental Secretaries acknowledged that, as a consequence, for a number of years early in their career they were not very good at management and that they began to learn about management only later. Some Departmental Secretaries commented that more recently they have participated in and completed the Harvard Advanced Management Program in Cambridge Massachusetts or the Management Program at the Kellogg School of Business in Chicago or the Institut Européen des Affaires d'Administration (INSEAD) Management Program in Fontainebleau. One of the younger Departmental Secretaries had also completed a Master of Business Administration (MBA). These and other management programs and courses provide the Departmental Secretaries with knowledge about techniques the better to manage and lead their departments. Management programs and courses have been an influence on the instrumental aspects of management for many of the Departmental Secretaries (4:17). Even those who had recently gained qualifications or attended programs in business management commented that these qualifications and programs, while useful in guiding their thinking about business management practices were 'not everything' and that their constitution of public sector management work goes beyond business management practices. In a substantive sense their constitution of public sector management work is not altered as a result of such programs and courses, because overwhelmingly their management work is derived from the public policy decisions of the government of the day.

Former Departmental Secretaries were conscious of this lack of education and background in management disciplines and the part this might have played in their constitution of public sector management work. They acknowledged deficiencies in their previous careers: a limited background in the management discipline; very limited periods away from the public service in commerce or industry; limited experience across the public service (in a number of departments, or in a number of disciplines),

perhaps via secondments. They acknowledged that deficiencies in their management qualifications and management knowledge were possible to remedy using experiences such as those mentioned previously. However, they were also conscious that the system, or institutional forces which operated in the public sector, were such as to tend to draw them away from such experiences and keep them in the technical domain. Their work required technical expertise in their field, professional knowledge of public service and experience gained from practice, rather than a generic managerial knowledge in contrast to the proponents of managerialism who argued that it was management knowledge and expertise that mattered in the constitution of public sector management work.

4.5.2. Experience Gained From Practice – Learning on the Job

The APS has to a large extent, been influenced by and adopted the practices of the British Civil Service and its belief in the ‘gifted amateur’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2001, p. 141). The ‘gifted amateur’ is one who is deemed to have the faculties to develop and learn what he or she needs on the job. Belief in the ‘gifted amateur’ is perpetuated still in the APS by ministers and other politicians who do not expect management expertise from their Departmental Secretaries but instead technical expertise in their field, professional knowledge of public service and experience gained from practice because these are the most valued qualifications for the job. Perhaps this is due, as others have identified, that:

Australia has no equivalent to the French Ecole Nationale d’Administration through which almost all leaders will pass; although, since 2002, the APS has used the Australian and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and APS Commission leadership courses to hone and refine the skills of future public sector leaders. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 119)

Departmental Secretaries have no formal requirement to have ‘subject matter expertise or even professional qualifications in the area on which they advise’ (ibid.).

Many Departmental Secretaries have gained their knowledge of management from experience on the job, by reading popular management texts, by exposure to management ideas and behaviours of others in the public and sometimes private sectors. Many commented that they were not management experts and indeed had little if any

formal management experience or capabilities. Instead Departmental Secretaries had a philosophy of learning about management via ‘trial and error’.

Where if you look at the personalities of the members, [we are from] very different backgrounds. We are not [and] we have never seen ourselves as management practitioners. Three of them have been chief executives in industry and the other two ... and myself have come out of the bureaucracy. It's a kind of "suck it and see" for us because we are not management gurus. (19:16)

Trial and error learning is based on learning from others within the public sector including from peers, colleagues and one’s manager or management team. Management concepts, philosophies, models and frameworks are built from practice ‘... a lot of my leadership I guess, ideas, and philosophies had been built just out of practice’ (2:16). In the case of Departmental Secretaries, this practice sometimes means learning from ministers and in some cases also from Cabinet members and a former Prime Minister.

I sit there with the Prime Minister, and I see her deliver messages in Cabinet and I go that's a really clever way of doing that you know and then you sort of just noted the way and it becomes part of what you do yourself next time or whatever. (2:51)

The majority of Departmental Secretaries were of the view that management is not something that required formal training and expertise. Instead management is simply something that they did as a matter of course. Management is seen to concern practical and common sense behaviour that they simply gleaned and practised while on the job. Management work as performed by Departmental Secretaries is specific to their public sector world. Policy in the sense of both policy development and policy advising is the work deemed primary in importance.

... I have to say I just do it [management], I don't think about what we are doing. I've never read a management textbook in my life; I'm an economist by training. It's kind of pragmatics and common sense. ... but, coming into a professional organisation out of a professional organisation you tend not to think about management, you are on policy all the time. (19:22a)

While such learning on the job is pragmatic and seemingly sensible, there is the possibility that learning on the job can be highly problematic, where people are learning from others who are similarly not knowledgeable in the field, in this case in the field of management. For the constitution of public sector management work, this manifests the

perpetuation of political and policy-driven public sector management work, by public actors, rather than the adoption of managerialism and the NPM. The participants also report a lack of management capability at other management levels in departments across the public sector. In particular, the need to identify and develop managers at these other levels whose capability is low is acknowledged. The dearth of management capability across the public sector might be symptomatic of the institutional factors (Di Maggio & Powell 1983) at play in the public sector that serve to value technical (policy) domain knowledge and technical operatives³⁶ over management domain knowledge and managers (19:22b). Thus Departmental Secretaries who are themselves technocrats, with limited management skills, are cognisant of and perceive the need for ‘management’ across the sector, but constitute such work in a different way from the NPM.

But we learnt along the way that we had classic public sector problems with [management capability] performance, measurement and communication. We had people who were called managers and couldn't manage their way out of a wet paper bag . . . They shouldn't have been called managers or shouldn't have been managing people. We've had to take the people like that who've got technical skills and get them out of management, give them a technical role. (19:17)

What features most prominently is their technocracy. Furthermore the ‘cultural tribe’ to which they belong greatly influences their constitution of public sector management work, as will be discussed below.

4.6. Departmental Secretaries and Cultural Tribalism

How Departmental Secretaries see their world and how they might constitute public sector management work is further shaped, to a large extent, by the fact that they are in Canberra. Canberra is regarded as a predominantly government ‘town’, where the centre of government and the public sector is based. In a sense, Departmental Secretaries located here have been institutionalised into a prevailing Canberra-centric culture where common formal and informal values and practices surrounding public service are pervasive. The Canberra-centric view of the world, according to several participants, is

³⁶ Technical operatives are non-management professionals in the APS workforce.

commonly held by Departmental Secretaries, strongly influencing the way they constitute public sector management work.

Several participants commented on the dilemma associated with the Canberra-centric culture of the APS: such Canberra-centricity is seen as a powerful but problematic influence on public sector management work. Many of those who work in the APS within Canberra are described as having been born and ‘bred’ in Canberra and having little interest in travelling or engaging with the greater Australian population outside Canberra. In these Departmental Secretaries’ views, this leads to what they term the dilemma of a ‘country town syndrome’ comprising a narrow perspective, a lack of challenge, loss of touch with broader Australia, insularity, low standards, and poorer performance by those who operate from Canberra (12:20a).

Some Departmental Secretaries (relatively new to their roles) describe the Canberra-centric culture as one that exhibits ‘group think’ and is exemplified through such mechanisms as the Secretaries Board (comprising Commonwealth Portfolio Secretaries). The board is headed by the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, described as the ‘first among equals’, and the member that sets the formal or informal tone of the board. The board’s influence is seen to be pervasive, especially in Canberra (12:10a). The agenda, discussions, debates, and outcomes of the Secretaries Board are seen as important and significant to Departmental Secretaries, but in some cases they are not formally and transparently communicated to those of the cohort who are not formal participants/invitees. Instead informal, opaque and ad hoc methods and mechanisms are used to communicate the functioning and activities of the Secretaries Board to some Departmental Secretaries (12:10b).

If there is stuff happening at the Secretaries Board I hear about it through rumour and innuendo: “oh, did you hear X, and by the way Y has been decided. Really?” It’s almost like oral tradition, like the elders of a tribe. The elders have decided X. Really? When did they do that? Well, the elders had a meeting. Did they? What did they say? Well, what you need to know is this. Really? This is ‘loosey goosey’. You couldn’t imagine a conglomerate in Australia, like Wesfarmers, being run like this – it would be chaos. It would be irresponsible. It probably would be illegal. (12:11a)

These methods and mechanisms are deemed to be political, power-based, inappropriate, and dysfunctional to public sector management work. This is because power-political and bad behaviours become an implicit norm that influences the constitution of public

sector management work. Furthermore, these methods and mechanisms create inadvertent ‘in and out’ groups, rather than a unified whole upper echelon or stewardship team. Those Departmental Secretaries who find themselves at the bottom of the ‘pecking order’ or on the ‘outer circle’ may engage in even more risk aversion, be more cautious and concerned, lose confidence, and potentially display lower commitment. Some may even become frustrated and angry with their peers and colleagues and engage in counterproductive practices. They may not assert their views nor engage in dialogue and debate with the broader APS. Other Departmental Secretaries who find themselves at the top of the ‘pecking order’ or in the ‘inner circle’ may engage in more aggressive behaviours, ‘play politics’ and potentially assert their power in inappropriate ways across the APS. Both sets of behaviours have implications and consequences for public sector management work. However, whether this is a reflection of a design or a default position is difficult to discern; instead it is based on a long tradition of anchoring the public sector to Canberra (Commonwealth of Australia 2001, 2004) so it can operate close to the seat of government and politics. Canberra, or at least the environment in which the Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work, is a political centre where power politics at various levels of organisations are pervasive. Departmental Secretaries need to manage up to the political environment and so are drawn into such power-political games. This is elaborated further in Chapter 5.

There are interesting issues of power that come with this secret art, this informal mode. So what are those influences? It's very, very powerful. It's sublime, it's not transparent. It's pervasive. I argue that it's derailing because of those earlier features. And it is the source of informal power. And some would argue formal power. If you were talking to Departmental Secretaries and you went around that table, I'm sure that each of them would have a story to tell about that. It probably may not be the first point of reference but, to me, it's pervasive, it's there. Very Harry Potter like. It's a bit like the Ministry of Magic in Potter. (12:11b)

Furthermore, a Canberra-centric culture leads to a phenomenon described by one Departmental Secretary as ‘sociability’ (12:20b). He described the ‘sociability’ phenomenon as being replete with favouritism, nepotism and patronage that mimics a closed feudal societal system akin to a ‘sisterhood or a brotherhood’, one which operates much like a fraternity replete with powerful fraternity practices. In such a system there are powerful influences that reinforce the status quo so that the system

perpetuates itself, continues and remains in place, and is closed. Through the processes of enculturation (Grusec & Hastings 2007) and institutionalisation (Di, Maggio & Powell 1983) they are bound up in ‘group processes’ (Schein 2010). The conditions of security and protection afforded by this system are reinforced and guarded to maintain the status quo. Outsiders, the unorthodox and/or the contemporary tend to be excluded from this Canberra-centric world. Those who challenge the status quo are excluded or expelled, as they are perceived to be a threat.

Yeah, one of the recent examples of a victim of this is the former Commonwealth [Secretary] ... he was a classic unorthodox person who did not fit. He challenged the contemporary status quo and was then expelled. (12:21a)

To enter such a closed ‘feudal societal system’ is possible only if one ‘cracks the code’. A Departmental Secretary explained his lived experience of trying to ‘crack the code’ by following the guidelines (or codes) in the APSC guide for how to enter the APS. To ‘crack the code’ one needs to be part of or emulate those who belong to the Canberra-centric culture (12:21b). Although described in different terms, others have also documented this ‘sociability’ phenomenon associated with Canberra-centricity, such as Pusey (1991).

The Canberra-centric culture is so powerful and political that one Departmental Secretary reported that to be accepted in the APS as part of the senior management or leadership cadre, is contingent on where one lives. He explained that although he was not from Canberra he stated his home address as a suburb in Canberra (where he resided during the week) rather than his hometown in another suburb in a state of Australia (12:21c). Doing this allowed him to be ‘accepted’ as part of the Canberra ‘tribe’. He described the symbolism attached to the place one lives as being powerful and important. His observation and experience was that there are significant differences in the experience of Canberra-based public sector Departmental Secretaries and those based outside Canberra. The self-perpetuating culture or enculturation means that the Departmental Secretaries have developed a ‘closed loop’ (Senge 1990) in relation to their ways of operating and their learning.

One participant described Canberra as Australia’s ‘city of government and politics’. Given the Departmental Secretaries are employed by, expected to operate for and be

held accountable to the Australian Commonwealth government and operate primarily from Canberra, it appears that there are institutional forces at play which give rise to and perpetuate the background, career profiles and cultures to which the Departmental Secretaries belong. As such they are imbued with the elements of this ‘city of government and politics’ and its culture. The prevalence of this Canberra-centric culture to which the Departmental Secretaries belonged was acknowledged recently by former Prime Minister Keating who observed that to understand the Commonwealth bureaucracy and how it operated he had to spend time meeting with the bureaucrats (the Departmental Secretaries), on ‘their turf’ in the Canberra Club (Australian Broadcasting Commission 2013) and that their Canberra-centric culture was a tight one. This Canberra-centric culture (replete with its hierarchy, power-political norms, opacity and adhocism, groupthink, in-and-out groups, sociability phenomenon, exclusion of the contemporary and unorthodox) to which the Departmental Secretaries belong exerts a powerful uniforming influence on their constitution of public sector management work. The members of this Canberra-centric culture, driven by institutional forces, give deference to the governmental, political and power elements of this culture in their constitution of public sector management work rendering it uniform.

The Departmental Secretaries’ common cultural kinships are a critical factor which gives rise to their similar constitution of public sector management work. The Departmental Secretaries see what they do as the art of public service, crafting public sector management work based on their knowledge, skills and commitment to their public service vocation, with little or no influence from NPM considerations. In this sense the constitution of public sector management work will tend to be further shaped by the dimensions of this vocation and the public service ethos to which Departmental Secretaries subscribe. This ethos will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

4.7. Public Service Ethos – Ethics

Notwithstanding the findings outlined in the previous section, the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries state they are strongly bound by an ethos of public service, that is, an unswerving commitment to the public good in all that they do. They also believe that whatever they do needs to be undertaken within firm ethical boundaries. Whether this is realistic, simply an altruistic ideal, or a parroting of their responsibilities

under the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) of what public service should be, their narratives in this area are common and consistent. Undoubtedly, this aspect strongly influences how they perceive the constitution of public sector management work.

The vocation of public service concerns understanding that public sector management work is not a science. The vocation incorporates specialised technical expertise in their field; professional knowledge of public service and experience gained from practice especially policy advice and policy development experience; and an understanding of government politics. The vocation requires personal qualities of: ‘emotional intelligence’ meaning the need for Departmental Secretaries to sublimate their ego to that of their minister; ‘courage’ meaning being resilient in one’s work rather than ‘giving up when knocked down’; ‘persistence’ to put forward ideas in the face of opposition; ‘tolerance’ of challenging behaviour from one’s colleagues and superiors by seeking to understand their position; and a determination to ‘persevere’ with matters when they need to be driven harder. This vocation is consistent with what Weber (1978, pp. 958–9) describes in terms of an ‘instituted style of ethical life, or *Lebensführung*’. Critically in a *Lebensführung*, there is a need to operate in an ethical manner and to adopt the ethos of public administration (*15:36; 21:18*). Hence the vocation of public service as perceived by Departmental Secretaries is something different from the more generic concept of managerial work as advocated by the NPM (Pollitt 2011).

The vocation of public service or public administration is characterised in a precise way as ‘an “order of life” subject to its own laws’ (Weber 1978, pp. 958–9; du Gay 2000, p. 43). Primarily these laws include lengthy technical training, previously certified via a public service examination, and an understanding that public service office is a ‘vocation’ (*Beruf*) (Weber 1978, pp. 958–9). The vocation incorporates personal moral commitment and principled behaviour ‘which is separate from and privileged over the bureaucrat’s extra-official ties to kith, kin, class and individual inner conscience’ (Weber 1978, II, pp. 958–9; du Gay 1994a, p. 667–9; Hunter 1994, p. 156). The notion of vocation is a concept which pre-dates managerialism. Departmental Secretaries are long-term public servants indoctrinated in public service using such concepts and so their constitution of public sector management work reflects this concept rather than managerialism.

Public service behaviour is shaped by the ethical surroundings present in the technical, procedural, and organisational dimensions of the public sector or 'bureau'. For bureaucrats or public servants such as Departmental Secretaries it is deemed necessary to have developed the following attributes: an ability to follow procedures strictly (public service laws, regulations, and ministerial directions); loyalty and commitment to the purposes of the public service; subordination of personal and political convictions; acceptance of hierarchy, and 'esprit de corps'. Such attributes are considered essential in a complex public service setting and they shape the identity of the Departmental Secretary. The attributes

are the outcome of a specific organisational habitus – declaring one's personal interest, subordinating one's own deeply held convictions to the diktats of procedural decision-making, [...] through which individuals learn to comport themselves in a manner befitting the vocation of office holding. (du Gay 2000, p. 44)

It is not managerialism to which they subscribe but instead their work is constituted by traditional ideas of bureaucracy or public administration. This vocation is still practised by Departmental Secretaries and shapes their constitution of public sector management work.

All Departmental Secretaries commented on their public service ethos and on the requirement and desire to serve the public that this ethos implies. The public service ethos was described as being embodied within a public service vocation and a commitment to serve. This ethos is considered to be a unique concept of the public service and one which encompasses the provision of common good and embodies a commitment to public service: '*A sense of obligation and duty to the public to achieve [is fundamental to the Departmental Secretary's role]*' (22:32). Striving for the common good is the essence of what underpins the public service ethos for the Departmental Secretaries and their people. Although they understand that to realise the common good involves much compromise and challenge, they are driven less by notions of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and are more concerned with public good and equity. Hence their management approach is not a managerial one but instead one focussed on trying to achieve notions of common good within the confines of policy and political realities.

I think what is sometimes missing in the literature is there is a public service ethos which is too often ignored. People tend to see members of public service organisations, departments just being members of any other organisation. But I think people who are public servants, when I address groups of staff, the times that their eyes would shine were when we were talking about the public good, we were talking about opportunities to improve Australia, the public interest, dealing decently and properly in the real sense of that word, being proper with the Australian public, being honest and exercising our own integrity. (17:25)

In particular, many of the Departmental Secretaries commented on understanding that their roles, positions and work are a privilege, in which they took great pride. They take their responsibilities and accountabilities seriously. These Departmental Secretaries understand and accept the prestige associated with their public office much like others before them (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c). Prestige was recognised by the Remuneration Tribunal in their 2005–2006 Annual Report that states:

[t]he prestige associated with appointment to a high public office entails acceptance on the part of appointees, of less remuneration than might apply to a comparable job in the private sector. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 5)

The acceptance of the privilege and prestige of such work, coupled with low levels of remuneration (relative to comparable positions in the private sector) (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c), suggests a deep and underlying ethos to public service which the Departmental Secretaries embody in their constitution of public sector management work (2:9b; 2:50; 4:27; 9:7; 9:21; 15:8).

The calibre of Departmental Secretaries was recognised by the Remuneration Tribunal as being commensurate with highly capable individuals possessing abilities ‘to manage large, complex, [diverse] and significant functions and organisations that are a feature of the public sector’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 5). The requirement for a high calibre of person, whose remuneration is relatively low, with reasonably short periods of engagement (from three to five years) and uncertain prospects for renewal of appointment, suggests that Departmental Secretaries embrace their roles due to factors other than these. A public service ethos is one of those factors.

Ethos explains the continued dedication that the Departmental Secretaries espouse when discussing their work. Such dedication is in stark contrast to the apparent demise, lack of respect and low value, which the broader population places on the position of the

Departmental Secretary (Egan 2009, p. 56) and their public sector management work. As Egan suggests, drawing on commentary with a Departmental Secretary, ‘what you pay says something about what you value’ (Egan 2009, p. 56). Others imply that the value in focus is often economics (Pusey 1991) and that the pay awarded to people reflects an economic concept of value (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c). Instead their desire to do common good is articulated often and although it may be part of enculturation processes which contribute to the creation of their identities as Departmental Secretaries, it is also reflected in their choosing to join the public service and to remain with the public service for their entire careers. This desire shapes, in part, their constitution of public sector management work.

All Departmental Secretaries believed that they contribute to Australia’s common good. Delivering on and for the common or public good is perceived to be a core aspect of their constitution of public sector management work and at the forefront of their agenda, although difficult to achieve. Departmental Secretaries report that they, their executive management teams and their workforces believe in and had joined the public sector to work towards the ‘greater common good’. Much of the responsibility to work for the common good was enshrined within the Acts that govern the work of their departments. It includes the need to improve the social, cultural, commercial, financial, political, and economic environments so that citizens are in a position to contribute and benefit from such environments. It includes a responsibility to enhance the welfare of the Australian people. Additionally, the proper stewardship of resources to guard against excesses, whether they be environmental degradation, or the exploitation of people, or economic/financial mismanagement, contribute to the common good. Departmental Secretaries report that they consider their public sector management work as encompassing an obligation to serve the nation of Australia and her people (1:9; 2:15; 2:56; 3:2b; 3:5; 4:2b; 4:13a; 4:13b; 4:23; 15:23a; 15:23b). [Our grand purpose is] *in fact, we help improve the wellbeing of all Australians*’ (13:19).

While it is admirable that the Departmental Secretaries articulate this obligation it is possible that it is based on altruistic views rather than practical and realised achievements. To what extent is it actually possible for Departmental Secretaries who report to political ‘masters’ to realise this common good? Departmental Secretaries are bound by instrumentalism. They understand that their political masters are capable of delivering common good but that governments (regardless of political colour) are also

capable and sometimes willing to deliver the very opposite. For political purposes the public interest is often compromised and it becomes the ministerial interest that is the driving force. Both Departmental Secretaries and their political masters are often motivated by individualistic and power-oriented motives (Clegg 1989) rather than selfless ambitions and goals. Scarce resources, which underpin choices made by governments for the delivery of public services, always require compromise. ‘Wicked problems’, those that are often irreconcilable, plague Secretaries and their ministers. They experience the difficulty of effecting even minor incremental changes over long periods of time as their public sector management work is constrained by their political masters (Lindblom 1959, 1979). Such changes are often dependent on chance, timing and the will of the government of the day. Departmental Secretaries understand that their efforts are often thwarted and the common good is often not realisable. Their constitution of public sector management work is invariably influenced by such factors, the majority of these being political in nature.

... and that's what I mean about the timing of decisions. If the groundwork has been laid, if the people are coming with you, with the discussion, you can do virtually anything. It's remarkable really what government can do, should they choose to, for good or evil. (14:14a)

Departmental Secretaries understand that their work as public sector managers is also integral to the governance of the state both for the present and for a sustainable future: *‘the core practice [of public sector management] is good governance [of the state] leading to improving the wellbeing of Australians in the short and longer term’ (9:6)*. Some believe the public sector has developed an ‘unwritten contract’ between most of the citizens and institutions and that this contract underpins government and democracy. The unwritten contract includes an understanding by the community of the community’s rights and responsibilities towards the state. Some believe the unwritten contract is rendered possible because of the public service ethos and values, which underpin the constitution of public sector management work of Departmental Secretaries (9:4a; 9:4b; 9:21b). While such beliefs can appear as naïve earnestness or blissful optimism to those outside the public service, they are held by those who have decades of experience in the public sector, working closely with the government of the day, and the citizens and institutions which participate in Australia’s democracy. Such comments also reflect the

focus on governance which lies at the heart of the constitution of public sector management work, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

*What is the main importance of public sector management to me is that if you have a good public sector that is accountable and of high integrity then it does build that trust and in my mind it supports the democracy we have.
(9:9)*

The public service ethos and values of Departmental Secretaries further incorporate notions of equity in their public sector management work and the access to government services their departments offered. These notions are based on an understanding of the law and also a firmly held belief. Departmental Secretaries commented on the need, as far as possible, to ensure that they and their departments operated in a consistent, open and transparent manner so that equity and fairness objectives of government could be realised for all Australians (3:21; 11:2a). One could argue that this aspect of their management work was executed simply to meet the requirements set by (and hence avoid the wrath of) regulatory bodies such as the Government Ombudsman and the Auditor-General. It is also in contradiction to the lack of openness and transparency which takes place at the Secretaries Board, albeit that this concerns internal transparency rather than the external transparency reported previously but it is much more than a purely instrumental focus; it is instead a deeply held conviction based on their subscription to an ethos of public service. Departmental Secretaries explained that to promote equity and fairness they and their officers are expected to perform a range of activities that ordinarily would not be performed outside the public sector. Such services are required to ensure the social compact between them, the public service and the public is honoured.

So in many of our locations we do outbound [work]. Two of my officers will be sitting in a gutter with some homeless people this morning making sure that they're on benefits and things like that. ... It might be a homeless shelter, I was out in a park with someone about a month ago, we go out in the morning when they come for the vans with the soup and the porridge and we stand there with our laptops and say, do you want to make sure your benefits are up to date ... (4:6)

A former Departmental Secretary commented on the agenda that he and a number of his colleagues had tried to promote to preserve the important ethos of the public service. He described the changes that had been driven by a former Departmental Secretary of the

Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) who was overtly committed to managerialism and had incorporated devolution of many dimensions of the public service. The former Departmental Secretary and his colleagues were concerned that the push for devolution was eroding the fabric of the public service by ‘breaking it up’ and strongly believed that there were aspects of the public service that needed to be preserved and nurtured. As such they lobbied the then Departmental Secretary of the PM&C on such matters (24:30). This behaviour exemplifies the perception which Departmental Secretaries hold of a strong bond and commitment to the public service ethos, although it may also be a concern about losing some of their power through devolution. But it is also a reflection of the deeply embedded value that they place on the institution of the public service, and their efforts to ‘save it’ from the insurgence of managerialist-based reforms, that in turn influence their constitution of public sector management work. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, many of the managerialist-based reforms are viewed as nothing more than fads and fashions.

All Departmental Secretaries share this ethos, those values and a commitment to public good, and espouse it as core to their vocation. The practical ability to realise this public service ethos and common good is understood as being marred by a myriad of factors, such as the constantly changing dynamic of the political sphere, by power motives, scarcity of resources, and by the prevalence of wicked problems. Nonetheless, they believe that their work, anchored in the Australian Constitution, contributes to governance of the state, which in turn develops confidence in democracy. They espouse notions of equity, fairness and truth and explain that these pervade their constitution of public sector management work and help build a social compact with citizens.

4.8. Discussion and Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, using a grounded theory-like approach the concepts derived from the data are presented in Appendix F. The findings and the consistency or otherwise of them with the literature are now discussed. The body of knowledge on public sector reform contains opposing ideas, theories and concepts. Additionally, *much* of the literature is based simply on conceptual arguments with only a small amount based on empirical research. Broadly, the body of knowledge is divided between proponents of the NPM and managerialism and those who are critical of its concepts.

The findings, to a considerable extent, are inconsistent with what NPM proponents argue and are consistent with those who have been critical of the NPM and its managerialist concepts. These writers are distinguished, where possible, in the discussion that follows.

4.8.1. Discussion

Contrary to public sector reform literature which claims that the introduction of the Senior Executive Service has opened up opportunities for members of the public to compete on the basis of merit for senior roles, providing a broader base of capable and service-oriented senior management cadre (Wilenski 1986a), those who constitute public sector management work remain predominantly public actors who have been appointed from within the public sector. They are more Weberian and bureaucratic (in a positive rather than a pejorative sense) public actors, who have sustained/reinforced the status quo rather than changed it. Such reforms were viewed as providing for radically changing the public sector management work associated with permanent tenured Departmental Heads by introducing a system of limited-term contract-based appointments for these senior executives and replacing the former career public servant model (Mascarenhas 1993; Scott & Gorringe 1989). But this did not occur as reformers did not challenge many of the core principles and tenets of the public sector (such as security of tenure, internal competition for jobs, and a career public service) (Kernaghan 1991; Maor 1999), and the career public servant model remains an enduring component of the sector and hence, in turn, influences the constitution of public sector management work.

Other factors, such as the appointment of Departmental Secretaries by ministers, bias appointments towards policy capability and against management capability and is consistent with the literature which claims that Departmental Secretaries succeed in achieving their positions by honing their capability in policy advising, rather than by developing their management capabilities. The focus for the Departmental Secretary is thus on the political process and advising their minister, rather than the management of their departments (Halligan, Mackintosh, & Watson 1996). Halligan et al. (1996, p. 71), quoting a Secretary, propose that:

many present Secretaries have got there on the basis of their policy-advising skills rather than their leadership management and people skills. I think there is a tendency for people who've come up through that stream to focus unduly on the Minister, the political process, to the detriment of the performance of their agencies.

Departmental Secretaries continue to be chosen and appointed to their positions for their policy-advising capabilities rather than their management capabilities and policy-advising influences their constitution of public sector management work. This influence will be discussed further in the following two chapters.

Some of the evidence, such as the formal tertiary qualifications held by Departmental Secretaries, is consistent with the literature, which claims that in the APS formal tertiary qualifications in a range of disciplines are held by a majority of those in Departmental Secretary positions (Pusey 1991; Weller 2001). Also consistent with the literature is evidence that there is a low prevalence of such qualifications in the field of management, across the Departmental Secretaries. The evidence shows that the specific qualifications held are not aligned with the NPM and the promotion of generic management competencies. There is no requirement for Departmental Secretaries to be proficient in the field of management. Departmental Secretaries, such as Dr Ian Watt, (not a participant in this research) the former Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, publicly acknowledged the lack of management domain knowledge and qualifications (Skotinicki 2013). Dr Watt comments that he did not have a background, experience, qualifications, development or training in management when he joined the public sector. He said that, especially in departments such as Treasury, leadership and management were not topics that have been discussed or were part of the agenda (Skotinicki 2013). Dr Watt acknowledged, as did many other Departmental Secretaries from this research, that as a consequence, for a number of years early in his career 'he was not very good at management' (Skotinicki 2013, p. 15) and that he began to learn about management only later.

Furthermore, the literature identifies that what 'was most lacking in [Departmental Secretaries'] previous careers' to prepare them for their appointment, was: 1) a lack of background in the management discipline; 2) a period away from the public service, (perhaps several years in duration) possibly in commerce or industry (Commonwealth of Australia 1976b, p. 240) and 3), greater variety in experience across the public service (in a number of departments, and in a number of disciplines), perhaps via

secondments. In addition, even though the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries do hold formal tertiary qualifications in a range of disciplines there is no requirement for them to do so. This is consistent with the literature which claims that, for example, while Departmental Secretary appointments to the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of the Treasury usually comprise candidates who are lawyers and economists respectively, there is actually no requirement for any specific academic or other qualification for such offices or position holders (Commonwealth of Australia 2001).

The lack of interest in management is referred to in the public sector reform literature as political indifference towards public sector reforms, which focussed on public sector management work (Julliet & Mingus 2008). Political commitment towards such public sector reforms is missing because ministers have little interest in the management work of the public sector. Some authors argue that such topics are not of particular interest to ministers and other political actors because instead it is the political dimension, which dominates their existence (Kroeger 1996). The findings confirm this assertion. Governments do not see reforms based on public sector management work as centrally connected to problems demanding their attention (Aucoin 1995). Nor do most governments see any votes in bettering public sector management work. For such governments, public sector management reform is 'essentially an internal bureaucratic preoccupation that could be tolerated so long as it did not detract from their political agenda' (Aucoin 1995, p. 15). Hence, political will, the important prerequisite or 'lever' for change/reform, is not invoked as ministers care little about public sector management work (Wilenski 1986b, p. 264; Di Francesco 2012; Zifcak 1994, p. 172). This lack of interest in public sector management work is evident in the appointment decisions made by ministers, of Departmental Secretaries who are not necessarily competent in management. It is in contrast to the large body of literature that claims that managerialism is required in the public sector.

Others (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c; Egan 2009) also observe that ministers lack knowledge, capabilities and experience in management and so pay little if any attention to the accountability/role of Departmental Secretaries to manage their departments. The Remuneration Tribunal reported on this lack of management capability in the ministerial ranks, suggesting that:

relatively few of the elected members from among whom Ministers are chosen have previous higher level management experience; and second, in university terms, “government 101”, which is in the end about politics and public policy, is very different from “management 101”. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 98)

Egan (2009, p. 20) in his paper *Review of the Work Value for the Office of Secretary* reports that politicians (and hence ministers) are usually not elected to their positions on the basis of management capability or experience, and that ‘Ministers of the Parliament are unlikely to have the necessary administrative and professional skills to offer stewardship in a managerial context’ (Egan 2009, p. 22).

Other evidence, such as disregard and disrespect for the vocation of ‘public administration’, is consistent with the literature (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 92; Lavallo 2006; Rhodes 2014a, 2014b). One former Departmental Secretary commented that today this vocation of ‘public administration’ was not as well regarded or respected as it was in the past and that an economic rationalist paradigm was encroaching on the vocation instead (15:18). Economic rationalism was based on neo-classical economic ideas such as public choice, privatisation, contracting out, economic efficiency and effectiveness. To achieve the latter, managerial practices such as those employed in the private sector, including strategic and business planning, accrual-based budgeting and accounting, more sophisticated financial management approaches, and executive services based performance management and measurement, were introduced to the public sector. The literature identifies this issue of economic rationalism and the quest of reformers to replace or extinguish older bureaucratic values with a new philosophy of public sector management work which incorporates managerial values, principles and practices, (Caiden et al. 1995). These are to be considered ‘judiciously’ before being imported, so as to respect and preserve the distinctive character, principles and values of the public sector (Lavallo 2006) and, in effect, the vocation of ‘public administration’. Notwithstanding the changes associated with the managerialist reforms, the Departmental Secretaries are still located in the traditional world of public administration. These managerialist reforms are overlooked either consciously or subconsciously because the existing culture and vocation of public service is strongly embedded. Although this vocation is not well regarded or respected during the tide of reforms, it has endured, remains predominantly unchanged, and influences the constitution of public sector management work.

Some of the evidence, such as the common components of Departmental Secretaries' demographic backgrounds, their long public sector careers, and their Canberra-centric culture is consistent with the literature which claims that: 'Secretaries are career public servants, predominantly male, Canberra-based (and since the 1970s increasingly Canberra-reared) and ambitious high achievers' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 120; Pusey 1991). The Canberra-centric culture of the Departmental Secretaries is the ineluctable consequence of institutional forces in the public sector. For example, du Gay (2000) is perhaps close to the evidence here when he argues for a return to the tenets of Weber's bureaucracy as the underpinning of public service. He opposes the NPM because he believes its managerial principles and practices are in contradiction to the work of the public servant which align better with Weber's 'instituted style of ethical life, or *Lebensfuhrung*' (du Gay 2000, p. 43), rather than the more managerial sense of a public sector manager. What is evident here though for these public actors is that it is not a *return* to bureaucracy. In effect, they have not ever embraced the NPM as a driving or guiding force for how they constitute public sector management work. Rather, to a significant extent, they rely on bureaucratic notions, whether consciously or tacitly, to constitute their public sector management work.

The evidence that Departmental Secretaries belong to a unique culture, which is enduring because it suits and serves the constitution of public sector management work, is consistent only in part with the literature which acknowledges that the public service culture and its associated values have endured, and changed little over time (Ackroyd et al. 2007; du Gay 2006; Eichbaum 2000; Faux 1999; Reich 1999; Talbot 2001; Wallis et al. 2007). However, this endurance has not been without opposition (Kernaghan 1991; Maor 1999), predominantly from the proponents of public sector reforms who challenge the commonly regarded principles, values and cultures of the public sector. These reformers advocate private sector management values (Box et al. 2001; Thayer 1978) derived from market-based models proposing the adoption of characteristics of entrepreneurial cultures and the 'promotion of an enterprise culture' (Rosenbloom 1993, p. 506; Box et al. 2001; Gualmini 2008) as well as entrepreneurial management behaviours (Gualmini 2008; Kiel & Elliott 1999) such as innovation, and empowerment (Williams 2000). More recently, appeals have been made for the public sector to employ 'public entrepreneurs' (Accenture 2014), and that intrapreneurs (Thomson 2014b) and greater innovation are needed for the public sector (Stone 2014). Such

challenges amount to calls to change the public sector culture in the belief that the sector could become more effective by augmenting public sector management work with private sector management principles and practices (Caiden et al. 1995; Maor 1999), albeit sometimes cautiously (Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1993). The literature assumes incorrectly that an entrepreneurial culture can be introduced. The evidence from this research shows no such introduction of an entrepreneurial culture and instead the endurance of a unique public service culture to which the Departmental Secretaries belong and which shapes their constitution of public sector management work.

The equity and fairness to which Departmental Secretaries subscribe and that permeates their public sector management work is not valued by all the advocates of public sector reform. This is consistent with the literature which claims that the proponents of the NPM are inspired by an economic and commercially oriented managerial-based ethos, rather than a 'social service ethos' (Acroyd 2007, p. 23), disregards or challenges the 'ethics of responsibility' (du Gay 2008, p. 351) associated with the more enduring public service social compact. However, public servants have not abandoned such ethics and instead resist and continue with their deeply embedded professional values and institutions (Acroyd 2007) because such values matter to them and their vocation. Furthermore, senior public servants understand that where reforms are unworkable in a practical sense, they should simply continue with earlier activities of public sector management work (Mulgan 2008a). We can conclude that Departmental Secretaries have accepted some reforms but resist others.

Evidence of the public service commitment to the common good which frames the constitution of public sector management work is not consistent with the literature which identifies the slow demise of the common good and other public service values being replaced by an economic rationality (Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Pusey 1991). The introduction of a new managerialist or NPM philosophy (Hood 1990; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt 1990a) that omits the public service commitment to the common good and a desire to serve the public interest, which instead focusses on a private sector corporate philosophy based on economic efficiency, individual incentives, and performance measurement is not evident. Nonetheless, the managerialist paradigm has adapted over time and there has been a move back towards acknowledgment of the

importance of the public service commitment to the common good and public interest, and these aspects of the public service have been maintained (Mascarenhas 1993).

Evidence such as efforts made by some Departmental Secretaries to preserve aspects of the public service or carry on regardless during reforms, is consistent with the literature. The literature claims that such behaviour is an exemplification of the anxiety, uncertainty, resentment and confrontation that took place across the public service when public sector reforms, based predominantly on economic theories, were advocated (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Mascarenhas 1990; Wilenski 1986a). Such reforms, based on a market-oriented philosophy, are at odds with and challenge public service employees and their more social and humanistic values (Mascarenhas 1990; Schick 1996). Rather than passively succumbing to the managerial ‘erosion’ of aspects of the public service, Departmental Secretaries challenged the reforms and exerted their power as a group to resist and hence preserve certain elements of the public service. Such behaviour indirectly influences the constitution of public sector management work because it reinforces the institutionalised values of the public service.

The thesis joins other empirical research more consistent with scholars who are critical of the NPM, or argue against the NPM into the APS because it is not empirically evident that a rational managerial actor-based model has taken root in the public sector.

4.8.2. Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus has been on the Departmental Secretaries as public actors who fill the position of being public sector ‘managers’ and hence, who determine what constitutes public sector management work. Despite the global reach of the NPM over the last thirty years, with its managerial principles and values, and various waves of reform, it is the characteristics of their individual backgrounds, public sector career profiles and the cultures of these people who perform public sector management work that shape that work’s unique constitution. They are not the managerialist type that the literature proposes.

Hence, Departmental Secretaries are public actors, resembling Weberian bureaucrats, who constitute public sector management work as an ethos, rather than managerialists who regard it as a rationalised and ethically indifferent activity. The environment in

which these public actors constitute public sector management work is predominantly political rather than managerialist and hence a prescribed, constrained, and complex one. This environment, which further shapes the constitution of public sector management, is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5 The Environments in Which Departmental Secretaries Constitute Public Sector Management Work

... you are in the fish bowl, you are never independent of government but you need to be able to identify a role that is different to government. You work for the government but your role is to advise the government without fear or favour, [via] frank and fearless advice. (22:35)

5.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question: how does the environment and context of the public sector in which Departmental Secretaries practise, shape their public sector management work? Management, whether private or public sector management, is situated (Clegg 1996, p. 1) within environments constituted by contexts, in specific places. Australia's Commonwealth public sector management work is situated within a number of intersecting and complex environments that include a political environment; a constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment; a financial environment, and a modern media environment. To a considerable extent, the environmental influences on Australia's Public Service ensure that public sector management work is somewhat circumscribed and prescribed. While these are contrary to the notions of entrepreneurial and innovative activities proposed through much of the public sector reform literature, such as the NPM, they are the reality of public sector life. The discretionary constitution of public sector management work in any of these environments is particularly limited.

The Departmental Secretaries identified the environments above as the most critical, hence they frame the discussion in this chapter. All of these environments impose restrictions and prescriptions on the Departmental Secretaries which in turn direct, shape and constrain the constitution of public sector management work. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the analysis of these environments in terms of what elements were identified by the Departmental Secretaries for their impact on the constitution of public sector management work. A more comprehensive table of the impact of these environments and their elements on the constitution of public sector management work is presented in Appendix G.

Table 5.1 Overview of the Impact of the Environments and their Elements on the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

Political Environment	Constitutional, Legislative, Regulatory Environment	Financial Environment	Modern Media Environment
Connection to multiple ministers. Relationships required with multiple ministers.	Australian Constitution as authorising/ legitimising framework.	Appropriated funds.	Increased scrutiny imposed by the modern media Conflicting demands by media for transparency and by the public for privacy and confidentiality.
Connection to ministers, government and parliament requires participation in political sphere. Meta-institutional issues invoke a non-rational and a highly political arena. Political environment is akin to an 'adversary chamber' and 'combative political prism'.	Myriad of Acts. Constitution, legislation and regulations impose strict governance requirements.	Budget cycle and forward-year estimates are four years out.	Rapid adoption of new information and communication technology (ICT) means citizens communicate instantly/immediately.
A 'whole of government' and national approach.	Administrative Arrangements Orders determine structures but create conflicts.	Capital raising requires offsets across the public sector.	24/7 news and media cycle.
Competing with ministerial office staff.	Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) is broad in its prescriptions on Departmental Secretaries.	Departmental Secretaries are 'cost managers'. Ministers expect balanced budgets.	Focus on the urgent short term arena (generated by the modern technologies and media). Volume of work has increased exponentially as a result of digital access via improvements in ICT.
Avoidance-based risk management prevails.	Public Governance and Performance Act 2013 and Financial Management Act 1997 prescriptions.	A 'multiple bottom line' of commitments to citizens, government and workforces.	Modern media management to control dialogue. Requirement but reluctance for a greater public profile.
	Appointment and termination provisions result in lack of tenure.	Procurement processes prescribed by cumbersome bureaucratic policies and procedures.	

The overarching environment in which Departmental Secretaries operate is political. The political environment encompasses a number of distinguishing features that have implications for the constitution of public sector management work. These features include: the need to work closely with ministers, parliament, and the government of the day, including adherence to strict transparency and governance processes; a range of meta-institutional issues, including political contests, political debates and political decisions; the need to work with ministerial office staff and recognise the ‘political games’ played by such staff, and avoidance-based risk management approaches. These features, which contribute to the constitution of public sector management work, emerged from the empirical data and are discussed in the following section.

5.2. The Political Environment

The political environment requires the Departmental Secretary to assume multiple and often conflicting roles in order to constitute public sector management work. The political environment is characterised by much opacity and obscurity, meaning that the Departmental Secretary often confronts and has to deal with contradiction and conflict. The appearance that they strive to maintain is that they operate in an apolitical manner within a political process, a myth that Departmental Secretaries subscribe to simply by virtue of the nature of the environment. In fact, dualities prevail in this environment. Effecting a rational interpretation of these dualities is the formal and public role assigned to the Departmental Secretaries through various legislation and policies. However, if they were to operate simply in this mode, their jobs would be unviable. To cope with the political environment they have to wear two ‘hats’, the obvious rational ‘hat’ but also the invisible political ‘hat’, but they cannot overtly be seen to be wearing the political hat. What they do needs to appear rational and apolitical but in reality is underpinned by their capacity to be political actors in these environments. The problem with much of the NPM literature is that it addresses only half of the environment, the rational half, as if everything is value neutral when the environment, in reality, is value laden. Unless this duality is properly understood, reform processes will have limited weight because they do not reflect the actual environment in which public sector management work is constituted.

All Departmental Secretaries indicated that the political environment was the most uncertain, challenging and complex. The political environment of government differentiates the work of the Departmental Secretaries and all other public sector management practitioners from other management situations (for example, management in the private sector or the non-government sector). The political environment is a direct and prominent feature of the contexts in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work. The political connection, especially the need to work closely with ministers, parliament and the government of the day within a political environment, is evident (21:20; 22:19; 25:1a; 25:1b; 25:1c).

All Departmental Secretaries confirmed the criticality of working closely with their minister(s) and the need to forge relationships based on trust. The relationship between the Secretary and the minister was deemed critical because, in effect, the minister is the Departmental Secretary's 'manager' and the primary stakeholder: '*... obviously the Minister is a key stakeholder, the [Departmental Secretary] reports to the Minister*' (1:8; 11:2d; 2:22a; 17:2c; 20:8; 22:1a; 25:7a). The essence of this relationship is trust. The minister bases this relationship on a gradual development of trust in the Departmental Secretary over a long period of time. Departmental Secretaries' longevity in their roles are in large part determined by the confidence which the Prime Minister and other ministers have in their ability to do their work and the trust they place in them. Trust is beyond anything that is prescribed for the Departmental Secretaries and their ministers. They can be competent managers in their own right but if they displease the minister(s) their relationship can be significantly and irreparably damaged. It is the political environment that creates these more personal and unpredictable relationships. Trust is something intangible, something that leads to a cautious constitution of public sector management work, as the Departmental Secretaries are protective of themselves.

... you build trust with Ministers very slowly and you spend it very quickly. So they trust you slowly based on performance, but if you get something wrong, it comes straight [back], you come back a long way very quickly. ... Sometimes it gets quite awkward because you've got to say back to [Ministers] things, difficult things. (21:17a)

The relationship of trust between the minister and the Departmental Secretary is based not only on the competent execution of public sector management work by the Departmental Secretary but also on their capacity to engender trust. Such work requires

the deliberation of ‘frank and fearless’ policy and personal advice, to the minister, which is often not easy to deliver. Where the work or advice is perceived to be poor or incorrect, subjecting the minister to risks (invariably these are political in nature) or where they are not what a minister wants to hear, then the earned trust can disappear and the relationship suffers, with consequences for the constitution of public sector management work. A significant component of the Departmental Secretary’s work involves the management of such relationships, with great diplomacy, political astuteness, care and cautiousness, as their constitution of public sector management work is fundamentally dependent on this relationship.

*I see supporting the Minister as being, its supporting the Minister by telling him he is mad or he is about to make a courageous decision or whatever way you want to put it but it has that sort of [frank and fearless characteristic].
(22:38a)*

In this relationship, the needs of the minister are to be understood and executed, as is the requirement to recognise what other agendas are in the minister’s purview or further horizon. These needs and agendas are couched in a complex web of policies, politics and government. But beyond the rational component there is also, in most cases, a much more intuitive, second guessing, Machiavellian component. An understanding of the intent behind various policies, the politics and political landscape (but no overt engagement in them) and the objectives of the government of the day are made, so that the objectives can be executed by the Departmental Secretary in partnership with their minister. Much of this understanding and execution depends on the quality of the working relationship between these parties (4:2c; 4:8; 6:10; 9:8a; 12:9a; 13:14a; 15:19; 21:17b).

The quality of the relationship between Departmental Secretaries and ministers was described as ‘important for both parties’ working within a political environment; it was one of mutual dependence. These relationships contributed to the realisation of administrative, governmental and political objectives. Hence, one former Departmental Secretary commented on the recognition which ministers have of the need to forge good relationships with Departmental Secretaries and to seek out and consider their advice prior to making decisions on matters of significance: *‘Wise Ministers learn about the arts of governing in the Australian Westminster system which include ensuring that they are adequately informed before they make big decisions’* (23:5a). However, in a

political environment of contestable policy advice, there are other parties who prevail on government and who challenge the advice provided by the Departmental Secretaries. Nevertheless, the value of the relationship between the Departmental Secretary and the minister, one of mutual dependence, was not well understood by the proponents of NPM, who placed little importance on the vital interplay and the political nexus between these two parties for the constitution of public sector management work.

The relationship between the Departmental Secretary and the minister was frequently described by participants as one between two parties with a great burden of responsibilities and whose positions were 'lonely' ones given they were at the 'pinnacle' of the public sector and government, respectively. The majority of Departmental Secretaries view such relationships as warranting a more formal and official basis, whereas a minority feel that these relationships would function best where they were based on informality, collegiality and personal friendship (albeit within the confines of acceptable norms in these situations) (17:5a). But these warmer relationships are developed via the creation of an appropriate persona in such environments and these come with consequences. These 'warmer' relationships extend to ministers on all sides of politics and enable the Departmental Secretary to deliver the required 'frank and fearless' advice to their minister(s) more easily. These warm relationships allowed the Departmental Secretary to articulate an 'administrative voice' essential to the ability to influence the 'efficiency and effectiveness' of public sector outcomes. *'So I mean it's just [that] the Secretary and the Minister working together can usually and properly resolve things, [but] if that relationship doesn't work well, there is a real risk [for poor political and administrative outcomes]'* (22:11). The 'administrative voice' becomes most productive when it is part of the dynamic at the initial stages of policy advising: *'My philosophy was: if we can help have a voice upstream it makes the outcome downstream a much more efficient process for the community'* (9:14a).

In reality, Departmental Secretaries develop and constantly review these relationships and assess their associated risks. The relationships are tangible and overt as well as intangible and covert; in terms of the latter they are engaged in assessing and best 'guesstimating' continuously because such relationships take place in a political environment neither value neutral nor objective. Their survival or otherwise during changes of government creates tensions within these relationships. Although many

Departmental Secretaries survive changes of government, some do not: they can be targeted by incoming governments and dismissed, with appropriate positive rhetoric. Hence when they forge relationships with their minister(s) they do so against this backdrop of politics and this has an impact on their constitution of public sector management work.

Many Departmental Secretaries work for and with a multiple number of ministers or a multiple number of ‘masters’. The Departmental Secretary and his/her Deputy Secretaries also establish working arrangements to suit the peculiarities of such reporting requirements and these multiple ministerial relationships. These arrangements include structuring the department so that the senior management team is able to meet the needs of these multiple ministers. These arrangements, driven by the political environment in which Departmental Secretaries operate and report to multiple ministers, go to the heart of their constitution of public sector management work (9:14b; 24:19b), complicating and constraining it.

But the volume [of work] was enormous and we [my three Deputies and I] had three Ministers it was not just [Minister X] we had other key Ministers we had [Minister Y] and [Minister Z]. We had at any one time we had at least three Ministers. (24:19a)

Where their department was responsible for the delivery of programs and services on behalf of or in partnership with other agencies and departments, there was a further need for the Departmental Secretary to ensure that the views and comments of these other ministers were considered, understood and acted on where necessary. Again, working arrangements were to be put in place to deal with the anomalies that arose from the political environment in which they constituted public sector management work (4:8). These working arrangements are not those associated with the instrumentalism of managerialism, they were developed as a direct consequence of the demands arising from the political environment.

Departmental Secretaries acknowledged that their constitution of public sector management work extends beyond supporting their minister/s to supporting the Prime Minister, Cabinet, the government and parliament (and its committees) indirectly (3:2a; 4:27; 11:2c; 12:7b; 14:3a; 16:11b; 25:7b). In supporting these other parties and working with the various committees such as Estimates Committees, Departmental

Secretaries are indirectly supporting their ministers because their minister is working with these other parties in the first instance. Although supporting the minister was seen to be the primary responsibility of Departmental Secretaries, this responsibility was described as encompassing the need to also manage the minister's department, manage the minister's programs, provide policy advice to the minister, and work with the various other parties mentioned above (Prime Minister, Cabinet, parliament, and committees) for and with the minister (22:38b): '*... the Secretaries are the apex of the Australian Public Service. Prime Ministers and Ministers rely on them for the provision of public services and turn to them for important strategic advice, about the whole spectrum of domestic and foreign activities*' (18:7). These other parties made complicated and conflicting demands on the Departmental Secretaries (19:8).

In particular, the government of the day and its direction is acknowledged as paramount. It is an integral driver for the work of the Departmental Secretary and a critical factor that underpins their constitution of public sector management work:

... at my kind of level, ... you've got to understand what the political, what the policy framework is that government is pushing towards. ... So it's much better if senior public servants read the economic context and the policy context very well. (21:10b-11)

Such a factor further means that many of the Departmental Secretaries participate regularly in the political sphere, attending Cabinet meetings with the Prime Minister and other ministers, Senate Estimates Committees and associated Parliamentary Committees. Departmental Secretaries work closely with their minister(s) in Cabinet Committees. They sit in Cabinet Committee meetings beside their minister(s) who often defer to them to carry the debate or the argument. In such Cabinet Committee meetings generally a Departmental Secretary does not speak unless requested to address the Cabinet, although they generally brief their minister(s). However, unless the Departmental Secretary is asked for their view, they would generally not offer a view of their own accord. Exceptions are the Departmental Secretaries of Treasury, Finance, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Attorney-General and the Solicitor General who quite regularly are asked to join the debate with the Prime Minister and Cabinet: '*I have had occasions when the Prime Minister has turned to me and I was sitting beside the Minister and he has asked me to explain what the Minister was seeking or on about*'

(11:9). Great diplomacy and tact is required in such circumstances and environments that are unavoidably politically situated.

Furthermore, the government of the day requires Departmental Secretaries to conduct their public sector management work with adherence to transparency and governance processes. The Departmental Secretaries identified a primary driver of transparency and governance as the Senate Estimates framework in which they are required to participate. The accountability of the public sector is always on display via this framework. Departmental Secretaries' attendance at Senate Estimates meetings, in a sense, resembles shareholder annual general meetings, albeit with significant differences. The Senate Estimates agenda is set, the subjects on the agenda are not disclosed before the commencement of the process, no proxies are provided and no motions can be carried and there is no choice about the time the meeting will finish. The Senate Estimates process is, in part, about accountability but it is also, in part, a highly political process that is used for a different purpose, sometimes called an 'adversary chamber' with a focus on the minutiae of inputs rather than the strategic delivery of outcomes *(6:18)*. This other purpose includes the political power games played by politicians in order to 'catch out' ministers and gain political advantage. The political process creates an unparalleled political dimension for public sector management work. This political process and its impact on the constitution of public sector management work is not acknowledged by advocates of the NPM.

Beyond the political power games, the political process gives rise to a range of meta-institutional issues within the political environment which affect the work of Departmental Secretaries. These issues include the political contests, debates and decisions made by governments. Public sector management work is shaped to a large extent by this political framework and not by the rational and objective framework often assumed by the proponents of NPM who advocated managerialism.

The role that Departmental Secretaries play as a result of political contests is not always well understood, as much of it is not overt. The adaptation and adjustment required by Departmental Secretaries in their 'management' behaviours and constitution of their work, as a result of political contests, is immense and often very confronting to those few who join the public sector senior management cadre from the private sector. Political contests are prominent at different stages of a political/election cycle. Whether

the political process is at a certain point in its cycle presents further challenges and distractions that the Departmental Secretary has to consider and factor into routines. Such challenges include consideration of the extent to which the environment is politically charged and consideration of the distractions for politicians, ministers and stakeholders, that such political/election cycles create (1:7). Although not considered by those proposing NPM, the response to these challenges is integral to the constitution of public sector management work. The nuances, for example, of political contests that take place during election cycles, which result in having to take into consideration and discuss with ministers the discontent of a small number of constituents in a marginal electorate, prior to taking management actions and decisions, are often not understood. One Departmental Secretary recounted a conversation with a newly recruited colleague to the public sector from the private sector, who did not appreciate such political contests and their implications for the constitution of public sector management work:

[The conversation went] “*what do you mean I need to talk to the Minister about five unhappy constituents in a marginal electorate?*” “*Well it wouldn't matter if the electorate had a 15% margin. But because the margin is only 0.03% and we are six months from the federal election that means it's a high risk issue*”. “*What do you mean that it's a high risk issue? The technology is not any different, the financials are not any different, the returns are not different, to any other sector!*” “[Yes] *but the electoral dimension makes it difficult*”. “*Well hang on a minute, aren't we an independent statutory authority?*” “*Yes we are but we operate within the government environment. We operate in an environment where there is a political contest underway. Do you want to be subject to that or do you want to just get on? The things you need to do are different. So how you engage inevitably, even though we are not political, there is a dimension of understanding of those processes and issues that you need to take into account*”. (6:5)

Departmental Secretaries occasionally develop relationships with members of the Opposition, especially during an election cycle. One former Departmental Secretary explained that he tried with great difficulty to seek agreement with his minister to establish and maintain a relationship with the Opposition and especially with the relevant Shadow Minister. The relationship was important, he explained, because the Opposition often becomes the government of the day, over time, and so for effective transition from the former government to the next government (generally the former Opposition), these relationships with Departmental Secretaries allow connection and trust to be in place. Forming these relationships denotes a rational approach to the political environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector

management work. Thus, rather than simply building a connection and trust with the Opposition, Departmental Secretaries are playing a ‘political’ game to secure their own futures in this precarious political environment. In particular, during the ‘caretaker’ period of government, Departmental Secretaries are expected to be working with the government of the day but at the same time perceive that they need to be engaging appropriately with the Opposition. Incumbent ministers generally frown upon such relationships because of the potential political ramifications. Where the minister allowed such relationships they generally included the involvement of the minister’s political advisors to balance out any political concerns of the minister (17:8; 22:4b; 22:4c).

... one of the other things I forlornly tried to achieve while I was there was to agree with the Minister that it was sensible to maintain a relationship with the Opposition particularly with the Shadow Minister. Now Ministers don’t like that because they are scared you will tell them things that will embarrass the Minister or the government or ... they do not rely on the discretion and that’s where you swim in the politics thing, ... you do work for the government of the day there is no doubt about that but the government of tomorrow is the Opposition of today very often. And for transition and for trust there has got to be some sort of connection. (22:4a)

Beyond the political/election cycle and political contests, there are political debates and political decisions made by governments that have an impact on the constitution of public sector management work. Departmental Secretaries are expected to take an interest in the broader public and political debates that surround the work of their various departments (8:2). These political debates are often only tangentially related to the programs and services offered by departments but they can have adverse implications for Departmental Secretaries and their constitution of public sector management work. Political debates about the introduction of new policies or programs can result in a constantly changing set of priorities and focus areas which compromises the ‘efficiency and effectiveness’³⁷ of managerialism. The Departmental Secretaries and their departments are often captive to the ebb and flow of political debates and decisions and hence their work is constrained and disrupted. These aspects of the political environment in which Departmental Secretaries work are not well explored by the proponents of public sector reform, who demanded greater functional ‘efficiency and

³⁷ ‘Efficiency and effectiveness’ are terms of managerialism. When referred to by Departmental Secretaries in this research such terms were qualified to reflect the limits of such efficiency and effectiveness as it applies to the public sector and they did not refer to these words in managerialist terms.

effectiveness' from the sector, based on managerialist principles and practices, rather than acknowledging that such functionalism is often subordinated by political considerations.

The sensitivities required and the responses required to such political debates by Departmental Secretaries and other public sector managers are quite different from those that would prevail in other sectors (6:6). These political debates cannot be entered into by the Departmental Secretary, because all officers of the public sector are bound by the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) which does not allow them to publicly comment on the merits or demerits of opposition or government policies. It means they have to be cognisant of the different rules of engagement, such as the requirement to not comment on government policy, but at the same time accept accountability for and delivering on determined policy. When debates take place at the political level, the Departmental Secretary and other senior management are 'silent'. The only legitimate avenue open to the Departmental Secretary in such political debates is to brief or advise the minister(s). What the minister(s) decide(s) is usually final. This is a different situation from that prevailing in the private or the non-government sector, where the Chief Executive Officer and his/her senior management team are at liberty to participate as they see fit (according to their corporate policies) in such political debates (6:7a).

There is this different dimension of considerations that we have to take into account and there are different rules of engagement about how we interact with that environment [in comparison] to the private sector (6:20a).

Departmental Secretaries understand these political features as characterising the constitution of public sector management work differently from the management work in other sectors. Unlike the simplistic assumptions offered by the proponents of NPM, the challenges posed by the political environment and its political contests, debates and decisions mean that Departmental Secretaries have to take into consideration all of these features in their constitution of public sector management work. Such political challenges prescribe and constrain much of their work. It means that they have to interpret and translate the features of the political environment and then ensure that their constitution of public sector management work is compatible with and does not challenge such features. They achieve this via the establishment of governance frameworks, operational policies, processes, systems, controls and mechanisms, specifically developed to meet the political requirements of their environment.

The political environment in which a Departmental Secretary operates is seen by some to be even more difficult today than in the past, because parliamentary discourse and political debate in Australia were observed to have deteriorated significantly. The Departmental Secretary's interface with the political arena today requires interactions considered to be the antithesis of the values displayed within the public sector, confounding their traditional constitution of public sector management work. The contemporary political arena and its discourse and debate were described as deteriorating, violent, aggressive, ferocious, inappropriately personalised, vitriolic, dreadful and appalling to observe (6:17). The deteriorating political arena created further challenges for Departmental Secretaries because of the need to try to buffer the public sector workforce and their departments from the complexities, uncertainties, and difficulties which the interface and interaction with the political context created (6:18).

The Departmental Secretaries, in one form or another, perceive the political environment to be a battleground, which can be confrontational, rough and unpredictable (akin to a 'political sea', a 'political fish bowl', a 'combative political prism') (11:1a; 13:17b; 22:35). Their use of analogy and metaphor depicts the challenges, complexities and uncertainties created in this political environment and the challenges this poses for public sector management work. It does not reflect the purported rational interpretation of how public sector management work is constituted.

What makes it a very particular and special context is that there is a high level of political engagement, you are not a political actor per se yourself but you are inevitably impacting on and being impacted by politics - the sea in which you swim is a political sea. So you have to understand that almost everything that you do will be viewed through a combative political prism. (11:1b)

These features, which arise from the political environment and its processes of government, require Departmental Secretaries to interface and work at the boundary where government, politics and bureaucracy collide and coexist, doing so collaboratively with all members of the political system, especially with ministers, parliament, government and Oppositions. Departmental Secretaries' work is tightly bound to the political players and the political problems determined by the parties in the political environment, to whom they are expected to respond. In this political environment they are expected to be simultaneously dependent, independent and interdependent, a positioning that is both complex and complicated. The political

environment directs, shapes and constrains the constitution of public sector management work.

... I suppose as a head of a public sector organisation, you are working at the crossroads between administration, policy and politics. In terms of the interaction between policy and politics you are not involved as are staffers in Ministerial Offices, where policy and politics comes more sharply together but nonetheless you can't be an effective public sector manager unless you are aware of the ... and conscious of the political context in which you are working. That is not meant as a party political comment, that is just a fact of life and that is equally true whether you are working for a Labor Prime Minister or for a Coalition Prime Minister. (8:2)

Within this political environment, Departmental Secretaries operate and provide 'apolitical' information and advice. But they participate directly in the political context and processes, in which their political 'masters', the ministers, the government of the day, the parliament and its committees actively engage. They do not provide political advice and yet they are immersed in and surrounded by the political arena in which political advice is proffered and on which they are required to remain silent (21:10a). It is here in the political environment with their ministers that they constitute public sector management work at the boundary of government and beyond: 'So your role does take you right into that political dimension, but you don't play the politics. You don't provide political advice' (21:8a). Hence, the Departmental Secretaries and their constitution of public sector management work is closely bound and constrained by the parties in this political environment. Departmental Secretaries follow the directions of these parties and so they are not at liberty to 'steer' (Osborne & Gaebler 1992), direct or determine mandates for their departments. Instead, their constitution of public sector management work is prescribed by their interpretations of the will of elected politicians and their policies. Limited influence is possible in this environment. This aspect of the political environment was all but ignored by the advocates of the NPM, who instead believed that the political nexus between Departmental Secretaries their ministers, the government of the day, parliament and its committees could and should be broken, and that Departmental Secretaries should simply 'manage'.

Others commented on the fact that the government's influence on a department, its Departmental Secretary and their constitution of public sector management work, varies according to whether the department was either policy-setting or service delivery/policy implementation based. The former were influenced by the government of the day in the

sense that they were to contribute to the policy-setting agenda of the government, albeit in an ‘apolitical’ sense. The latter were influenced by the government of the day in the sense that they were to contribute to the policy implementation and service-delivery agenda of the government. Although the influences varied, the priorities of the government of the day were a primary influence on the constitution of public sector management work regardless of the type of department from which the Departmental Secretary operated (1:4; 12:9a). Hence, Departmental Secretaries were keen to make it their business to understand the political narrative and respond to the direction of the government: ‘... and all of those things become really important from a political level, understanding what the direction of the government is and how we can best support and tap into what’s happening there’ (2:33a).

In serving the government of the day, Departmental Secretaries commented that they were *not* necessarily in charge or in control of the way in which they managed their work as often they were simply directed to execute a government mandate or ministers’ orders (8:3a; 8:3b; 12:6a; 13:7b; 14:3b; 15:13a). Consequently, the government of the day exerts a strong influence on the Departmental Secretary and this prescribes and constrains their constitution of public sector management work. Unlike the concept of ‘new public managers’ as free and unencumbered agents, and catch-cries of public sector reformers to simply ‘let the managers manage’, the Departmental Secretaries are not at liberty to ‘manage’ as they see fit. Instead they are bound to abide by the directions of the government of the day and their constitution of public sector management work reflects this bond.

Well government ... have a very big influence on public sector management because at the end of the day in the public sector you operate or you work to implement the government’s policy, the policies of the government of the day. (1:4b)

The political environment requires the Departmental Secretaries to ‘swim in a political sea’ (11:1a; 22:35) in which they are not independent but are expected to carve out a different role for themselves from the political players. The political arena or sea is one described as a ‘combative political prism’ (11:1b; 6:20c), further compounded by an entrenched political culture that permeates the echelons of the Departmental Secretaries’ world. They are required to understand the political environment in order to interact and interface with this environment because it frames how they constitute public sector

management work. Another feature of the political environment and political sea in which they swim and in which their constitution of public sector management work takes place is the adoption of a ‘whole of government’, approach discussed below.

... you are in the fish bowl you are never independent of government but you need to be able to identify a role that is different to government. You work for the government but your role is to advise the government without fear or favour, [via] frank and fearless advice. (22:35)

Additionally, the government of the day, via its ministers, requires Departmental Secretaries to adopt a whole of government approach to their constitution of public sector management work and hence a national perspective and, in many cases, an international perspective (5:14; 6:38b). This perspective exerts much influence on the work of the Departmental Secretaries because their portfolios frequently incorporate government priorities that span Australia. A national perspective was described as covering a range of dimensions that needed to be considered by the Departmental Secretaries in their constitution of public sector management work. These dimensions include the need to operate in a nationally consistent manner; the need to respond to variable economic states described as ‘Australia’s patchwork economy’ (4:19) or its ‘boom and bust’ state economies (15:30a); the need to respond to the withdrawal of state government services; the need to offer national environmental disaster recovery services; delivering on national budget decisions; dealing with national and international crime and security matters; the need to work with and communicate to a changing Australian demographic; dealing with international outbreaks of diseases; protecting the security of Australia’s borders; considering and acting on the findings of national inquiries, and dealing with national media hype and concentration on certain matters. A national perspective was further described as being akin to the national interest and so the need to understand society and its social mores is critical (1:12; 1:13a; 4:20; 12:18; 14:14b; 15:30b; 15:30c; 15:31a; 15:31b; 16:23).

Yes [the national context featured in] every portfolio because you are in a national context that is the beauty of the Commonwealth public service. You are working in a national context. It doesn’t matter what you are doing, it has national implications ... we [all] had national implications ... And you swim in a national goldfish bowl. (22:26/28)

The Departmental Secretaries’ ability to advise their minister(s) is dependent on understanding the broader national context. All Secretaries are expected to be literate in

economics, finance, budgeting, social demographics and associated arenas. The Departmental Secretaries are to be knowledgeable in the national context for their and their minister's credibility. All hold this knowledge about Australia's broader macroeconomic, political and social environment and it frames their constitution of public sector management work. This knowledge of their environment is of greater significance to their constitution of public sector management work than knowledge of 'generic management' (13:23a; 13:23b). Advocates of NPM rarely considered the former; instead, they promoted the simplistic 'context-free genericism' (Pollitt 2011, p. 35) of managerialism.

To lead a public sector organisation you've got to understand the context that the government is operating in and that includes the economic situation of the country. It also includes the budgetary situation. And so those two things and the general political and social discourse absolutely frame what you are thinking might be or how you're managing your circumstances.
(14:4)

Working with the state and territory governments, as well as local governments, also forms part of the national perspective that features in the Departmental Secretaries' constitution of public sector management work. Much of their work is directed at addressing major matters of national challenges and opportunities. These were often derived from many different jurisdictions across Australia and included such matters as the quality of water in the Murray Darling Basin System as it affects South Australia; climate change and its potential impact on crop growing in the Northern Territory and Queensland; resource booms and busts and their effect on the mining industry of Western Australia and other states; the carbon tax and its impact on coal mining in New South Wales and Victoria; a high Australian currency and its impact on industry and employment across Australia. There is a need to understand matters of consequence across these jurisdictions because collectively and separately they have an impact on and shape the constitution of public sector management work of the Departmental Secretary. The interface that Departmental Secretaries have to have with these state, territory and local governments is fundamental. The national perspective is a pervasive element that influences the constitution of public sector management work of the Departmental Secretary (2:33b; 2:34; 4:10a; 4:10b): *'So [the] national context is fundamental to what we do. So the institutions, the states, local government, federal*

government have an interface, it's important to us. ... So the national/global context, we just can't escape it, it's our business' (6:34; 6:37).

Such features of the political environment in which public sector management work is couched (including the influence of ministers, the government of the day, parliament, meta-institutional issues, and the national perspective), frame the Departmental Secretaries' constitution of public sector management work. These features cannot be disregarded as they are by proponents of NPM, because they are a fundamental component of the constitution of public sector management work. In effect, they bind Departmental Secretaries to the political environment. Together with other features such as political manoeuvres by ministerial office staff competing for influence and the avoidance-based risk management which ensues from such an environment, as discussed below, these features constrain, prescribe and hence shape the constitution of public sector management work.

Within the political environment, Departmental Secretaries explained the need to also establish relationships with the minister's office and ministerial office staff. These relationships are also considered to be of importance to the connection between the Departmental Secretary and the minister. But these relationships were often fraught, due to the political nature of ministerial office staff appointments and their lack of public sector experience, in terms of the perceptions of the Departmental Secretaries. Thus, one Departmental Secretary noted that, in the past, ministerial office staff were appointed on a secondment or 'loan' type arrangement from various departments and, as such, were public servants who came to the office with extensive experience in the public service and an apolitical approach. However, these processes and arrangements of appointment to minister's offices have since ceased. Instead, inexperienced political officers were appointed to the Ministerial Office via a *'process by which political apparatchiks are nurtured until they can move from University to sitting in Parliament without touching life in any way'* (11:12). Departmental Secretaries perceived ministerial office staff to be competing for influence and engaging in political manoeuvres. These ministerial office staff often attempt to influence the nature of the advice coming from the department by requesting departmental staff to provide ministerial briefings reflecting the wants of the ministerial office staff rather than the apolitical views of the public service. This aspect of the political environment creates

difficulties and tensions for the Departmental Secretaries and adds to the complexity of the constitution of public sector management work.

Support means give them [the Minister] good advice. Give them frank and fearless [advice]. Not tell them what they want [to hear]. I used to watch the way their Office operate[d]. I thought Ministers use to take an awful risk with some of the staff they had. And I used to monitor the interactions that they were having with my Department and used to stop it if they [the Ministerial Office staff] were telling, as they used to, my Departmental people down the line what they wanted in briefing[s]. (13:30)

Furthermore, ministerial office political advisors would sometimes not bring to their ministers professional advice from the Departmental Secretaries, behaviour Departmental Secretaries considered could have potentially serious political consequences for the government of the day, including loss of office. The responses of the Departmental Secretaries implied that they (the Departmental Secretaries) had superior experience and advice in comparison to Ministerial Advisors.

I would argue that in recent years, recent times, the activities of young political advisors, including trying to often not trouble their Ministers with professional advice from the public service, the end result of that, is a lack of success by Ministers and thus, shorter time in office. ... if you don't know how to run the system of government and respect the other players within it and work with them or if you want to describe [it] in management terms, manage the relationships with them, you [the Minister] make bad decisions and you lose office. (25:4)

Departmental Secretaries felt that their roles and their constitution of public sector management work were obstructed because of the establishment of ministers' offices providing advice, albeit political, which competed with and sometimes compromised the apolitical advice provided by the Departmental Secretary: *'I think it [the role of the public service] has become confused partly because of the development of Ministers' Offices which impinge greatly on that first role, the [policy] advisor role' (22:2a).*

The growth of ministerial office staff numbers over the past thirty years is a development which has had a considerable impact on 'the way the Australian Government works' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 13). Departmental Secretaries rarely, if at all, commented on this growth, an absence of comment that is a datum in itself; nonetheless they were cognisant of the need to work closely with these staff because they had a direct impact on their management work. Concerns with

ministerial office staff spill into this work, as these staff are interdependent with and operate in close proximity to the political environment. The Departmental Secretaries had to modify how they enacted public sector management work in order to preserve the integrity of the operation of their departments. The evidence indicates that the Departmental Secretaries are drawn into, rather than simply operating close to or at the boundary of, government. As a consequence, the constitution of public sector management work is significantly affected. In particular, the need to operate within the political environment creates risk aversion because, as discussed below, the Departmental Secretaries take a conservative approach to risk management (18:1d).

... the role of the public sector in providing advice [needs to be reassessed] - not political advice that's the role [of the Minister's Office] - but it's very hard to distinguish politics from - what was it that one of my illustrious predecessors said you know, 'you swim in a bowl of - you know you are like a goldfish in a bowl, you are swimming in politics all day long, you can't ignore it, you've just got to take it into account, so your advice [is apolitical] ... (22:3)

Risk management approaches in the political environment surrounding the public sector vary considerably from those taken in other sectors. Although risk management is a component of the constitution of public sector management work, it takes place within a political environment, which means that Departmental Secretaries are not at liberty to manage risks in the same manner in which senior management might do in other sectors. Risk management in the public sector often means risk avoidance because of the government's low appetite for the political consequences of risk (16:13). In general, in other sectors, the market rewards risks. However, the reverse is the situation in the public sector where the consequences of miscalculating and realising risks are different because, in part, the trade-offs between risks and returns are not always as explicit in the public sector. The reaction of society, the government and the citizen to matters that go awry is complex and has political consequences. Public sector central agencies often advocate a 'riskless' perspective so as to not create political consequences for the government. Hence, risk aversion and avoidance characterise the constitution of public sector management work and thus a conservative approach is taken to this work. Significant consequences follow for the constitution of public sector management work which, when focussed on risk avoidance rather than risk management, becomes constrained, limited in its scope, effectiveness and efficiency (6:3; 13:7a; 16:13).

... One of the issues I've challenged ... is the perspective from some of the central agencies that the operating framework has to be riskless. That is we can't be taking risk because of the political consequences for the government. ... They ... [risk and politics] are highly interactive and they can create circumstances that go to define public sector management practices. (6:4)

This risk avoidance that characterises the constitution of public sector management work stands in contrast to the innovation, creativity, re-engineering, entrepreneurialism and unconventionality promoted by the proponents of public sector reform and the NPM. Instead, Departmental Secretaries' constitution of public sector management work is largely devoid of risk taking because the risk-averse processes of government politically determine such work. Furthermore, unlike their peers in the private and non-government sectors, Departmental Secretaries' pay is not profit metric based, although such considerations are usually estimated on a private sector equivalent and taken into account when determining executive salaries in the public sector. Their *modus operandi* is conservative rather than entrepreneurial as there are no rewards for doing otherwise. Their work reflects their keeping low profiles, operating in conservative ways, following apolitical and conventional behaviours, strict codes of conduct and a general disdain for risk. They are not empowered to constitute public sector management work in ways that reflect the NPM but instead are expected to reflect the will of their political and risk-averse masters.

Coupled with the influence and direction of the parties that operate in the political environment in which Departmental Secretaries work is the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment. This environment is one that comprises instruments such as Australia's Constitution, Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Administrative Arrangements Orders. This environment further contributes to the constitution of public sector management work and as with the political environment shapes, prescribes and constrains that work.

5.3. The Constitutional, Legislative and Regulatory Environment (Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Administrative Arrangements Orders)–Legislation

Departmental Secretaries work within a constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment dominated by a formal instrumental legislated framework. Their constitution of public sector management work is bound by the formal set of legislated instruments and orders within this environment. These incorporate the Australian Constitution, a myriad of Acts of Parliament, accompanying Regulations, and Machinery of Government or Administrative Arrangements Orders by which Departmental Secretaries and their departments are bound. There also exist specific Acts for some departments, especially those with statutory authority and independence. These legislated instruments and orders contain the essence of the formal functions of the Departmental Secretaries. This environment is another context in which the Departmental Secretary operates and is a ‘distinguishing feature’ integral to directing and prescribing the way in which they constitute public sector management work. Compliance is a large and necessary component of their work within this environment.

What the [Department] is to do is laid down in legislation, that's why we've got to report back to Parliament through the Minister, that we are actually doing the functions that they are appropriating funds to us to undertake (5:13a).

The primary instrument of this environment, which forms the background for the work of the Departmental Secretary, is the Australian Constitution. The Constitution indirectly enshrines the responsibilities of the Departmental Secretary, albeit in a general manner. It articulates the legal framework within which the Departmental Secretaries are expected to constitute public sector management work: *‘The overarching legal framework for a public sector manager must start with the Constitution’ (12:1)*. This legal framework sets the context within which the Departmental Secretary is authorised to act and to which they and their constitution of public sector management work are bound (4:2a; 5:21c; 22:9a).

... particularly as a Secretary of course, your responsibility is ... firstly to the law. I mean is it, is what you are doing legal, is what you are being asked to do legal, and that's always a consideration, particularly for the

Commonwealth because of the Constitution. I mean everything is grounded in the Constitution, if it's not something that the Commonwealth is Constitutionally empowered to do then ... well you can't do it but oh well you can, you can in some circumstances but you have to get referred powers and all sorts of wonderful things [like] agreement of [the] States ... (22:9a)

Public sector reforms focussed on the introduction of market principles and mechanisms, without recognising that these could not provide the comprehensive approach needed to meet the dilemmas that constitutionality poses on public sector management work. Departmental Secretaries are cognisant of the legal framework that the Constitution poses on them and so adopt this as a fundamental discipline for legitimising their work. Advocates of NPM who wanted to just 'let the managers manage' did not appreciate that Departmental Secretaries are not at liberty to simply do as they see fit, nor to constitute management work as one would expect a 'free agent' in the private sector to do. They have limited autonomy. Such was not recognised or at best disregarded by many public sector reformers.

The legislated formal instruments within this constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment are many, but in particular the following are most applicable across the APS to the Departmental Secretaries and their constitution of public sector management work:

1. the Administrative Arrangements Orders (establishing the functions and structures of government);
2. the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013);
3. the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 (FMA Act) [now called the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act 2013)];
4. portfolio-specific legislation (such as the *Defence Act*, and the *Migration Act*);
5. Acts which apply to independent statutory authorities (such as the *ASIC Act*) and Commonwealth Authorities of Australia (such as the *CAC Act*); and
6. more general Acts which apply to both the private and the public sector (such as the *Freedom of Information Act*) (see Egan 2009 for a representative list of hundreds of Acts pertaining to the Departmental Secretaries).

Formal responsibilities are also enshrined within common law and administrative law. As one Departmental Secretary explained, these laws, particularly as they developed from the 1970s, advocate responsibilities that

might not necessarily be formally written down but nonetheless are part of the backdrop which you need to be conscious of. [So for example] ... common law as it develops and case history and all that. (8:2b).

Nonetheless, they are part of the backdrop that Departmental Secretaries are conscious of and to which they are required to adhere.

... there are a range of frameworks [including] the Public Service Act, our financial framework [the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997] for managing public money in the Commonwealth. We have a range of other legislation that we have to apply in managing and working with our people. (5:12a)

Administrative Arrangements Orders are a fundamental component of the legislative framework that directs the constitution of public sector management work of the Departmental Secretaries (4:3a). These orders give rise to the formal structures and functions of government by stipulating the legislation administered, the minister responsible for such legislation and the portfolios and departments that will be required for the administration of such legislation. When governments reorganise their functions and structures they issue such orders. Administrative Arrangements Orders are complex and often there are multiple cases where one Act or one piece of legislation, to be administered by Departmental Secretaries, is split across one, two or more departments. This splitting of Acts and legislation across different departments was intended to avoid potential ‘bureaucratic turf wars’ between departments. But, these structural arrangements create disputes about responsibility boundaries, which translate to a complex authorising environment in a legal, administrative and policy sense. Furthermore, there exists a tension between the government structuring responsibilities across different portfolios and at the same time wanting to adopt a ‘whole of government’ approach.

No [the Administrative Arrangements Orders concept] doesn't work, no. ... you are in a kind of a complex space of legal authority, administrative authority, policy authority. ... they create a kind of a space which is relatively well defined but there are always boundary issues and blurry bits at the edges. (21:5)

Departmental Secretaries' constitution of public sector management work is derived from and is expected to respond to machinery of government or administrative arrangements orders changes (21:4). Hence they have limited scope in relation to decisions about formal structures (12:9b) and functions which they administer; generally none. Their freedom to constitute public sector management work is significantly reduced by this legislation.

The Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) also plays a fundamental role in establishing the context in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work. In particular, s56 of the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) allows for the Office of Secretary to be established '*whenever a Department of State is established by the Governor General*' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c:2). Furthermore, the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) requires that Secretaries '*manage the Department and ... advise the ... Minister in matters relating to the Department*' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, pp. 89-90). There is limited mention in the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) of the responsibility to develop policy or the need to provide policy advice. Rather what is mentioned is that the *role* of the Secretary includes: '*principal official policy advisor to the Agency Minister*' (Public Service Act 1999, amended 2013). Yet Departmental Secretaries mentioned that policy development and policy advising are integral components of their constitution of public sector management work (as will be discussed in Chapter 6). Such anomalies are ever-present in the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work. Although the Act is narrow in its scope, it prescribes and it is within this limited scope, that Departmental Secretaries are expected to constitute their public sector management work according to the prescriptions of the Act (12:8).

The FMA Act 1997 (now PGPA Act 2013) is broad in its intent and provides a 'principles-based approach which gives Chief Executives significant responsibilities in defining detailed formal management procedures for their agencies' and that 'financial management responsibility ends with the Secretary' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, pp. 89-90). This FMA Act 1997 (now PGPA Act 2013), and compliance with it, is a critical component of the environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute their public sector management work and one which gives rise to the need for them to establish a range of governance mechanisms to achieve such compliance. Unlike the

flexibility and choice implied by the instrumentalism of managerialism, the constitution of public sector management work is complex, regulated and substantive and hence rigid and controlled due to the environment in which it takes place.

You've got to comply with the Financial Management Act, and [many] other sorts of laws of the country and there are a lot of those, right. So, you've got to meet all the proper responsibilities of an Agency Head under the Public Service Act, under other legislation. And if you have your own Act, under your own Act. So all of those things are just baseline requirements. (14:2a)

Other significant Acts pertaining to the context in which the Departmental Secretaries work are portfolio-specific Acts, the *Parliamentary Services Act 1999* for departments of the parliament, and Acts which apply to independent statutory authorities and to Commonwealth Authorities Corporations such as the (CAC) Act 1997 (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, pp. 89-90). These Acts establish the functions, accountabilities and responsibilities, which Departmental Secretaries are required to perform. They stipulate the legal parameters which direct the work of the various portfolios and which provide some independence for statutory and corporate authorities of the Commonwealth (*1.1b; 3:2b; 5:12b; 6:1a; 12:2; 19:7a*).

Everything we do in [the Department] ultimately falls under an Act of Parliament. So we're a CAC Act body created by the ... Act [date] and everything we do leads back to an accountability to Parliament and ... is connected to government ... and ... to the people [of Australia]. (6:1b)

A number of other general Acts contribute to the legal framework within which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work. These include the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the Workplace Relations Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Racial Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. This legislation, much of which applies also to the private sector, creates a greater burden on public sector management because audit activity is more likely to expose possible breaches (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 90). Adverse publicity associated with such breaches is also potentially greater because 'failure to comply with legislation can be portrayed as incompetence on the part of government, or a waste of taxpayers' money' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 90).

The constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work comprises hundreds of prescriptive Acts, regulations and associated legal frameworks, though some have more force or relevance than others. These frameworks call forward much governance and constrain the Departmental Secretaries and their constitution of public sector management work because they are given little, if any, freedom or autonomy within such frameworks. Public sector reformers advocating NPM rarely acknowledged such legal and governance frameworks and instead encouraged departmental autonomy, which is inconsistent within such environments where Departmental Secretaries are legally bound to ministers who are in turn accountable to the parliament.

Furthermore, the appointment and termination of Departmental Secretaries is also enshrined within a set of formal legislative instruments, which ministers sometimes ignore when they make a political decision to terminate a contract or replace a Departmental Secretary.

... I'm appointed by the Governor General and on the advice of the Government for a fixed term, my term is four years, could be between three and five years ... but the circumstances in which you could be removed are set out in the legislation. (1:3)

The legislative frame which forms the basis for current mechanisms of Departmental Secretary appointment and termination was viewed by some as one which imposes the potential for a reduced frank and fearless approach in their public sector management work, and in particular, to the provision of policy advice. As Departmental Secretaries are now employed on fixed-term contracts, their loss of permanent tenure can bring certain circumspection with regards to the provision of frank and fearless advice, for fear of losing one's job. Although only a few Departmental Secretaries articulated this concern, it resonates with the recent actions of the current Liberal National Coalition government, which removed from office the Secretary of the Department of Immigration. Wiltshire (2014, p. 47) comments that this Departmental Secretary was removed from office because he 'told it like it was, and whose comments on asylum seeker policy were evidence based'. Hence the appointment and termination mechanisms that are part of the environment in which Departmental Secretaries operate, exert powerful influences and potentially negative consequences on them and their constitution of public sector management work. There are also limits in spite of the

legislative framework, on appointment and termination practices that are often negotiated in the political environment.

While all Departmental Secretaries commented on the legislative nature of their role and being bound by a range of legislation, the legislation does not provide a comprehensive guide as to the constitution of public sector management work. Of note is the lack of a definitive statement of formal responsibilities for Departmental Secretaries. Many Departmental Secretaries made this observation, especially those who had previously sought an articulation of these formal responsibilities but had not found any such documentation. Although there have been attempts recently to articulate the formal responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries (see Public Service Act 1999, amended 2013), these responsibilities are still defined in general terms. While it is understandable that such a role cannot be defined with great detail, it is significant that no attempt has been made to define it in more specific terms. Many Departmental Secretaries believed that this lack of specific definition was due to their responsibilities being contingent on a myriad number of factors arising from their constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment.

... I think every Departmental Secretary at least in my time, I've been retired now for ... years, would have had a slightly different version of that [the role] because there wasn't at least at that time a definitive statement [of the responsibilities and accountabilities of Secretaries]. (17:4)

Another environment in which public sector management work is constituted is the financial environment. Within this environment, appropriated funds, allocated budgets and resources determined by government, pose further significant prescriptions and constraints on the Departmental Secretaries and their constitution of public sector management work.

5.4. The Financial Environment—Appropriated Funds and Allocated Budgets—Cost Management

The financial environment³⁸ in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work is highly prescribed through legislation and policy and replete with bureaucracy administered by the government of the day. Appropriated funds, budgetary and resource allocation procedures are key features of this financial environment within which public sector management work is constituted. Departments are dependent on and are required to abide by the budget decisions and procedures of the government of the day (19:5). Departmental Secretaries have limited if any control over the allocation of such funds, budgets and resources. Departmental Secretaries are responsible for securing such appropriated funds via established budget processes but it is the government of the day that is the custodian of and controls these funds (1:14). The allocation of appropriated funds, budgets and resources is dependent on the state of Australia's economy and its fiscal environment (8:13).

I mean take the fiscal environment; the country's fiscal circumstances fundamentally determine the money that we get. Money is central to what you can or can't do with capability which feeds back from your strategic needs, so you can't as one former Secretary said you can't talk about strategy without talking about money. (8:13)

In difficult economic and fiscal environments, the government, ministers, Cabinet, and the community are focussed on how much money is being spent by government and how effectively such monies are being spent: is government expenditure responding to and facilitating appropriate individual and industry needs, and achieving desired outcomes? That is, the state of the financial environment will determine the quantum of funds, budgets and resources made available to Departmental Secretaries and often this quantum is mismatched with the requirements to deliver on the commitments of the government of the day (1:6; 2.13c; 2.18; 2.47; 8:7). Departmental Secretaries are expected to cut their allocated cloth to fit the vagaries and challenges of the financial environment as they have no financial autonomy. Proponents of public sector reform introduced financial management programs derived from the private sector with a view

³⁸ While the financial environment is based on legislation, regulation, policy and formal processes it is separated out here owing to the unique appropriated funding processes that influence the Departmental Secretaries' constitution of public sector management work.

to improving the financial management capability of the public sector. Such programs were intended to provide greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy for the financial management of departments' resources. But these proponents did not consider how the Departmental Secretaries' dependency on the financial environment creates a dynamic that shapes their constitution of public sector management work.

Formally government allocated budgets are determined on a four-year cycle but typically these are realised on the basis of an annual cycle. Hence, while the government prepares four-year budget estimates, in a practical sense the government allocates budgets to departments with a focus on the next year only. The four-year or forward-year estimates process was intended to assist Departmental Secretaries to take a long-term financial planning perspective in their constitution of public sector management work. However the annual budget focus and allocation makes it difficult for departments to plan for the future, for long-term risks, and/or for long-term investments and returns on those investments. The annual budget cycle has therefore an impact on the constitution of public sector management work, in a manner that is not paralleled in other sectors. While public sector reformers, focussed on private sector financial planning practices, were keen to introduce this discipline of long-term financial planning within the public sector, they did not consider fully the constraint imposed by the government's allocation of budgets on an annual and hence short-term basis.

Aligned to the budget estimates process is the function of capital raising for investment purposes. Raising capital³⁹ is not something that Departmental Secretaries can engage in directly, as this is part of the new policy proposal (NPP) process. Within this NPP process, the government's budgeting process rules require any capital raising to be offset by equivalent savings. These offsetting requirements, in effect, mean that some areas of the public sector will need to provide the offset savings for other areas to be able to raise the capital they require. The process of cross public sector capital raising and offsets is based on a prioritisation which takes place remotely from the arena in which the effects and impacts will be realised. It is a process that is the responsibility of the Cabinet Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) and the process is opaque. It results in significant gaps between the parameters originally influencing a new policy, the

³⁹ The term 'capital' has a very specific meaning in appropriations and financial management terms: expenditure on assets and durable goods. As such in this sense the term 'capital raising' applies to (NPPs) that are new and/or expanded spending proposals that can include either or both capital and recurrent expenditure.

process of capital raising and its eventual machinations. The considerations made by the government re capital raising and expenditure might be vastly different from those originally requested by Departmental Secretaries. The government takes decisions not necessarily for the reasons proposed or articulated by the departments. This is seen where significant investments are made in marginal electorates for reasons that are other than economically rational or viable (6:8). Such budgetary, financial and capital factors that are intertwined with political factors characterise the constitution of public sector management work as constrained and hence different (6:7c).

... we've seen it happen where investments are made again in marginal electorates where if you'd thought about it from a broader economic paradigm those investments they wouldn't be made there, they would be made somewhere else. But because of that interface between the political process, the budgetary framework and public sector management, that dynamic - distortion is the wrong word, but it can have an unintended effect on the original policy and operational considerations and in some cases, it can distort it, there is no doubt about that. (6:7b)

The financial environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work is one in which they are disempowered. This disempowerment may contribute to a perception that Departmental Secretaries acknowledged, that on occasions they were aware of the existence of a public sector mentality by some public sector workforces regarding the appropriated funds or monies with which the public sector operates. Some in the public sector perceived these monies as funds that belonged to the government and, as such, the monies they appropriated were not 'real' monies in the sense that the private sector has monies and a 'real' 'bottom line'. One Departmental Secretary described this as *'I guess it's a public [sector] mentality that you know it's not as cut throat, it's not as... I guess it's not real money, it is the government's money'* (2:39).

Some Departmental Secretaries mentioned that they do not personally focus on budget management but instead handed it over or delegated it to others in the organisation to manage. This apparent lack of focus on budget management by some Departmental Secretaries is a fundamental characteristic of their constitution of public sector management work, and may be a reflection of the perception of appropriated funds belonging to the government rather than the department. This apparent lack of focus on budget management and the 'bottom line' was further explained by a current

Departmental Secretary who made the observation that the public sector is a ‘cost manager’ not a ‘profit maker’. As such, the public sector appropriates funds from the government and is required to manage these funds, but it is not in a position to manage these funds actively in such a way as to generate profits and so views budget management differently primarily in terms of cost management. While Departmental Secretaries take their financial responsibilities seriously, it is understandable that this component of their constitution of public sector management work is of less significance to them than it might be to their peers in other sectors. This is because expectations as couched within the FMA Act (now PGPA Act 2013) are on the strict governance and administration of appropriated funds via detailed procedures rather than the active management of budgets for the generation of profits (21:32; 22:7b; 22:7c).

Public sector is different from the private sector in one important regard and that is that we manage cost, we don't manage the bottom line profit, so you don't loss lead, you don't generate revenue, you actually manage costs. Very few public sector agencies are actually in the business of making money, making their own money. Ours comes to us from government in the form of appropriation. So the financial discipline is much more around cost management, than [it is] around revenue generation. (21:1)

Another Departmental Secretary commented that unlike the private sector, in which the Chief Executive Officer is held accountable for the profit of his/her organisation in the public sector, Departmental Secretaries are not held accountable in the same way for the financial management (outcomes) of their department. Instead the Department of Finance takes carriage for the broader financial management and financial outcomes of the public sector in a collective way. It requires balanced budgets from each of the Departmental Secretaries and is not too concerned where negative budgets result. Thus while financial accountability and management is required in the public sector, it is essentially limited to cost management and financial governance, whereas revenue and profit generation is not relevant to the work of the Departmental Secretary.

The consequences of running a loss in the public sector are not as catastrophic as in a company. If you don't make a 'bottom line' profit in a company, you will not long be flicked. If you are Secretary of the Department, you are servicing a wide range of things, one of which is, is the organisation sustainable? But the most important one is does the Minister have confidence in you? And it will take a lot of financial rubbish to burn that confidence but only a couple of bad policies to kill it. So there's a kind of spectrum here. And Finance Departments have tended to control that behaviour by requiring that agencies budget for balanced results and then if

they are shooting for a loss, but I don't recall seeing a Secretary lose their job over, a negative expense outcome. (21:23a)

Several former Departmental Secretaries with experience in government business enterprises (GBEs) were of the view that a budget management focus could be taken and that appropriated funds were not a necessary condition for this lack of focus.

I don't think public service departments [are focussed on their 'bottom line'] even now even with the huge restraint on resources. So that's one thing I think there isn't quite that bottom line focus but there is no reason, intrinsic reason there shouldn't be. (7:19)

While there may be no intrinsic reasons for the lack of bottom-line focus taken by Departmental Secretaries, there are reasons. One is extrinsic, such as a lack of expectations/accountability on Departmental Secretaries working in departments which deliver policy or programs, as above, whereas budget management is a priority and expectation for those Departmental Secretaries heading GBEs, because their charter or mandate⁴⁰ is different (that is, preparing the GBE for corporatisation or privatisation). Many public sector reformers and proponents of NPM have ignored this lack of expectation/accountability.

Other reasons why the single bottom line is not a focus in the constitution of public sector management work are also extrinsic. In particular, the formal financial legislative framework underpinned by Australia's Constitution (as mentioned previously) imposes a range of different requirements on the public sector and its ability to generate surplus/profit or a deficit/loss from its operations (18:1e). Some departments that operate on the basis of full cost recovery are not allowed to generate such profits or losses because they are neither statutory nor corporate bodies covered by the relevant Acts. Those departments that are statutory or corporate bodies are expected to return any surplus/profit to the government's consolidated revenues or return monies to customers by adjusting subsequent fees. Where deficits/losses are incurred these are remedied by adjustments, in this case increases in fees chargeable to customers. This need to balance budgets is a factor that means it is not possible to generalise across the

⁴⁰ Although the charter or mandate referred to for GBEs may be the case where government intends to corporatise or privatise such organisations, GBEs operate as 'enterprises' in accordance with their enabling legislation.

two sectors re their budget management practices and the priority they give to their bottom line (18:1c).

And that [Department] was very much a sort of in many respects a commercial operation. But there was a bit of a trick because you had to cover your cost but you weren't allowed to make a profit and you weren't allowed to make a loss. ... because it was not a statutory body. It wasn't, under the Company's Act. It was technically [the Department] remained a division of the [Portfolio]. And there's also a strong sort of legal framework that sits behind it, which constitutionally, I mean you can only charge fees that are commensurate with the services that you're delivering. And any excess revenue that you make is actually, technically it goes back to consolidated revenue or it goes back to the clients that have paid the excess money in effect because you can only charge for what you deliver. So if you inadvertently or otherwise make a profit in that sense out of those services then you have got to reflect it in subsequent fees and charges that you've lowered or give the money back, which we did at various times. And if you make a loss of course then you have to work the other way. You have got to increase your fees and charges to make sure you recover those losses. So at all stages, you're travelling at equilibrium, probably give or take 10% of your budget. (16:3b)

Instead the concept of a multidimensional bottom line is a focus in their constitution of public sector management work. Departmental Secretaries commented that the concept of a multidimensional or 'triple bottom line' for the public sector is one that comprises commitments to citizens, commitments to government, and commitments to the workforce, encompassing concepts of public service ethos (6:1c).

So it's not about making a profit it's how much I can invest that money into getting absolutely maximum services for the community, the impact I can [have] and how my people feel about working for the organisation they work for, so that's my [triple] bottom line. (2:40a; 2:40b)

The triple bottom line was considered by some Departmental Secretaries to be of relevance to the public sector and to be taken more seriously in the public sector than in the private sector (5:7a). The explanation provided for this is that the private sector is motivated predominantly by a 'single bottom line' focus. The single bottom line is of paramount importance to shareholders who, when returns are falling, will quickly put pressure on organisations and their CEOs to concentrate on dividend and market values, almost to the exclusion of anything else. In contrast, the public sector serves stakeholders who are fundamentally different from private sector shareholders. For the public sector, the stakeholder or shareholders are understood to be the broader Australian community. In particular, public sector stakeholders are deemed to be

motivated differently from private sector stakeholders and are generally not in a position to pay for or do not pay for the services they require and receive from the public sector (5:7b). Such stakeholders expect services to be delivered for the common good, regardless of the costs or of the economic return to government of such services.

[We operate in] a much more complex world [than the private sector]. ... The shareholders or stakeholders are fundamentally different and generally don't pay. Some do, some don't. (5:7)

Thus the public sector does not have a single bottom line focus (or a profit-based focus), due to its fundamentally different government-funded position, a set of unique public sector stakeholders served, and drivers of 'common or collective good' (9:22; 10:4a). Current Departmental Secretaries acknowledge that their constitution of public sector management in relation to budget management is to deliver within their budgets with an eye to efficiency and effectiveness, making the most of the resources (or appropriated funds) (5:8b; 10:14). The public sector bottom line, per se, is acknowledged to be about the need to achieve within one's budget while at the same time realising the objectives set by the government: in other words, the need to be efficient and effective within the bounds set by the financial environment in which they operate and at the same time delivering as much as possible for the Australian community.

... [the private sector] they are acting in the interest of the shareholders. For us, the shareholder proxy holder is the Australian community. ... That's who I have in mind when I talk about the community we serve. (12:7a)

Within the financial environment in which public sector management work is constituted, procurement of goods and services (in particular, information technology systems) are made with appropriated funds. Like budget management more generally, procurement practices and associated contract negotiations in the public sector are focussed not so much on just 'economic value for money' as they are on the formal bureaucratic procedures required by government for procurement of goods and services. A former Departmental Secretary with experience in a GBE commented that the rigour of cost-benefit analysis and business case evaluation mechanisms often applied in the private sector for procurement of such services is not apparent in the public sector. The delegation of procurement contract negotiation/management by the Departmental Secretary to low levels of management in the public sector is in contrast to high levels of management at which procurement contract negotiation/management is conducted in

the private sector. Very few questions are posed by those in the public sector considering decisions about the procurement of such services. The research shows that, despite limited public funding and resources, questions such as the following are rarely considered: what are the business benefits? Do we need to incur the expenditure this year? Can this purchase decision be postponed for a number of years? Do the items/systems need replacement now?

... the lesson I learned at [Government Business Enterprise was] to get it right if you want something to be on time and on budget, you have to be personally involved. Not micro managing it but being on the steering committee and being alert. I don't think that happens very often [in the public sector]. (7:20)

These seemingly poor procurement and contract management approaches were considered responsible for the poor record of outsourced contracts by large departments (in relation to late delivery timeframes and costs exceeding budgets). But what is often not understood or acknowledged by commentators and reformers alike, is that these approaches are the by-product of a legitimate, bureaucratic and highly regulated financial environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work. The procurement and contract management approaches employed by Departmental Secretaries, like their budget management more generally, reflect less a focus on economic value for money or a profit-oriented bottom line focus for the appropriated funds, and instead a greater orientation to the prescribed, detailed and often cumbersome bureaucratic processes and procedures, imposing significant legal responsibilities, to meet the formal requirements of government for the procurement of goods and services.

Departmental Secretaries must work with much more difficult and broader concepts of 'value' than simply 'economic' concepts. Such broader concepts of value are often harder to judge (Halligan et al. 1996), which does not mean that the budget management of appropriated funds should be less focussed on securing the greatest efficiency and effectiveness for the public sector. It does mean that public sector management work is constituted within a broad financial environment that places a myriad of financial prescriptions and caveats or 'checks and balances' which constrain Departmental Secretaries, especially in relation to their management of appropriated funds. Further

constraints are evident in the modern media environment that also frames the constitution of public sector management work.

5.5. The Modern Media and ‘Social Media’ Environment—Complexities and Vicissitudes

The traditional media environment has always exerted an influence on the constitution of public sector management work. Departmental Secretaries commented that modern media,⁴¹ augmented through developments in information communication technologies (ICT), exerts a powerful set of complexities and vicissitudes which further frame the constitution of public sector management work (8:8a). Departmental Secretaries are subject to more demanding, intense and ongoing scrutiny, requirements to be concurrently transparent and confidential, and to communicate with the community using ‘social media’ which increase opportunities for contestability as well as increasing exponentially the rate and volume of interactions available and expected. The modern media environment imposes on the Departmental Secretaries and their work an element of reactivity and short termism (14:15), which restricts their ability to work other than incrementally and often in an ad-hoc manner. This is especially the case because of the speed of real-time social media communication and the availability of the 24/7 media news cycle. The modern media environment gives rise to complexities and vicissitudes unlike those in any other arena which further constrain and shape the constitution of public sector management work.

The modern media environment generates increased scrutiny on the Departmental Secretaries and often this scrutiny is exercised through the parliament. Such scrutiny means that Departmental Secretaries factor into their constitution of public sector management work the need to: appear and present before *more* Senate Estimates Committees and Parliamentary Committees, produce Annual Reports, participate in *more* Australian National Audit Office audits, and provide *copious* amounts of information and respond to *increasing* commentary from a demanding public. Some Departmental Secretaries reported being involved with between eight to ten

⁴¹ The modern media environment, such as real-time social media, and an exponential number of participants, intersects with the political environment. However, the modern media environment is covered separately in this section to elaborate on the impact that this environment, augmented through developments in ICT, has on the constitution of public sector management work.

Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry at once. These increasing inquiries and other forms of scrutiny are demanding of them and their workforces and involve a great deal of work in preparation for and presentation of requested information, as well as the need to make appearances before the various committees. Deciding on which matters to respond to and which matters to leave shape their work. Scrutiny is constant and relentless as a consequence of modern media. At times this scrutiny represents criticism of the Departmental Secretary, their departments, and their constitution of public sector management work, and hence is a source of stress. Where the scrutiny exposes a department to wrongdoing or where a court case is lost (through a summary judgement or a 'strike out motion' suggesting the case should not have been brought to court in the first instance), the stress is even greater (10:6a).

I found myself increasingly responding to questions on notice and Senate Estimates and other places, responding to what the media picks up about your Department. And my job was always to try to protect the reputation of the Department. (13:7c)

The modern media environment also provides an increasing pressure on Departmental Secretaries to be ever more transparent. This is juxtaposed with demands to concurrently protect the confidences and privacy of the individuals and institutions to which the Departmental Secretaries deliver services. Hence, Departmental Secretaries need to take into consideration these conflicting and seemingly contradictory demands within the modern media environment. It means they have to 'juggle' the growing needs of an often aggressive and demanding media in conjunction with their legal obligations to provide media responses, presenting them with quandaries and conflicting challenges (13:31). The advocates of public sector reform simplify or ignore the complexities and constraints imposed on the constitution of public sector management work by the demands of the modern media environment and so rarely consider this need to juggle conflicting demands.

It's an environment in which there's increasing pressure to be transparent. We are limited in that regard because we cannot by law talk about our dealings with an individual institution. ... So we have to be very careful to protect the confidences of the institutions we deal with. But beyond that to be as transparent as we can be about what we are doing. (19:11b)

The rapid take up and use of ICT by the media, individuals and industry means that Departmental Secretaries have to reinvent internal and external interfacing technology

frameworks, reshaping their constitution of public sector management work. It means that the core operations of the public sector are becoming faster, more diversified and more challenging, requiring Departmental Secretaries to modify their work. New technology means that the communication process is now immediate and no longer defined or dominated only by the institution of the media or the institutions of government and the public sector, as in the past. The control of communication by institutions such as the media and their role in such communication has changed dramatically as a result of ICT. Whereas in the past, institutions such as the traditional media were dominant in such debates and their communication often went uncontested, this is no longer the case. Today almost any citizen and institution can conduct public discourse with almost anyone else in Australia, as well as globally, about any issue. The ability of citizens and institutions including the media to use new information communication technology mechanisms such as Twitter, Yammer, YouTube, Facebook and the like, has created a broader public debate and discourse and one which takes place instantly, immediately, and publicly (6:15).

So this communication and media, so the new channels, the way the community interfaces with government has changed. It has profound implications for public sector management and processes. ... It has massive implications for how the public sector conducts business. (6:16)

Social media has facilitated a 24/7 news and media cycle which is now considered the rule rather than the exception, requiring a much faster turnaround and management of press releases and commentary by Departmental Secretaries and their departments in response to public debates and discourses. The changes brought about via social media, which enable greater and broader public discourse and debate, create further challenges for the constitution of public sector management work. The resulting changes include: the way in which the work of the public sector is conducted and communicated; the way in which the community can react to this work; the way in which the government conceptualises its ideas, formulates its decisions and coordinates its communication; all of which fundamentally change the way in which the Departmental Secretaries work. Departmental Secretaries have had to modify and reshape their constitution of public sector management work in order to respond to this contestability as a result of the social media. Yet this contestability and its consequences (in particular added risks and

pressure on government) for the constitution of public sector management work are not considered in the literature on public sector reform.

Yeah. So the media can affect the way, I think it affect[s] much, much, more now. We did not have the 24/7 [media news] cycle in the time I am talking about. It was a factor, [but] thank goodness I never had to deal with that, and [mobile] phones on aeroplanes. I never had to deal with those two things. (15:16a)

How much different would it be trying to manage something right now than it was in the heyday of Hawke or Howard. Where things now [are so more complex], they didn't have pressures like the 24/7 [social media and media news cycle] either. (15:16b)

Departmental Secretaries reported the many avenues by which the community now have access to, and are able to connect with, the public sector and communicate their views and concerns. They commented that there are now more parties participating in this environment. The community are becoming more demanding of information and communication which it wants to share with and seek from the public sector. Through department websites, telephone-based help line services, information and contact centres, and public shopfronts, the public has access to the public sector and are able to make contact (in many instances twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week). For some departments this results in over 1000 contacts per day via such mechanisms. The community makes suggestions about the work of the public sector, they put forward ideas about how the public sector might operate, and they make recommendations for improvement and different ways of operating. The community expectations and demands on the public sector are potentially infinite and include the need to deliver services to acceptable standards and that 'entitlements' are recognised and disseminated appropriately. The potentially infinite set of expectations and demands from a community better educated and articulate in its views of the public sector than in the past means that Departmental Secretaries have to consider such views and factor these into their constitution of public sector management work.

Departmental Secretaries often find themselves caught up in the urgent (short term) as opposed to focussing on the important (long term) as a result of this increased pace. They reported focussing on matters from their electronic in trays which are constantly full and which demand their continuous attention. One Departmental Secretary

presented a model (Figure 5.1) to depict this dilemma in which many Departmental Secretaries find themselves.

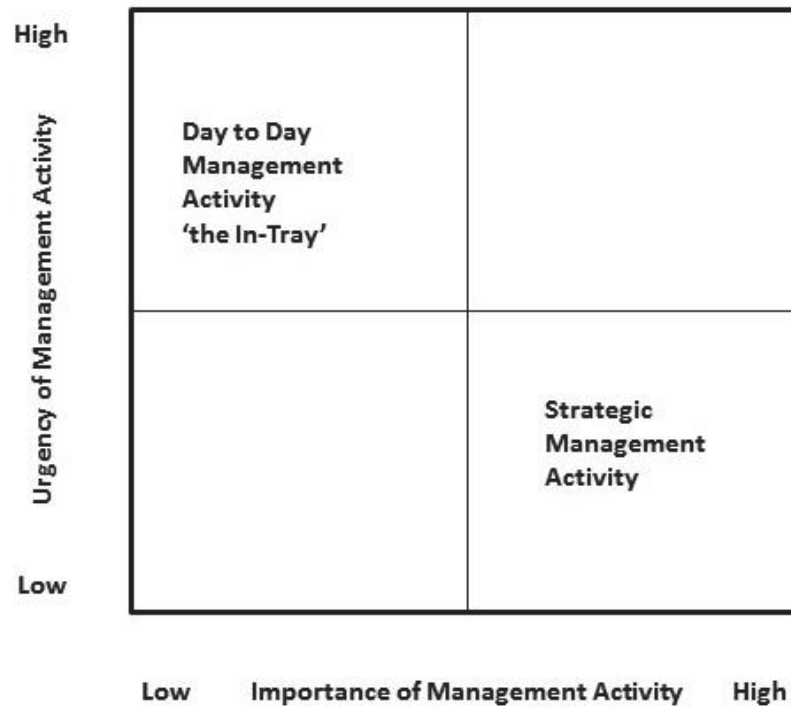


Figure 5.1 Model Depicting Dilemma of the Urgent Over the Important

The model represents management activity, with the depiction of high importance and low urgency signifying strategic activity. Strategic activity was described as being longer term and future based, externally oriented, adopting a broader macro perspective, and was organisation and sector-wide in nature. The model also represented management activity in the matrix with a depiction of high urgency and low importance, and labels this as day-to-day activity only (the ‘in-tray’). Almost invariably, Departmental Secretaries are not able to devote quality time to longer term strategic activity and commented on the low value placed on such work, because of the inevitability of instead having to focus on work which presses on them and their ministers ‘today or tomorrow’ (13:33a; 13:32; 13:33b).

The focus on the short term is especially driven by the 24/7 modern media cycle or, as some Departmental Secretaries referred to it, the 24-hour modern media ‘circus’, which represents the often immediate, momentary and transitory problems of society caught in

the media spectacle rather than more enduring, consequential and systemic issues. As Departmental Secretaries explained, their minister's focus is invariably one of responding to the subsequent 'noise' created. Such problems tend to drive the minister's agenda and hence the work of the Departmental Secretaries. The constitution of public sector management work is therefore focussed to a considerable extent on the day-to-day problems that are raised by the media and the broader community. This environment often means that they need to be prepared to commence new work, change directions, and discontinue existing work, in response to the agenda often driven by the parties in this environment. This often compromises their ability to operate efficiently and effectively. In contrast, proponents of NPM envisage an unrealistically benign, stable, simple, rational and controllable environment in which public sector management work can be constituted.

Yeah they have the whole cycle of how we are exposed to the problems, with the 24 hour media circus. The short-term sort of sensationalism in the media about, what in effect is always an anecdotal problem. It doesn't mean there is a systemic problem but the pressure comes on ... "how the hell did that happen?". Our Ministers wanting to be assured that it [the anecdotal problem] doesn't ever happen again, so someone has to put a whole system in place [to deal with that media sensationalism]. It's a layer of bureaucracy to manage a risk that no one has actually asked [us to manage] from a societal point of view, it doesn't make sense. To invest in managing that risk or are we better to accept that sometimes these sorts of risks are going to emerge. But if there are systemic risks fix them, if they are an outlier ... (5:42)

... because one of the risks with this type of organisation is that if you're not careful you can just be driven by what's coming through the door, a lot of these complaints or somebody over here's done the wrong thing or here's this [matter] we've got to look at. (10:9)

As well as the implications of the decreased cycle time of a 24/7 media and the many more participants in the process, enabled via ICT mechanisms such as social media, the Departmental Secretaries perceive a marked difference in the nature and quality of the modern media relative to the traditional media. They commented that media management is difficult today because previously observed protocols such as 'Chatham House rules' are no longer observed by a range of parties in the modern media, and so there existed a lack of trust in these parties.

... managing the press is very difficult partly because I don't [trust the press]. There was a time a long time ago when you could [trust the press],

and I did have quite good relationships with those in the press that were particularly interested in the areas that the Portfolio was working in. And I would by and large trust some of those people, quite significantly, quite significantly. On one occasion that trust was betrayed with well with dire consequences actually. But it was a distorted dire consequence but it was really unfortunate. (22:20a)

The constitution of public sector management work incorporates a myriad of activities to deal with modern media management. Departmental Secretaries often personally oversee the work of functional groups responsible for media management, as this work is recognised as significant to the reputation of their departments and to their answerability to the minister(s), parliament, the government of the day, and the general public. Some manage the media personally and in partnership with the members of their senior management team, as this gives them greater control over the media (15:14a). Some Departmental Secretaries spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their time on media management, especially if their organisations are undergoing change agendas, when they expressed the need to contain and seemingly control the ensuing dialogue.

My first decision when I came, ... we [the Commissioners] control the dealings with the media, because every man and his dog was talking to the media for [the Department] before we got there because there was nobody leading [the Department] at the time. So we contained the dialogue with the media. (19:22c)

Media management is a key driver in their work especially because of the connection between the political environment and the media environment (8:3c). Both constrain the Departmental Secretaries' work because these environments generate debate which is often grounded in politics and which requires responses from Departmental Secretaries while avoiding or at least containing political risks that can arise from such debates. Although most Departmental Secretaries prefer to keep their distance from the media in order to avoid becoming victims of media misrepresentation and 'beat ups', all were expected to have a higher public profile than previously and some were more prevalent in the public domain (22:20b).

So, it's very, very, very tricky and you can get side-swiped. So you make a speech on something and somebody will deliberately, deliberately either take something you said out of context or they'll call up the Minister's office and say "Do you realize that blah blah blah" and give a really bad light on it.

This is very common. So mischief and stuff like that makes it very hard for Secretaries to have a high public profile. (14:18c)

They have to juggle the need to engage in greater public dialogue, while at the same time manage their public profile by keeping the debate at an intellectual and apolitical level to ‘avoid accusations of politicisation’ (14:18a; 14:18d; 14:19; 15:6b-7).

And it’s much more dangerous having a high public profile, I can tell you that. Think of Ken Henry [the former Secretary of the Treasury] of all those accusations about politicization. (14:18b)

A comprehensive table of the impact of these environments and their elements on the constitution of public sector management work is presented in Appendix G.

5.6. Discussion and Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, using a grounded theory-like approach the concepts from the ‘public sector environment’ viewpoint derived from the data are presented in Appendix H. The findings and the consistency or otherwise of them with the literature are now discussed. The findings are inconsistent with what NPM proponents argue, to a considerable extent, and are consistent with those who have been critical of the NPM and its managerialist concepts. These writers are distinguished, where possible, in the discussion that follows.

5.6.1. Discussion

Evidence of the constraints and prescriptions of the political environment in which public sector management work is constituted is consistent with the literature that describes the place where Secretaries operate as ‘the “fulcrum point” or the “frantic interface” between Departments and their ministers (and the Prime Minister)’ (Smith 2007, p. 15; Egan 2009, p. 11). As Smith (2007) observes ‘... Secretaries remain at the critical interface of the relationship between the public service and the executive arm of Government’ (in Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 11). The role of Secretary is to position the agency to meet community expectations and to act ‘as the interface between the political level and the [...] bureaucracy’ (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 68; see also Egan 2009, p. 11). Others argue that the constitution of public sector management work

implies ‘working the seams of government [that] requires mastery of a range of areas such as: “the technical core”; “the institutional sphere”; “the substantive issues” related to the policy arena in which one operates, and; “modes of influence”’ (Elmore 1986, p. 77). Hence the place in which the Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work is akin to a ‘smudgy zone’ (Hecló 1977, p. 36). This ‘smudgy zone’ (Hecló 1977, p. 36) exists where ‘the vital interface of political administration occurs, for better or worse in terms of government performance’ (Elmore 1986, p. 74). It is a unique place that requires the Departmental Secretary to assume ‘multiple and often conflicting roles’ in order to constitute public sector management work (Elmore 1986, p. 74). Smith (2007) further acknowledges that Departmental Secretaries’

legislative cover is thin and their management and governance structures complex and ambiguous. They retain all the accountabilities, responsibilities and obligations that ever went with their positions, but have acquired further responsibilities in regard to the management of their Departments. Yet, in an environment which is faster moving and more fluid, and at the same time more “scrutiny enabled”, they have a reducing level of control over what is achieved and how it is achieved. (Smith 2007, in Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 14)

This environment further means that ‘the outcomes [of the public sector] may not be entirely within the control of the people [responsible for the work]’ (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 38). This fulcrum point or frantic interface in which public sector management work is constituted has been described as being a ‘crazy world of real public administration’ (Weller 2001, p. 188) and has been identified empirically in this research.

Contrary to public sector reform literature which claims that: ‘although significant distinctions exist between public and private sector offices at senior levels, their core features – the demands, expectations, complexities, and uncertainties – are of a similar order’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. i) the constitution of public sector management work is unique because of the political environment in which it is constituted. The core features of this political environment are significantly different, and not of a similar order to those features in other sectors, essentially because they arise within the political domain in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work. This difference is not well understood. As Dr Watt, the former Secretary of Prime Minister and Cabinet publicly stated ‘criticism of the public

service often arises out of a lack of awareness of the complexity of the objectives and outcomes required from policy implementation' in a political context (Skotnicki 2013, p. 14). It is the unique political environment, which gives rise to the complexity and the vicissitudes that characterise the constitution of public sector management work.

Such complexity has been acknowledged:

Managing a public sector agency is a complex task. Secretaries can be held accountable for all policy advice, the performance of their staff, the morale of their organisation, expenditure of public money, and even the performance of their Minister. In a single day they may be called upon to brief the Minister on a contentious issue, liaise with colleagues in other departments about Cabinet business, meet departmental clients or stakeholders, deal with staff performance, and respond to invitations to attend meetings or functions. (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 68)

Banks (2013, p. 11) comments on the growing complexity of the political environment in which Departmental Secretaries operate. Beyond the challenges posed by the 'complexity of contemporary policy problems' are challenges that arise from complexity of the political environment in which such problems must be addressed. This political environment has become harder recently for a number of reasons, including what Banks considers to be 1) the growth and dominance of Ministerial Offices; 2) the intensity of the new 24/7 social media and its focus on reactionary issues and short termism; 3) contests of 'oppositionism' versus adversarial politics; and 4) other phenomena such as freedom of information, the power of special interest groups, and the need to achieve increasing efficiency dividends. The complexity of the political environment in which public sector management work is constituted has no parallel.

Other evidence such as the primacy of the relationship between the minister and the Departmental Secretary is consistent with the literature which claims that 'the Secretary –Minister relationship is critical' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 13). These relationships, as well as those between the Departmental Secretary and ministerial office staff, are viewed as 'critical in the equation between a Minister and a Secretary' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 13). Furthermore, the evidence is consistent with the literature which claims that these relationships are somewhat strained due to the nature of appointment of such staff and their lack of appropriate experience (Banks 2014, p. 11) with consequences for the constitution of public sector management work. The public sector reform literature identifies these consequences as 'unanticipated

political risks for elected officials and public managers’ (Kettl 1997, p. 456), which arise by further separating policy-making from policy implementation through the appointment of ministerial office political advisors. The appointment of political advisors by ministers introduces another party to policy advisory, which creates a disconnect between ministers and Departmental Secretaries because it seeks to ‘decouple’ the work of policy and political governance from the work of administration or policy implementation which were formerly the shared domain for ministers and their Departmental Secretaries (Wilenski 1986b; Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990; 1993; Mulgan 2008a). Decoupling has consequences for public sector management work.

Further evidence about the confusion occurring as a result of the wedge that ministerial office staff appointments create is consistent with the literature. The public sector reform literature identifies this confusion and claims that reforms that sought to subordinate Departmental Secretaries to these ministerial office advisors have damaged the relationship between the elected ministers and their Departmental Secretaries (Campbell 1988; Gregory 1998; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993; Mulgan 2008a; Riggs 1986), and impinged on their constitution of public sector management work.

The evidence also shows that Departmental Secretaries are responsible for the greater majority of official government transactions within Australia; these encompass those pertaining to businesses and individuals.

This evidence is consistent with the literature that proposes:

Secretaries are at the very apex of the APS. Prime Ministers and Ministers rely on them for the provision of public services and turn to them for strategic advice about the whole spectrum of domestic and foreign activities which define our nation, our security, our stability and our quality of life. (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. preface)

The evidence confirms that the constitution of public sector management work is couched within what is today a large and complex government institution and that this institution contributes to the social and economic welfare and prosperity of Australia and is far-reaching and complex. This complexity means that Departmental Secretaries’ work and in particular the advice they give to government has long-term serious consequences. These can include the potential for a litany of policy failures and the

downfall or at least early departure of the government of the day. The demise of some governments may be related to the approach taken by some Prime Ministers of not properly considering policy advice offered by the bureaucracy (23:5a; 23:5b, 23:5c) (Howard 2001). This evidence is consistent with the literature which claims that recently failed policies such as the carbon and mining tax policies, the National Broadband Network policy, key components of immigration policy, and elements of industrial relations policy (Banks 2014) are examples of the consequences of not following policy advice. Each of these areas of policy failure is associated with policy arenas that are of major significance, extraordinarily complex and wicked in nature, and has substantial consequences for Australia. The evidence is consistent with the literature that claims that these failures were a result of the management or mismanagement of policy development (Banks 2014). In the above cases ‘one or more elements of “good process” was neglected or subverted’ and ‘the policy ideas were not adequately evidence-based nor subjected to sufficient scrutiny’ (Banks 2014, pp. 7–9). The literature further claims that unless the government of the day applies sound and accepted policy processes, incorporating the testing and contesting of policies, prior to their implementation ‘within the bureaucracy, the community, the Cabinet room and, ultimately within the Parliament’, difficulties will arise (Banks 2014, p. 9). At the heart of such processes is the need for ‘evidence, consultation and debate’ (Banks 2014, p. 9) which although complex is a critical component of the constitution of public sector management work.

Also consistent with the literature is the evidence that Secretaries are drawn into a political arena because by necessity they are required to work with political actors within the political environment such as the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the government, the parliament (and its committees). This political environment is demanding and problematic for, and constrains the constitution of public sector management work. In particular, parliament is considered by some to be an ‘adversary chamber’ (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 64). Although focussed on accountability, parliament was overly concerned with the ‘old check and tick’ approach of politicians (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 64). The parliament’s view of accountability was considered to be out of step with public sector reforms that reoriented such accountability from an input to an output focus. While ministers judge the public service in terms of strategic outcomes the

parliament still focuses on inputs that go into the achievement of the outcomes. As Halligan et al. (1996, p. 64-65) found

Parliamentary notions of accountability are still very much focussed on the minutiae of public administration [and not so much on the] more strategic view of [policy outcomes] what performance means in today's public service. [A consequence of this is that] Parliamentary committees encourage risk aversion of the worst kind. (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 69)

Furthermore the Senate Estimates process was viewed as a political way of 'using public servants' appearances as a means of getting at the Minister or the Department or both' (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 63). It was the 'gotcha' factor rather than focusing on scrutiny that was often the primary driver and the approach was based on 'getting into the weeds' to try and catch out the minister (Halligan et al. 1996, p. 63). Much scrutiny is placed on departments and Secretaries by parliament and it is both formal and informal and growing and tending to focus on Secretaries themselves (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c). Parliamentary Committees were criticised in the past for being too focussed on political rather than administrative domains (Halligan et al. 1996). The criticism remains apt today as the evidence has shown. The constitution of public sector management work is thus judged by two different standards: those of the minister and the parliament. A tension is created for the Departmental Secretary that ties their constitution of public sector management work further into the political sphere. The constitution of public sector management work is thus focussed on the complicated and often conflicting demands derived from ministers and their offices, parliamentary committees, and responding to political matters via crisis management (Halligan et al. 1996) because of the demands of the political environment.

In contrast with the literature on public sector reform, which claims that reform outcomes can be realised without need for consideration of the predicaments posed by the political environment, the evidence provides a different view. Some of the literature is consistent with the evidence which shows that public sector reform outcomes related to the constitution of public sector management work can be realised only if they are based on an appreciation and consideration of the challenges posed by 'political choices and governance' (Thomas 1996, p. 43; Campbell & Halligan 1992; Dunn 1997; Rhodes, Wanna & Weller 2009; Tiernan & Weller 2010; Weller 2001; Zifcak 1994). Rather than operate within a 'rational actor' or 'organisational process' framework (Allison 1971;

Allison & Zelikow 1999) as the proponents of public sector reform and managerialism infer, Departmental Secretaries operate instead within a 'governmental (bureaucratic) politics' framework (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999). In this model there are many actors who are:

... players who focus not on a single strategic issue but on many diverse intra national problems as well; players who act in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather according to various conceptions of national, organisational, and personal goals; players who make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics. (Allison 1971, p. 144)

The suggestion that Departmental Secretaries appeared unquestioningly to depend only on public sector reform solutions offered by the proponents of NPM, has been criticised in the literature by those that are critical of the NPM (Thomas 1996). Those critical of the NPM propose that the difficulties in securing significant and substantive reforms have included the complexity of synchronising or synergising the directions, views, commitments, and capabilities of the political and bureaucratic arms of the public sector (Julliet & Mingus 2008). Hence the literature which claims that a managerialist agenda, devoid of the nuances of the political context within which public sector management work is constituted, has been introduced into the public sector is in contrast to the evidence which shows that the political environment, although often characterised by ambiguity and opacity overwhelmingly dominates the constitution of public sector management work.

Evidence of the political environment shaping risk-avoidance behaviours and influencing a propensity for not taking risks is consistent with the literature that claims that the public sector has a low appetite for risk (Skotinicki 2013) as stated by the former Departmental Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Dr Watt. Furthermore, the literature proposes that 'most Secretaries are risk averse because there is no downside and no upside. It is collectivism and an inclusive model of reward, not a market approach' (Egan 2009, p. 55) which shapes their low propensity for risk and this is reflected in their constitution of public sector management work.

The evidence that the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment, rather than a market-based framework, is binding on the constitution of public sector management work is consistent with literature. The public sector is constitutionally bound in

Australia as in most Westminster-modelled polities, and so the concept of applying a market-based framework to the public sector is considered unsound and not comprehensive to meet the quandaries that constitutionality poses on the constitution of public sector management work (Peters & Pierre 2007). What the proponents of managerialism often forgot is that a core aspect of the constitution of public sector management work is the implementation of constitutions (du Gay 2006; Lynn 2007; Peters & Pierre 2007). The public sector and its constitutional, legislative and regulatory environments contain differences across a number of domains including: politics, governance, constitutional frameworks, institutional/interpersonal relationships, accountability of parliamentary government, and principles of democracy (Foley 2008; Goodsell 1985; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Kettl 1997; Maor 1999; Mulgan 2008b) which tightly bind the constitution of public sector management work to the ‘discipline of constitutional scrutiny’ (Rohr 1998, p. 104).

Furthermore, rather than a market-based discipline and the managerialist principles of responsiveness advocated by the pro-NPM literature, some anti-managerialist literature identifies a weakening of the ‘responsible operation of a state and [...] the effective running of a Constitution’ due to ‘contemporary passion for the “ethics of enthusiasm”’ for the NPM (du Gay 2008, p. 350; Bogdanor 2001). Other literature claims that a culture shift from a bureaucratic culture to a corporate culture has been ushered into the public sector ‘without knowledge on what public [sector] management really is’ (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 89; Bogdanor 2001; Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001), replete with its unique constitutional basis, and political overlays. The evidence shows that the constitution of public sector management work is grounded in the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment that directs and prescribes this work.

The literature offers comparisons whereby Australia is compared to an institution, called ‘Australia Incorporated’ (Egan 2009, p. 11), which is deemed akin to a ‘business within the public sector’ (Box et al. 2001, p. 611; Kettl 1997), the government/Prime Minister is deemed akin to the Board of Australia Incorporated and the ‘agents’ associated with such ‘principals’ are deemed to be the Departmental Secretaries (Egan 2009, p. 11). Although the literature draws on institution and agency theory, the evidence shows that Secretaries are not agents but instead are expected to be apolitical operators in a Westminster system of public administration. The Secretaries are responsible to the

ministers of Australia's government of the day rather than to a Board of Directors in an incorporated business. A defining factor which makes these comparisons unpalatable is the constitutional dimension of the environment in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work which comprises challenges posed by constitutional governance mechanisms, a myriad of legislation, and many regulatory frameworks (Thomas 1996).

The literature offers other comparisons between the work of the public sector manager and the private sector manager at the most senior levels, which are not consistent with the empirical evidence. One such comparison is that the role and work of the Secretaries of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Treasury are proposed to be akin to those of a principal staff executive in a global enterprise or of an executive director in a major company serving the Chairman and CEO (Egan 2009). However, the evidence, consistent with other literature, claims that Departmental Secretary roles underpin our democracy and the Constitution, and these roles are fundamentally different from those of CEOs and chairpersons in the private sector that have no such responsibilities (Banks 2014; Caiden 1991; du Gay 2000). The evidence consistent with the literature confirms that there is no definitive statement of what constitutes public sector management because it is bound by a myriad of factors associated with the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment in which it takes place. This environment constrains, prescribes, and directs the constitution of public sector management work that makes it unique (Clark 2001; Foley 2008; Goodsell 1985; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Kettl 1997; Maor 1999; Mascarenhas 1993; Mulgan 2008b; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 1995).

The public sector reform literature which premises the constitution of public sector management work on clear, unambiguous, rational assumptions and principles (Gregory 2007; Mulgan 2008a; Treasury 1987) and 'ideal models of [...] private sector' management work (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326; Bogdanor 2001; Gregory 2007) is inconsistent with the evidence. Such technocratic approaches to reforming the constitution of public sector management work focussed on efficiency and effectiveness (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Mascarehnas 1990; March & Olsen 1983; Salamon 1981; Wallis, Dollery, & McLoughlin 2007), and failed to appreciate that in Westminster systems such as Australia, established conventions, complexities and ambiguities which

are deeply embedded in the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment cannot be easily ignored, contested or displaced.

The evidence that frank and fearless advice may have become compromised by the changes in the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment in which Departmental Secretaries are appointed and terminated by the government of the day, is consistent with the literature critical of the NPM. This literature claims that Australia's Public Service political neutrality has become compromised and the risk of political interference re partisanship behaviour may have grown, as a result of charging the government with the appointment and termination of senior public servants (MacDermott 2008; Mulgan 1998a; Mulgan 1998b; Mulgan 2013; Podger 2007; Wiltshire 2014). Hence this legislative aspect of the constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment exerts a powerful influence and potentially negative consequences on the constitution of public sector management work.

The evidence that financial management initiatives introduced to the public sector have not reformed the constitution of public sector management is inconsistent with the public sector reform literature. The literature claims that the introduction of financial management programs which covered a range of policies and practices derived from the private sector were intended to redirect the public sector's attention on 'managing for results' (Australian Public Service Board 1986, p. 11). Other reform initiatives such as the introduction of forward-year estimates were intended to allow for financial planning over the longer term. Furthermore the launch of the Program Management and Budget initiative was to provide ministers and senior public servants with greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy for the efficient management of their departments' resources and overall performance (Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986b). However, the evidence shows that the financial environment in which public sector management work is constituted is one that rather than provide discretion, flexibility and freedom, in fact prescribes, constrains, controls and directs this work. Bureaucratic procedures and processes bind the financial environment in which public sector management work is constituted. These bureaucratic mechanisms are a necessary and critical feature of the public sector and serve to provide the sector with the required objectivity, impartiality and rationality. Essentially, such mechanisms require cost management rather than financial management, annual budget planning cycles that do not allow long-term planning, and there is limited autonomy for the

management of departmental resources because financial resources are appropriated from government and so are allocated and rescinded according to the requirements of the government of the day, which compromises concepts of efficiency.

Evidence that the changes brought about by social media mean that governments and their public sectors are required to now work in different ways and at a faster pace is consistent with some of the literature that claims that as well as the 24/7 media news cycle other changes have quickened the pace. These changes include: the greater volume of information available to government; the availability of more and different sources of advice; an ever burgeoning volume of information available to the public, media, business and interest groups with which such parties can be more informed and input via critiques; blurred boundaries between subject areas and disciplines so that departments must work together; and overlapping and enmeshed arenas such as international, federal, state, and local where interests and policies are contested (Smith 2007 in Commonwealth of Australia 2010c). These changes mean that ‘the means by which governments do their business have been transformed, and the pace at which business is done has quickened markedly’ (Smith 2007 in Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 14). This modern media environment has imposed growing requirements for contestability, transparency, and immediate responsiveness such that the constitution of public sector management work is shaped by reactivity, and short-termism.

The evidence of the powerful influence from the media environment that frames the constitution of public sector management work is also consistent with the literature. It claims that the media environment has driven the need to engage in greater dialogue with key community stakeholders and that the Departmental Secretary and the public service more broadly are exposed to more scrutiny, enquiry and criticism from the citizen, community, and society (Halligan et al. 1996). The evidence shows that this scrutiny, enquiry and criticism are often related to the predisposition of the modern media to report on and often sensationalise issues of ‘political’ interest, which arouse the attention of the ministers which are often responded to by Departmental Secretaries, at the minister’s request. The media environment thus binds the Departmental Secretaries and their constitution of public sector management work to the vagaries of the political domain, and is consistent with the claims documented by the Remuneration Tribunal which stated ‘each Secretary is subject to ongoing, detailed scrutiny and is more exposed to the vicissitudes of the government of the day than any other federal

public sector office' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. 1). The constitution of public sector management work is thus constrained and shaped by the composite of issues generated by the modern media environment as it cannot disregard the scrutiny, enquiry and criticism that this environment generates to which it must respond.

Consistent with the literature that claims that the modern world is characterised by competing and challenging institutional logics or models, which serve to stipulate the ways in which actors and organisations operate (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Friedland & Alford 1991; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980; Thornton & Ocasio 2008), the empirical research shows that the myriad dimensions and multiple logics within the many environments in which public sector management work is constituted serve to bind, constrain, prescribe, direct and shape this work. Within these many environments with multiple logics, calls made by managerialists to simply 'let the managers manage' go unheeded because public actors are not free to 'simply manage'. Rather than the rationalist model assumed by the proponents of NPM (Osborne & Gaebler 1992), the empirical research is more consistent with scholars who are critical of the NPM (du Gay 2000, 2002, 2008; Johnston 2000), given that the constitution of public sector management work in the APS reflects more the complex and nuanced 'governmental bureaucratic political model' (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999).

5.6.2. Conclusion

The empirical evidence adduced in this chapter confirms that public sector management work, at least in the APS, does not take place in the value-neutral managerialist environment that the literature suggests surrounds the NPM. The context or place in which Departmental Secretaries operate is comprised of a number of environments that bind, constrain, prescribe, direct and shape their constitution of public sector management work.

All of the above environments shape the place or the 'crazy world of real public administration' (Weller 2001, p. 188) 'the "fulcrum point" or the "frantic interface" between Departments and their Ministers (and the Prime Minister)' (Smith 2007, p. 15) in which the Departmental Secretary constitutes public sector management work. It is a place that offers them limited discretion with which to shape the constitution of public sector management work and instead this place curbs their freedoms, constrains their

decisions, prescribes the rules, directs their activities and binds their behaviours to strict codes of conduct and bureaucratic governance procedures. As such, the environments in which they constitute public sector management work are unique and context rich, rather than generic and context free as proposed by the advocates of managerialism and NPM.

Within these environments, Departmental Secretaries are expected to perform a number of roles and responsibilities that comprise the substance of activities that constitute public sector management work. These roles and responsibilities have been influenced by the artefacts of managerialism and have resulted in a duality of activities that the Departmental Secretaries are required to navigate when they constitute public sector management work. This duality of activities and the navigation between them is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Roles and Responsibilities – Boundary Riding a Duality of Activities on a Spectrum

As a Secretary there is no template for what you do when coming into a job or how you perform the job. ... (23:1a)

6.1. Introduction

The constitution of public sector management work is a ‘diffuse concept’ (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002, p. 237, see also Allison 1984) dependent on the actors, the environments and their activities. This chapter addresses the research question: how do Departmental Secretaries construct or perceive their roles and responsibilities in the context of continuing reforms? In executing their roles and responsibilities, Departmental Secretaries are required to navigate a plurality of activities arranged on a spectrum spanning rational-instrumental work at one end and work that is highly political-interpretive at the other end. How Departmental Secretaries execute their roles and responsibilities is fluid rather than static. The empirical findings of this research show Departmental Secretaries to be ‘boundary riders’ that constitute public sector management work in a rational-instrumental transactional manner on some occasions while, on others they are drawn into the political arena.

Departmental Secretaries report performing a range of roles and responsibilities, some which resemble ‘generic’ rational-instrumental activity, as described in the literature (see Drucker 1965; Graham 1995; Kotter 1982), while other work more closely resembles political work. Empirically, the ‘generic’ rational-instrumental work reported broadly incorporates classical management theory conceptions, such as those of Henri Fayol (1949), with overtones of what later public sector ‘reformers’ of a managerialist orientation, such as Osborne and Gabler (1992), advocate. Departmental Secretaries’ more political work escalates the closer they are to the seat of government power. Substantively, public sector management work remains close to that described by Weber (1978) and later by others such as Caiden (1991) and du Gay (2000). Collectively this work incorporates: 1) rational-instrumental work such as leadership,

governance and administration; and 2) political-interpretive work such as stewardship, stakeholder management and policy.

On the rational-instrumental side of the spectrum, many artefacts of the new managerialism surround the Departmental Secretaries' work, although they are not necessarily cognisant of their presence nor is it the case that they are necessarily influenced strongly by them. On the political-interpretive side of the spectrum, they work with a different set of influences, as the empirical research reported demonstrates. There are no constant or fixed positions on the spectrum but their work moves across the spectrum in a highly dynamic way, depending on a complex range of variables prevalent at any particular time. These might be relevant to their personal interpretations of the roles and responsibilities or might be related to the kind of organisation for which they are responsible. Effectively, their roles and responsibilities are both fixed and subject to highly interpretive judgement. Rational-normative models of public sector management do not fit the circumstances. The evidence reveals that Department Secretaries operate in variable positions on the spectrum (see Figure 6.1).

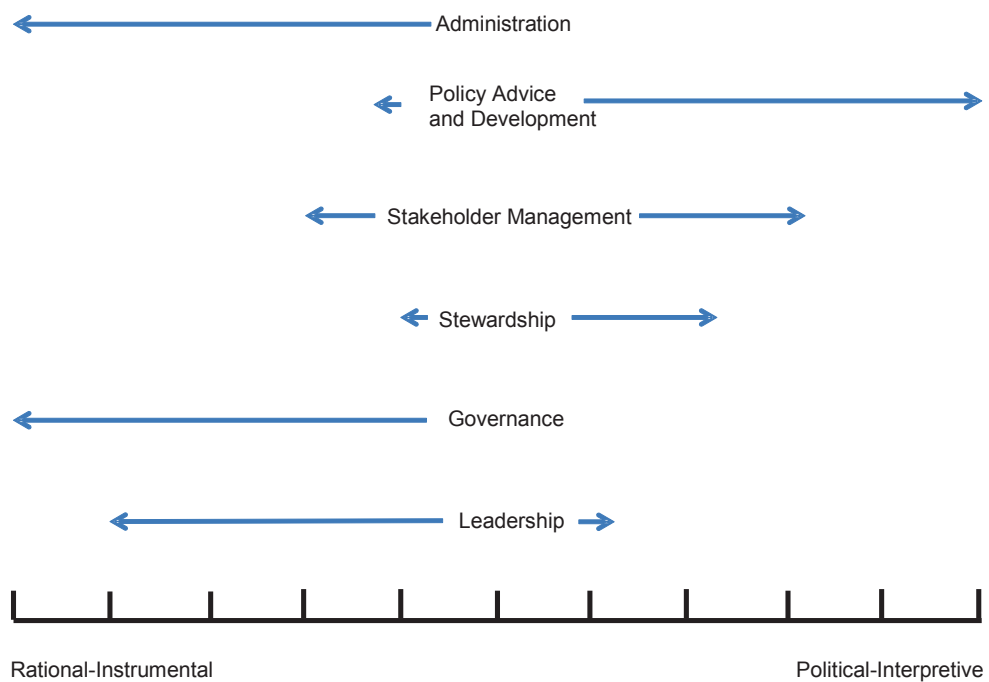


Figure 6.1 Execution of Departmental Secretaries' Roles and Responsibilities Across a Spectrum

When Departmental Secretaries were asked to discuss the core components of their ‘public sector management’ work, almost unanimously, they questioned the term. On further explanation, the Departmental Secretaries reported that their management work was dependent on requirements of the government of the day and these were accepted as their core focus (as outlined in different contexts in the previous two chapters). Departmental Secretaries believed that their work was less about ‘management’ than it was about delivering on government mandates and parliamentary requirements (12:7c; 12:7d; 19:8a). *‘So I never see that [our work] as management as such, that’s really about ... a delivery on this [government] mandate that we have . . .’* (19:8b).

The stress on mandate stands in stark contrast to the literature on public sector reform and the advocacy of a rationalist and managerialist oriented NPM (Barzelay 1992; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Osborne & Plastrik 1997). It reflects instead Allison’s (1971) and Allison and Zelikow’s (1999) governmental, bureaucratic, political actor model of behaviour rather than a rational actor model of behaviour as advocated by proponents of public sector reform. Analysis of their roles and responsibilities shows that Departmental Secretaries sit in different positions on this spectrum: sometimes they are more fixed at the political end and sometimes at the rational-instrumental end. The need to navigate the duality of activities that exists between these various roles and responsibilities is an unintended consequence of public sector reforms that affects the constitution of public sector management work. There was little acknowledgment by Departmental Secretaries of navigating a duality of roles and responsibilities between public service and managerialism resulting from public sector reforms indicating a subconscious assimilation and passive acceptance.

One of the reasons they may not be consciously managerial is because they perceive their roles to be more about policy and bureaucracy than about management. Many of their activities are grouped at the rational-instrumental end of the spectrum, a favoured (and most comfortable) position for some of the Departmental Secretaries from which, on a transactional basis, they are inevitably pulled or enticed towards the political end. Some Departmental Secretaries recognise, accept or prefer this more than others and are more ready to position themselves further along the spectrum. Some remain largely fixed at the rational-instrumental end. Their navigation of the spectrum also reflects

their work when managing up (to the minister and the government of the day) drawing them to the political, and their work when managing down (to the department and their subordinates) which draws them to the rational-instrumental. So they constitute public sector management work in multiple different positions on this spectrum.

6.2. Rational-Instrumental Activities

The activities that *predominantly* take place in a rational-instrumental manner pervade the constitution of public sector management work, although the political-interpretive end of the spectrum also influences these activities but to a lesser extent. These activities include those related to the leadership, governance and the administrative roles and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries as discussed later. These activities are principally transactional in nature.

6.2.1. Transformational or Transactional Leadership

Rational managerialism is reflected in the leadership roles and responsibilities of the Departmental Secretaries through the adoption of modern leadership styles; the development of visions, goals and objectives; the development of values and codes of conduct; and formal forward planning regimes. These artefacts create a semblance of rationality and instrumentality in these roles and responsibilities, even though Departmental Secretaries may not be conscious of their influence nor of the seeming legitimacy that these artefacts provide their leadership roles and responsibilities. The complexities and nuances of the leadership role do not allow it to be reduced to a simplistic semblance of ‘generic’ rational-managerial work. The political and bureaucratic nature of leadership as executed by Department Secretaries means they are continually navigating the spectrum.

Some Departmental Secretaries commented on their adoption of a transformational leadership style (Bass 1991) and that the old ‘command and control’ style of leadership was from a ‘bygone era’, neither viable nor in place in the public sector (2:9c). The transformational style was used when disseminating information to the workforce, especially from the political arena. It involved the translation of the minister’s policy and direction through synthesis, simplification and creation of relevance for the

workforce. These assertions were made by relatively youthful current Departmental Secretaries with recent MBA qualifications and are consistent with the ideology of the NPM. The articulation by Departmental Secretaries of the adoption or the display of a transformational style may be a reflection of the influence of the artefacts of managerialism and the NPM.

Despite assertions to the contrary, experience suggests that the command and control style of leadership remains a core feature of the public sector⁴² (13:4a; 13:5b). It is an institutionalised approach to leadership. Departmental Secretaries are not at liberty to exercise great variance in their own leadership styles, as they are expected to execute in a transactional sense the direction set, over which they, and their workforces, have little discretion.

One former Departmental Secretary was of the view that leadership of the workforce was akin to ‘manipulation’ (22:22). Manipulation was needed to achieve results through people. So leadership in this sense incorporated the use of a number of mechanisms and levers that would result in people working towards predetermined desired goals. While it was acknowledged that there were noble aspects to leadership, the leader’s role was to establish rules by which the organisation would be expected to operate, and to set aspirational goals where possible and, as such, leadership was considered to be a manipulative activity.

I used to say to people just to shock them partly, that the job of a leader is to manipulate staff. I mean you want to achieve a result, what you are doing is manipulating people to achieve that result you are doing that with, all sorts of mechanisms, all sorts of levers that you are pulling and tugging or whatever. So leadership is a manipulative role I think that’s why -- I mean there are noble things about leadership and there are things that ... [are less than noble]. (22:22)

The view of leadership as a manipulative activity reflects a candid analysis of the few freedoms and limited discretion that Departmental Secretaries have in their execution of leadership roles and responsibilities and the more instrumental and transactional nature of this role, rather than one that is transformational. Much of their leadership responsibilities emanate from the prescriptions of the government of the day. In this context of institutionalised command and control, Departmental Secretaries, though

⁴² The researcher makes this assertion based on her experience within the public sector for the past two decades.

articulating their preference to use a transformational leadership style, invariably resort to ‘manipulating’ their workforces per se, to do what has been prescribed. Thus, although they are free to adopt a range of leadership styles, the command and control style is one that lends itself to an arena in which they deliver a broader service or program whose content they are not at liberty to determine. This limitation on leadership is not considered by public sector reformists who assume that Departmental Secretaries are free to lead in a managerial sense, ignoring the strong directions given to them from the political arena.

... of course you can't lead Departments in the direction that is inconsistent with the government's broad wishes. So leadership is a leadership in the context of an overall leadership vision or a narrative that is developed by and with political government. (11:5)

Leadership was described as being predominantly about explanation, communication and contextualisation of a department's purpose goals and direction, both internally to their workforces and externally to the community which the department serves (8:5; 11:5; 12:14; 12:15b; 13:6; 16:14): ‘... it's a very important part of leadership to be able to explain to the business community and to consumers what it is that we set out to do and that's a key part of leadership’ (1:8). However, while Departmental Secretaries exercised leadership in this way, the determination of their departmental purpose, goals and direction is not their own (as outlined in the previous empirical chapters), and is instead highly prescribed by their ministers, leaving them with little room for interpretation. This lack of freedom with which to interpret and shape their leadership responsibilities, especially the freedom to determine the purpose, goals and direction of their department, is often forgotten by the advocates of NPM who instead assume that Departmental Secretaries have the same liberties with which to lead as their counterparts in other sectors. Departmental Secretaries stress the rational-instrumental aspect of leadership as the articulation of the department's predetermined purpose, its contribution and its value-add and so positions their work at the rational-instrumental end of the spectrum.

Leadership also involves the promulgation of APS principles, values and codes of conduct. Departmental Secretaries explained that these principles, values and codes of conduct were largely determined by the APSC but that they had the opportunity, albeit bounded, to contribute to their shaping. This contribution was offered in a collective

sense and framed by the contribution of their peers, and so often reflects isomorphism rather than innovation and entrepreneurialism. Limited discretion in shaping principles, values and codes of conduct provides little flexibility of interpretation in their leadership.

And certainly promoting the values and contributing, ... the role of the Departmental Head is to be part of developing the values and the capabilities, ... promoting the values ... I mean the Public Service Commissioner promulgates the values but the role of the Departmental Head in my opinion is to be very significantly involved in determining what those values are and what they should be; because after all it's your Department that's going to be applying those values, ... your staff are the ones that are affected by those values and as their spokesperson but also as a spokesperson for the conceptual thing that is the public service, you've got a role. (22:39)

Departmental Secretaries' leadership responsibilities incorporate the development and articulation of a vision for their organisations. However, many Departmental Secretaries were pragmatic in their views about this. Visions they argued were, in practice, the 'raison d'être' of their organisations, generally provided by the government of the day via the minister(s) (13:17d; 13:18; 15:20a). Thus many Departmental Secretaries had articulated visions on the basis of the direction given to them by their minister(s).

You have got to have a sense of purpose and direction so that's vitally important. You have got to know what you're trying to do. And that's not just something that you invent or comes to you overnight. It's an outcome of a range of influences from government, from policy, from legislation, from obligation, from public accountability, all those things ... (16:16)

As such it is '*... the Portfolio [that] dictates the vision in a sense*' (22:23) because the portfolio's policy agenda, developed by the minister, reflects the vision (17:17; 17:18). Ministers provide vision for their departments and these visions often reflect an established charter or mandate that the department frames. In that sense, the latitude which the Departmental Secretary has to develop a vision for his or her department is generally bounded or delimited; hence, many Departmental Secretaries are not in a position to craft visions and instead focus on interpretation and articulation. They understand that ministers, as elected representatives of the people, are the legitimate parties to develop visions (3:13; 3:14c; 11:5b; 12:15b; 12:15c; 24:25a).

A critical part of that [department's plan] was the vision. The vision had to be a vision that he [the minister] endorsed, that's what he [the minister]

wanted. It wasn't a vision just for the ... it was a vision for the Department and we saw it as the Commonwealth Department was going to be the leader of Australia's ... That's what he [the minister] wanted and that's what he [the minister] agreed to. (24:25c)

Any personal vision held by the Departmental Secretary was always constrained to the extent that it was compatible with that determined by the minister (11:6; 14:13d; 15:26).

You can, you know, it's a two-way street. You can try your very level best to influence the Minister['s vision]. But at the end of the end, you know. Whatever the Minister says [goes, because] he's the elected one or she. (15:27)

Although visions were accepted as providing a frame to guide and focus the efforts of the workforce, visions were understood by Departmental Secretaries to be received and hence developing a vision was not a priority. Here the Departmental Secretaries are reflecting a conscious understanding of the political influence on their role as leaders as well as their need to execute this activity in an instrumental way and hence their need to navigate up and down the spectrum in their work.

To be perfectly honest I actually see vision as telling people what we're doing and coming with us. So our vision ... is to provide services. The services the Australian Government has decided in a good manner to provide to Australian citizens. (4:13c)

Thus, in what is often considered a significant component of leadership, the Departmental Secretaries acknowledge the political origins of the visions they must execute instrumentally. Unlike the assumptions of public sector reformists who advocated only rational-instrumentality in this area of leadership, the establishment of visions is the domain of the elected government of the day, to be implemented by the Departmental Secretary. Calls by such reformists for public sector managers to 'steer' rather than 'row' (Osborne & Gaebler 1992), referring to the need to lead rather than follow, go unheeded because they are inappropriate for the constitution of public sector management work. Departmental Secretaries are in fact following the lead of the minister(s) and they and their departments do not have the autonomy from the government of the day to lead or steer at their discretion. Leadership within the constitution of public sector management work is essentially about following or 'rowing' in the direction set by the minister for the department and hence the analogy

and its premise are inappropriate. In reality, the artefacts of the NPM exist across the APS but cannot be applied and used as management tools to the same extent as in the private or non-government sectors because of the influence and force of the political dimension that renders leadership episodic.

However, the need to visualise for the long-term (ten to fifteen years) future of the public service as a whole was considered by some Departmental Secretaries to be an important part of their work (9:17), reflecting the influence of this artefact of rational managerialism. Forward thinking, taking a long-term view, considering systemic matters and positioning their organisations to realise wider objectives of government 'always within the context of working with the government of the day' (9:2) were considered essential components of leadership (17:17).

As a leader there's a strategic edge to this stuff [administration] and the strategic edge, one of the strategic edges, is positioning the organisation to assist the Minister and the Government achieve wider objectives. This is essentially a matter of timing and capability. The timing is if you want to pursue an idea you have got to have it ready at the right time. And the capability is either you or your organisation and I think it's the latter have the capability within it to develop some pretty solid thinking around what's wrong, what needs to change, and what might assist that process. (14:6c)

Senior management in the public service is bound by the short-term and immediate mandates given to them by the government of the day. Their leadership roles and responsibilities are not akin to those of their peers in other sectors because they do not have the discretion that allows such strategic and future-oriented planning. Instead they are bound by incrementalism that is prevalent across the public sector. Their strategic and future-oriented planning time horizons are those reflecting the terms of the governments. Although they can try and influence these governments of the day towards strategic and future-oriented planning agendas, in reality they do not have the power to determine such agendas and so are expected to be persistent and determined with the incrementalism that prevails (9:15) using this incrementalism to contribute towards the longer term (9:8d; 24:20).

Institutionalised incrementalism, because of its alignment to a governmental, bureaucratic and political perspective, is all but ignored by the proponents of public sector reforms and NPM who instead advocate a focus on the development of formal forward-planning regimes to be implemented by the public sector. In practice,

Departmental Secretaries understand that they may never realise even incremental aspects of departmental visions because execution is dependent on the machinations of a necessarily slow-moving bureaucracy which will span time horizons bound by electoral cycles regardless of any forward planning in which they engage. Institutionalised incrementalism or ‘muddling through’ (Lindblom 1959, 1979) which results from the frequent derailing of rational attempts at planning, because of unpredictable political actions, curbs the discretion which Departmental Secretaries have to execute leadership roles and responsibilities in a rational-managerial way. Instead their leadership is drawn into the political arena.

Although Departmental Secretaries’ leadership activities are heavily anchored in the rational-instrumental end of the spectrum, they are constantly juggling leadership roles and responsibilities between the duality of the rational-instrumental and the political-interpretive. Artefacts of managerialism influence them, if only in a subconscious manner. Departmental Secretaries do not necessarily acknowledge or recognise these artefacts as managerial but passively accept them. The artefacts of a rational managerialism are also evident in the governance role and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries, as discussed later.

6.2.2. Assurance via Governance

All Departmental Secretaries are obliged by law to establish and oversee a comprehensive governance framework for their department(s). *‘You have stewardship of an organisation that not only has to try to support the governance of the country, [but] you have to apply proper governance in the way that you operate’ (9:8c; 9:5).* Such governance frameworks incorporate:

arrangements by which the power of those in control of the strategy and direction of an entity is both delegated and limited to enhance prospects for the entity’s long-term success, taking into account risk and the environment in which it is operating. (Commonwealth of Australia 2003, p. 2)

Departmental Secretaries commented that their governance frameworks include a range of structures and mechanisms which aim to provide a reasonable degree of assurance for the government that their organisations have clarity of purpose; are structured appropriately; have in place accountability frameworks that, collectively and

transparently, enable the organisation's performance success. This role was considered of paramount importance (9:11) and indeed many felt this was what public sector 'management 101' was essentially about (21:3).

Now when you talk about [public sector] management we think of governance first, as the essential setting of the tone for the organisation. Setting of the strategic direction, the accountability to the Parliament ... (19:2)

Many of these frameworks involve explicit attention to the design of organisation structures and executive management committee mechanisms, employment functions, financial management procedures, legal functions, ministerial functions, board management (for Statutory Authorities), risk management mechanisms, record keeping and reporting systems, procurement, contract and project management activities, and performance review functions (6:9). This work encompasses the need to respond to regulatory oversight by bodies, such as, but not limited to Senate Estimates Committees and Parliamentary Committees; the Australian National Audit Office; the Inspectors-General; and the Ombudsman, and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Departmental Secretaries mentioned that they often focus their attention on reports provided by such regulatory oversight bodies (4:4). These often centre on governance arrangements, as the law obliges them to consider and respond to such bodies and their reports (3:16). In the execution of this role, Departmental Secretaries juggle both rational-instrumental artefacts (some of them managerial) embedded within the frameworks they use to deliver the governance role but also consider and work with the political-interpretive dimensions of this role. Such juggling renders their work fluid.

Departmental Secretaries commented that mandated governance provides a degree of comfort that their departments are adhering to the legislation and the required 'ways of operating', which reduces the likelihood of incurring risks (5:25; 21:21). Hence Departmental Secretaries understand that this component of their work is of fundamental importance to the minister(s). As both they and the minister(s) are risk averse, and as there are significant consequences for poor governance, the governance role and its responsibilities is a significant component in the constitution of public sector management work, which is consciously understood to be driven by the political aspects of the role; hence, careful attention to this role provides the Departmental

Secretaries a degree of ‘peace of mind’ from the wrath of the minister which would be felt if this role were poorly executed.

So yeah the governance thing I was careful about because I felt that if we had those governance structures in place and they were working properly then other things would flow from that which would make me feel more comfortable. (15:9)

So ... governance ... So your job at this level is to get as much reasonable assurance as you can that things are operating properly and you are conforming with the relevant laws and policies, otherwise it's an ugly place to be. (21:3)

The execution of this role is predominantly rationally instrumental and transactional; a frame within which the Departmental Secretaries have become somewhat captives of managerialism as it infiltrates governance work.

Departmental Secretaries describe the governance role as one in which they exercise some degree of interpretation and discretion in the way in which governance is executed. But they understand that the drivers for the public sector are different from other sectors and hence the governance framework that exists in the public sector reflects these different drivers (6:2; 18:16; 12:4). In particular, the legislatively prescribed and institutionalised requirement for appropriate organisation structures, transparency of operations, fair and due processes, propriety and prudence in the management of appropriated funds, integrity of procedures employed, reflect the different drivers and hence the different nature of governance in the public sector. Prescription and institutionalisation result in a willing acceptance of the rational-instrumental dimension.

Because I think it's easy to sort of generalize public sector management and private sector management. Whether it's a company or a government department or agency, there are different drivers. You're operating within a particular [governance] framework: in the case of government, prescribed by legislation, by and large to make efficient and effective use of public resources to achieve the business of the department or agency, the objectives that the government has set for that particular organisation. (16:1b)

As will be discussed below, administration means they also have to navigate the rational-instrumental end of the spectrum, especially where their department was responsible primarily for program delivery.

6.2.3. Subordination of Administration

The administration role and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries mostly cover three key areas: 1) administration of government programs; 2) deployment of a resource base (people, financial, property, and information technology); and 3) operation of systems and processes, with which to implement government programs (23:1b). These administrative roles and responsibilities are considered subordinate relative to the more politically oriented roles of stewardship, stakeholder management and policy. Analysis of the empirical evidence indicates this ‘other’ role and its responsibilities has a lower standing in the constitution of public sector management work, largely due to the lack of interest and consideration that ministers have in administration relative to policy and the lower priority that ministers place on the administration of a department (13:9, 13:16b; 13:17a; 13:17b; 13:17c). The subordinate position of administration is also reflected in the limited prominence/representation it is given within Departmental Secretaries’ Performance Agreements.

It is ironic that many public sector reforms and artefacts of managerialism were focussed on by proponents of NPM and are now reflected in the administration role. Yet Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work by focusing less on administration and more on roles and responsibilities which are closely aligned to their minister’s requirements or interests as this allows them to work closely with the government of the day and maintain a persona of power and prestige.

One Departmental Secretary commented that while there is recognition of the accomplishment of policy advising and development activity across the public sector, because of the direct involvement of the Departmental Secretary in such activity many programs in the public sector are not administered directly by the Departmental Secretary. As the quote below suggests, policy is performed by the most senior executive cadre within the sector and the government: Departmental Secretaries, ministers and Cabinet, and yet administration is considered to be the purview of subordinates. Hence there is prestige associated with working on the ‘A team’ of policy as opposed to the ‘B team’ of administration. Consequently administration or ‘... *the management of programs which is the other responsibility of the Departmental Head*’ (22:1b) is often delegated to other members of the Departmental Secretaries’ executive management teams such as deputy secretaries and branch heads.

In fact the other thing about policy departments is the policy is generally done well in the public service because not only have you got the Secretary of the Department and his or her senior executives involved in the measure. You've got the Minister and eventually you've got the Cabinet. So I say you've got the "A team" to focus on policy. So what happens when government makes the decision on the policy? Flick it back to the Department for implementation and it's given to a Division or Branch Head to get on with the implementation. Now where's the "A team"? Nowhere to be seen ... (3:17)

A number of artefacts of a rational managerialism are reflected in the administration role and responsibilities of the Departmental Secretaries. These artefacts include the introduction of people, financial, property and information technology frameworks reflecting a private sector orientation; the need to negotiate within bargaining frameworks, and the need to establish such instruments as individual contracts, and collective, certified enterprise agreements. These artefacts create a semblance of rationality and instrumentality in this role even though Departmental Secretaries may not be conscious of their influence on public sector management work nor of the seeming legitimacy these give to administration roles and responsibilities. In reality, although administrative activities are largely rational, instrumental and transactional, they are influenced by the political machinations of governments and ministers and so also require the Departmental Secretary to operate, at times, at the political-interpretive end of the spectrum when administering their departments.

In particular, a core component of the deployment of resources that Departmental Secretaries oversee, employee relations and industrial relations, reflect the artefacts of rational managerialism. The employee relations and industrial relations arena is one which featured significantly in the reforms advocated by proponents of NPM. Such proponents recommended a range of reforms and artefacts to provide greater discretion and freedoms to the Departmental Secretaries in this aspect of their work. However, these functions are still so highly prescribed that the constitution of public sector management work is only marginally influenced by contemporary management ideas promoted by rationalist-managerialist reformers. Establishing and maintaining working relationships with relevant employee representative groups such as unions; the need to negotiate within bargaining frameworks; and the need to establish such instruments as individual contracts, and collective, certified enterprise agreements, comprise the bulk of such work.

Departmental Secretaries commented on the complexity and problems associated with government reforms that mandated decentralised and then centralised approaches to collective, certified enterprise bargaining agreements. Several commented on the fact that their workforces comprise four different segments including: 1) non-ongoing temporary, 2) intermittent, 3) casual, and 4) permanent ongoing workforces, all employed at different times and for different periods of time, to perform very different work. Although it was not pragmatic to negotiate an enterprise agreement with these four different workforces, doing so was now required by law as a result of reforms. The Departmental Secretaries found a way to do so but commented on the difficulties. Others were concerned with negotiating such agreements during negative budget environments, because they had limited ability to negotiate beyond the government mandated 'envelope'. These comments reflect the need for Departmental Secretaries to operate predominantly from the rational-instrumental end of the spectrum but on occasions to also navigate to the political-interpretive end.

We have workforces that are a bit different, ... Our workloads [are different] [some] we bring on for a very short period of time. We had 43,000 [in one workforce]. ... We had to work [it] out, because it was a government requirement that they operated under an enterprise agreement. As we only bring them on for seven or eight weeks, there is no time to have a negotiation about an enterprise agreement. ... So we got around the – we didn't get around that, but we got around what could have been an almost insurmountable problem: by finding a way of both complying with the law which we had to do, but doing it in a way that worked for the business. ... So we have got four separate enterprise agreements for workforces that operate very differently. In trying to fit that in to the legislative framework that really doesn't allow for that, it's a challenge. (5:27a)

The operation of systems and processes (such as information management, financial management, and project and program management) is another component of the Departmental Secretaries' administration role and responsibilities requiring that they navigate the rational-instrumental domain in the ways in which public sector management work is constituted. The administration of such systems and processes is contingent on a range of institutionalised bureaucratic policies and procedures. There is limited opportunity for Departmental Secretaries to exercise discretion or to make their own interpretation in the administration of systems and processes to implement government programs. In particular, the strict adherence to laborious and bureaucratic procurement policies, guidelines, processes and procedures limits the use of discretion. Limited discretion in turn serves to reduce the risks to government. Thus the

administration of systems and processes is bound by rules and regulations which reduce the freedoms with which the Departmental Secretaries can constitute public sector management work, except in a rational-instrumental manner. Reforms intended to raise the ‘efficiency and effectiveness’ of administration activity, such as the operation of systems and processes, failed to take hold because they did not take into account the institutionalised bureaucracy which is so much a part of the constitution of public sector management work.

6.3. Political-Interpretive Activities

The activities that predominantly take place in a political-interpretive manner also pervade the constitution of public sector management work, although in a lesser sense. These activities include those related to the stewardship, stakeholder management and policy roles and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries as discussed below. These activities are crowded by the political artefacts of government and less by those of a rational managerialism. These activities are principally interpretive in nature and hence the constitution of public sector management work also reflects this interpretive perspective.

6.3.1. Trojan Horse of Stewardship

Departmental Secretaries described the constitution of public sector management work as also comprising a stewardship role and responsibilities of the APS as a whole, public sector ‘management’ beyond any one portfolio, department, agency, or statutory authority (5:31). It features as a key consideration in the work of the Departmental Secretaries. The majority of Departmental Secretaries spend time executing this role and see themselves as the stewards of the APS (12:23–24; 1:13). They describe this as a ‘corporate citizen’ role and take it seriously and often involve their departments in contributing to work that would benefit the APS as a whole (13:25; 14:16b).

... stewardship [of] the Australian Public Service. Now all Portfolio Secretaries are asked to have a stewardship role in the Department, to think about the public services as one. (4:4)

The stewardship function was recently augmented within the changes made to the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013). These changes formally require Departmental Secretaries to exercise stewardship individually for their departments and collectively for the APS. A former Departmental Secretary saw the exercise of this stewardship as a contributing factor in the functioning of the public sector which, in turn, is significant to Australia's democracy. But the requirements of this Act and the language of the former Departmental Secretary represent a rational-managerialist depiction of the stewardship role. In reality, this role and its responsibilities are embroiled in a multitude of political, governmental, substantive and bureaucratic realities that Departmental Secretaries must consider and wrangle every day.

... individually and collectively, Commonwealth Secretaries under legislation now have a responsibility to be stewards of their Departments and stewards collectively of the Public Service as a whole. In other words, they have a responsibility for the health and the effectiveness of the institutions that they lead. This is based on the premise that government departments and agencies are institutions of State of significance to the operation of our Democracy. (23:2)

Departmental Secretaries described stewardship as being a collegiate member of the wider public service community of Secretaries (13:26). Some commented that they executed this broader role by being members of government leadership forums (14:17; 22:29) (see Appendix I). In these forums, the Departmental Secretaries described their engagement in discussions and debates about the functions and functioning of the public service but these forums are not immune from the Departmental Secretaries' own political behaviours.

Yes it does [management and leadership extends beyond your role of Departmental Secretary], you are a part of a collegiate whole. You have specific legal responsibilities within your own portfolio but you have a broader responsibility to the public service as a whole, the government as a whole to be a corporate and collegiate colleague and to support the broader quality and development of the public service and its delivery. (11:7a)

Stewardship responsibilities might give the impression of being a rational-instrumental managerial role easily executed as part of public sector management work. The artefacts of a rational managerialism include the need to work in a cooperative and collegiate manner with the Secretaries Board, the requirement to develop whole of government approaches, and a contribution to the professional development of the public service.

These artefacts were intended to create a rationality and instrumentality to these roles and responsibilities.

Departmental Secretaries' descriptions of the stewardship role and its responsibilities indicate that many *are* conscious of its influence, but many Departmental Secretaries acknowledge the complexities and nuances of the political and governmental nature of their role as irreducible to the simplistic semblance of 'generic' rational-instrumental managerial work. In practice, most Departmental Secretaries recognise the constraints of the political and governmental dimensions. They acknowledge that stewardship is an ideal worth considering but that this is difficult to achieve given their complex reality. Many comment, albeit in a subtle way, that simply because stewardship is mandated does not necessarily mean that it is realisable. They referred to stewardship as 'a big management idea', a 'phenomenon', and an 'expectation' as well as something that 'is easier to say than to do' indicating its potential but not acknowledging its realisation (13:25; 11:7b; 14:17).

That's [the Secretaries Board] fairly recent because of the phenomenon called stewardship which was identified in the Blueprint for Reform by Terry Moran, which I think is a great description of that broader role of Secretaries, [a] collective role, which I think is really important and undervalued until fairly recently. (13:25)

Although difficult, the Departmental Secretaries commented on their quest to adopt a whole of government approach wherever possible. They explained this means giving consideration to the priorities of the government of the day which were understood to be greater than the priorities of any one department, hence involving cooperation and compromise:

So you see it's about doing what you should do. This is all part of the expectations of a leader of a public sector organisation. You absolutely don't just work for your own organisation. (14:17)

It means participating in cross-service committees and operating interdepartmental committees. It means working together with other departments to support and assist them in delivery of the government's broader agenda and priorities. It means accepting the need to 'live within one's budget' and to manage budget cuts in a manner that allows the sector as a whole to meet the government's broader objectives. Their stewardship is on display when they provide submissions and contributions to

Parliamentary Committees and Commonwealth Reviews (16:24). Stewardship is about working with peers to consider, decide and agree as a collective whole on how to achieve the government's policy directives. These rational explanations and comments by the Departmental Secretaries as to how they work indicate that they acknowledge a rational-managerial paradigm, notwithstanding the political reality in which they work and which they need to navigate.

I always felt that there was a contribution that I should make to improving and sustaining the APS. I think that just comes with the job that the most senior levels of Departments need to think of themselves as having a collective responsibility for the leadership and management of the APS as a whole. Sometimes making compromises if there were disagreements between one portfolio and another within the Australian Public Service, sometimes you needed to say to your own Deputies, "We're not going to follow our narrow, our self-interests. We'll sign on to the bigger picture here for the APS as a whole". (17:23)

The expectation of managerialism is that rational Departmental Secretaries can apply this artefact of the NPM, albeit in a limited way, but when it comes to the practical reality of their work they are constrained. The expectation that Departmental Secretaries will exercise a whole of government approach as part of their stewardship responsibilities is subject to the complexities that result when the collective approach that they are expected to achieve is constantly subject to the disputes and disagreements prevalent in competing political agendas. In this arena, the cooperation and compromise required as part of the stewardship role and responsibilities are difficult to realise in a practical sense, given the political and bureaucratic dimensions of their work. Several former Departmental Secretaries suggested that the quest to achieve a whole of government approach was a contemporary management idea that was fraught: they referred to it as a 'Trojan horse'.

Anecdotally the public service that I joined in the mid-1960s was one of competing barons often with violent feuds that went on over many, many decades. Now that is pretty much gone. It is much more collegiate and cooperative. Where they possibly can Secretaries take a 'whole of government' approach and that of course has been one of the big if you like management ideas it certainly has been a Trojan horse. It is easier to say than to do but certainly one that is pursued. (11:7b)

Other current Departmental Secretaries commented similarly about the difficulties of realising the stewardship function across the public sector. Their experience is that the

stewardship function and engagement across the broader APS by Departmental Secretaries is more the rhetoric than the reality. Instead, the ability to be noticed, recognised, rewarded and promoted as a Departmental Secretary is based on the work one did for the minister, often as a Deputy Secretary. The ongoing contribution to the broader APS, adopting a whole of government approach, and displaying stewardship, went largely unrecognised or at least was secondary to one's individual contribution to one's minister in a specific situation. Pressure to personally and individually contribute to the minister's requirements, were shown to be of greater consequence to the Departmental Secretaries than expectations of collective stewardship. This political pressure shapes the constitution of public sector management work, rather than the rational-normative concepts of managerialism.

The rhetoric is that it's [stewardship] expected, but the measured reality that people getting appointed to Secretary jobs don't always demonstrate, is the connected behaviour as Deputies. Some of them do, some of them don't. So it's not a guarantee of promotion and it's not a blocker to promotion, but again it's one of those ranges of factors. The greatest way to get to be Secretary is to do a whacking great job for your Minister when you are a Deputy, because they talk to their colleagues and say "oh this person is pretty good," and then it's all about reputation. ... And so the path to greatness as it were, isn't necessarily about your corporate [stewardship] as in APS contribution as much as it is about the kind of personal contribution you make in a particular context, that's a slightly cynical view, but that's been my experience. (21:31)

While the 'path to greatness' per se (which could include bigger and better organisations to work within) or promotion for the Departmental Secretary may well be as above, it is the researcher's observation, as a public servant, that Departmental Secretaries *are* expected to practise stewardship of the APS. On the whole they do participate in such stewardship when called on to do so by the minister(s), the Public Service Commissioner, the central agencies, and/or their peers. However, the evidence indicates that those seeking promotion will focus more on behaviours which are accepted, recognised and rewarded by the minister for promotion than on those that are less so. In that sense the stewardship function will remain captive to the influence of the political dimension and less resemble a rational-instrumental activity.

An expectation of their stewardship role, one which featured significantly, was their contribution to the professional development of the public service. Their membership of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) and their participation in the

Public Sector Management Program Committee and the Australian and New Zealand School of Government was integral to their efforts at developing a professional public service (3:22; 4:25). By participating in these bodies, they were able to develop other members and grow the profession of public service. Their connection with other professional institutions and organisations was important as it provided them with exposure to the people, work processes, products and services of (often non-public sector) organisations. Such exposure provides the Departmental Secretaries with an opportunity to contribute to, learn and bring back knowledge from such organisations to the APS. Their interface with other organisations is deemed important as it gives the Departmental Secretary a broader perspective with which to exercise their stewardship. In this regard, public sector management has been influenced by the travel of contemporary management ideas. The Secretaries acknowledged the difficulty, but importance, of finding time in their schedules to exercise such stewardship although some admitted they were disappointed that they had not found enough time (10:13). While Departmental Secretaries are, in this capacity, working at the rational-instrumental end of a spectrum, this is anomalous for their stewardship.

I've also felt it's important to make a contribution back so I do presentations but have a fairly high involvement in the accounting profession and Institute of Public Administration to make sure that we are contributing to the professionalism of the public service as well. So in this world you only command a seat at the table if you've got something to offer and people have respect for your views. So the professionalism of this organisation is very important to me, the standing of the organisation. (3:6)

In their stewardship role and responsibilities, Departmental Secretaries are constantly juggling the rational-instrumental and political-interpretive dimensions of their work. Departmental Secretaries, when they acknowledge and recognise the artefacts of their stewardship role and responsibilities as managerial, navigate the spectrum of dualities, negotiating the artefacts of managerialism. This navigation has an impact on the constitution of public sector management work given the contradictions and inconsistencies between the two dimensions.

6.3.2. Stakeholder Management – Concurrence or Conflict

All Departmental Secretaries developed relationships, collaboration and partnerships with an extensive, broad and diverse range of stakeholders. Stakeholder management

encompasses working with many and diverse stakeholders including but not limited to those identified in Appendix J.

The requirement to manage stakeholders is also documented within the position summary for the Office of the Secretary as reported by the Remuneration Tribunal Report Part 1 (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. ii). The Departmental Secretaries referred to their need to liaise with a wide group of stakeholders who are generally the recipients of public services and those citizens affected in some way by policy decisions. The Departmental Secretary is expected to work in a balanced and diplomatic manner with the diverse and differing requirements of the various constituent groups with whom the department deals, and whom the minister represents (11:10; 11:3) and concurrence is expected with these stakeholders.

Here too as in all their work *‘there is also [a] “boundary rider” or ambassador role dealing with the important constituents for your Department and for your Minister’* (11:1c), that means they are pulled into the political dimension rendering the rational expectation of concurrence almost impossible. They do not have the discretion to choose their stakeholders as they are predetermined for them in terms of importance by ministers, parliament, and the government of the day and they are expected to manage such stakeholders using prescribed public sector processes and procedures to which they are bound, and according to the requirements and expectations of the minister(s). Departmental Secretaries navigate to the political-interpretive end of the spectrum to do so, yet the language and artefacts of stakeholder management are subverted by a rational managerialism. Unlike the simplistic assumptions made by advocates of NPM, stakeholder relationship building, partnering and collaboration (internally and externally) is a complex and context dependent component of management work which draws them into the political realm.

Rational managerialism has infiltrated the stakeholder management role and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries. Managerial artefacts such as ‘Citizens’ Charters’ and ‘Customer Service Agreements’ and their language of clients, customers and consultative committees, permeate the stakeholder management role and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries, implying it is a rational-instrumental role. Departmental Secretaries were unanimous in their understanding and acceptance that the key stakeholder was the citizen, the community, the society (1:5; 13:15; 18:11;

19:10d); in other words the Australian people. As Departmental Secretaries commented *'stakeholders fundamentally are the Australian community . . .'* (19:10c). Australian people are considered to be the primary *raison d'être* of the public sector and hence managing these stakeholders was a large component of the constitution of public sector management work. In effect, the community as the key stakeholder is deemed to be anyone and everyone who had the potential to be affected by and/or positively or negatively affect the policies and programs of the department or portfolio: *'so in the end, the ultimate stakeholder for [the Department] is the community, both as the user of the [products and services] and as our funder. The circle closes with the community'* (6:19). Such statements indicate an implicit bias towards the rational rhetoric of managerialism because, in reality, such stakeholders are managed via the minister(s) and so these relationships are consistently couched in a web of politics requiring Departmental Secretaries to navigate to and from the dualities of positions on the spectrum.

The community served by the public sector are represented, either directly or indirectly, by the elected representatives of the parliament and hence the parliament is the key stakeholder for most Departmental Secretaries:

now they [the community we serve] were represented by the Parliamentary process, by the Parliamentary representatives so clearly we are accountable to the Parliament. So the Parliament is a very key stakeholder.' (19:10b)

Parliamentary stakeholders encompass the Prime Minister, ministers (cabinet members and backbenchers), parliamentary secretaries, parliamentary committees and their associates. Departmental Secretaries devote quality time and effort to the development of relationships with those stakeholders with whom they have a primary relationship (see discussion in Chapter 5). This stakeholder management is dominated by the political and institutionalised context and environment in which these stakeholders operate. They are not at liberty to opt in or out of stakeholder management with parliamentary stakeholders. Analysis of the evidence indicates a conscious bias towards the political dimension of work. The need to navigate dualities, contingent on circumstances and situations, creates contradictions in perceptions of their roles that has an impact on their work.

On other occasions, Departmental Secretaries reflect a different bias towards rational-instrumental dimensions. They confirmed their need to develop relationships with their equivalent colleagues across the state jurisdictions. Across state jurisdictions they worked with peer groups from many portfolios to achieve synergies and meet Commonwealth–State deliverables. Such stakeholders demand a significant amount of the Departmental Secretaries’ time (16:11b) and many Departmental Secretaries commented on the complexities associated with the management of stakeholder relationships across jurisdictions. They identified Commonwealth–State relationships in Australia’s federated system as generally complicated and problematic but manageable.

In the state jurisdictions we also work closely with the Ministers, with the Departments of our counterparts. ... because often the citizen comes through the door, they don’t care whether we’re the Australian government, or State government, they just need services and so we work with that. Those relationships with the State are often complex, particularly when the State–Commonwealth relationships are complex. (4:10a)

The abovementioned comments indicate Departmental Secretaries articulating a rational rhetoric associated with the stakeholder management role and responsibilities. Analysis of the evidence indicates an insecurity that may have developed as a consequence of a perceived loss of power and prestige formerly associated with their positions. This loss of power resulted from the introduction of managerialism and its artefacts to the sector. Managerialism lessened the power and prestige previously associated with the positions of the Mandarins (the former Departmental Secretaries). Contract-based appointments for Secretaries and the associated loss of tenure produced more timid Departmental Secretaries, given that their termination was now technically easier (Podger 2007; Shergold 2004; Weller 2001, p. 193; Weller & Wanna 1997). Current Departmental Secretaries may have created for themselves a new identity, redefined their roles and established a new base of power in their new domain, after public sector reforms. Since the reforms of the 1980s, Departmental Secretaries have re-created their role using the rhetoric of NPM.

Departmental Secretaries commented that they had established strong personal relationships with every Secretary of relevant state government departments and were able to draw on such relationships, to manage difficult and complex problems as they arose across these jurisdictions. Many commented on the importance of solid relationships across the membership of Commonwealth–State ministerial councils and

their standing committees. These standing committees would often gather informally prior to formal meetings taking place, to discuss and try to resolve differences about public policy matters. Again, the Departmental Secretaries are making statements reflecting a rational rhetoric, implicitly accepting the rationality of managerialism. They commented that Australia being a small nation (with only six states and two territories), enables them to manage the transactions of the business of government collectively with a focus on the 'national interest' rather than 'parochial interests'. Such language does not denote the reality of the political realm so much as reflect a rational-instrumental language of managerialism.

Invariably, it was the strength of personal relationships and networks established over long periods of time between the Commonwealth Departmental Secretaries and their state counterparts which, Departmental Secretaries explained, enabled the resolution of many contentious matters informally and prior to the conduct of these more formal meetings 17:12): *'I would chair the Commonwealth State Council and went to a lot of trouble to build again good personal relationships with my counterparts in the State governments. . . .'* (17:11).

Although there is acknowledgment of the strength of the relationships established by Departmental Secretaries with the benefit of longevity in the sector, this alone is not sufficient to surmount the complexities of the political domain in which the stakeholder management role is executed. Instead, analysis of the empirical findings shows there is a subtext of their desire to protect the integrity and ethos of the public sector from the consequences of the decisions of political actors such as ministers and their advisors operating in the chaotic, vitriolic and shambolic arena of politics. The subtext includes a concern that if they were to allow political ministerial decisions to prevail, the public sector would not survive. Departmental Secretaries see themselves as acting as 'responsible intellectual Mandarins', albeit under difficult circumstances, almost in the sense of the hyperbole of the British television series 'Yes Minister'. The empirical findings demonstrate that they manage all the transactions of government; that, due to their longevity in the sector, they can connect as a group that knows the sector; they are appalled by the political battlefield of government; they are apolitical operators; their work within the public sector contributes to Australia's democracy; they have a public service ethos and work for the common good. The subtext of responsibility means Departmental Secretaries are trying to navigate the duality close to the rational-

instrumental end of the spectrum when they execute their stakeholder management role and responsibilities even though this role is couched in the political end of the spectrum.

Departmental Secretaries explained that developing relationships, partnerships and collaborating with their peers, was required due to the interdependent characteristic of public sector management work (22:9b; 3:5c). Thus while all departments and agencies are different and have their own responsibilities, they are at the same time expected to work together to achieve collective outcomes (22:18). Often the work of the Departmental Secretaries incorporates coordination of activities across a multitude of agencies, sectors, jurisdictions and stakeholders and so there is a requirement to work together to realise collective outcomes across the public sector: *'... particularly in terms of your work that partnering is an important way to achieve efficiencies going forward'* (3:3). Public sector management work is in this sense a collective practice replete with the need to communicate, consult, co-design and develop mechanisms to realise consensus with stakeholders. One Departmental Secretary commented on this interdependence by saying: *'... I feel this [need to collaborate] very strongly, that in modern government it's impossible to work alone'* (14:6a).

The concept of collaboration and partnering is complex and fraught with difficulties, in particular, the need for all parties to agree is problematic; hence, collective outcomes are rarely if ever achieved. As one Departmental Secretary commented *'one of the downsides of just having a collaborative approach is it does, like everything else, require concurrence on the part of both [or all] parties'* (3:3). While facilitative mechanisms exist with which to foster such collaboration and partnering, the work of the Departmental Secretaries is complicated by a myriad of other parties' and organisations' differing views, attitudes and agendas that make reaching consensus, difficult if not impossible. In particular, the differing responsibilities, operations, capabilities, deliverables, outcomes and budgets across public sector agencies create difficulties in realising agreement post-collaboration and partnering. The concurrence expected is rarely realised as it conflicts with the Departmental Secretaries' departmental agendas and their own personal needs to achieve and be recognised by their minister(s) for their individual rather than collaborative contributions.

The dichotomy of overt expected collective collaboration and a somewhat covert recognition of individual personal contributions means that Departmental Secretaries

are constantly moving their positions across a duality of positions on the spectrum. They need to please their minister(s) by working in a rational-instrumental way and at the same time and/or at other times they need to master the political-interpretive dimension of the spectrum and work in an interpretive way.

Managerialism denies the boundary riding that takes place across the entire spectrum as Departmental Secretaries navigate dualities. The policy role and its responsibilities require navigation along the spectrum from the political-interpretive to the rational-instrumental, thus defying efforts by advocates of the NPM to dichotomise policy from administration.

6.3.3. Contestability of Policy

Although there are few artefacts of managerialism associated with the policy advice and development role and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries, managerialist reforms challenged Departmental Secretaries' dominance and reduced their power in this arena, ushering in an abridged role for the Departmental Secretaries in relation to their former positions as the sole providers of policy advice and development to the government, with the introduction of ministerial advisors. Analysis of the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries value this role and its responsibilities above all and understand that their power base is reduced if they acquiesce to its diminution and so they consciously redefine an even greater role in policy advice and development and continue to challenge the diminished role that managerialist reforms have proposed. In framing this greater role, Departmental Secretaries challenge the quality and authority of policy advice and development from any other avenues or parties and propose instead the primacy of the official policy advice and development they offer given their public bureaucratic (not in a pejorative sense) actor status and the public sector experience they have garnered.

It [policy advising] can involve Cabinet submissions, it can involve delivering briefs as they are called coming forward from the Department, it can involve discussions of issues across the table with Ministers. It's the whole policy making process being open to authorized advice from senior officials being considered by the role of the decision makers at a political level before they make the decisions. (23:4b)

The policy advisory and development role is considered by Departmental Secretaries to be a paramount contributor to the contest of ideas and so features prominently in the constitution of public sector management work. A former Departmental Secretary explained that ‘*democracy is all about the contest of ideas*’ (23), and that within this contest of ideas, governments of all persuasions will be able to function better if they call for and consider policy advice from the senior public service (23:4c;23:5a). There was also the view that negative consequences arose for governments that chose to ignore or abate policy advice provided by senior members of the public sector, especially from the Departmental Secretaries (23:5b; 23:5c).

Government’s going to work best given its complexity, if major policy issues usually very complex issues, are subject to professional advice. Under the previous government, there were significant issues which were handled with little or no professional advice from the senior public service. (23:3)

As such the policy advisory and development role of the Departmental Secretaries is considered to be of relevance to the functioning of Australia’s democracy, which places the Departmental Secretary and the constitution of public sector management work in a closely embedded position with the government of the day. Analysis of the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries’ redefinition of a greater policy advisory and development role encompasses a strong belief system such that, although they acknowledge the importance of contestable ideas, they advocate that *their* policy advice and development is fundamental to good decision-making by governments and will lead to better outcomes. Departmental Secretaries are intent on navigating close to the political arena and keen to stay close to the seat of power of government in their exercise of this role. They are, in this sense, challenging vehemently the policy administration dichotomy reinforced by managerial reforms. Thus, in stark contrast to the proposition put forward by public sector reformers that the work of governments was to govern, by incorporating the development of policy, quite apart from policy advice from the public sector, and instead focusing on managing and managerialism, Departmental Secretaries are pushing back and reasserting their dominance and power in this role.

Departmental Secretaries are prominent contributors in the environment of contestable ideas, perceiving themselves to be the primary policy advisors and policy developers to the minister(s). The acknowledgment of the contestability of ideas was less discussed

than their primacy in the delivery of policy advice and development. This primacy was explained as related to the Departmental Secretaries' longevity in their positions and the traditional prominence placed on the policy advisory and development role in the constitution of public sector management work, which they do not want to relinquish. The evidence shows that it also reflects a desire to focus on work that positions them close to the seat of power. As such the desire to maintain this prominence is reflected in the policy advisory and development role at the political end of the spectrum, described as incorporating the need to understand the political domain and be able to 'play' in it. A certain 'gamesmanship' is therefore required by the Departmental Secretaries in their practice of public sector management work (11:2b; 20:8). It comprises developing policy papers and policy options compatible with the political framework or platform of the political party and government of the day. It means anticipating and considering what was on the horizon for the government or for incoming governments, anticipating the broad direction and 'ideology' of an incoming government. It means, where necessary, repackaging ideas from a current government to suit the ideology, ideas and policies of an incoming government to achieve consistency with the policies of the incoming government. An understanding of the mechanisms of politics, the political stakeholders and the building of effective relationships within the political environment are considered to be critical to the policy advisory role. In this role the Departmental Secretary is firmly entrenched in the political-interpretive dimension of the duality of activities on a spectrum they navigate.

Well I used to pride myself in sort of figuring out where the Ministers sat in relation to the Prime Minister. You know when the Labor party is in power they're the left, middle or right and trying to interpret or read where that faction or that part of the party you know. And I wouldn't put up to a Minister something that I thought they would take to Cabinet and get slaughtered or maybe give them some advice about who else they should talk to on the way in. Those sorts of things about successful implementation of policy. (13:10c)

The Departmental Secretary has to be a 'student of the politics' to excel in policy advice. Departmental Secretaries commented on the need to understand complex political nuances such as the minister's relationship and positioning relative to the Prime Minister and the various party platforms of different political factions of government. They also remarked on the importance of ensuring the minister is properly and accurately briefed and equipped to ensure he/she does not 'lose face' in Cabinet as

well as the need to advise the minister on who he/she should be lobbying or connecting with prior to policies being debated in Cabinet, to ensure the successful implementation of policy (25:6b). A solid understanding of politics and the political context is required for the successful delivery of policy advice because the policy advisory role and the framework in which it is conducted are considered to be political.

It was further noted that Departmental Secretaries that succeed at understanding the political context and excel in their policy advisory and development roles, also succeeded and '*survived long term*' (13:10a) in their roles (17:8). This was because the policy advisory and development role and responsibilities are what matter most to their ministers (13:9). Thus by executing this role well the Departmental Secretaries were able to please and protect their minister(s) and at the same time engage in what is understandably their own self-preservation and survival. It is this policy advisory and development role that matters to the minister, not the managerial or administrative work suggested by the proponents of the NPM. The execution of this redefined role by Departmental Secretaries allows them to re-identify with the former power and position status that Departmental Secretaries held as the primary policy advisors to government, even though this is no longer the case, given contestability. So Secretaries give priority to policy advising and development rather than managerial or administrative work. Furthermore this policy role consumes their time and attention disproportionately to most other roles and responsibilities because of the emphasis they place on it.

Policy advising also incorporates the need to understand what the various lobbyists and lobby groups are advocating and their agendas, as these are critical stakeholders to the minister. Departmental Secretaries report the need to provide policy advice to their ministers, which encompasses the content and workability of the policy itself, as well as the various views and responses of the lobbyists to policies and in turn how the minister might counter the various views and positions held by lobbyists and others. When developing and providing policy advice to a minister, there is a need for the Departmental Secretary to involve other people, such as lobbyists in '*discussions about what is administratively feasible*' (21:6a). So policy advising also encompasses the need to anticipate the views of other key stakeholders and interested parties such as lobby groups and individuals (21:6c; 21:8b) and has little to do with the rationality and instrumentality of managerialism. It means Departmental Secretaries were predominantly interpretive in this political arena.

Again ... so if you are at my level, if you are providing advice to a Minister, you've got to be able to say "and this is what this lobby group will think of it, and this is what this lobby group will think of [and] what their response will be, and here is how you might counter that".(21:6b)

Departmental Secretaries reported that to offer sound policy advice also means that they needed to understand their minister's thinking and ideological position. Others with whom the minister associated in part shaped their interpretation of this thought and ideology. Departmental Secretaries have to understand who these others are because they are integral in influencing the minister's thinking.

Another thing that was important to me was to find out who was influencing my Ministers and [that I] made sure I knew who they were. [So] who did [the Minister] talk to. There was a particular person in New South Wales I discovered that he talked to. He was a bit of a strange character. But it was important for me to get to know him and from that, it allowed me to understand where the Minister was coming from and so I know where he's coming from and that I thought we had really more background on his concerns and therefore I was able to tailor my advice in a way which was more helpful to him [the Minister]. ... It was important to know where he was turning. It was particularly important in the early days when I was trying to find what made him tick. One aspect was who did he talk to? (24:22)

Understanding relates not to a rational-instrumental managerialism but instead to the political and interpretive realm. By understanding these other parties, the Departmental Secretary could provide more tailored and professional policy advice to this minister ensuring it was aligned to the latter's ideological position and thinking (24:23). As such, Departmental Secretaries engage in much research to gain a deep understanding of the ideological position of the minister(s) and their associates, as this will enable them to deliver their policy advisory and development roles competently. Analysis of the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries want to maintain their former dominance in the provision of policy advice to the government, as they do not accept the relegation of this work to others, a result of the public sector reforms of the 1980s forward. Their study of politics, their research of lobbyists and their agendas, as well as the manoeuvring they engage in to understand the ideological positions of government ministers, indicate a concentration, preference and priority which they give to the more political dimensions of the duality of activities on the spectrum of work that they navigate. This determination and persistence to continue to provide what they deem to be professional policy advice and hence participate actively in the policy role post

public sector reforms, is contrary to the current reality where policy advice is received from other parties and is contestable. This affects their constitution of public sector management work.

Providing policy advice and formulating policy proposals requires much cajoling, influencing, convincing and cooperation from peers and colleagues. The securing of understanding and support for policy proposals was deemed possible because of the established relationships the Departmental Secretaries had developed with their peers and colleagues and their longevity in the APS (*13:13; 13:14b*). However, analysis of the evidence shows that securing understanding and support is extremely difficult in a contested environment, and yet Departmental Secretaries are portraying a persona of themselves and their peers as a collegiate, homogeneous and functional group of cooperative colleagues in this difficult policy arena. This is inconsistent with their earlier claims, as discussed in Chapter 4, of Departmental Secretaries being akin to a dysfunctional closed feudal society. Departmental Secretaries are representing themselves in a positive and cooperative light because they want to preserve their traditional policy roles and responsibilities that have been and continue to be eroded by the managerialism of the NPM. In reality they are competing to deliver this policy advice and development with others, but do not wish to acknowledge this reality as it is challenging and confronting.

The policy advisory and development role of the Departmental Secretaries encompasses a 'politics of policy'. This 'politics of policy' represents an unavoidable, legitimate and significant dimension of the constitution of public sector management work (*13:14c*). It meant that Departmental Secretaries spent much of their time focussed on developing a solid understanding and actively participating in the 'politics of policy' replete with its deep knowledge of the political environment and ideologies, an understanding of the key political 'players', an appreciation of lobbyists and their agendas, knowledge of the ideological position of government, a gamesmanship of diplomacy and political astuteness, and a willingness to work collaboratively with peers to secure desired ends. The 'politics of policy' frames their constitution of public sector management work. However, neither the policy advising and development role nor the 'politics of policy' is accepted by the advocates of the NPM as a required core component of the work of public sector managers. Instead policy and its concomitant politics was deemed to be the domain of the government by NPM advocates. Public sector managers were to focus

on ‘management’ while ‘policy’ was to be the focus of government. Whereas there is a strong connection between the policy advisory and development responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries and the government of the day, the advocates of NPM tried to nullify this relationship and decouple policy from the purview of the Departmental Secretaries. Reformers have not realised this decoupling because the policy advisory and development role is deemed substantive and institutionalised as a core component of the constitution of public sector management work.

6.4. Substantive Constitution Within the Spectrum

The roles and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries require them to navigate the duality of activities on a spectrum incorporating the rational-instrumental dimension and the political-interpretive dimension. This duality means that, on occasions, Departmental Secretaries’ constitution of public sector management work incorporates the transactional and on other occasions it incorporates the interpretive. Although there may be a desire or an expectation for their work to be anchored in the rational and instrumental spheres, Departmental Secretaries are constantly being pulled and pushed towards the political-interpretive sphere that crowds out much that is rationally instrumental. This pulling and pushing from the rational-instrumental to the political-interpretive results in the substantive constitution of public sector management work taking place somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

Although the literature assumes that the constitution of public sector management work will take place at the rational-instrumental end of the spectrum, this research shows that such an assumption is both unrealistic and not the case. In particular the research shows that the Departmental Secretaries favour the bureaucratic, governmental and political dimensions of their work. While they try to manage with managerialism and have considered its principles and practices, they have been distracted by the reality of politics, which crowds out their work. They are required to please a multitude of parties in a sense of being ‘all things to all people’, some expecting a rational-instrumentalism and others expecting and indeed demanding that they play in the ‘crazy world of real public administration’ replete with politics (Weller 2001, p. 188) in which the Departmental Secretary constitutes public sector management work. They are boundary riders who are required to navigate and interface the duality of activities on a spectrum

encompassing rationality, instrumentality and politics because their work is contingent, inconsistent, changeable and fluid. The substantive constitution of public sector management work takes place at the centre or ‘the “fulcrum point” or the “frantic interface” (Smith; 2007, p. 15) of this spectrum.

6.5. Discussion and Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, using a grounded theory-like approach, the concepts derived from the data are presented in Appendix K. The findings are inconsistent with what NPM proponents argue, to a considerable extent and are consistent with those who have been critical of the NPM and its managerialist concepts.

6.5.1. Discussion

The evidence shows that the constitution of public sector management work is subject to a duality of activities that must be navigated by Departmental Secretaries across a spectrum spanning from the rational-instrumental to the political-interpretive and is a distinct contribution to the existing literature. The evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries are boundary riders who constitute public sector management work in a rational-instrumental transactional manner on occasions and on other occasions are drawn into the political-interpretive arena. The evidence shows that leadership, governance and administration roles and responsibilities are predominantly executed in a rational-instrumental way, whereas stewardship, stakeholder management and policy are steeped in politics rendering the substantive constitution of public sector management work at the centre of this spectrum. While the literature claims that public sector management work performed by the most senior public sector managers (such as Departmental Secretaries and Federal Bureau Chiefs) includes distinctive, specific and more nuanced roles and responsibilities specific to the public sector (Allison 1984; Egan 2009; Kaufman 1981; Smith 2007; Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001; Weller & Wanna 1997), it does not acknowledge the duality of activities which constitute public sector management work as fluid.

Contrary to the public sector reform literature which claims that public sector managers need to steer rather than row (Osborne & Gaebler 1992), referring to the need to lead

rather than follow, the evidence shows that such calls went unheeded because they were inappropriate for the constitution of public sector management work. Instead Departmental Secretaries follow the direction set by the minister and the government of the day and although they have a leadership role and responsibilities these are executed by working in an instrumental transactional manner. Consistent with the literature, which claims that the work of the public sector is progressed in an incremental manner (Keating, 2013) which often resembles a ‘muddling through’ (Lindblom 1959, 1979), the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries lead using only incrementalism, making continuous albeit minor directional changes to build on established policy initiatives. While the constitution of public sector management does involve visualisation often spanning decades (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. ii) this is generally completed only if required by and for the minister but it is rarely a feature of the constitution of public sector management work. Hence leadership within the constitution of public sector management work is not of the strategic, visionary, transformational longer term, future-oriented type advocated by managerialist reformers.

In contrast with the public sector reform literature which claims that in Australia, as in other Anglo-American polities, there was a need to both ‘let the managers manage’ and to ‘make the managers manage’ (Kettl 1997, p. 454; Savoie 1990b; Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001), and that there was a need to ‘put the manager back into management’ to enable public sector managers to make sound judgements and decisions with sufficient power and authority (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 1992, p. 3; Paton & Dodge 1995; Rhodes and Wanna 2007), the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries do not have the discretion with which to simply manage or lead. Instead the constitution of public sector management work is constrained by the institutionalised prescribed instrumental leadership role and responsibilities that Departmental Secretaries execute.

Evidence of the prominent place which governance holds in the constitution of public sector management work is consistent with the literature which claims that although reformers tried to further modify the governance structures of the public sector (Aucoin 1990; Gregory 2007; Hood 1990; Maor 1999; Talbot 2001), this work is a fundamental component of public sector management work which remains ‘fit for purpose’ (Irvine 2014). The governance role of Departmental Secretaries is reflective of a set of drivers

which are specific to the public sector including the requirement for appropriate organisation structures, transparency of operations, fair and due processes, propriety and prudence in the management of appropriated funds, and integrity of procedures employed (Commonwealth of Australia 2003). As the evidence shows, governance frameworks in place reflect these specific drivers. The public sector reform literature claims that a blurring of differences between public and private sectors resulted in consequences for the constitution of public sector management work (Arnold 1998). However, in relation to governance, the evidence shows that prescriptive, institutionalised, and instrumental governance mechanisms are firmly embedded and it is these that continue to influence the constitution of public sector management work.

The evidence also shows that this administrative work is considered subordinate to other work as it is perceived to be less valued by the minister, and so is often delegated. This subordination influences the constitution of public sector management work in contrast to the prominence which managerialism places on such work and its many managerial artefacts. The public sector reform literature claims that reforms removed from Departmental Managers many central controls and delegated to them greater authority with which to manage (or administer) their departments (Savoie 1990b). Such reforms included artefacts such as the introduction of the Financial Management Improvement Program (FMIP) (Australian Public Service Board 1986); the launch of Program Management and Budget (PMB) to provide ministers and senior public servants with greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy for the efficient management of their departments; the creation of super departments by amalgamating 26 departments into 16 super departments to enable financial devolution and portfolio budgeting, and the abolition of the centralised Public Service Board and instead the creation of a Public Service Commissioner, with reduced functions and powers (Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986b).

The literature suggests Departmental Secretaries were offered greater autonomy and discretion for the management of their departments, in a similar way to chief executives in the private sector who are free to manage their organisations as they see fit. Many of the constraints associated with expenditure, recruitment, selection, and promotion were removed (Mascarenhas 1993; Scott & Gorringer 1989) leaving the Departmental Secretaries freer to manage (Osborne & Gaebler 1992). However, many of these reforms focussed on a private sector 'instrumentality' or the application of a rational

‘managerial frame’ for the public sector, were deemed deficient when applied to the public sector (Wilenski 1988) because many bureaucratic administrative traditions prevail (Toonen 2007). The evidence shows that such ‘rational-managerial frame’ does not prevail and that instead a bureaucratic, transactional, instrumental frame (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999) dominates the constitution of public sector management work.

The evidence which claims that the stewardship role and responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries exposes them to organisations and institutions which in turn facilitates the transfer and translation of contemporary management ideas to the public sector after they have been considered fit, is consistent with the literature which claims that transfer of contemporary management ideas takes place as a result of exposure and translation or modification of the ideas to suit the particular situation or circumstances of those who have been exposed to the ideas (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). Hence Departmental Secretaries, through exposure to contemporary management ideas, as a consequence of their stewardship roles, translate, shape and change such ideas to suit and tailor such ideas to their differing public sector contexts (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195). The evidence also shows that the travel and translation of contemporary management ideas by Departmental Secretaries as a result of their exposure to organisations and institutions including central public sector agencies, cross-jurisdictional departments, other public sectors, and professional public sector bodies such as the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), and academia are willing to consider, translate and integrate such ideas into the constitution of public sector management work. These contemporary management ideas are those deemed relevant for the public sector because of their fit.

Consistent with the literature that claims there is a political dimension in the role of the Office of the Departmental Secretary re stakeholder management (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. ii; Metcalfe 2014) is the evidence that shows that Departmental Secretaries develop relationships with stakeholders such as the parliament, the media, cross-jurisdictional agencies, and members of society and that such stakeholder management draws them into the political arena. The evidence showing that the stakeholder management role encompasses the development of relationships which function at the ‘boundary’ or ‘seams’ of government and politics, is consistent with the

literature which claims that ‘working at the seams’ of government via the establishment and development of relationships is critical to the public sector manager’s work (Elmore 1986; Heelo 1977). In executing their stakeholder management roles at these boundaries and seams, Departmental Secretaries are required to wrangle with the political dimension that makes conflict rather than concurrence the norm in their constitution of public sector management work. As a former Departmental Secretary of Immigration and Citizenship (not a participant in this research) has suggested: ‘there is a very strong reliance on developing and maintaining excellent working relationships [with stakeholders], both involve an understanding of government and its processes, . . .’ (Metcalf 2014, pp. 28–29).

Contrary to some of the public sector reform literature which claims that government was to focus on its core function of governing quite separate from the bureaucracy which needed to focus on its core function of managing (Savoie 1990b), the evidence shows that the policy advisory and development role of Departmental Secretaries is a cherished core of their work and it is accomplished in partnership with the government, because this work requires interdependence by both parties. It requires them to work closely with the government of the day, and to do so they must immerse themselves in the same ‘political sea’, and display a certain ‘gamesmanship’ (Lynn 1982), per se, that exerts a powerful influence on their constitution of public sector management work.

Consistent with some of the earlier public sector reform literature which claims that reforms have brought about significant ‘improvements [in the] quality of policy development work, to the capacity for cooperation and coordination within the public service, . . .’ (Hawke 1989, p. 9, Mascarenhas 1990) and some of the later public sector reform literature which claims that the *Ahead of the game, Blueprint for reform of Australian government administration* sought to achieve the provision of high quality policy advice (Commonwealth of Australia 2010b; Moran 2010), the evidence shows that policy advice and development is an acknowledged, legitimate, and significant component of the constitution of public sector management work and a well-developed capability across the public sector.

The literature claims that political astuteness (Hartley 2014; Hartley et al. 2013), and a ‘gamesmanship’ of policy (Lynn 1982) is required in the public sector, encompassing skills required of public sector managers to enable them to participate in various degrees

in policy advising and development. The evidence also shows that the policy advisory and development role requires an understanding of the philosophic position of governments, the manoeuvring of lobbyists, and an anticipation of the expectations of peers, and hence it is a substantive ‘politics of policy’ which shapes this work and the constitution of public sector management work. This substantive work is not consistent with the rationalism of managerialism. The evidence is contrary to the public sector reform literature, which claims that advocates of NPM have modified the relationship that exists between the instrumental and the substantive, as advocated earlier by Weber (1978), and instead focussed reforms primarily on rational-instrumentalism, further modifying the governance structures of the public sector, especially in relation to the policy administration dichotomy (Aucoin 1990; Gregory 2007, pp. 227, 243; Hood 1990; Maor 1999; Talbot 2001). The evidence shows that efforts to decouple policy advisory and development work from the public sector domain have not succeeded, because this work is well-anchored in the constitution of public sector management work. Hence the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries are expected to work on both policy advising and development work and administration or management work akin to what du Gay (2001) proposes.

Furthermore, the evidence that shows that Departmental Secretaries’ work is institutionally bound to the political, bureaucratic and governmental domain and its protocols and machinations that constrain, is consistent with the literature which claims that:

the pursuit of better management, different from the pursuit of better bureaucratic public administration, has to [acknowledge] the political and governmental limits to which it is [,] or should be [,] subject. (du Gay 2000, p. 144)

The evidence that shows that, stewardship, stakeholder relations and policy work reflect a greater concentration on the governmental, bureaucratic and political components of public sector management work, is consistent with the literature that claims that this work rather than the generic, rational, managerial work found in the private sector (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Pollitt 2011) is what constitutes public sector management work.

Management in the public sector is not comparable to the private sector and is more complex. It is the case that ‘public and private management administration are

fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects' (Allison 1984; Bower 1977). The differences play out across a number of domains such as politics; governance; constitutional frameworks; institutional/interpersonal relationships; accountability of parliamentary government, and principles of democracy (Foley 2008; Goodsell 1985; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Kettl 1997; Maor 1999; Mulgan 2008b). The evidence is consistent with these abovementioned claims as it also shows that, collectively, the complex roles and responsibilities as covered in this chapter are those that pertain and are specifically relevant to, the constitution of public sector management work rather than the agenda of the NPM reformers. This evidence is also consistent with literature that claims that where governments indiscriminately adopted reforms based on NPM they '... failed to comprehend the complex nature of management in the public service' (Mascaenhas 1993, p. 325). Such reformers are neither appreciative of what these reforms mean for public sector managers nor if such reforms actually go to the elements at the heart of what constitutes public sector management work (Allison 1984; Aucoin 1990; Savoie 1990a).

6.5.2. Conclusion

The constitution of public sector management work in a context of evolving reforms, according to Departmental Secretaries in Australia's Public Service is not a simplistic 'generic' managerialist type (Pollitt 2011) of management but instead appears to be unique, specific and nuanced transactional and governmental, bureaucratic and political 'management' work (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999). The constitution of public sector management work reflects a duality of activities that are performed on a spectrum spanning the rational-instrumental at one end and the political-interpretive at the other end.

Although Departmental Secretaries are boundary riders, the substantive constitution of public sector management work takes place at the centre of the spectrum they navigate. This substantive constitution of public sector management work (Weber 1978) appears to have endured amid the myriad of public sector reforms and the introduction of the artefacts of managerialism that took place across the Anglo-American polities over the past three decades (Talbot 2001, p. 299). These findings challenge the literature on public sector reform and the advocacy of a simplistic rationalist-managerialist oriented NPM (Barzelay 1992; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Osborne & Plastrik 1997). The notions

of ‘breaking’ or ‘banishing’ bureaucracy as put forward by these public sector reformers are unrealistic. While NPM can incorporate artefacts of managerialism, these artefacts do not create rationality. Hence the constitution of public sector management work is more complex, limited in discretion and ultimately unique.

These findings are distinct from and contribute to the existing literature (Allison 1984; Egan 2009; Kaufman 1981; Smith 2007; Weller 2001; Weller & Rhodes 2001; Weller & Wanna 1997) that suggests that public sector management has little to do with generic ‘management’ but rather is a complex myriad of bureaucratic activities associated with the business of government. It especially builds on the work of other researchers such as Heclo (1977) and Lynn (1982), who advocate that working at the seams of government (Heclo 1977) and policy ‘gamesmanship’ (Lynn 1982) are core to public sector management work. Reflecting on Allison’s (1971) and Allison and Zelikow’s (1999) work, the empirical findings of this research propose that governmental, bureaucratic, and political components of Departmental Secretaries’ roles and responsibilities as well as the rational-instrumental transactional influence the constitution of public sector management work. Hence Departmental Secretaries reported that their work was less about management than it was about delivering on government mandates and they did not see themselves as managers but rather as public actors or bureaucrats working in a highly political arena, in partnership with their political masters, the ministers, to develop and implement policy.

The disparity between what public sector reformers advocated and what currently constitutes public sector management work may be as a consequence of the lack of adoption by these public actors of many contemporary management ideas promoted by public sector reformers. The following chapter will discuss the way in which contemporary management ideas travelled were considered, and where they were deemed to fit, were translated and adapted for adoption within Australia’s Public Service. What will also be discussed is the power of the political bureaucracy to maintain their primacy in defining what constitutes public sector management work, by accepting or rejecting such contemporary management ideas.

Chapter 7 The Impact of Contemporary Management Ideas: Their Influence on the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

Well, [contemporary management ideas] are [important] for people who don't know the old ones. So I think some management [ideas], I think a frame of reference, management frame of reference is important for people to have. Now, I don't think it necessarily matters what it is, ... but it should be evidence-based.(15:28b)

7.1. Introduction

The constitution of public sector management work as described by the Departmental Secretaries in Australia's Public Service is fundamentally different from the managerialism that has been advocated by public sector reformers. Public sector reforms that took place across Anglo-American polities since the 1980s, informed by contemporary⁴³ management ideas, were focussed on economic rationalist concepts and managerialist approaches that prevailed in the private sector. Hence concepts such as efficiency and effectiveness were advocated for the public sector, often on the assumption that they were relevant to, and could be applied easily in the public sector. Private sector management concepts, principles, processes and practices were promoted under the mantra of 'let the managers manage' and then 'make the managers manage'. But public sector management work has little to do with managerialism and much to do with the bureaucratic actors, political environments and duality of activities performed, as the previous chapters have shown. This chapter specifically addresses the research question: how have contemporary management ideas influenced Departmental Secretaries and their work?

⁴³ Contemporary management ideas in this thesis refer to a broad range of modern management fads and fashions in the sense that Micklethwaite and Wooldridge (1996) and ten Bos (2000) conceptualise these terms. Hence contemporary management ideas are considered to be a 'set of general concepts and generic principles which could be applied in all circumstances' (Micklethwaite and Wooldridge 1996, p. 67) and practices and techniques underpinned or purporting to be underpinned by scientific characteristics such as '[rationality], essentials, fixed truths, in depth-analyses, causality, purity, procedure, . . . control, reason, ...' (ten Bos 2000, p. xiii). Contemporary in this thesis is always used contextually to refer to management ideas deemed contemporary at different points in time and especially those associated with the advent of new public management (NPM).

Public sector reforms inspired by contemporary management ideas, given the unique character of the public sector, have been widely regarded as unsuitable (Brunsson 2006; Gregory 2003; Moe 1994; Savoie 1994a; Sundstrom 2006; Talbot 2001; Williams 2000). Some of these NPM ideas underpinning reforms, when they travelled, appear to have been translated, transferred and transformed as proposed by the proponents of the theory of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevón 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002), sometimes to suit the public actors, their places of work and the activities they performed. Contemporary management ideas and public sector reforms enter the APS through sponsorship by those with decision-making power, such as the government of the day and especially the Departmental Secretaries of the top four central departments of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, Finance, and the Australian Public Service Commission, in the APS. The evidence shows that the disposition of such parties will determine acceptance, adoption, promotion or rejection of ideas and reforms. Where such ideas are accepted, this is usually based on an assessment of the suitability of these ideas as deemed to 'fit' the existing public sector.

This chapter discusses the impact of contemporary management ideas couched within public sector reforms from the 1980s forward, and how these influence the constitution of public sector management work. The role played by the Departmental Secretaries, central agencies, and the government of the day in the acceptance or rejection of contemporary management ideas including how such ideas travelled, were translated, transferred and transformed is also considered.

7.2. Disposition to Contemporary Management Ideas

Departmental Secretaries are well positioned to consider contemporary management ideas from their involvement in a range of local and 'globalising webs' (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214). Their disposition towards specific ideas is a determining factor in the eventual determination of their suitability or otherwise and their recommendation or rejection.

7.2.1. Fads and Fashions

Many Departmental Secretaries commented on the ‘faddish or fashionable’ (2:48) nature of contemporary management ideas. Contemporary management ideas often come in various ‘tides or waves’ (16:12) over time. Many contemporary management ideas were recognised as being temporal and so were generally avoided by Departmental Secretaries, as an example: ‘*So you necessarily have to think, is this particular management tide or leadership tide applicable to the public service or not?*’ (14:12).

Many Departmental Secretaries believe that management consultants and management gurus promote contemporary management ideas as being overly complex, theoretical, and unnecessarily complicated when in practice such ideas are often based on common sense, practical experience and intuitive knowledge (2:35). Some argued that management consultants ‘trammel their wares’ using buzzwords, advocating so-called new theories, new terms and new concepts which were simply a new ‘flavour of the month’. Some compared management consultants to ‘*snake oil salesmen peddling their wares*’ (9:18) of management fads. They saw management fads as dangerous when they were accepted without consideration.

I mean I have read most books about management and leadership that exist. Most of them are bullshit. They are mutually exclusive. They are quite contradictory in nature and they assume a one size fits all prescription for organisations. You most usually find this expressed by consultancy firms, they have got the solution to a problem you may not even know you have got when they come in and do this. (20:23b)

These fads created a degree of scepticism and cynicism among some Departmental Secretaries, especially those who had observed other Departmental Secretaries being ‘seduced’ by and succumbing to such fads on a yearly basis (7:13; 13:17e; 24:28). Some believed that the APS had erred on the side of importing too many contemporary management ideas without applying a degree of analysis to establish the suitability and relevance of these ideas for the public sector: ‘*I think we [the APS] sometimes, ... make the error of sort of grabbing, trying to grab, whatever the latest thinking is in the private sector management world*’ (10:11). Others expressed concern that some in the public sector had dismissed all contemporary management ideas because of their distaste for management fads that had been adopted unquestioningly in the past.

You know lots of terms that came out of the literature over the years that I think breed cynicism in a lot of people. Because most people who have been a witness to the impact that they [contemporary management ideas] were having in the public sector saw that they were usually temporal fads. The trouble is that people used to dismiss really good ideas as temporal fads because of the terms that were used sometimes and because many of them were temporal fads, they would dismiss everything. (13:21)

Many contemporary management ideas were understood to be variations on a theme. Delivery mechanisms such as information technology management, call centre management, and payroll management systems were examples of contemporary management ideas which had been considered and adopted but which were not original: ‘So I think a lot of the new ideas force you to think about things in different ways but for me a lot of it is variations of a theme’ (2:23). Contemporary management ideas were often considered by Departmental Secretaries not to be new ideas but instead reinvented, or recycled, with many originating not from the private sector but earlier from the public sector (11:7d; 15:28a; 15:28b) such as the concept of merit-based employment and promotion. They are reflecting here the primacy of the public sector and the public service to which they belong which denotes an element of their disposition towards such ideas.

Some former Departmental Secretaries who had been exposed to public sector reforms of the 1980s observed a circular flow of contemporary management ideas. These circular flows were deemed to be in step with the fashions of the epoch. The concept of ‘let the managers manage’ is one such fashionable idea introduced into the public sector as part of the NPM, which was supposed to provide public sector managers with greater authority and accountability. However, this fashionable idea wavered over time, based on perceptions held by government and the community of the power held by public sector managers. Similarly, the fashionable idea of outsourcing public sector functions to be more efficient and effective has been revisited and repealed over time as a result of the many errors that have resulted from outsourcing.

Like “let the managers manage” and then no, no, no you can’t outsource accountability, we’ve got to bring this all back. [Then] let’s outsource everything it’s much more efficient and then no let’s bring it all back there are too many mistakes happening. So yeah, I’ve seen [ideas] sort of come full circle a couple of times. (7:13)

Often these recycled contemporary management ideas were perceived as being based on the application of new or different labels or names, which were then heavily promoted and marketed (11:7c; 13:20; 24:28). Departmental Secretaries commented that the public sector workforce was an educated workforce that was not easily fooled or persuaded by old management ideas purporting to be contemporary and so Departmental Secretaries were mindful of promoting such ideas, simply because they purported to be new ideas. Instead, they applied an evaluative lens to such ideas (13:19).

... I'm not cynical about having a theory of management. I suppose what I'm cynical about is old ideas being dressed up in new clothes every year, you know there is this sort of brilliant new theory, [but] there is not much new. But people make a living out of saying that they have got this brilliant new way of seeing the world or of doing things and it's usually not new, it's just some well-tried and established principle by another name. (7:12)

Departmental Secretaries reflect a disposition that is predominantly sceptical, restrained and sometimes disparaging towards contemporary management ideas. Their disposition indicates they are opposed to the majority of contemporary management ideas to which they have been exposed because these ideas challenge their bureaucratic identities, clash with their political and governmental environments, and contradict their institutionalised work. However, as will be discussed later, in a seemingly contradictory sense they acknowledge learning from exposure to contemporary management ideas via local and globalising webs. Departmental Secretaries, on occasions, offered constructive criticism of contemporary management ideas, indicating a need to show that they are modern thinkers, open-minded and receptive to change; when mostly, they understood that positive change from such contemporary management ideas had been negligible in their management work. It also reflects a view that Departmental Secretaries believe there may be no real need for change, as one shrewd former Mandarin commented: *'there would be something wrong with the bureaucracy [public sector] if you could change or break the bureaucracy'*.

7.2.2. Exposure to Local and Globalising Webs

Departmental Secretaries are members of a variety of local groups, committees, fora and professional associations (or webs). These local webs include the Australian Public Service Commission, the APS200 (a forum for the top 200 Senior Executive Service in

the APS), the Secretaries Board, professional public sector bodies such as the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), professional associations and institutions such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) and Australian Institute of Management (AIM).

Departmental Secretaries' participation in these webs include: delivering presentations/sessions on a range of subject matter areas; advising and guiding other APS agencies; contributing to whole of government initiatives and mandates; promoting the APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct, and other similar activities. Departmental Secretaries commented that these local webs enable them to learn about contemporary management ideas (2:35) from within and across the public sector and to disseminate them beyond to a range of communities, groups, and organisations in Australia and overseas (6:32). Such comments appear in stark contrast to Departmental Secretaries' sceptical, restrained and disparaging regard of contemporary management ideas and exemplifies their portrayal of a more contemporary, accommodating, progressive and adventurous persona.

I guess I was influenced and pushed in certain directions by the management ideas that were current at the time. I think that's responsible in a way. You do need to try to stay across the literature and to be active in management forums and to listen and try to take the best ideas and to implement them at home. (17:19)

Departmental Secretaries are also exposed to contemporary management ideas via a number of global organisations, universities and colleges. Limited acceptance by them of many of these ideas contrasts with positive rhetoric about the value of such exposure. Departmental Secretaries commented on their exposure via their participation in education, development, training, secondments, reading literature and other activities. In particular, the Harvard Business School/University (especially its Advanced Management Program), John F Kennedy School of Government, the Institut Européen des Affaires d'Administration (INSEAD), Kellogg School of Business (Northwestern University, Illinois), London School of Economics, Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey's Consulting, (and other academic institutions and 'think tanks') have featured prominently as vehicles for the development of Departmental Secretaries (12:16).

So I was very fortunate that the government sent me to Harvard Business School to do the Advanced Management Program in 2008 ... I have got a Master's in Business Administration ... So I have a strong business background [of a] commercial type ... and I've worked for DAS [Department of Administrative Services] back then [when] the government had commercial entities in the Department of Administrative Services. So I've seen lots of those [ideas] the latest in management thinking. (4:14)

Departmental Secretaries commented on sourcing influential principals, professors and other academics (within these abovementioned institutions) to learn from their ideas. These have included exposure to: principals such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, Jack Welch, Steven Covey, Peter Senge and Peter Drucker; professors such as Malcolm Sparrow, John Kotter, Patrick Dunleavy, and Ronald Heifetz; and other academics such as Daniel Goleman, Patrick Lencioni, Martin Seligman, Tony Wilson and others (1:10; 1:11; 12:16). Although Departmental Secretaries commented on having valued this exposure as it allowed them to consider contemporary management ideas for application in their management work and more broadly across the public sector, they at the same time rejected many of the ideas from these sources as they deemed them to be, in essence, simplistic, common sense and of negligible value to their work. Their covert disposition is evident despite a positive rhetoric.

Malcolm Sparrow, a fellow from Harvard who did some stuff on leadership. Wrote a book, made about \$10 million out of it and he has got three principles to his philosophy. He says understand what you and your organisation [are] where you are, so what's your culture, your performance and all that sort of stuff, so understand that; understand where you want to go; and then finally go there [laugh]; that's it! (2:48)

Departmental Secretaries acknowledged that contemporary management ideas were generated via collaborative communities of peer national and global government and public sector institutions. These institutions include: public sector departments across Australia and more globally; public service commissions across the world; Group of 20 (G20), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other institutions who meet together with their peer Finance and Treasury Ministers. Best practices are shared across these global communities of peer institutions and intellectual property is aggregated and made accessible.

While communities of peer institutions expose Departmental Secretaries to contemporary management ideas, analysis of the evidence shows that it is contemporary

public sector topics of a technical nature that are disseminated via such global webs, rather than contemporary management ideas. Common frameworks and standards on a range of contemporary public sector topics are discussed and considered for use across jurisdictions. *'Internationally we've championed quite a lot of working closely together [on technical work] with the other [...] administrations'* (9:21c). Hence collaboration with peers provides Departmental Secretaries with opportunities to compare and contrast contemporary public sector topics of a technical nature with their peers with a view to improving this work (3:7; 3:14a; 3:14b; 9:10; 9:21d; 19:14a; 19:14b), rather than contemporary management work. These examples indicate their disposition towards contemporary management ideas is secondary in importance to them and their constitution of public sector management work.

Departmental Secretaries espouse a positive rhetoric of being open-minded and receptive to contemporary management ideas and of being influenced by such ideas (8:12; 13:22; 17:21; 21:23; 22:25; 16:17b) via local and globalising webs. They believe the public sector should not be insular and inward-looking, and that it is not appropriate and indeed, is 'arrogant', to assume that they cannot learn from or can ignore contemporary management ideas (12:17a; 12:17b; 13:20; 25:8b). Departmental Secretaries commented that consideration and comparison of contemporary management ideas is taking place more frequently than in the past. They commented that there is more flexibility today than twenty or thirty years ago to consider and apply contemporary management ideas deemed applicable to the public sector (11:6).

Departmental Secretaries said they were receptive to learn about what the British, Canadians, Americans and/or New Zealanders are doing in relation to public sector management work and to import and translate this work for use in Australia. This is in spite of significant differences in their models of government:

But there is still a lot that we are looking to one another and trying to understand the things that you're doing in your public administration in [the Anglo-American polities] that makes sense to bring here or otherwise.
(5:15)

They commented that collaboration and information sharing is considered necessary as Departmental Secretaries were of the view that *'none of them have a monopoly on good ideas'* (5:16).

... the challenges of service delivery, of conducting business in the public sector today are significant and you need all the help you can get to cope with that environment. So to the extent that they [contemporary management ideas] are better management processes to enable you to cope with and/or deal with that environment, you need to take them on board. (6:32)

Yet as discussed in previous chapters, contemporary management ideas and managerial artefacts have been largely ignored in public sector management work as they do not accord with the bureaucratic actors, the political governmental and bureaucratic environments or the duality of activities which are performed in the public sector. At best, such ideas have been tolerated where necessary but generally have not taken hold because they were not deemed relevant. The fervour, commitment and ideology of these ideas, the reform processes in which they were couched and the managerialist narrative, have been mostly lost. Contemporary management ideas, reforms and managerialist devices clash against a system that was and remains enduring because it is bureaucratic (not in a pejorative sense), political and governmental in substance. This system is enduring and influences public sector management work because it is much more relevant to how Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work.

Furthermore, despite comments made by Departmental Secretaries about understanding the need to consider contemporary management ideas, many explained they do not have sufficient time to devote to engaging with and considering these ideas (15:29). The sourcing, consideration, analysis, translation, application and assimilation of contemporary management ideas require resources. But the public sector has not, in a collective sense, dedicated sufficient resources to this activity and has not been able to benefit from the possible learning. The lack of resourcing is suggestive of the lack of value these ideas are accorded, as generally resources are allocated to valued activities. They do not necessarily actively dedicate time to these and so their exposure is likely to be more ad hoc or incidental.

Contemporary management ideas were sometimes seen as being about an 'ideal' that was not realistic for the constitution of public sector management work, especially because of the institutionalised 'command and control' style of management in the public sector. This makes it difficult for the public sector to apply contemporary management ideas, as these often contradict the established, traditional and conservative style of public sector management. While managerialism is a term understood intellectually by the Departmental Secretaries and the broader public sector workforce,

its practices do not resonate with how public sector management work is conceived and done. Furthermore, the ministers' lack of passion for the management domain also drives behaviour unfavourable to contemporary management ideas.

The management idea has been the management ideal of doing. I've thought about good management and leadership over the years. I've spent time studying [contemporary] management ideas. I've actually been quite studious in reading up and understanding them. Not necessarily just applying them by rote. Because there are good things to be gathered from different management theories. [But] at the end of the day for me it was a question of maintaining my own authenticity and integrity. (9:19)

7.3. Legitimacy and Acceptance of Contemporary Management Ideas

Coupled with the disposition Departmental Secretaries typically have towards contemporary management ideas, there exists a process of legitimisation and acceptance that is required prior to the sanction of contemporary management ideas. Departmental Secretaries referred to the roles played by government, central agencies and the public sector workforce in legitimisation and acceptance. Analysis of the evidence shows that although it is rare for such parties to legitimise and accept contemporary management ideas, even where such parties do so these ideas rarely modify the constitution of public sector management work in a significant sense. This is because of the enduring institutionalised nature of public sector management work.

7.3.1. Role of Government and the Four Central Agencies

The findings indicate that the legitimacy and acceptance of contemporary management ideas and their sanction are based on three primary factors. The first factor is the nature of the relationship between government and the public sector, as well as the government mood for centralised or devolved communication between the two parties. Where the nature of this relationship is open and collaborative it allows for decentralised communications and the public profile or media presence of the four central agency Departmental Secretaries is generally higher. However, where the relationship is closed and less participative, the Departmental Secretaries' freedom to communicate is restricted and their visibility or public profile is less. Departmental Secretaries commented that communications become more centralised as governments of all

persuasions choose to adopt a singular and controlled message (16:18b; 16:21b-22). Communication during such periods comes directly from the government of the day, often via the minister's office. Thus although seemingly contradictory, centralised communications create less cohesion in the take-up of contemporary management ideas because the voices of the four 'key' Departmental Secretaries are quashed.

It is political factors that shape the dissemination and legitimisation of contemporary management ideas in public sector management. The adoption of such ideas is dependent on who controls the dissemination of communication, that is, the government or the public sector central agencies. If the public sector central agencies are closed out of the relationship with government it is difficult for them to disseminate contemporary management ideas across the sector and their take-up is less palatable.

But I think the inability to maybe translate in an open and visible way a lot of the management ideas and learnings that are going on elsewhere. That used to happen through the mechanism that I've talked about, through Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C), Head of PM&C and others [Finance and Treasury] is not as evident these days as it was [due to centralised communication]. And I think it just seems to me that is having an adverse impact on the service as whole and its sense of purpose and direction and its take-up of contemporary ideas. (16:21a)

The second factor in the legitimisation and acceptance of contemporary management ideas and their sanction is also dependent on the government's zest or propensity for such ideas and reforms (1:4c; 5:6). It was recognised that without political commitment, or when political commitment wavers, no real ideas or reforms would be realised. Departmental Secretaries recognised catalysts originating from within society that drove reforms through government to be implemented by the public sector. They explained that recent amendments to the Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) were brought about by demands from within society, agreed to by government through the parliament, leading to consequent changes to the public administration framework. Thus, public sector reforms are dependent on the political judgements made by politicians within the government of the day.

So there are catalysts every so often. They are really driven not from the bureaucracy but from the society. It says to government, what are you going to do about this? I think we are in a mess. Something has got to change drastically here and we want, we're looking to you, you're the government. So they're supported obviously by smart people in the bureaucracy but in the end it's a political decision to make a big change. (5:16a)

While the influence of government reforms and contemporary management ideas can be potentially significant because the public sector is responsive to government (3:24) and hence is required to follow its direction, reforms promoted (and some forced through) by government rarely challenge traditions of public sector management work. Governments via their ministers are less concerned about the management domain than they are about the technical domain or policy dimension of public sector work. Reforms and ideas are not regarded with the same gravitas as recommendations made in relation to public sector work that is fundamentally associated with its 'technical' core.

The third factor contributing to the legitimacy and acceptance of contemporary management ideas and their sanction is the role of the four central agencies and the strength of personality of their respective Departmental Secretaries. Departmental Secretaries commented that those contemporary management ideas and reforms which are successful are often driven from within the public sector, in particular from its four central agencies: the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, Department of Finance and the Australian Public Service Commission. These central agencies and the strength of personalities of their respective Departmental Secretaries influence which contemporary ideas and reforms are driven throughout the public sector. These central agencies and their Departmental Secretaries are in positions of authority, and have roles and the prerogative to recommend to government relevant contemporary management ideas and reforms to improve the public sector and its management work.

I was going to go on to say how influential it is the contemporary management ideas and how to fix public sector management. There are some key leadership positions within the public service that are fundamental to the take-up of those ideas. Really if you think back about over the last 20–25 years or so, ... it's fallen more often than not to the heads of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Public Service Commission, maybe the Department of Finance and maybe the Department of Treasury, so those four Departments. And at various points they have quite strong personalities. So if you think of PM&C in particular where you had the Max Moore Wiltons, you had the Peter Shergolds.⁴⁴ (16:17a)

The personality of these Departmental Secretaries who head the four central agencies was considered to be a key factor in the promotion and implementation of contemporary management ideas and reforms and hence their legitimisation and acceptance for the

⁴⁴ These were the former Heads of the Department of PM&C.

constitution of public sector management work. Depending on who they were, these position holders were able to consider contemporary management ideas from business, academia, and consultancies, and then promote/advocate and disseminate them across the public sector with greater or lesser success.

The mechanisms through which influential ideas were exposed included the publication of ideas in newspapers and journals, public speeches made at relevant conferences, and the cascading of information from central agency. Departmental Secretaries throughout the public sector. As they held the most senior positions in the public sector, when they chose to comment on or promote certain ideas, senior managers across the public sector took them seriously (14:18d). However, not all incumbents were reformers or had reform mindsets or personalities.

. . . Not everyone is going to make that call [to reform]. The head of PM&C before Terry Moran to the best of my knowledge didn't make the call, the one after hasn't made that call. But Terry said "no, no, we need to think about how we can reform Australian government administration", ... But from time to time there'll be enough lobbying done at Ministers again around, the APS is just not offering contemporary experiences and they'll say come on guys, let's have a look at this. (21:24)

It is unlikely that contemporary management ideas that radically contradict or challenge the enduring institutionalised nature of public sector management work, as did the many managerialist ideas of the NPM, will be supported. There have been some exceptions, including zealous reformers, such as former Departmental Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Max Moore Wilton (not a participant of this research), who have been strong economic rationalist/managerialists and as such have attempted to impose these ideas across the sector (16:18). However, the ideas and reforms may last only as long as the reformer is present and has the power to promote and influence change. Furthermore once sanctioned, contemporary management ideas and reforms also need to be implemented by Secretaries reluctant to change the status quo in other than incremental ways.

Departmental Secretaries work by *reinforcing* what they are *familiar* with and what they *value* and what they deem *appropriate* for the public sector. This indicates passive and active resistance to reforms with which they do not agree. Over the past four decades, various incumbents have initiated and effected reforms and ideas, often reflecting a bias

towards the existing status quo or marginal and incremental modifications to the constitution of public sector management work (as will be discussed later). However, over the past four decades these reforms have not always been incremental as the initial surge of managerialism (Pusey 1991) was radical and supposedly involved a paradigm shift. There have been waves of reform initiatives sometimes led by influential Departmental Secretaries and sometimes by governments influenced by external reformers, including managerial consultants/academics and business peoples, recently with the reform initiatives during the Rudd/Gillard government ‘vigorously promoted by both the Secretary to the Prime Minister and Cabinet Department, Moran and the Public Services Commissioner, Sedgwick’ (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 236).

Similarly, other Departmental Secretaries reported that they, their departments, and the APS as a whole, were well-regarded by the government and their views were regularly sought on contemporary management ideas, via formal invitations by the Australian Federal Parliament (3:13). They were asked to deliver presentations on their organisations’ functions, to participate in orientation sessions for new members of parliament incorporating sessions on the work of their departments, and to deliver occasional lectures. On occasions, requests are made by the parliament for Departmental Secretaries to discuss their views via semi-formal briefings on the future of public administration and similar topics. However, although there is respect and regard for the knowledge, experience and proficiency of the Departmental Secretaries, the contemporary management ideas which are shared are often those which reflect the status quo and so reinforce the constitution of public sector management work resulting in institutional isomorphism, and isopraxis (Powell, Gammal, & Simard 2005, p. 233).

7.3.2. Role of the Public Sector Workforce

Contemporary management ideas could emanate from within the broader public sector workforce, sometimes from members with different backgrounds and experiences (19:16), sometimes by those with long collective work experiences in the sector. However, external entrants are few and longevity in the sector is the norm. Hence the public sector workforce is limited in its ability to generate contemporary management ideas. Ideas tend to be anchored to institutionalised public sector employment, experiences, practices, and knowledge relevant and appropriate for the sector (14:12)

generated by those with intimate knowledge of the past rather than ambitions for the future.

The views and involvement of the public sector workforce via consultation and engagement are considered essential for seeking and securing acknowledgement and acceptance of ideas (14:13b). Departmental Secretaries believed that management ideas needed to be considered, legitimated and accepted by those within the public sector. Legitimation by the workforce was deemed most likely to influence the constitution of public sector management work (20:23a).

7.4. Adoption of Contemporary Management Ideas

Contemporary management ideas sanctioned by the government or the four central agencies are sometimes accommodated via tailoring in attempts to make them better fit the APS. Tailoring is not extensive because there is rarely great interest, concern or focus on innovation in public sector management work. The focus is on the rational managerial dimension of work: ideas have been imported directly into the public sector with little or no tailoring and have created dysfunction and disarray.

7.4.1. Tailoring, Translation and Transformation

Rarely did Departmental Secretaries embrace or adopt contemporary management ideas in an indiscriminate manner or assimilate them in their original form or in a wholesale manner (7:11; 17:21; 22:15; 24:28) '*... yes we've certainly looked at those management ideas and concepts and typically we don't adopt them vanilla*' (6:31). Departmental Secretaries reported keeping abreast of management ideas and considering their merits and applicability for the public sector (3:19). They chose to selectively 'cherrypick' what they took to be the best.

... for the last 30 years, private sector ideas have been dominant. I think there was a lot of merit in some of those private sector ideas but I don't think they translate perfectly into a public sector environment ... (17:19)

Departmental Secretaries preferred to use management consultants who have experience and knowledge of the public sector, its organisations, its environments, its culture, its processes and procedures for innovation because, generally, these consultants consider

and modify contemporary management ideas to suit the public sector. Others were adamant that they would not engage certain external management consultants (giving as an example McKinsey's Consulting, for illustrative purposes only) because they were deemed to be more suitable as advisors to the private sector.

So we tend to try to use people who have some experience in dealing with public sector organisations simply because I often find they can, in a sense, take the, what I call the textbook stuff, but they've thought about it and thought about how, in a sense, you modify it for the public sector. I'm not particularly driven or influenced by what you might call the latest thinking in the management circles. I'm more, if you like, driven by a modified version of that that seems to have some track record in the public sector. (10:11)

Departmental Secretaries reported the adoption of tailored ideas such as the use of outsourcing of some services in which the public sector had little industry-based expertise; the balanced scorecard adapted into a 'four quadrant' model focusing on stakeholder relationships, products and services, staffing, and business processes (3:19; 6:31b) and scenario planning (22:25). They also described the adaptation of Steven Covey's *Seven Habits* framework to encompass the articulation of values (6:31c); the use of total quality management and Six Sigma concepts in quality assurance processes and the achievement of International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standards: principles of the 'learning organisation'; concepts associated with 'emotional intelligence' (EQ); project management; financial management; accrual-based accounting and budgeting processes; concepts of 'transformational leadership' and 'adaptive leadership'; and customer service. Most of these reflect only the rational components of managerial work rather than the substantive constitution of public sector management work. In reality, as has been discussed in earlier chapters, the constitution of public sector management work has changed only marginally, if at all, by the adaptation and adoption of such ideas.

Contemporary management ideas, introduced as a consequence of public sector reforms, have been controversial and problematic because they were adopted from the private sector, with little, if any, adaptation (13:3). The performance appraisal and management system, and its counterpart, the performance bonus system, were imported directly from the private sector to evaluate and measure performance. Although still in place in the public sector, Departmental Secretaries commented on the challenges that such systems

brought to the sector (18:3). In effect, they simply tolerate these systems as they have limited, if any, confidence in their value.

Performance appraisal and management systems drawn from the private sector, replete with key performance indicators, and forced performance ratings and rankings, are especially controversial. Departmental Secretaries acknowledge the importance of evaluation and measurement of performance. Many argue there is a place for performance appraisal and management in the public sector. However, such comments reflect a positive rhetoric because at the same time they admit that performance appraisal and performance management are difficult to apply sensibly in the public sector. They acknowledge that sometimes there are unintended outcomes, often perverse, from their adoption.

Performance-based pay was introduced into parts of the public sector in the 1980s, in the quest to motivate the public sector workforce. Several former Departmental Secretaries described the unintended and dangerous consequences of this practice (13:2b; 20:10) where workforces became focussed predominantly on aspects of their performance which were measurable/tangible and which related to the securing of financial bonuses (7:11). Some Departmental Secretaries advocated use of such performance measures and bonuses but with caution. They reported that these systems were viewed as potentially ‘poisonous’, as they had brought about unintended consequences (7:12) such as inappropriate behaviours. Such systems had been introduced with little consideration and were widely seen as incompatible with the public sector environment and its unique characteristics and challenges (13:2c; 13:2d). Rather than a focus on a singular tangible financial target (that is, profit or return on investment) such as in the private sector, with which it is relatively simple to measure and recognise/reward, Departmental Secretaries’ performance is generally less measurable because of its complex, ambiguous, intangible, risk-averse, intrinsically collaborative, distributed and long-term nature, arising from its political dimensions. Such performance is difficult, if at all possible, to measure and even harder to reward via monetary bonuses as their quantum is usually too low to motivate.

... we still flounder around with performance-based pay. And I can see nothing in the public sector that has shown any sign of that being a sensible idea full stop or bonuses or any of this drivel, it's just been a nonsense. But people thought that money would matter but because it was the public

sector, you could only give a little bit of money; therefore, it became totally irrelevant. If you could have given people huge amounts of money it might have mattered but it might have also meant they might have been much more politicised than you might really want them to be. So there's a whole host of public sector considerations that you've got to bring to bear about these things. (14:12)

Although the performance measures are still in place, their impact on the constitution of public sector management work is negligible because the parties bound by such systems, ministers and Departmental Secretaries, understand and acknowledge their limitations and compensate for them by 'working around' these systems, rendering them devoid of their intended objectives in practice. As one Departmental Secretary commented, ministers understand that although performance agreements are drafted and in place for Departmental Secretaries, their accountabilities often change '*before the ink has dried on the agreement document*' (18) and so they are largely disregarded. Such systems resemble institutional polymorphism, and polypraxism (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233) and their impact on the constitution of public sector management work is low.

. . . I think we overstepped the mark see, where we used some private sector practices too far. I think we had some problems with accrual accounting, [and performance management systems] I think we had some problems with over reach in terms of losing sight of the values of the public service and some parts of that. (24:6)

The dismantling of tenure and the placement of Departmental Secretaries on contracts of employment was another public sector reform imported directly from the private sector with no adaptation or tailoring. Most former Departmental Secretaries considered it to be an inappropriate import from the private sector as it presented a challenge to the provision of frank and fearless advice to ministers and government by Departmental Secretaries (15:8b). Instead, insecurity created by the possibility of termination of contract was believed by some to have led to a change in the quality of advice provided to government. The nexus between low job security as a result of loss of tenure and the courage to deliver objective candid advice to ministers and government was believed to be especially prevalent across the younger and less experienced Departmental Secretaries who had much more to lose than those who were older and more experienced or had reached the pinnacle of their careers. Furthermore, the practice by ministerial office staff of vetting or challenging advice from the Departmental Secretary

to the minister is also deemed to be a more prevalent occurrence as a result of the loss of tenure (15:13b).

... for most of my career we had tenure. I didn't in the last few roles because I was on contract, which I fundamentally believe that's another thing they borrowed from the private sector and in my view a total disaster, you know I am in the minority perhaps but I think is a disaster. And I think one of the reasons that the government is in more trouble than it ought to be [today] is because they've got too many people not telling them [the] things they need to know because they might get [their contracts terminated]. I think the old days where the Secretaries had tenure, they could be freer. I know a lot of people protest this and say that's rubbish. If you are brave you can stay. I think that's rubbish. (13:11)

While current Departmental Secretaries hold a different view, notably that their advice continues to be frank and fearless, they are not articulating a diminution of the provision of frank and fearless advice as to do so would be to admit weakness. Advice offered to ministers by current Departmental Secretaries recently indicates an apparent risk to their continuing employment where advice is deemed controversial for the government (see Bettles 2013 re termination of contract by Abbott Liberal National Government in 2013 of former Departmental Secretary of Immigration and Citizenship Andrew Metcalfe, not a participant in this research).

Another idea copied directly from the private sector was the introduction of corporate boards to some statutory agencies. One Departmental Secretary commented on the potentially catastrophic consequences associated with the ill-fated introduction to public sector statutory authorities of quasi-corporate boards. The quasi-corporate board became the main body with accountability for statutory authorities reporting to government. However, such quasi-corporate boards struggled to understand their core charter. Furthermore, quasi-corporate boards did not have the powers of a private sector corporate board. They could not appoint or dismiss the 'Chief Executive', nor could they set the Chief Executive's remuneration. The line of accountability from the quasi-corporate board to the government was unclear, especially because the Chief Executive was appointed by the government and was directly accountable to the Treasurer, as were the quasi-corporate board members: *'quasi boards were really an awkward animal with statutory authorities, because it was not quite clear what the line of accountability was from the quasi board to the government'* (19:2d). There was a lack of clarity or a 'dissonance' in the structure or line of accountability of the board (as described by the

HIH Insurance Royal Commissioner at the time) (Urhig 2003) (19:2). It was also unclear who was accountable to government in the event of errors. Instead, what was realised and required was that there needed to be a direct line of accountability between the head of the statutory agency and the political process. For the constitution of public sector management work the quasi-corporate board idea was a temporal aberration with unintended outcomes. The boards were eventually dismantled.

If I can be crude, the chief the Head of Treasury at the time said, "Look, when things go wrong we just don't know whose backside to kick". It wasn't quite his phrase it was cruder. With the structure we have now there is only one backside in the frame and that's mine. (19:2)

Several other ideas copied directly from the private sector included the outsourcing of public sector information technology (IT) and human resources (HR) functions to the private sector and the introduction of a centralised industrial relations mechanism via whole of government enterprise bargaining arrangements. Both of these ideas have led to unintended negative consequences such as higher costs, lower standards and services, confusion and dysfunction for the public sector (19:2, 19:2c).

But at other times, some of these ideas for very good reason aren't necessarily sensible within the public sector or indeed the private sector. The classic is, well one of the classics, was huge outside, outsourcing of your core IT and your core HR capability and in my view, those things were both disasters for the public sector. (14:13a)

These ideas were seen as an aberration with unintended outcomes and the outsourcing approach has since been repealed and dismantled.

Analysis of the evidence indicates that many contemporary management ideas, especially those associated with managerialism, can be forced upon the public sector with little tailoring, translation or transformation. Instead they are bolted on and merged into the existing frameworks, almost out of desperation but are not implemented with rigour. In other cases, naiveté is evident, whereby public servants can be seduced into uncritical acceptance by those promoting such ideas, especially where the promoters have limited knowledge, experience and interest in management and the public sector. Some of the younger, less-experienced Departmental Secretaries more recently appointed to their roles, show more enthusiasm for such ideas than older, more

experienced, shrewd veterans. Only remnants of managerialism remain in the constitution of public sector management work and these are treated with contempt.

Collectively, contemporary management ideas and the public sector reforms on which they were based have had a mixed (often negative) but marginal impact on the constitution of public sector management work. Such ideas were generally considered with caution and scepticism and few were adopted or even adapted to fit the sector. Even fewer have effected radical change on the constitution of public sector management work. Instead incremental changes only have taken place.

7.4.2. Equilibrium and Incremental Change

Regardless of their origin, whether generated by the government, the central agencies, or the public sector workforce, contemporary management ideas are not accepted ‘wholesale’ for implementation across the sector. Instead, only relevant components of contemporary management ideas are considered with marginal influence as a result of the desire not to disrupt the equilibrium of the public sector by making ‘*abrupt shifts to the left or [to the] right*’ (17:22). It is also a reflection of the acceptance by the government, the central agencies and the Departmental Secretaries that the public sector is highly institutionalised and not susceptible to radical change.

And management ideas are like that too. And so, the most obvious one ... [the public sector] should pick up the approaches of the private sector because they're much more efficient, they can probably do the job better than the people in the public service and so on and so forth. There's some truth in that and still is. In fact, there was a lot of truth in it. But within that, the public sector has to find its own way. The reason it has to find its own way is that it's a different beast to the private sector. You know, it really is a different beast because its whole motivation is not to make money. Its motivation is to act and behave in the best interest of the country. And/or to do what the government of the day tells it to do. And that should be deemed to be in the best interest of the country because these people are elected by the people to be their leaders. (14:12)

The longevity of employment in the sector means that, as some Departmental Secretaries observed, their best reform and change management occurred within the first three years of their appointment to a department and that, after this period, many of the changes previously implemented would probably need to be revisited and modified again. But further change was considered difficult because it would mean that Departmental Secretaries would be obliged to evaluate and modify their own former

changes, to which there was often inertia. Hence, there was a view that to enable continuous and meaningful change to public sector management work, Department Secretary positions should be rotated every five years. However, in practice, Departmental Secretaries do not move from their roles across the public sector within this timeframe.

I really hate organisations that go nowhere. And so I think there's a great responsibility from someone at the head of an organisation to really lead it to a different place. [...] used to say, I used to see [...] a bit because I was [Departmental Secretary], and [...] used to say that [...] thinks that [...] thought that Secretaries did their best work in the job in the first 3 years in it. And it's not surprising because they, ... It's because you come in with a set of fresh eyes, you can see the organisation and what needs to change and you form that view firmer as you go through and then you institute your changes. If you stay in an organisation too long, you then are looking to have to change your own stuff. And that's always harder. So it's better if there is constant movement in my view. I don't mean every five minutes. [But] that you get a new Head of Department about every five years. I think that's quite healthy. (14:21)

Although reforms and contemporary management ideas play only a limited role, this does not mean stasis. One former Departmental Secretary held a view that the APS has been reformed and transformed since its inception more than a century ago, most recently over the past thirty-five years, with this transformation contributing much to Australia's economic prosperity and wellbeing. Such reforms have modified some features of the Departmental Secretaries' activities predominantly as a result of successive legislative changes to the public sector (see Commonwealth of Australia 2010c). These reforms and transformations have been slow, cautious and measured as befits the public sector: they have been considered with an eye to assuring fair and equitable treatment of citizens, they have been based on formal processes and procedures as required by the rule of law, they have been implemented where they were deemed to be appropriate and relevant within the context of promoting the national interest. The transformation has been bureaucratic in nature, incremental over time, not necessarily overtly communicated and represents constancy in the constitution of public sector management work and hence is imperceptible to outsiders. This perception of the public sector's acceptance and implementation of change, albeit incremental, is held by many Departmental Secretaries.

*... the public service has been very successful in totally transforming itself
... the period of economic reform over the last thirty years or thirty-five*

years has been accompanied by a parallel period of public sector reform going through various phases which have been integral to the economic reform which has transformed Australia in a positive way ... the point is [that] there is any amount of evidence that although public servants like to play by the rules, because that's their job, treat citizens fairly and equally, because that's their job, try to do the right thing with an eye to the national interest, because that's the sort of people we recruit into the public service. Despite all of those things nonetheless the public services have changed radically to the benefit of Australia and nobody's actually managed to explain that to the people. (25:10)

As Departmental Secretaries commented, what is not often acknowledged is that the constitution of public sector management work requires more than simply a managerial economic focus, because at its core is a policy dimension, and that *'policy is more than what economists work on, although, economists think that economics equals policy'* (25:8a). They explained it was problematic to apply contemporary management ideas, within the public sector, as it is considered to be a *'different beast to the private sector'* (14:12), one oriented to the governmentally bureaucratic and political (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999) rather than being market oriented. Departmental Secretaries made the comment that while there is much to learn from the private sector, there were important differences which needed to be taken into consideration and significant tailoring of models needed to be made to take into consideration the unique circumstances of the public sector. They commented on how many mainstream ministerial departments had considered contemporary management ideas but, recognising their limitations for the public sector, implemented few (25:8c).

Departmental Secretaries acknowledged the 'great divide' between the private and public sectors and that contemporary management ideas which were generated and travelled from the private sector, were limited in their applicability to the public sector. For many, contemporary management ideas played little role, if any, in their work (10:11). Many contemporary management ideas from the private sector were deemed not easily transferable and in some cases not at all transferable to the public sector. There was acknowledgement that public sector reforms or the 'new managerialism' were an attempt to take ideas that worked in the private sector context and apply them in the public sector, especially in an endeavour to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector.

Managerialism's proponents did not take into consideration the different logics that exist across the private sector and the public sector, rendering many contemporary

management ideas unusable. Hence, public sector management work has been influenced only marginally by external ideas.

7.5. Discussion and Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, using a grounded theory-like approach the concepts derived from the data are presented in Appendix L. The findings are inconsistent with what NPM proponents argue, to a considerable extent and are consistent with those who have been critical of the NPM and its managerialist concepts.

7.5.1. Discussion

Consistent with the public sector reform literature which claims that reforms and contemporary management ideas based on the NPM and its managerialist principles and practices were advocated as a result of the strong influence that microeconomic theories were playing at the time on governments and communities across the globe (Kettl 1997), the evidence shows that these reforms were focussed primarily on economics, efficiency and effectiveness. The evidence which shows that the focus was a response to the dire economic situation faced by Anglo-American polities from the 1970s forward is also consistent with the travel of ideas literature which claims that social, economic and political pressures can create a climate in which practices and ideas circulate in and across organisation fields (Powell et al. 2005, p. 234). The subsequent philosophy of ‘letting the managers manage’ which morphed to become ‘make the managers manage’ via devolution of financial and personnel management responsibilities and powers from central agencies (Shergold, in Wanna, Vincent & Podger 2012, p. 64; Smith 2007) was eventually wound back as it was deemed inappropriate for the sector. The evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries do not consider the notions of economics, efficiency and effectiveness resonate with the constitution of public sector management work, consistent with the literature which claims that while the proponents of NPM touted efficiency as paramount for the public sector, it is of importance but it is the ‘least important value for the public sector’ (Bertelli et al. 2003, p. 264; Peters & Pierre 2007).

Managerialist principles and practices premised on notions of economy, efficiency and effectiveness were advocated in public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas that circulated at the time. The evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries recognised that many of the ideas touted as contemporary management ideas were actually fads or fashions which came in various ‘tides or waves’ and were temporal in nature. This evidence is consistent with the literature which claims that many of the concepts, ideas, and techniques of managerialism were possibly nothing more than the buzzwords or jargon which accompanied the NPM rather than relevant principles and practices applicable to the constitution of public sector management work (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Spann 1981). Such buzzwords or jargon reflect what others refer to as influencing a ‘hollow state’ notion of reforming government (Milward, Provan & Else 1993) where public sector reform becomes an attempt to re-engineer or reinvent the constitution of public sector management work to align with the current flavours of the reform era where the public sector sheds ‘traditional responsibilities to improve efficiency and service to citizens’ (Kiel & Elliott 1999, p. 632).

The evidence that recycled contemporary management ideas was often based on the application of new or different labels or names, and then heavily promoted and marketed is consistent with the literature which claims that public sector reforms that took place across some Anglo-American polities were concerned more with the rhetoric of reform or isonymism than the actual reforms (Clark 1994; Kettl 1997; Kiel & Elliott 1999). Furthermore, attempts to reform the public sector over the past decades have been carried out under the banner of NPM (Solli, Demediuk & Sims 2005, p. 31) but ‘the activity behind the concept [of] new public management is not as easily found as a reference to it’ (Solli, Demediuk & Sims 2005, p. 31). Hence, Departmental Secretaries viewed the concepts associated with NPM with a degree of scepticism and cynicism, as vacuous in substance, and lacking in real impact on the constitution of public sector management work.

Departmental Secretaries are prepared to consider contemporary management ideas, especially via their exposure to these ideas from a range of local and global avenues. These avenues included their membership of collaborative communities of peer national and global government and public sector institutions, groups, committees, and fora as well as their connections with professional associations and organisations, and their

participation in universities and colleges. Consistent with the literature, which claims that the use of globalising webs or ‘crosscutting organisational arrangements premised on interconnectedness and alignment’ (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214) is another mechanism by which ideas can be translated as they travel, the evidence shows that Departmental Secretaries do translate ideas as they travel, as a result of their membership of these localising and globalising webs.

Consistent with the travel of ideas literature, which claims that within the model of the travel of ideas translation is defined as the process of ‘displacing something, or the act of substitution; [and] it always involves transformation’ (Czarniawska & Sevon 2005a, p. 8, drawing on Serres 1982), the evidence shows that where Departmental Secretaries believed there was some merit in contemporary management ideas they optimised such ideas by tailoring and translating them, where possible, so that they fit their own challenges, environments and organisations. Furthermore, this evidence of tailoring and translation is consistent with the literature which claims that ideas that are translated, shaped and changed during the process of copying are modified such that they result in local varieties of models and ideas flavoured by differing local contexts (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195). Hence the ‘balanced scorecard’, which was adapted into a ‘four quadrant’ model focusing on stakeholder relationships, products and services, staffing, and business processes (3:19; 6:31b), resulted in a ‘local’ public sector version flavoured by the different context in which it was to be used, though it did not greatly impact public sector management work.

In contrast to the abovementioned literature, some ideas that travelled were not translated and hence not transformed or, at least, the results were imperceptible. Ideas such as the performance appraisal, management and bonus systems introduced from the private sector to the public sector (Osborne & Gaebler 1992) remain contentious examples of inappropriate ideas which were imported without judicious modification and continue to impact the constitution of public sector management work, in the sense that these are not relevant but need to be tolerated. Indeed, such systems have now become institutionalised within the public sector and consistent with the literature, which claims that the processes of institutionalisation can result in both ‘stability and change’ (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 48 citing Czarniawska & Sevon 1996). The outcomes of such institutionalisation are stability in the sense that the performance appraisal, management and bonus systems have not been modified. In this case the

institutionalisation of the imitation is not viewed as a 'performative process' (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195; Sahlin-Andersson & Sevón 2003; Sevón 1996) and the outcomes of imitation are not different from the original model that was imitated.

However, the evidence that the public sector considered, translated and modified a number of other reforms and contemporary management ideas, such as: outsourcing; the balanced scorecard; scenario planning; project management; and accrual-based accounting and budgeting is consistent with the literature, which claims that as reforms and ideas based on NPM diffused, circulated and were translated during their travels across the Anglo-American polities, management ideas and concepts were received in a differential manner (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233). This differential manner in which ideas and concepts are received can include variation in the purpose and use of such ideas or practices because of the specific physical organisational settings and contexts (Hwang, & Suarez 2005, p. 93). Some of these management ideas and concepts resembled institutional isomorphism, isopraxis and isonymism whereas others resembled institutional polymorphism, and polypraxis (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233). However, these ideas are centred on rational managerial rather than substantive dimensions of the constitution of public sector management work and so regardless of their being received in a differential manner their impact has been only marginal.

In contrast to the public sector reform literature, which claims that reforms emanating from the US and the UK during the 1980s were copied verbatim in New Zealand and led to a mimetic isomorphism (Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Scott 1987, 2003b, 2008a, 2010) of the NPM, the evidence shows that the Australian experience was different and no such copying took place, leaving the constitution of public sector management work largely unchanged. Unlike their colleagues, professionals from within New Zealand Treasury, with experience of neo-liberalism and the ideas of managerialism at institutions such as the OECD, the World Bank and the IMF, who transported these ideas (Scott 2008b) to New Zealand in a seemingly unquestioning way, Departmental Secretaries in Australia applied an evaluative lens to these ideas. However, in New Zealand, there was little consideration given to their appropriateness for public sector management and instead the ideas became readily institutionalised (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). The evidence shows that in Australia the opposite took place; no such institutionalisation resulted as only ideas deemed appropriate for the constitution of public sector management work were considered, and these were few.

The evidence shows that the four central agencies and their Departmental Secretaries have a key role to play in driving reforms and contemporary management ideas and that these are generally successful when driven from within the public sector rather than from external sources. Such agencies and their Departmental Secretaries are respected for their knowledge, experience and proficiency in the public sector and more so than external consultants, and so reforms and contemporary management ideas promoted by these agencies are usually acknowledged as relevant for the sector and for the constitution of public sector management work. This evidence is consistent with the public sector reform literature, which claims that reforms promoted by the Nielsen Task Force (1985) in Canada failed to get the traction required, as they were externally driven, lacked the support of ministers and bureaucrats, incurred resistance from senior bureaucrats and received only limited parliamentary support. Hence, these attempts to reform the public sector from the outside caused great offence, opposition and mistrust (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 223; Savoie 1994b). For contemporary management ideas to succeed within the public sector they need to be considered and accepted as legitimate by those within the public sector and, especially, driven by the most senior management teams, in part because these are trusted, respected members of the public sector. This evidence is also consistent with the literature which claims that public sector reforms and contemporary ideas accepted by former earlier bureaucrats (Departmental Secretaries) especially those operating in central government agencies were promoted in the APS (Codd 1988; Holmes 1989; Keating; 1988, 1989; Paterson 1988; Shand 1987). Furthermore, the evidence also shows that where there is engagement with the workforce through consultation and participation in proposed changes, this engenders further trust which is considered imperative for reforms and contemporary management ideas to be seen as legitimate, be more readily accepted, and ultimately succeed, consistent with the literature which claims that without such consultation and trust reforms are less likely to succeed (Julliet & Mingus 2008; Peters & Savoie 1998).

The evidence shows that the constitution of public sector management work has remained constant despite the waves and tides of reforms inspired by the managerialism advocated by consultants Osborne and Gaebler (1992) in their text *Reinventing government*, and Osborne and Plastrik (1997) in their text *Banishing bureaucracy*. Such texts gave rise to what is considered by some to be the reinvention movement of public sector reform (Brudney, Herbert & Wright 1999, 2002; Calista 2002). However,

consistent with the literature which claims that the presentation of ideas by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Osborne and Plastrik (1997) are ‘devoid of a knowledge of public administration and its historical context’ (Williams 2000, p. 522; Coe 1997; Fox 1996; Goodsell 1992; Kobrak 1996; Nathan 1995; Russell & Waste 1998; Wolf 1997) the evidence shows that the constitution of public sector management work was not radically changed by such ideas because it is couched in a governmental bureaucratic and political arena (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999) rather than the private sector market-oriented arena from which managerialist ideas stemmed.

The evidence of constancy of the constitution of public sector management work despite four decades of reforms is consistent with the public sector reform literature, which claims that a paradox has developed across public sectors in the Anglo-American polities and in particular in the UK over the past three decades (from 1980 to 2010) such ‘that everything has changed and nothing has changed’ (Talbot 2001, p. 299). While the travel of management ideas and their application to public sector reforms has taken place during the past four decades, the public sector and in particular the constitution of public sector management work has varied little, especially the importance of constitutional democracy administered by the public sector which has remained stable (Barzelay 1992; du Gay 2001). Others have concluded similarly that there remains a constancy to the role of Departmental Secretaries even though the environment in which they constitute public sector management work has changed radically over time (Commonwealth of Australia 2001; Egan 2009).

The evidence also shows that Departmental Secretaries were not easily persuaded⁴⁵ by managerialist concepts because they deemed most to be inapplicable to how they did public sector management work. This evidence is consistent with the literature, which claims that while such concepts derived from the private sector are deemed of relevance to the issues and matters that public sector managers are confronted with, these concepts ‘do not map the territory [of public sector management] directly’ (Allison 1984, p. 218; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Stewart & Ranson 1988). The managerial agenda of the NPM may have initiated superficial coverage of reform topics without significant concern for

⁴⁵ Hood and Jackson (1991) offer a comprehensive account of the role that argument plays in the acceptance or rejection of certain ideas in administration, suggesting that ‘the acceptance or rejection of certain administrative ideas is couched within the persuasiveness of the argument, rather than the solely hard-science approaches’ (ibid, p. 201). However, the findings of this research indicate that Departmental Secretaries are interested in the relevance and applicability of the ideas to their public sector management work.

the constitution of public sector management work (Brunsson 2006; Moe 1994; Savoie 1994a; Sundstrom 2006).

Furthermore, as Powell et al. (2005, p. 239) propose in their continuum of organisation 'ideal types', combinations of four criteria can 'constitute the dimensions' by which 'ideal type' organisations will vary in their acceptance of ideas. These criteria are the carrier of the idea as it travels, the context in which the practices or ideas travel, the actual object that is travelling, and the 'temporal and experiential nature' of contact with the idea and its 'originators or their apostles' (Powell et al. 2005, p. 239). The four criteria coalesce to form a set of different patterns of 'receptivity and resistance to managerial practices' (Powell et al. 2005, p. 240). Such a continuum suggests the possibility that ideas and practices can be transformed/translated, and so changed, as they travel, as proposed by the proponents of the theory of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002) but that some ideas and practices will be resisted as they travel. The evidence shows that the public sector organisations in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work at times were 'engaged translators' and at other times were 'active resisters' to contemporary management ideas.

Active resistance to reforms and contemporary management ideas advocating managerialism was a considered response taken by Departmental Secretaries who understand that the organisations in which they constitute public sector management work operate according to different logics than private sector organisations from which such managerialism was derived. This evidence is consistent with the literature, which proposes that the modern world is characterised by competing and challenging institutional domains or logics (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Friedland & Alford 1991; see also Davis, Diekmann, & Tinsley 1994; Scott, Reuf, & Caronna 2000; Thornton 2004; Westney 1987)

Some literature claims that many contemporary management ideas were adopted by those in public sector management roles with limited experience in management, who turned to management gurus, bought books on management and organised conferences facilitated by external consultants (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996, p. 65). The consequences for the constitution of public sector management work were claimed to be that 'management ideas are now an institutionalised part of government' (Micklethwaite

& Wooldridge 1996, p. 351). However, contrary to this literature, the evidence shows that instead contemporary management ideas inspired by managerialism did not take hold and that instead their impact on the constitution of public sector management work was negligible.

7.5.2. Conclusion

Many of the contemporary management ideas which manifest within public sector reforms did *not* alter the constitution of public sector management work in Australia, because they were deemed not appropriate and neither suited to nor fitting for the public actors, the political environments and the duality of roles and responsibilities which constitute public sector management work. Reformers, with an economic rationalist perspective, advocated contemporary management ideas that were derived from the private sector. As Friedland and Alford (1991) propose, a set of competing and challenging institutional logics exists and in this case between the private and public sectors and many contemporary management ideas clashed with public sector logics.

Ideas associated with efficiency and effectiveness were advocated for the public sector and a lexicon including terms (also derived from the private sector, that is, strategic planning, personnel management, financial management, and accountability for results) were introduced (Allison 1984; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Stewart & Ranson 1988). Indeed, many have argued as does this research, that such concepts and terms ‘do not map the territory [of public sector management] directly’ (ibid.). The quest to ‘reinvent’ government or ‘banish’ bureaucracy (as suggested by the two texts *Reinventing government* [Osborne & Gaebler 1992] and *Banishing bureaucracy* [Osborne & Plastrik 1997]) was in effect a presentation of ideas which were ‘devoid of a knowledge of public administration and its historical context’ (Williams 2000, p. 522; see also Coe 1997; Fox 1996; Goodsell 1992; Kobrak 1996; Nathan 1995; Russell & Waste 1998; Wolf 1997).

Although, many if not all the contemporary management ideas proposed by reformers were circulated, diffused, and translated (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevón 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002) during their travels across the Anglo-American polities, they were received in a differential manner (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233) with *few* resembling institutional isomorphism, isopraxis

and isonymism whereas others resembled institutional polymorphism, and polypraxism and still others were completely discarded. Those elite public actors that constitute public sector management work in Australia's Public Service, the Departmental Secretaries of the top four central agencies in the APS, as well as the government of the day, in large part, made these decisions. What this research finds is that it was these public actors who determined what if any of these contemporary management ideas would be accepted and in what form, and that such determination was related to the extent that contemporary management ideas would 'fit' and suit the constitution of public sector management work. Ideas were judiciously considered and what appears to have endured is the unique constitution of public sector management work by Departmental Secretaries.

The following chapter covers the conclusion to the empirical research including a conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work, implications for theory and practice, and provides some recommendations for further research.

Chapter 8 Conclusion, Conceptual Model, and Contributions

8.1. Summary

This research investigated the constitution of public sector management work in the APS, in a context of evolving public sector reforms given claims of its reconstitution towards managerialism, replete with a focus on economics, efficiency and effectiveness as advocated by the NPM in the public sector reform literature (Barzelay 1992; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Osborne & Plastrik 1997). This reconstitution was deemed to be a consequence of reforms that took place across Anglo-American polities and the circulation and travel of contemporary management ideas from the 1980s to 2010, which were translated and transformed as they travelled, according to the travel of ideas literature (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). The research focussed on the Departmental Secretaries within the APS because these are the most senior of the management cadre and those expected to consider and drive reforms in partnership with the government of the day.

This important research has received little attention in the public sector reform literature, despite the significant impact of the public sector and the constitution of public sector management work on Australia's social, economic and political prosperity and wellbeing. Some research has been conducted on the Departmental Secretaries in Australia. While these studies contribute to our understanding of the Departmental Secretaries and their work, they do not yet present a comprehensive understanding of the constitution of public sector management work in the context of evolving reforms.

This thesis, therefore, makes an important original contribution to the public administration literature by addressing the primary research question: *how do current and former Departmental Secretaries in the APS constitute public sector management work, in a context of evolving reforms?* To assist with the examination of this research question, four subresearch questions were developed to guide the researcher in this field:

1. Who are the Departmental Secretaries who practise public sector management work?
2. How does the environment and context of the public sector in which Departmental Secretaries practice, shape their public sector management work?
3. How do Departmental Secretaries construct or perceive their roles and responsibilities in the context of continuing reforms?
4. How have contemporary management ideas influenced Departmental Secretaries and their work?

The methodological framework employed for the research was a grounded theory approach used to allow for the development of a broad sociological account, rather than one constrained by narrower functionalist and positivist theoretical approaches (Yetton et al. 1997). A qualitative case study using semi-structured interviews with current and former Departmental Secretaries in Australia's Public Service was used, complemented by some supporting document analysis. The document analysis was conducted to secure additional data with which to verify the emergent grounded theory. A review of the public administration literature, especially related to public sector reforms across Anglo-American polities during the 1980s to 2010, was presented in Chapter 2. The literature on new institutional theory as it pertains to the travel of contemporary management ideas was also considered, but to a lesser extent (see Appendix A). The findings of the research, their analysis, the implications and contributions for theory and practice were written up in four chapters (Chapter 4, public actors; Chapter 5, environments; Chapter 6, the roles and responsibilities; and Chapter 7, the impact of public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas).

This concluding chapter includes a conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work (Figure 8.1) which was developed as part of this research, and which has been substantiated by the interviews conducted. This model has three core factors: public actors, governmentally bureaucratic political environments, and a duality of activities to be navigated in the execution of roles and responsibilities. Collectively, these three core factors within the model provide the primary basis for the contribution of this research to the public administration literature. A further category of the 'fit' of contemporary management ideas provides a secondary basis for the contribution of this

research to the literature on new institutional theory as it relates to the travel of contemporary management ideas.

This model may be applicable to other public sectors across Anglo-American polities especially those polities such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand as they tend to follow Westminster systems of government akin to that of Australia. However, generalisation across the field is not a core strength of qualitative research (Eisenhardt 1989) and was not the aim of this research. The conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work is presented below.

8.2. Conceptual Model of the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

The conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work presented in Figure 8.1 is a culmination of this research. The components of this model, discussed at length in the preceding four chapters, are drawn together to show their relationships, connections and consequences for the constitution of public sector management work.

The purpose of this conceptual model represented by Figure 8.1 is not to provide a simplistic positivistic nexus of causality and feedback loops. Instead, it is intended to illustrate a set of regular relational occurrences that emerged from the analysis which collectively shape the constitution of public sector management work. The arrows depicted in the model have to be therefore considered as indications of either temporal sequentially or de-facto antecedents, rather than as strict cause and effect relationships. The model brings together a range of competing concepts to show the complexity of the constitution of public sector management work. Finally, the model is not generalisable in other contexts.

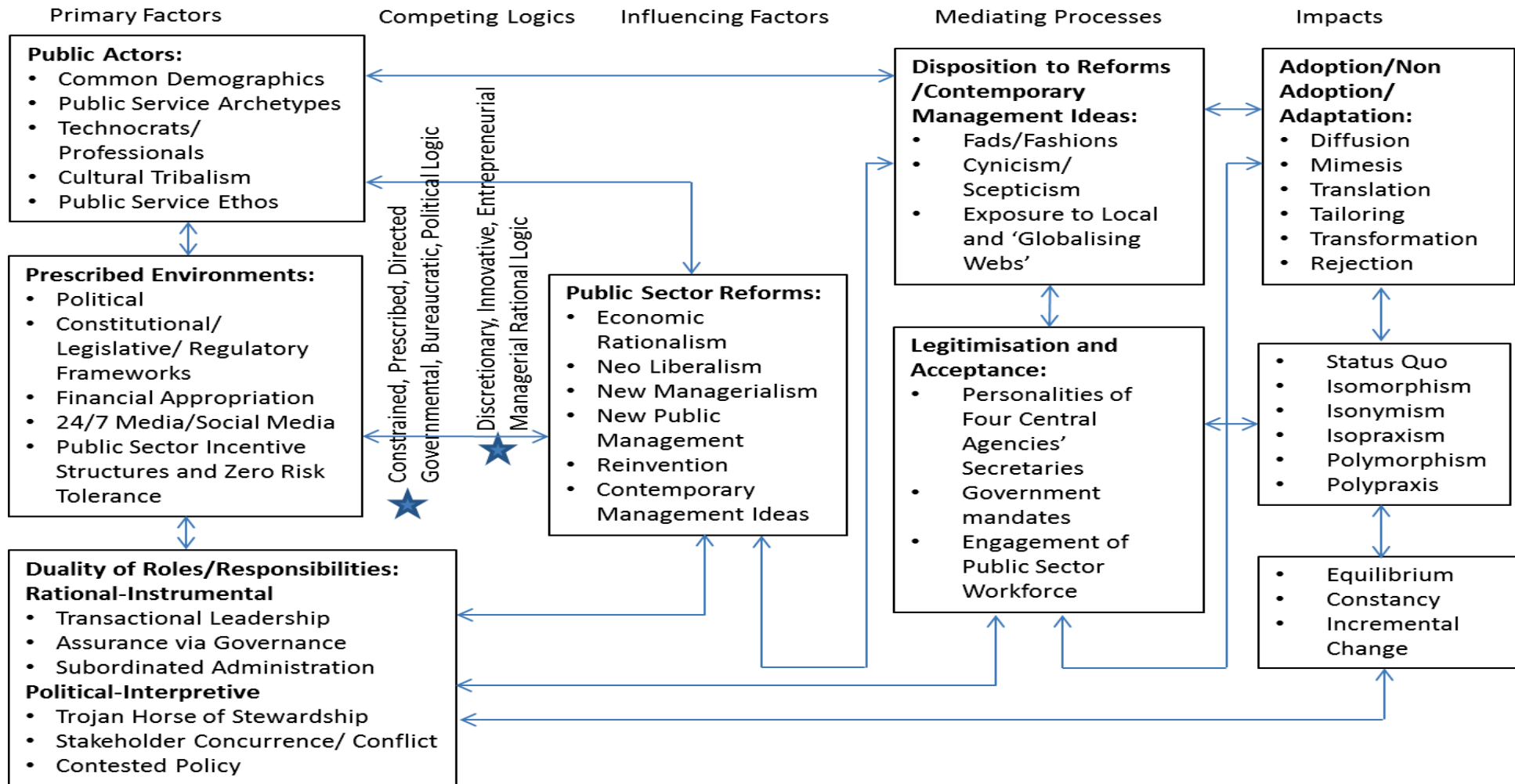


Figure 8.1 Conceptual Model of the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

This conceptual model represents a grounded theory approach to how Departmental Secretaries in Australia's Public Service constitute public sector management work in the context of evolving reforms. The model builds on the work of others who argue that the modern world is characterised by competing and challenging institutional logics or models, which serve to stipulate the ways in which actors and organisations operate (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Friedland & Alford 1991; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980; Thornton & Ocasio 2008). Rather than a rational actor or an organisational process model (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999) advocated by public sector reformers adopting a managerialist perspective or logic, a different set of logics apply to the constitution of public sector management work. The model shows that the constitution of public sector management work by Departmental Secretaries in Australia's Public Service more closely resembles a governmentally bureaucratic and politically situated logic (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999) and a diffuse phenomenon (Clegg 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). It is not a managerial phenomenon that operates according to rational actors, organisational processes, or market-oriented logics focussed on economics, efficiency and effectiveness.

Instead, the model of the constitution of public sector management work proposes a public sector logic consisting of a number of unique and distinct elements including public bureaucratic actors, governmentally bureaucratic political environments, and a duality of rational-instrumental and political-interpretive work. These elements present constraints and prescriptions that shape, direct and bind Departmental Secretaries. This work is not constituted according to discretionary elements, found in managerialism. Reforms and the contemporary management ideas on which many are based influence the instrumental transactional components rather than the substantive constitution of public sector management work. The disposition of Departmental Secretaries to reforms and contemporary management ideas, as well as legitimisation and acceptance processes, can mediate the influence of reforms and ideas and have an impact on the constitution of public sector management work and result in a myriad of outcomes or effects. Reforms and contemporary management ideas can have various impacts on the constitution of public sector management work, namely adoption, non-adoption or adaptation. In turn, what transpires can be classified as no change or reproduction of the status quo, or change through isomorphism, isonymism, isopraxis, polymorphism, or polypraxis. This research has found that public sector management work has maintained

an equilibrium or constancy in its constitution, although incremental change has occurred.

8.2.1. Primary Factors

Departmental Secretaries are public actors influenced by deeply embedded logics that have little if anything to do with public sector management, per se, as conceived within the NPM. These logics, which influence the constitution of their work, can be seen as follows. Departmental Secretaries were originally recruited into the public sector because they fit a 'public service archetype'. Public service archetypes are imbued with a set of common traits such as an attention to minutiae and detail, an ability to analyse facts and figures, and a disposition to risk aversion and avoidance. These traits are the antithesis of what would be expected from a management cadre within the private sector, which calls for entrepreneurship and innovation. The re-emergence of this set of common traits in each new generation of public servants perpetuates the incumbent constitution of public sector management work.

Ministerial indifference to management results in the appointment of Departmental Secretaries based on their ability to discharge policy work: their ability to manage is disregarded. Once appointed, the minister directs the attention of the Departmental Secretary to policy work, which is their core capability. Hence, the constitution of public sector management work is weighted to policy more than to management and reform agendas.

Most Departmental Secretaries have qualifications in non-management fields such as law and economics, linked to strong technical domain knowledge valued by ministers, and most begin their roles with limited knowledge of and little focus on management. The type of qualifications held assists them in their requirement to be familiar with the minutiae and detail of their particular field, as expected by the parliament and the ministers. As a consequence, they do not constitute public sector management work in a generic managerial sense: instead, their work is dominated by the policy related to their minister's portfolio responsibilities and legislation associated with its implementation.

The Canberra-centric cultural tribalism to which the Departmental Secretaries belonged before the NPM, endures today. The bond that this tribalism creates has made them impervious to reforms, as they are always able to fall back on their pre-existing, mutually reinforced and commonly held behaviours. These long-established and enduring institutionalised behaviours drive the constitution of public sector management work.

A perception of being strongly bound by a public service ethos/ethics, that is, a steadfast commitment to the public good, endures. This ethos/ethics translates into a determination to deliver accountabilities within an ethical framework that strongly influences the Departmental Secretaries' perception of the constitution of public sector management work. Departmental Secretaries are a unique group of people who do significant work for low levels of remuneration, relative to their counterparts in the private sector. So it is this disposition of public service ethos/ethics that leads to their lack of priority towards management and hence their constitution of public sector management work.

The environments where Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work constrain, prescribe, shape, direct and bind them and their work. These environments offer little if any discretion as to how the Departmental Secretary is to constitute public sector management work, as opposed to the discretion implied by the NPM. The environments and their constraints, prescriptions, and directions on public sector management work include the political, legislative/regulatory, financial and modern media. The political environment that creates interdependence between the Departmental Secretary and the parties in this environment, namely ministers, government and parliament, creates a bond that prescribes, directs and constrains the constitution of public sector management work. This political environment, replete with its political contests, debates and decisions, as well as an aversion to risk, is the antithesis of the politically devoid perspective of a public sector management based on 'clear assumptions and unambiguous principles' assumed by the proponents of the NPM.

The constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment with its formal instrumental legislated frameworks exerts another and different set of constraints and prescriptions on the Departmental Secretary and their constitution of public sector management work.

Formal instruments such as the Constitution, Acts of Parliament, Regulations, and Administrative Arrangements Orders are legally binding on the constitution of public sector management work. This environment requires strict compliance, and as the ‘authorising environment’ it directs and prescribes the constitution of public sector management work.

The financial environment is highly prescriptive for Departmental Secretaries and so they have limited control over the allocation of appropriated funds; hence it is cost management that is expected of them and that shapes their constitution of public sector management work. Bureaucratic procedures, rather than private sector-type financial management principles and programs intended to provide ministers and senior public servants with greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy for the efficient and effective management of their departments’ resources, are what direct their work. This work is thus dependent, constrained and shaped to a large extent by the funds allocated to the Departmental Secretaries by the government of the day on the basis of broader economic, social, and political factors rather than the needs of the Departmental Secretaries.

The requirements for contestability, scrutiny and transparency demanded by the modern media environment make unparalleled complex demands on the Departmental Secretary and their work. The multiplicity of actors and agendas contributing to the modern media environment reflect competing and challenging institutional logics. Coupled with the availability of a variety of new information communication technologies and the speed with which these enable a 24/7 media news cycle, these actors have imposed an element of further reactivity and short-termism on the constitution of public sector management work. Hence, the constitution of public sector management is bound by incrementalism and adhocery that further constrains and shapes this work.

Departmental Secretaries are contingent ‘boundary riders’ who, on occasion, constitute public sector management work in a rational-instrumental transactional manner and on other occasions are drawn into the political-interpretive arena. Their substantive constitution of public sector management work takes place in between the two ends of the spectrum that they traverse and is fluid in contrast to the fixed rational managerialism advocated within the NPM. This navigation of activities across a number of roles and responsibilities including leadership, governance, administration,

stewardship, stakeholder management and policy, frames the constitution of public sector management work.

Their leadership role and responsibilities require that the Departmental Secretaries explain and contextualise visions, purposes, goals and directions for their departments, which are predetermined and prescribed by government. Such prescription leaves little room for discretion and/or interpretation, and constrains their constitution of public sector management work, rendering it mostly rational, instrumental and transactional. This is in contrast to the discretion, innovation, and transformation advocated in NPM.

Governance work is fundamental to the constitution of public sector management work. Governance frameworks are legally prescribed to meet a set of drivers that are specific to the public sector. Governance frameworks offer the government a sense of assurance over the activities of the public sector. Governance work is considered to be of paramount importance and sits at the heart of public sector management work. Little discretion is exercised in the implementation of governance responsibilities that are a significant proportion of public sector management work. For the constitution of public sector management work, governance is a significant influence and the antithesis of the entrepreneurialism and innovation that managerialist reformers advocated.

Administrative Arrangements Orders (AAOs) determined by government, dictate the programs to be administered. To give effect to these AAOs, Departmental Secretaries' administration responsibilities encompass the deployment of programs, a resource base and systems and processes, using institutionalised and prescribed policies, processes, and procedures. This work is considered subordinate to other work as it is perceived to be less valued by the minister, and is often delegated. Subordination of the rational-instrumental dimension of public sector management work influences the constitution of public sector management work, in contrast to the prominence which managerialism places on such work.

Departmental Secretaries' stewardship role encompasses responsibilities which fall beyond their own organisations but which cover the whole of the APS. They are not independent agents at liberty to drive the agenda only of their department. In executing stewardship, Departmental Secretaries are required to exercise cooperation and compromise and seek to achieve whole of government outcomes. However, the quest

for such outcomes is thwarted by the political and bureaucratic realities that Departmental Secretaries are faced with every day and hence they are thrust towards the political end of the spectrum, which shapes their constitution of public sector management work.

Departmental Secretaries have a significant stakeholder management role and responsibilities, which encompass the development of relationships with a vast array of stakeholders in government, across the public sector, the media, and the community. These relationships operate close to what has been described as the ‘boundary’ or ‘seams’ of government, or at least tangentially to government, and so are bound by the protocols and machinations of the governmental and political domain in which the work takes place. Concurrence across stakeholders is rarely, if ever, achieved, shaping the constitution of public sector management work.

Policy advisory and development responsibilities remain a primary and core component of the constitution of public sector management work, despite contestability. Their policy advisory and development role requires the Departmental Secretary to work closely with the government of the day, immerse themselves in the same ‘political sea’, and display a certain ‘gamesmanship’, per se, that exerts a powerful influence on their work. This role requires an understanding of the philosophic position of governments, the manoeuvring of lobbyists, and an anticipation of the expectations of peers, and hence it is a substantive ‘politics of policy’ that shapes this work, which is not consistent with the rationalism of managerialism. Such work is institutionalised within the public sector and so exerts a powerful influence on the constitution of public sector management work.

8.2.2. Influencing Factors and Mediating Processes

Reforms and the contemporary management ideas on which many reforms are based influence the actors, their environments and their work but do not necessarily result in acceptance and institutionalisation. Many reforms are based on the principles of economic rationalism, neo-liberalism, new managerialism, new public management, reinvention, and contemporary management ideas originating from the private sector and so have little relevance for the constitution of public sector management work. These reforms and ideas are subject to mediating processes, such as the disposition of

the Departmental Secretaries to advocate and accept such reforms and contemporary management ideas. They perceive that reforms and contemporary management ideas are typically fads, fashions, variations of a theme, and recycled and relabelled ideas. This creates scepticism and cynicism. Many reforms and contemporary management ideas are viewed as being unsuitable and without relevance for the public sector and hence are avoided. Avoidance, in turn, means that the impact of such reforms and ideas on the constitution of public sector management work is negligible.

Furthermore, Departmental Secretaries engage in local and globalising webs (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214) of organisations, public sectors, and government institutions that allow them to learn from and disseminate reforms and contemporary management ideas. But the limited time and resources which Departmental Secretaries devote to evaluate, communicate, and implement these ideas, means that the circulation of these ideas within these webs is not a sufficient condition for them to have an impact on the constitution of public sector management work.

Other mediating processes, such as the processes of legitimisation and acceptance of reforms and contemporary management ideas, which in turn depend on other parties' views such as government and the public sector workforce, also contribute to their marginal impact. The four central agencies and their Departmental Secretaries are trusted and respected for their public sector knowledge, experience and expertise, and the force of their personalities is a contributing factor in the promotion and acceptance of contemporary management ideas. This group of Departmental Secretaries is able to exert a strong influence on their work by reinforcing what they are familiar with, what they value and what they deem appropriate for the sector. However, reforms and ideas driven by such agencies and their Secretaries usually reflect a bias towards reinforcing the 'status quo' or result in institutional isomorphism, isopraxis and isonymism (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233). The impact on public sector management work is marginal.

Where governments drive reforms and contemporary management ideas these are generally focussed on the technical and policy domain rather than the management or administrative domain. Ministers take little interest in reforming the 'administrative' aspects of public sector management work and so managerialist reforms and ideas do not alter this work significantly.

8.2.3. Impacts

Some degree of translating, tailoring and transforming of reforms and contemporary management ideas to fit the public sector is undertaken by Departmental Secretaries. Most contemporary management ideas, especially those from the private sector do not translate well for the public sector and many have been rejected or overturned post their implementation. The majority of reforms and contemporary management ideas address the rational managerial rather than the substantive constitution of public sector management work and so their impact has been limited at best.

Public actors acknowledge and accept that the nature of public sector management work is institutionalised. Where changes are made to this work, they are slow, cautious, incremental, and take place over long periods of time (usually enshrined in legislation). This incrementalism is, in part, a consequence of the inertia inherent in Departmental Secretaries who have longevity in the sector and are reluctant to undo their own previously initiated changes. It also reflects a perception of acceptable change across the public sector. Equilibrium is therefore generally maintained. Such incrementalism and institutionalisation does not reflect the reforms and contemporary management ideas advocated by proponents of NPM but instead reflect changes deemed suitable to these public actors, their environments and their roles and responsibilities.

8.2.4. Competing Logics

Departmental Secretaries are influenced by reforms and contemporary management ideas that have traversed the globe, but their impact is marginal, due to the governmental, political and bureaucratic logic (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Friedland & Alford 1991; and see also Davis, Diekmann, & Tinsley 1994; Scott, Reuf, & Caronna 2000; Thornton 2004; Westney 1987) to which they and the constitution of public sector management work are bound. Public sector frameworks reflect governmental, bureaucratic and political dimensions and logics (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999), rather than efficient, effective and economic dimensions reflected in contemporary management ideas promoted by the NPM. These frameworks constrain and restrict the feasibility of reforms and contemporary management ideas within the public sector and so the impact of these ideas on the constitution of public sector management work is limited. However, these frameworks and their logic compete with

a market-oriented logic reflecting discretion, innovation, entrepreneurialism and rational managerialism, underlying many reforms.

The principles and practices of managerialism underlying many reforms and contemporary management ideas have not been embedded in public sector management work because these were deemed unusable and unsuitable. Managerialist reforms and ideas suited to market-oriented logics are not relevant to the governmental, bureaucratic and political logics (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999) which prevail in the public sector.

The original contributions to the public administration literature and the literature on new institutional theory as it pertains to the travel of contemporary management ideas, as well as the implications for practice, are summarised below.

8.3. Contributions to Theory and Practice

The research problem studied was derived from a review of the public administration literature and a limited review of the literature on new institutional theory. The empirical research and its theoretical frame were analysed to address the research problem, and this analysis has provided a number of original contributions to these abovementioned bodies of literature. The contributions and the implications for practice are identified and presented throughout Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. A summary of the contributions and their implications for practice are presented below.

8.3.1. Contribution to Public Administration Theory

An original contribution is made to the public administration literature by the development of a conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work. This model provides an approach that explains the various elements which contribute to the constitution of public sector management work by Departmental Secretaries in Australia's Public Service. The model provides a more comprehensive and empirically grounded explanation of the elements that constitute public sector management work than the current theoretical explanations proposed to date (see for example Weller 2001 and Weller & Rhodes 2001). Furthermore, the model builds on and reinforces the governmental, bureaucratic, political model proposed by others

(Allison 1971; Allison & Zeitlow 1999) to explain the constitution of public sector management work.

A number of other original contributions are made to the public administration literature by the identification of a number of elements: i) differentiation of Departmental Secretaries as resembling Weber's 'bureaucrats' or public actors who in turn influence their constitution of public sector management work; ii) the governmentally bureaucratic political environments in which Departmental Secretaries operate, that constrain, prescribe, shape and direct the constitution of public sector management work; and iii) the duality of activities to be navigated in roles and responsibilities expected of Departmental Secretaries that have an effect on the constitution of public sector management work.

This thesis contributes to the public administration literature building on the work of Pollitt (2011, p. 35) by empirically challenging the applicability of the concept of a 'context-free genericism' for the public sector, as proposed by reformers and advocates of the NPM. Chapter 5 in particular provides a detailed explanation of the various environments in which Departmental Secretaries constitute public sector management work and reinforces the place that a 'context' has in the public sector and its constitution of public sector management work. This research also provides empirical evidence for the work of others who argue that rather than being 'generic' management is a 'diffuse concept, one not tied to a specific content or meaning' (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002, p. 237; Allison, 1984) and hence reinforces Clegg's (1996, p. 1) assertion that management is always situated within an environment, a context, or a place.

8.3.2. Contribution to New Institutional Theory

An original contribution is made to the literature on new institutional theory, but to a lesser extent than the abovementioned contribution to public administration theory, by the empirical identification of a range of factors which affect the choices made by public actors to adopt, adapt or reject public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas to which they are exposed. The factors include: i) the perceptions held by Departmental Secretaries about the merits of contemporary management ideas; ii) the focus, or lack thereof, directed towards such ideas by ministers; iii) the

disposition of the four central agency Departmental Secretaries towards adopting and driving such ideas; iv) the extent to which such ideas relate to the substantive elements of their work; v) acceptance that public sector management work lends itself to incremental institutionalisation generally based on legislative change; and vi) recognition that ideas are generally unsuitable for the different logics that prevail in the public sector. These factors in turn have an impact on the constitution of public sector management work rendering it less susceptible to managerialism.

This thesis contributes to the literature on new institutional theory by the empirical identification of the use of globalising webs or ‘crosscutting organisational arrangements premised on interconnectedness and alignment’ as mechanisms by which ideas can be translated as they travel (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214). The research, as discussed in Chapter 7, shows how such globalising webs do not always result in the translation of ideas, as Departmental Secretaries often have limited time and allocate few (if any) resources to implementing these ideas.

8.3.3. Implications for Practice – Reform

A number of implications for practice arise from this research. First, if reforms are required to the constitution of public sector management work then reformers will need to consider whether such reforms will be palatable to the public actor bureaucrats; the Departmental Secretaries who constitute public sector management work. To reform or modify public sector management work, reform practitioners will need to engage and involve these public actors or try to disrupt the ‘blood lines’ at the apex of this cultural tribe of public actors. Because of the dynamic between these public actors and ministers in Australia’s Westminster system reformers need to acknowledge that any reform agenda will always be subservient to the minister’s policy agenda and that until such time as ministers find a closer balance between policy and management it is unreasonable to expect that this work will change.

Second, reformers need to be cognisant of and acknowledge the powerful influence that governmentally bureaucratic political environments pose on the constitution of public sector management work. For example, reformers need to acknowledge that any reform agenda will always have to be aligned with the political agenda of the government of the day, and compliant with the laws of the authorising environment which underpins

Australia's Westminster system to which the public sector is bound. Reformers need to acknowledge that any reform agenda will always need to take into account the collectivism of the sector, and the confines of its connection to the governmentally bureaucratic political sphere, because the independence and discretion afforded by managerialism is not an accepted option available within the public sector.

Third, if reforms are to encourage the adoption of rational-instrumental activities and discourage the political-interpretive activities currently key features of the constitution of public sector management work, reformers will need to consider the feasibility of separating the public sector bureaucracy from its political masters, the elected representatives of the government of the day. Until such work is decoupled from the governmental sphere it is unreasonable to expect that the prescriptions to which this work is subjected will offer anything but the most limited degree of discretion to those performing the work, and hence this work is unlikely to become managerial. Reformists wishing to uproot institutionalised administrative mechanisms and supplant them with more generic, rational, instrumental, managerial mechanisms will need to first consider whether the complexities associated with the prescriptions and confines of substantive public sector management work lend themselves to simplification, sufficient to allow for this work to become entrepreneurial and innovative.

8.3.4. Implications for Practice – Contemporary Management Ideas

First, for reforms and contemporary management ideas to become accepted as suitable and relevant for the constitution of public sector management work, they will need to be generated from within the public sector, or at least in partnership with the public sector, rather than externally from without. If the constitution of public sector management work is to be modified by reforms and contemporary management ideas, then these need to be focussed on, relevant to, and address the substantive elements of the constitution of public sector management work because managerialist principles and practices are considered of limited relevance.

Second, if there is to be significant reform and modification to the constitution of public sector management work, governments may need to reconsider the disposition of the candidates they secure for the four central agency positions and the refresh of such candidates over time. At the time of writing this thesis, the Australian Liberal National

Government announced the replacement of all of the current Secretaries of the four central agencies (Thomson 2014a). It is envisaged that the rationale for doing so is to try to bring about change to the public sector and modifications to its work. Additionally, reformers will need to consider challenging and securing agreement for different incentive structures and greater risk-taking from the government of the day as it is unreasonable to assume that reforms will have much relevance for the constitution of public sector management work without such agreement. Until ministers acknowledge managerialism as relevant for the public sector it is unlikely that the constitution of public sector management work will be modified significantly. Finally, reformers need to recognise the institutionalised nature of the constitution of public sector management work and accept that reforms may only be possible where they: address the substantive components of this work, are agreed to by public actors, implemented in small increments, and realised over significant periods of time.

8.4. Recommendations for Future Research

This research was conducted within the APS and does not lend itself to generalisation across other Anglo-American polities. To determine if such research was generalisable across other Anglo-American polities, future research might be conducted in such polities as the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand, building on the work of Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011). Comparative research across such polities can provide the basis for comparison and contrast to further the body of public administration knowledge.

Furthermore, as this research was focussed on the Departmental Secretaries who comprise the most senior management cadre in the public sector, other research could be conducted with the next level of management, Deputy Secretaries, to consider the extent to which the conceptual model of the constitution of public sector management work is extendable to these other public managers. Such further research can extend and elaborate on the findings generated by this current research.

To respond to some long overdue calls from former Departmental Secretaries (formerly given the title of 'Permanent Heads') that studies should be focusing on the ways of the minister rather than Permanent Head (Spann 1975, p. 16), further research could

consider the work of ministers in their capacity as the ‘manager’ to the Departmental Secretary. One such Permanent Head considered it was a:

pity that there is no book about the incapacity and incompetence of Ministers, and their frailties. Journalists don’t expose them nearly enough, and even lazy and stupid Ministers seem able to guard their flanks. (Spann 1975, p. 16)

Given that ministers as politicians have ‘. . . talents, [that] are different from those of an administrator’ (Spann 1975, p. 17) such research could provide valuable insight into the relationship between ministers’ work, and the work of the Departmental Secretaries, and the consequences of such for the constitution of public sector management work.

The model developed in this research, using a grounded theory approach, requires further development before major claims can be made in relation to the value of the model. Given the relationship that exists between the Departmental Secretaries and ministers, and that their work takes them to the boundaries and seams of government, further research into the constitution of public sector management work might be made by adopting a different theoretical lens. The ‘boundary spanning’ (O’Mahoney & Bechky 2008; Williams 2002) and ‘boundary objects’ (Star 2010; Star & Griesemer 1989) theoretical lenses could be considered in further research to determine how the constitution of public sector management work spans the boundary between the public sector and the government sphere.

Furthermore, although there have been studies, including this research, which consider the constitution of public sector management work, and other studies which consider work of private sector chief executives, further research comparing the two might be valuable. The theoretical lens of competing and challenging institutional logics (Friedland & Alford 1991; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980; Thornton & Ocasio 2008) could be applied to such research. Such further research might contribute to the question posed by Allison (1984, p. 14): ‘public and private administrative leadership: are they fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects?’ By comparing the constitution of public sector management work with the constitution of private sector management work further research can contribute to our understanding of the differences and similarities between the constitutions of management work in these two sectors of our society.

Finally, while this research has shown the impact of public sector reforms and the contemporary management ideas on which they were based have not significantly altered the constitution of public sector management work, further research might be conducted to explore the specific role of fads and fashions (Abrahamson 1991; Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999; Donaldson & Hilmer 1998; Furnham 2004; Hilmer & Donaldson 1996; Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Pascale 1991; Strang & Macy 2001; ten Bos 2000; Williams 2004) on the public sector. This research could explore the role of fads and fashions on the public sector and the impact that such have on public sector managers and their management work.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Literature Review Travel, Translation and Transformation of Ideas

A.1 Introduction

Scholars such as Micklethwaite and Wooldridge (1996) and Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011), argue that public sector reforms, especially those which promoted contemporary management ideas associated with the NPM advocated by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Osborne and Plastrik (1997), were institutionalised in Anglo-American polities from the 1980s onwards. The extent to which this institutionalism has taken place, as reforms and their ideas were diffused and imitated/copied as they travelled, and its impact on the constitution of public sector management work, especially in relation to Australia is analysed below.

First, the role of imitation/copying and diffusion of such reforms and ideas is considered by reference to new institutional theory (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). Second, the possibility of ideas/practices being translated and transformed as they travel is explored by considering the theory of the translation of ideas (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). Third, the implications of the translation of public sector reform ideas inspired by the NPM on the constitution of contemporary public sector management in the Australian context is considered, to conclude from the literature what the constitution of public sector management might be. It is assumed that what constitutes public sector management in the context of the APS will be a conglomerate of local and global ideas.

A.2 Role of Imitation/Copying and Diffusion of Contemporary Management Ideas

New institutional theory has explored the mimesis of ideas/practices (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). This theory proposes the concept of the organisation field within which institutional isomorphism occurs. Mechanisms of isomorphism include mimetic, coercive and normative forces (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). Fields emerge on the basis of mimesis and this imitation can create 'relationships, references, and identifications' (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin 2005, p. 194) which can shape identity and result in the development of fashions and trends (Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Tolbert & Zucker 1983; Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 2001; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). Across the organisational field of Anglo-American polities and their

public sectors, some degree of institutional isomorphism appears to have taken place as a result of the transfer of NPM ideas and their influence on the constitution of public sector management. The promotion of technocratic public sector reforms by NZ's Treasury from the 1980s, for example, might be viewed as an instance of reforms advocated by a dominating organisation within an organisation field (the public sector) (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; March & Olsen 1983, p. 282-283; Mascarenhas 1990; Salamon 1981, p. 472; Wallis et al. 2007). It can be reasonably assumed that the APS might be influenced by the fashions and trends that emerged in NZ. However, in the Australian context, divergent responses to early public sector reforms resulted because many of the prerequisites and 'levers' for change/reform were not invoked (Wilenski 1986, p. 264). These prerequisites included: political will, allocation of resources, continuing institutional support, time, and a strategy for reform (Wilenski 1986).

Normative, coercive and mimetic influences in an environment rarely occur in isolation but tend to operate together and often produce a set of confused organisational responses (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). In addition, as others have found, there exists a range of external pressures and influences on organisations that can create disagreement and conflict within organisations (Powell 1991; Scott 1987). Furthermore, others have suggested that rather than notions of static, fixed, compliant, or conformist type actors, organisations, institutions and nation states, institutional change is a much more dynamic process (Friedland & Alford 1991). Friedland and Alford (1991) propose that the modern world is characterised by competing and challenging institutional domains or logics, such as markets, families, polities, and churches or religion and that such domains of the modern world serve to stipulate the ways in which actors and organisations operate, suggest principles of organisation, put forward notions of identity, and propose a language to guide motives and behaviours (Powell, Gammal, & Simard 2005, p. 236). Several other authors propose studies of such challenged and competing logics⁴⁶ (see Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Davis, Diekmann, & Tinsley 1994; Emery & Giauque 2014; Ocasio 2008; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980; Scott, Reuf, & Caronna 2000; Thornton 2004; Thornton & Westney 1987). For the constitution of public sector management in the Australian context and across other Anglo-American polities, the notion of competing logics is a critical aspect because

⁴⁶ Although the body of literature on institutional logics is comprehensive, for the purposes of this research it is not covered in depth, due to space limitations.

public sector reforms inspired by private sector concepts competed with very different logics operating in the public sector. As a consequence a set of confused organisational responses is evident across the Anglo-American polities regarding the constitution of public sector management, post reforms.

Further challenging the notion of a static diffusion process leading to institutional isomorphism is the concept that similarities of isomorphic changes can also contain diversity. So, even though diffusion of ideas and practices can create ‘surface level convergence among organisations’, variation and difference have been identified whereas many diffusion studies propose only isomorphism (Hwang, & Suarez 2005, p. 93). Therefore, the translation of ideas or practices that have been widely diffused can lead to differences and variation in the purpose and use of such ideas or practices because of specific physical organisational settings and contexts (Hwang & Suarez 2005) and logics. This appears to have been the case in Australia and across each of the Anglo-American polities where seemingly similar reform ideas were initiated, but received differentially, as each polity has a specific physical and organisational context.

Other scholars propose that organisations, managers, and stakeholders are exposed to pressures in the marketplace and organisation fields for “‘new” management ideas and practices’ (Powell et al. 2005, p. 234; see also Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Hall 1997; McKenna 2005) that reflect a diverse array of possible responses to management ideas, as was the case across the Anglo-American polities during the period from the 1980s onwards, including in Australia and the APS. During this time, economic, political, and societal pressures for public sector reforms centred on the NPM. Economic pressures came from new institutional economics, new classical macroeconomics, and public choice theory (Gregory 2007; Wallis et al. 1999; Weller 2001). Political pressures related to the size, growth, cost, inefficiency, and bureaucratic nature of the public sector were advanced by the ‘New Right’ (Brudney & Wright 2002; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993; Public Services Trust 2009) and other ‘anti-big government’ movements of both right and left persuasions (Coombs 1977, p. 18). Societal pressures in the form of constitutional crises which took place in NZ and Canada during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as a range of Royal Commissions and government studies into the Australian public sector, gave rise to the implementation of previously developed NPM ideas (Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990; Smith 1997).

Social, economic and political pressures can create a climate in which practices and ideas circulate in and across organisation fields (Powell et al. 2005, p. 234). Pressure can be exerted on organisations by management consultants, funding bodies, the media and press, to adopt business-type processes and procedures to achieve greater efficiency, accountability and effectiveness and hence 'create value' (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman 1997). These pressures can be normative or coercive. Normative pressures can be exerted on organisations by management groups such as management consultants, professional associations and other management institutions where there exists an affiliation or connection with such groups, and there is a difference in the receptivity or resistance that organisations display in their adoption or non-adoption of management ideas and practices (Powell et al. 2005, p. 238). In Australia a degree of normative pressure was applied for public sector reforms by some Commonwealth public sector bureaucrats (formerly known as Mandarins), who chose to promote a managerialist agenda of reform during the 1980s (Carroll 1992; Considine 1990; Johnston 2000; Nethercote 1989; Painter 1988; Pusey 1991, 1993; Yeatman 1987). At other times the pressures on organisations can be coercive, whereby management concepts, principles, ideas, and practices are imposed from external sources such as by legislators, governments, funding authorities, and other formal bodies and here too there is variability in the ways in which such concepts, principles, ideas, and practices are translated by organisations (Powell et al. 2005). This has also been the case in the Australian context and across the other Anglo-American polities, whereby successive governments have applied coercive pressure for public sector reforms and managerialist ideas.

Powell et al. (2005, p. 235) show how management and organisational methods and practices have been transferred and copied across the organisation field via five illustrative cases that reflect a diverse array of possible responses to management ideas. Using Weber's notion of 'ideal types', Powell et al. (2005, p. 239) specify four criteria which 'constitute the dimensions' by which ideal type organisations will vary in their acceptance of ideas. These criteria are the *carrier* of the idea as it travels, the *context* in which the practices or ideas travel, the actual *object* that is travelling, and the 'temporal and experiential nature' of contact with the idea and its 'originators or their apostles' (Powell et al. 2005, p. 239). 'Depending on the set of influences and the mediating organisational characteristics, managerial practices will be rejected, instituted, or

translated in divergent ways' (Powell et al. 2005, p. 240). The above four dimensions coalesce to form a set of different patterns of 'receptivity and resistance to managerial practices' (Powell et al. 2005, p. 240). The authors develop a continuum of organisation 'ideal types' that shows how combinations of these four dimensions can create a diverse array of responses to management ideas. The continuum includes:

1. the 'enthusiastic adopter', denoting organisations that source new and best business models and practices in an active manner;
2. the 'converted innocent', that unexpectedly discovers its ways of operating have been subject to and undergone significant change and transformation;
3. the 'engaged translator', which is an organisation keen on shaping or tailoring new business and management practices;
4. the 'reluctant conformer', an organisation that finds itself both coerced and then rejected by the advocates of changed practices; and,
5. the 'active resistor', an organisation that is resolute in its quest to maintain its often traditional and historical ways of operating and being and hence rejects new fads and fashions (Powell et al. 2005, p. 240).

engaged translator. However, the Australian polity has morphed, over different periods of time, from being an engaged translator to displaying the characteristics of other organisation types, spanning from an ‘enthusiastic adopter’ (Carroll 1992; Codd 1988; Considine 1990; Holmes 1989; Johnston 2000; Keating; 1988, 1989; Nethercote 1989; Painter 1988; Paterson 1988; Pusey 1991, 1993; Shand 1987; Yeatman 1987), to the ‘active resistor’. Such a continuum suggests the possibility that ideas and practices can be transformed/translated, and so changed as they travel, as proposed by the proponents of the theory of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002).

A.3 The Translation and Transformation of Contemporary Management Ideas as they Travel

While the new institutional theory proposes a ‘static’ concept of institutionalisation, others view institutionalisation as a process capable of encompassing dynamic change (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005; Tolbert & Zucker 1996). Within new institutional theory, Scandinavian scholars have extended the notion of institutionalisation by considering and exploring the ‘processes’ of institutionalisation and seeing both ‘stability and change’ as possible norms of institutionalisation (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 48 citing Czarniawska & Sevon 1996). The proponents of the theory of translation propose the possibility of ideas/practices being transformed/translated, and so changed, as they travel (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002).

To better understand institutionalisation processes, imitation is viewed as a ‘performative process’ (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195; Sevon 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Sevon 2003). However, the outcomes of imitation can be different from the original model that was imitated and has been variously termed ‘recombination’ (Westney 1987), ‘accretion’ (Rottenburg 1996), ‘translation’ (Czarniawska & Sevon 1996), ‘editing’, (Sahlin-Andersson 1996) and ‘hybridization’ (Boyer, Charron, Jurgens, & Tolliday 1998; Djelic 1998). These concepts have replaced the concept of diffusion (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005).

Ideas are modified as they are imitated because they are translated, shaped and changed during the imitation process and result in local varieties of models and ideas flavoured by differing local contexts (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195).

Some elements of ideas can remain the same as the idea is imitated but other aspects of the ideas will be modified. Sometimes the name or label of an idea will remain the same as it travels but the practices and technologies can change as a result of adaptation to various ‘local “flavours”’ (Solli, Demediuk, & Sims 2005, p. 195). ‘Even in a globalised world, differences between continents, countries, sectors, and industries, have an impact on how widely disseminated knowledge is translated and applied in the local context’ (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 95). Thus, in Australia, the public sector reforms of the 1980s were applied in an incremental and consultative manner albeit that some bureaucrats within the central agencies actively endorsed such ideas, in contrast to the more technocratic and directive approach adopted in the public sectors of NZ and the UK (Johnston 2000).

Within the model of the ‘travel of ideas’, translation is defined as the process of ‘displacing something, or the act of substitution; it always involves transformation’ (Czarniawska & Sevón 2005, p. 8, drawing on Serres 1982). Accordingly knowledge, people, or things that are involved in the process of translation will comprise an uncertain identity. Furthermore, the translator and what is being translated will, by implication, change with all acts of translation (Czarniawska & Sevón 2005, p. 8, drawing on Serres 1982). Erlingsdottir and Lindberg (2005) show that other effects caused by the translation of ideas could be complementary to or compete with isomorphism. The authors found that homogeneous practices (or isopraxis) can develop where ideas become new actions, and then generate new heterogeneous practices and routines (Erlingsdottir 1999, cited by Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 48). While the empirical evidence is scant, it is possible to discern that certain global practices (such as privatisation, planning programming and budgeting systems [PPBS], and accrual accounting) (Dunleavy et al. 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Williams 2000) promoted via public sector reforms across the Anglo-American polities from the 1980s onwards did result in isopraxis.

Imitation can also lead to the adoption of the same names of practices (isonymism), but the application of those names is made to different practices and forms (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 48). Public sector reforms that took place across the USA and Canada were concerned more with the rhetoric of reform or isonymism than the actual reforms (Clark 1994; Kettl 1997; Kiel & Elliott 1999). In Australia and across all Anglo-American polities, a myriad of concepts, ideas, and techniques existed that were

presented as part of the NPM name. These included: joined-up government, e-government, market-type mechanisms, competition, privatisation, contractualisation, decentralisation, disaggregation, empowerment, performance measurement, performance appraisal, incentivisation, performance pay and bonuses, entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity, total quality management (TQM), management by objectives (MBO), planning programming and budgeting systems (PPBS), accrual accounting, citizens' charters, and customer orientation (Dunleavy et al. 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Williams 2000). Many of these concepts, ideas, and techniques were possibly nothing more than the buzz words or jargon that accompanied the NPM (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996).

Heterogenisation can also result in an organisation field in which some ideas can become 'translated into different models or forms in different practices at different times [and so create] polymorphism rather than isomorphism' (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 198, drawing on Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 67; Christensen & Laegreid 2001; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). Polypraxism can also result where a practice does not translate to a uniform practice, as was the case with many NPM practices (as described above), which were promoted during public sector reforms across Anglo-American polities. Thus, the label of NPM was applied to a myriad of processes and practices in Australia and the other Anglo-American polities but the application of such reforms meant that the actual processes and practices which it depicted and which were implemented were often quite heterogeneous (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996).

So what becomes apparent in these homogenous and heterogeneous processes which reproduce organisational ideas, models and practices is the continuous and dynamic process of reform which involves the connection and reconnection of organisations, people, processes and actions rather than a static process of only copying (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005, p. 51). In the Australian context, a dynamic process of reform took place via a range of internal and external influences on the governments of the day (Gregory 2007; Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1993; Wilenski 1986) with changes to the constitution of public sector management resembling polymorphism rather than isomorphism.

The use of globalising webs or 'crosscutting organisational arrangements premised on interconnectedness and alignment' is another mechanism by which ideas can be

translated as they travel (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214). Drawing on ‘theories of governmentality and actor network theory’ Hansen and Salskov-Iversen (2005, p. 213) consider the role played by globalising webs in the processes of translation of ideas. Globalising webs are orderings or provisions or arrangements in process as opposed to permanent or completed organisational bodies that provide linkages which enable translation to take place across different places and times via a range of ‘localised social and technical practices and devices’ used (Barry 2001, p. 12). A variety of terms are used to conceptualise the

links through which particular global meanings and conceptions of statecraft, governance, and management are generated, diffused, appropriated and edited in local settings [...] including political networks, knowledge networks, epistemic communities and transnational discourse communities. (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214; see also Haas 1992; Hansen, Salskov-Iversen & Bislev 2002; Stone 2003)

Although not a transnational organisational form, collectively the consultants, advisors and management gurus from the private sector facilitated and enabled the NPM to become a core component of many public sector reform programs across Anglo-American polities, with an impact on the governance structures of the public sector and public sector management (Aucoin 1995; Caiden et al. 1995; Foley 2008; Goodsell 1985; Hood 1990; Kettl 1997; Juliet & Mingus 2008; Maor 1999, p. 14; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 86; Mulgan 2008a, 2008b; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Similarly, globalising webs of senior public sector bureaucrats in the Australian context have facilitated and on occasions driven the contemporary management ideas underpinning public sector reforms (Codd 1988; Holmes 1989; Keating; 1988, 1989; Paterson 1988; Shand 1987). These bureaucrats exposed to managerialist ideas from such international economic organisations such as the OECD, General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT), the IMF and the World Bank (Pusey 1991, pp. 226-227) were provided with experiences which would have a lasting and significant effect on their ‘orientations to their work’ as well as enabling them to communicate, promote, and initiate such ideas back in the Australian context (ibid.) thus modifying the constitution of public sector management work to be more managerial in its orientation.

Advocates of NPM appear to have modified the relationship which exists between instrumental and substantive rationality, as advocated earlier by Weber, and instead focussed reforms primarily on instrumental rationality, further modifying the

governance structures of the public sector, especially in relation to the policy administrative dichotomy (Aucoin 1990; Gregory 2007; Hood 1990; Maor 1999; Talbot 2001). In particular e-modernisation and other such reform processes are shown by Hansen and Salskov-Iversen (2005, p. 232) to be advocating a specific governance and management approach, namely that under (neo) liberal rule, entities such as ‘non-state actors or hybrid organisational forms’ operating beyond the nation state are authorised to do so and ‘become authorised’ via their voice, and their expertise. In the same way, the transfer of public sector reform ideas across Anglo-American polities during the 1980s and beyond incorporated the use of many non-state actors such as rent seekers, right-wing think tanks, lobbyists, management consultants, management gurus, external advisors, contractors and other ‘specialists’ from the private sector, who advocated NPM and were authorised to do so, to a large degree as a result of the authority which their voice carried (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Pascale 1991). Therefore, the ‘globalising web is [a form of] governmental technology [which] once connected, [...] provides a means to translate ideas with a view to construct authority and manage organisational reform and societal modernisation’ (Hansen & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 232). Public sector reforms and NPM could be considered to have translated across the Anglo-American polities via globalising webs, *because* the ideas of rent seekers, right-wing think tanks, lobbyists, management consultants, management gurus, external advisors, contractors and other specialists from the private sector were accommodated and translated by successive Anglo-American governments and in the Australian context also by some former bureaucrats, for application across their public sectors.

Furthermore, ideas can be translated via various modes of imitation including the mediated mode (March 1999, p. 137; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002; Tarde 1890/1962). The mediated mode is one in which other organisations and actors mediate the ‘relationships between those being imitated and those who are imitating’ (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 196). Many organisations and people act as mediators and/or carriers of ideas (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002). These mediators and carriers have been called ‘Others’ (Meyer 1994, 1996) and they are able to mediate ideas by engaging in activities that are required for the translation of ideas (Hedmo et al. 2005). Such activities include influencing and shaping activities that take place under their patronage, as they ‘discuss, interpret, advise, suggest, codify, and sometimes pronounce and legislate [and] develop, promulgate, and certify some ideas as proper reforms, and

ignore or stigmatise other ideas' (Meyer 1996, p. 244). These mediators have been conceptualised as editors (Sahlin-Andersson 1996, 2000) who 'formulate and reformulate and [so] frame and reshape [ideas] in the process' of reporting on and transmitting ideas (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 197). Mediators can often include parties such as 'researchers, experts, international organisations, consultants, and publicists [...] in the process of imitation' (Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 201). Professionals from within NZ Treasury, with experience of neo-liberalism and the ideas of managerialism invoked in institutions such as the OECD, the World Bank, and the (IMF) acted as mediators and transported ideas of public sector reform and NPM (Scott 2008b) to NZ. This was also the case in Australia, as mentioned above. Such mediators can make a field global (Wedlin 2006), as did the actors and parties who made the field of public sector reform and NPM a global one.

A.4 Implications of Translation for the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

How public sector reform ideas inspired by the NPM travelled during the 1980s to 2010 across Anglo-American polities is discernible, as discussed above, but the implications for the constitution of public sector management are less clear, in part, because as researchers have shown, reforms take different shapes in practice regardless of the organisation studied (Solli et al. 2005, p. 30). Thus '[t]ranslation – of abstract ideas to concrete practices, of words to actions, from one place to another inevitably leads to difference in relation to the original' (Solli et al. 2005, p. 30) (see, for example, studies by Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Engwall & Pahlberg 2001). Names and their function are considered of significance, especially as, in relation to public sector reform, they constitute the core component of reforming (Solli et al. 2005). The doctrine of nominalism presumes 'that a name has constituting qualities, that is, through its connections to other words and public discourses it affects the way we perceive what it designates' (Solli et al. 2005, p. 31). In the Australian context there were a myriad of concepts, terms, (Dunleavy et al. 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011; Williams 2000) and buzz words (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996) associated with public sector reforms, and they were perceived in different ways and subsequently influenced the constitution of public sector management in a varied manner.

Modernisation over the past decades has been carried out within public administration under the banner of NPM (Solli et al. 2005); but 'the activity behind the concept NPM

is not as easily found as a reference to it' (Solli et al. 2005, p. 31). One reason why it is hard to define what NPM means in practice is that it is difficult to find one 'original idea that could give the concept of NPM a clear meaning' (Fox 1996, p. 258; Solli et al. 2005, p. 31; Williams 2000). Instead, it appears to be a group of activities that researchers have bundled collectively under the one label or name of NPM (see Christensen & Laegreid 2001; Hood 1995; Olsen & Peters 1996; Power 1997). As Eco (1990) and others suggest, it is doubtful whether it is possible to tell original inventions from copies or imitations (Erlingsdottir & Lindberg 2005; Solli et al. 2005). This seems to be the case with public sector reforms across Anglo-American polities whereby management consultants, Osborne and Gaebler (1992), are largely credited with the ideas of NPM; hence, the USA is deemed to be the originating source.

Solli et al. (2005, p. 32) explore a concrete reform considered part of NPM called 'Best Value' (in 2002) reportedly implemented in the UK. The value of reform names, these authors argue, is akin to the value of trademarks or 'reformmarks', which are similar to trademarks in that they 'concern [...] an identity that one wishes to build up, which is supposed to signal progress and excellence although not necessarily must have very much to do with the product itself' (Solli et al. 2005, p. 45). They suggest that 'to see the reformmark as separate from activity, [... is] a way to understand similarity and difference as practices are compared'. This is synchronous with Hacking's (1999) conceptualisation of nominalisation that suggests that 'concepts are divorced from the activity they refer to, but despite this they have a function' (Solli et al. 2005, p. 45). Thus, with reform, Solli et al. propose that it is the name of the reform that gives rise to an understanding of reforming because 'names in themselves give identity, while apparently different local circumstances legitimate a disengagement from the activities of the "original"' (Solli et al. 2005, pp. 45-46), which appears to have been the case with public sector reforms associated with the NPM in the Anglo-American polities. While NPM ideas spread to and from the USA, the UK, Canada, NZ and Australia, the reforms identified as NPM were, in many cases, given a unique local flavour. In this way, some of the ideas of NPM were disengaged or disassociated from the 'original' NPM ideas (of Osborne and Gaebler, 1992, and Osborne & Plastrik, 1997) and took on their own forms, actions, and products. This is an important point in terms of this research and the extent to which this is the case for the actual constitution of public

sector management work in the Australian context that is explored empirically in this research.

Management, whether it is public or private sector based, as Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall (2002, p. 237) suggest, is a 'diffuse concept, one not tied to a specific content or meaning'. Instead management is considered to be a process that depends on the place where management is conducted, the processes of and the person(s) conducting management activities (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002; see also Allison 1984). Public sector reformers across the Anglo-American polities heavily influenced by NPM ideas were less concerned with the places, the processes, or the persons who conduct management activities in the public sector. Reformers placed little attention on the constitution of public sector management and so few concepts, ideas, and techniques of NPM appear to have been translated into significant changes for public sector management work. The literature indicates that the managerial agenda of NPM has initiated superficial coverage of reform topics without significant concern for the actual practices neither of public sector management nor of their implementation (Brunsson 2006; Moe 1994; Savoie 1994a; Sundstrom 2006). A range of consequences, many of them unintended, which resulted from reforms based on NPM, were so because reformers did not consider the 'viability of their theories against practical experience' (Gregory 2003; Talbot 2001). Furthermore, as the reforms based on NPM diffused, circulated and were translated during their travels across the Anglo-American polities, management ideas and concepts were received in a differential manner (Powell et al. 2005, p. 233), some resembling institutional isomorphism, isopraxis and isonymism whereas others resembled institutional polymorphism and polypraxis.

For Australia, the travel, translation, and transformation of public sector reforms and contemporary management ideas had an impact on the constitution of public sector management work. They provide an indication of what public sector management is stated to be, but how this compares with what is actually practised in today's public sector management is not clear.

Appendix B: Documents Analysed

A (limited) range of documents were sourced and analysed to gain a further insight into the constitution of public sector management work. These documents were:

Public Service (PS) Act 1999 (amended 2013) Section 57 which covers the formal responsibilities of Departmental Secretaries

Public Service Regulations 1999 which underpins the PS Act 1999

Australian Public Service (APS) Code of Conduct and APS Values

Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 Section 44 which identifies special responsibilities of Chief Executives

Departmental Secretary Performance Agreement templates (where made available).

Appendix C: Extended Literature Review: Influences, Objectives and Outcomes of Public Sector Reform in Anglo-American Polities (Excluding Australia)

C.1 United Kingdom

Influences

Concern with efficiency and effectiveness was first raised by the Northcote/Trevelyan Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service of 1854 (Northcote & Trevelyan 1854; du Gay 2006), which was an early influence whose effect endured in the UK. The changes proposed by this early reform resulted in the establishment of a Civil Service Commission (CSC), which set up an apparatus for unifying the civil service and centralised and standardised recruitment procedures by anchoring them to examinations, the merit principle, and standardised first appointments (Chapman 2004). However, from the end of the 1950s, different views and influences for reform became apparent. These latter views and influences stressed the need to ‘modernise’ the civil service.

From the 1950s, the major influences leading to public sector reform in the UK were based on a growing view that the British Civil Service was a key contributor to the poor economic situation which prevailed post war, and that its civil servants were ‘managerially incompetent’ and ‘unfit for purpose’ (du Gay 2006, p. 158). A managerialist critique of the civil service prevailed which deemed that reform was required to bring about greater civil service efficiency and effectiveness via the introduction of private sector management practices and techniques from British commerce and industry to the civil service (Bogdanor 2001, pp. 292-293; du Gay 2006). Critics advocated ‘Generic Managerialism’, a view based on assumptions that there is something called ‘management’ and that such management is a ‘generic, purely instrumental activity embodying a set of principles that can be applied to a public business, as well as in private business’ (Painter 1988, p. 1; Wallis & Dollery 1999; Weller 2001). It became a prevalent and strong influence on public sector reform in the UK (Ackroyd, Kirkpatrick, & Walker 2007; Bogdanor 2001; Caiden 1991; Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt 1990a; Public 2007; Wallis & Dollery 1999;).

From 1979, managerialist influences drawing on economic theories⁴⁷ such as, new institutional economics (agency, transaction costs, property rights), new classical macroeconomics, and public choice became predominant (Gregory 2007; Wallis & Dollery 1999; Weller 2001). Such economic theories focussed on government failure and a concern with the growth of government or a growing ‘Leviathan’ government (Wallis & Dollery 1999, p. 16; Gregory 2007). The size, scope, and cost of the UK ‘welfare state’ was challenged by the ‘New Right’ (Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009) and other ‘anti-big government’ movements of both right and left persuasions in countries such as the UK (Coombs 1977, p. 18). As Coombs suggests this

[was] essentially a protest against the activities of government itself and can only be evaluated in terms of the propriety of government interventions in fields such as health, welfare, pensions, transport and countless and increasing others. (Coombs 1977, p. 18)

Instead, what was advocated were free markets, social conservatism, minimal government intervention, minimal welfare provision, and minimal regulation (Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001). To address this failure, and governments’ uncontrolled growth and inefficiency and ineffectiveness, private sector management principles were required, it was argued (Ackroyd, Kirkpatrick, & Walker 2007; Bogdanor 2001; Caiden 1991; Gregory 2007; Wallis & Dollery 1999). Table C1 below, provides a summary of the core influences of public sector reform in the UK, during the last half of the twentieth century.

⁴⁷ Economic theories especially those of the new institutional economics (agency, transaction costs, property rights) were a significant influence on public sector reforms across the Anglo-American polities. Although considered, for the purposes of this thesis they are not discussed in depth.

Table C1. United Kingdom: Influences of Public Sector Reform

United Kingdom: Influences of Public Sector Reform	
Concerns for greater efficiency and effectiveness	(Bogdanor 2001, p. 292-293; du Gay 2006)
A belief in private sector managerialism and critiques from managerial advocates	(Painter 1988, p. 1; Wallis & Dollery 1999; Weller 2001)
Economic theories such as new institutional economics (agency, transaction costs, property rights) new classical macroeconomics, and public choice	(Gregory 2007; Wallis & Dollery 1999; Weller 2001)
Concerns about welfare states and welfare professionalism	(Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001)
Concerns about the power of trade unions relative to government	(Ackroyd et al. 2007)
Concerns about the power of the civil service relative to government	(Coombs 1977, p. 18; Gregory 2007; Wallis & Dollery 1999, p. 16)

Source: Original table derived from literature

The influences on public sector reform in the UK grew from dissatisfaction with the growth and inefficiency of the public sector, views that the public sector was crowding out the private sector, with much pressure for public sector reform coming from neo-liberal or conservative governments in the US and the UK during the 1980s (Mascarenhas 1993, 1990) that wanted to introduce a ‘new public management’ (Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt 1990a, 1990b). These influences gave rise to a number of objectives of public sector reform, which varied with successive governments.

The ‘ideological and institutional directions’ of an agenda for managerialist modernisation through public sector reform had been set prior to the 1980s by some UK Labour administrators and these directions were continued in a consistent and coherent manner by successive UK conservative governments (Pollitt 1990a, p. 81). Prime Minister Thatcher’s Conservative Party public sector reform agenda was to reduce the size of the welfare state via a reduced role, function and size for the public sector (Caiden 1991; Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001). Underpinning the Conservative Party ideology was an underlying belief in monetarism and supply side economics, which contrasted with the former post war Keynesian economics (Gregory 2007). In effect these views translated to a need to cut public expenditure and public sector borrowing, reduce government taxes and, as a consequence, be able to return monies to the people and the market whom it was thought would be better able to

spend in a more efficient manner than government (Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001, p. 284).

Privatisation and marketisation or contractualisation via a range of market-type mechanisms such as contracting out, creation of internal markets, and competitive sourcing and tendering, were favoured as a means of introducing competition into the public sector to achieve greater economy, efficiency and effectiveness while at the same time enabling better customer service (Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001, p. 289, p. 291). Moreover, Prime Minister Thatcher and her party sought to separate policy-making from administrative implementation with the launch, in 1988, of the Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit paper on 'Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps' (du Gay 2006, pp. 151–158; see also Bogdanor 2001; Public Services Trust 2009). The aim of the recommendations of the Next Steps program was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service by introducing private sector business principles and practices (including contractualisation) to the public sector and in effect to launch what became known as the era of 'New Public Management' (NPM) (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 24; Talbot 2001, p. 291).

When Prime Minister Major's Conservative Government came to power in 1990, its reform agenda introduced NPM or private sector management practices into the public sector (Ackroyd et al. 2007; du Gay 2006; Talbot 2001, p. 292). This agenda continued with Prime Minister Blair's New Labour Government, which came to power in 1997, and built on the reforms of the previous conservative governments (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Public Services Trust 2009) especially in relation to NPM. Modernisation and management development were central themes of the New Labour Government from 1997 forward. As Bogdanor (2001, p. 291) suggests, the 'leitmotif' of public sector reform in the UK from the 1960s to the 1990s was 'that efficiency in the public services can be achieved by simulating a business situation, by adapting the methods and practices of the private sector to the public services', in effect, to bring market disciplines to the public service (du Gay 2006, p. 149; Public Services Trust 2009). Marketisation, decentralisation and deregulation, were the order of the day (Gregory 2007; Public Services Reform 2009; Talbot 2001).

More recent reforms undertaken by Prime Minister Brown's Labour Government, which came to office in 2007, followed 'the rhetoric of change' (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 37) and 'commitment to rules, fair chance, and a fair say for all' (Brown 2008, p. 2). Again, reform efforts followed and built on public service reforms of previous conservative governments (Public Service Trust 2009) and continued Blair's work on advocacy of choice and competition although with less gusto (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 37). Table C2 below, provides a summary of the core objectives of public sector reform in the UK, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C2. United Kingdom: Objectives of Public Sector Reform

United Kingdom: Objectives of Public Sector Reform	
Managerialist agenda of modernisation and management development	(Ackroyd et al. 2007, p. 9; Public Services Trust 2009, p. 36)
Reduce the size of the welfare state via a reduced role, function and size for the public sector	(Caiden 1991; Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001)
Cut public expenditure and public sector borrowing, reduce government taxes and as a consequence be able to return monies to the people and the market	(Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001, p. 284)
Bring market mechanisms to the public sector via privatisation and marketisation or contractualisation	(Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001, p. 289, p. 291)
Introduce 'New Public Management' (NPM)	(Mascarenhas 1990; Hood 1991; Pollitt 1990a, 1990b)
Improve public sector accountability and responsiveness	(Public Services Trust 2009)
Separation of policy and administration	(Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001)
Citizen empowerment	(Cabinet Office 2008; Public Services Trust 2009, p. 38)
New professionalism for the public sector	(Cabinet Office 2008; Public Services Trust 2009, p. 38)

Source: Original table derived from literature

The reformers' quest of enabling and freeing public sector managers to manage as private sector managers were imagined to be doing, paid little if any attention to the context or environment in which public sector managers operated. Neither did the reformers' objectives take into consideration the ability of public sector managers to simply manage according to the new public management approach. The reformers did

not, in the first place, consider what constituted public sector management, or whether what was being asked of public sector managers was actually doable.

Outcomes

There have been few systematic and comprehensive evaluations of the outcomes and consequences of public sector reforms in the UK (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Bogdanor 2001; du Gay 2006; Pollitt 1990a; Pollitt 2002, p. 281; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2004, p. 131; Wallis et al. 2007) although some exceptions exist (see Ackroyd et al. 2007, p. 9; Boyne et al. 2008; Halligan 2003, p. 205; Wallis et al. 2007, p. 40). Evaluations tend to focus on separate cases of public services reform or general trends across the entire sector, rather than detailed empirical studies or research which consider ‘comparative analysis across different domains’ of which there have been few (Ackroyd et al. 2007, p. 9; Ferlie & Martin 2003; Talbot 2001). Where evaluations have been conducted of the purported changes to UK public services, as a result of public sector reforms, their impact is difficult to gauge because the espoused changes have been ‘broad, often ill-defined and contradictory’ (Talbot 2001, p. 292; Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew 1996; Pollitt 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000). However, some argue that the UK public sector has changed as a result of the reforms (Wallis et al. 2007, p. 40; Halligan 2003, p. 205) in relation to its ‘internal shape, organisation, and management’ and, in particular, towards the new public management (NPM) mode of operating, replete with its private sector type management values and priorities (Pollitt 1990a, p. 84; Broadbent & Laughlin 2002; Powell et al. 1999, p. 2; Talbot 2001, p. 299). Others challenge the notion that public sector reforms have translated into substantial changes in values, work and organisation especially for professionals operating within the public services (Ackroyd et al. 2007, p. 9) and argue that little has changed (Eichbaum 2000, p. 38; Faux 1999; Reich 1999; Talbot 2001, p. 299; Wallis et al. 2007) in many cases as continuities exist among the changes that have occurred.

One outcome that has been observed is an inability by conservative governments to change the public sector culture systematically and to ‘roll back the state’ via reduction of taxes, public expenditure and public borrowing (by de-nationalisation of industries and publicly owned utilities and de-regulation of labour markets the size and role of the public sector could diminish), while at the same time there has been success in reducing

the trend for each of these latter elements to increase significantly (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 25; Talbot 2001). Efforts to privatise segments of the public sector were realised by the conservative governments but such efforts have resulted in the need to reintroduce mechanisms and institutions for the regulation of what became, in effect, privatised organisations which held a monopoly in the marketplace (Banham 1994, Hood et al. 1999; Olsen 2005; Peterson 1992; Talbot 2001, pp. 290 and 296). Generally, the efforts to secure public-private partnerships (PPP) underpinned by New Labour's public finance initiative (PFI) have been successful but such successes have been paralleled by equivalent and sometimes spectacular failures (such as the London Underground infrastructure company 'Metronet'), especially in relation to Information Technology (IT) (Talbot 2001; Public Services Trust 2009). Marketisation reforms associated with health and education, which were intended to deliver competition, delivered mixed results. Thus in the NHS, while some improvements were realised in efficiency and better cost consciousness, patient care suffered and inequity resulted via the 'two-tier health service' system that developed as a consequence of the attempt to introduce competition to the NHS via an internal market (Beaumont 2006, quoting his interview with Nick Bosanquet; Public Services Trust 2007; Talbot 2001). Furthermore, health professionals and social services professionals resisted the reforms and the associated challenges to their values, work practices, and culture which were based on a 'social service ethos' as opposed to a commercial or managerial based ethos, and reverted to their former professional values and institutions (Acroyd 2007, p. 23).

Other outcomes associated with the contractualisation and agencification of the Central Civil Service via its reorganisation into approximately 140 'Executive Agencies' (Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001) have been somewhat unclear. While in a number of agencies there have been acknowledged improvements in management practices, efficiency and effectiveness, and customer responsiveness, in others the results have been diverse and ambiguous (Talbot 2001). Changes in behaviours, processes and practices were slow to be put into effect and in some cases a multitude of ways of operating developed which complicated the relatively simple 'quasi-contractual' arrangements (Talbot 2001, p. 292; Gregory 2007; Talbot 1996). Similarly, a plethora of new national and local charters were established to underpin the Citizen's Charter introduced by the Major Conservative Government in the 1990s (Public Services Trust 2009, p. 26), which may have introduced greater complexity into the

public sector (Gregory 2007). Nevertheless marketisation, especially via the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT), was an important component of public sector reforms of this time as it enabled the reduction of costs, and significantly the introduction of ‘a new style of management in [the] key delivery agencies of the welfare state, encouraging the introduction of market mechanisms and disciplines’ (Butcher 2002, p. 123; Gregory 2007).

The outcomes attributed to NPM are also somewhat difficult to identify because of the inherent contradictions associated with its conceptual framework and the poorly defined, very general, and ambiguous supposed changes to the public sector with which NPM is associated (Bogdanor 2001; Ferlie et al. 1996; Pollitt 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000;). du Gay (2008, p. 350) and others (Bogdanor 2001) identify a weakening of the ‘responsible operation of a state and [...] the effective running of a constitution’ as the consequences brought about (in the UK) from the ‘contemporary passion for the “ethics of enthusiasm”’ which the NPM has ushered into the public sector. These researchers explain that the bureaucratic ethos with its formal rationality is predicated not on ‘an amoral instrumentalism, a wilful obstructionism, or a lack of care or recognition, but [instead on] a positive, statist “ethics of responsibility”’ (du Gay 2008, p. 351) but that this has been disregarded. Some researchers argue that transformational change has taken place within agencies such as the NHS (Ferlie et al. 1996) while others identify a resistance or at best accommodation by professionals in the NHS to the NPM initiatives put forward (Ackroyd et al. 2007). Yet other researchers argue that some changes are even less certain such as the often-touted premise of NPM to augment ‘managers’ right to manage’ (without political interference from above and employee autonomy from below) (Gregory 2007; Talbot 2001). Instead managers’ right to manage appears to have either been reduced or not changed at all (Talbot 2001, p. 293, 1997, 1994).

Unintended outcomes have also resulted from the introduction of NPM initiatives, such as agencification, which reduced bureaucratic hierarchical systems ‘within’ the public sector but led to an increase in regulatory mechanisms imposed from ‘without’ on public sector agencies for example via ‘... audits, inspections, standard setting, and review[s] ...’ (Talbot 2001, p. 293; Gregory 2007; Hood et al. 1999; Olsen 2005). Furthermore, the ability of ministers to make direct appointments of temporary civil servants, to act as political advisors (‘special advisors’) for the term of the minister or government, has called into question public ethics. The number of such political

advisors, whose role is somewhat vague, has grown from about 30 in 1974 to 74 in 1999 costing the government some £3.9M at that time, and led to the Neill Committee enquiry on public ethics (Talbot 2001, p. 299; Prime Minister 2000). Table C3 below, provides a summary of the outcomes of public sector reform in the UK, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C3. United Kingdom: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform

United Kingdom: Outcomes	
Lack of systematic change to the public sector culture nor a 'roll[ing] back of the state'	(Public Services Trust 2009, p. 25; Talbot 2001)
Privatisation and marketisation of the public sector	(Gregory 2007; Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001, p. 289, p. 291)
Deregulation of public sector but introduction of new/re-regulatory mechanisms	(Banham 1994; Gregory 2007; Hood et al. 1999; Olsen 2005; Peterson 1992; Talbot 2001, pp. 290 and 296)
Sound public-private partnerships in place but coupled with some equivalent and sometimes spectacular failures	(Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001)
Contractualisation and agencification of the Central Civil Service via its reorganisation into approximately 140 'Executive Agencies'	(Public Services Trust 2009; Talbot 2001)
National and local charters established to underpin the Citizen's Charter but with perhaps greater complexity for the public sector	(Public Services Trust 2009, p. 26)
Concern with an identified weakening of the 'responsible operation of' the public sector' via the introduction of NPM	(Bogdanor 2001; du Gay 2008, p. 350)
Potential for partisanship behaviour via the appointment by ministers of policy advisors	(Prime Minister 2000; Talbot 2001, p. 299)

Source: Original table derived from literature

The outcomes of UK reform were often mixed, contradictory, and unintended although it is possible to surmise that they modified the context of public sector management and its constitution. Marketisation via deregulation, privatisation, public-private partnerships, and contractualisation took place, as did restructuring and reorganisation which modified the context in which public sector managers operated but it is difficult to determine what all of these changes meant for the constitution of public sector management. Neither is there clarity on the implications for public sector management of the introduction of citizen charters. The establishment of the cadre of senior managers (the SES) and the establishment of the Management and Personnel Office

(MPO) to replace the Civil Service Department meant changes for the most senior public sector managers, such that they were given greater autonomy and discretion in the management of their departments. The adoption of more flexible approaches to personnel management and financial management and the reduction of some centralised controls on departmental managers may have directly had an impact on the way in which they manage, but this has not been studied empirically. There is limited evidence of interest in questioning, critiquing or challenging the outcomes among reformers and their implications for the constitution of public sector management were rarely considered. Regardless, as will be discussed in subsequent sections, public sector reforms and the NPM were implemented (in large or small part) and became institutionalised across the UK and other Anglo-American polities. With this institutionalisation came the isomorphism of NPM, regardless of its suitability or otherwise to the public sector and its management.

C.2 United States of America

Influences

In common with other Anglo-American polities was the underlying assumption in the USA that private sector business administration/management is similar to but fundamentally better than its equivalent in the public sector (Box et al. 2001; Kettl 1997; Light 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Thayer 1978). President Carter's public sector reform proposals in the late 1970s closely resembled the recommendations put forward by the Civil Service Commission Federal Personnel Management Project that began in 1977 and culminated in a Final Staff Report (Thayer 1978). The Final Staff Report advocated that public sector management practices can best be improved if the more effective and efficient private sector management values, practices, processes, methods and techniques are sought out, understood and implemented in the public sector (Box et al. 2001; Thayer 1978). In particular, President Carter's view was that there needed to be a new senior management cadre in the public sector (the Senior Executive Service [SES]) which was to become more motivated via '... rewards for excellence and [...] penalties for unsatisfactory performance' (President's Speech in Thayer 1978, p. 310) as in the private sector. The quest for efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector along the lines of the private sector was evident (Arnold 1995; Kettl 1997; Light 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Pautz & Washington 2009).

Another powerful influence in the USA and other Anglo-American polities during the 1980s was the influence of classical microeconomics or ‘economic imperialism’ (Udehn 1996, p. 1). Classical microeconomic theories such as agency theory, rational choice theory, and public choice theory, have exerted a strong ‘normative influence’ on public sector reforms especially as they apply to the management of the public sector (Box et al. 2001, p. 611; Nigro & Kellough 2008). These microeconomic theory influences are anchored to a ‘market-based model’ which advocates downsizing government, applying private sector management principles to public management, viewing citizens as customers, divorcing policy-making from administration implementation, and viewing government as akin to a ‘business within the public sector’ (Box et al. 2001, p. 611; Kettl 1997). The National Performance Review of the Clinton Administration (1993) incorporated many of these market-based model characteristics such as ‘decentralisation, competition, deregulation, [downsizing], privatisation, user fees, [... entrepreneurial culture]’ (Rosenbloom 1993, p. 506; see also Box et al. 2001, p. 612) innovation, and empowerment (Williams 2000). The need for government to produce more at less cost was inherent in the classical microeconomic influences of the day (Kettl 1997).

Other influences on public sector reform in the USA closely aligned to those above include the broader economic, technological, societal, and political forces that played out alongside major public sector reforms taking place over time (Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Van Riper 1958). Charting the long-term US economic cycles over four core periods that characterise US economic history, Kiel and Elliott (1999) identify a pattern of public sector reform that correlates or coevolves with such cycles. These cycles incorporate ‘technological-economic innovation, labour force changes, and increasing economic inequality resulting in societal level questioning of institutional configurations’ (Berry, Harpham, & Elliott 1994). Public sector reforms associated with four major eras of reform (‘Jacksonian populism’, ‘Progressive era’, the ‘New Deal’, and the ‘Hollow State’) from 1815 to 1980 and beyond (Kiel & Elliott 1999) are shown to have been influenced by macro technological/economic cycles of growth and decline. In each period of public sector reform, new policies, processes, procedures and organisational structures are developed to try to adjust to changes demanded by society as a result of evolving technological-economic and political

changes that have preceded the reforms (Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999).

In a similar sense three strong influencing political-cultural factors on public sector reforms in the USA have been identified by Gaulmini (2008, p. 91) as: '1) the cohesion and stability of the cabinet; 2) the characteristics of the organisational culture; and 3) the inclusion of public employees' trade unions in the reform agenda'. In the USA the fragmented culture of a decentralised bureaucracy, coupled with stable and cohesive large majority government cabinets, and a limited union presence in the reform agenda, has influenced the introduction of radical public sector reforms (Gaulmini 2008) but not at the federal level. However, other influences for public sector reform in the USA have also prevailed.

Changing levels of public trust in government and the public sector (Light 1997, 2006) also influenced reforms. Interest in better government by the public during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s led to a push for improved government and public sector reforms. However, limited evidence-based evaluations of how best to improve the performance of government led to calls for more and diverse public sector reforms or 'tides' or waves of reform (Light 2006). A lack of trust in the government gave rise to what Light (2006, p. 7) called 'war on waste' and 'watchful eye' reforms of the public sector, and in turn a degree of trust brought forward public sector reforms termed 'scientific management' and 'liberation management'. Each of these waves or tides of public sector reform responded to the public's concerns about the government (its performance, its size, and its power) as well as to crises, problems, and scandals (Arnold 1995; Light 2006; Pautz & Washington 2009) and led to a questioning of the constitution of government institutions and the relationships between government and society (Kiel & Elliott 1999). Thus, 'scientific management' reforms were influenced by a call for greater efficiency via the implementation of scientific principles of management and organisation; the 'war on waste' reforms were preceded by concerns with improving the economy via prevention of fraud, waste and exploitation; the 'watchful eye' reforms were brought about by calls for fairness, transparency and openness via access to information; and 'liberation management' reforms were influenced by calls for better performance via an outcomes orientation and greater worker engagement (Light 2006, p. 7). Crisis and scandals such as those associated with

the demise of Enron and WorldCom, as well as concerns with government waste and fraud, led to calls for reform.

Furthermore, a growing pejorative view held by many in society towards the bureaucratic nature of government gave rise to much public sector reform across the USA. In particular, two popular texts *Reinventing government* (Osborne & Gaebler 1992) and *Banishing bureaucracy* (Osborne & Plastrik 1997) gave rise to what is considered by some to be the reinvention movement of public sector reform (Brudney, Herbert & Wright 1999; Brudney & Wright 2002; Calista 2002) albeit that it has been challenged (Williams 2000). The reinvention movement saw a range of reform features (of a 'neo-populist' orientation) (Rosenbloom 1993, p. 506; see also Box et al. 2001, p. 612) such as strategic planning, training, quality improvement, reduced hierarchies, benchmarking, decentralisation, customer service measures, discretion re procurement and budgeting, privatisation, and simplification of workforce rules, operationalised and augmented across state government agencies (Brudney & Wright 2002). The reinvention movement was different but related to the NPM movement that was taking place in other Anglo-American polities such as the UK, Australia and New Zealand (Brudney & Wright 2002). The influence of the reinvention movement (underpinned by a neo-managerialist agenda) led to radical public sector reforms across a number of states but not at the federal level (Battaglio 2007; Condrey & Battaglio 2007).

The suitability and applicability of the reinvention movement and its influence on the constitution of public sector management has been challenged (Williams 2000). Five key reform features ('competition, privatisation, decentralisation, innovation and empowerment') advocated in the two above texts have been explored and found to be misleading, contradictory, inconsistent, ambiguous, and consequently both 'seriously flawed' and 'fundamentally inapplicable' to the public sector (Williams 2001). The work of Osborne and Gaebler (1992), and Osborne and Plastrik (1997), all consultants, was challenged on the grounds that it was empirically unsound and so may have confused public sector management practices leading to many contradictions and trade-offs (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). These texts do not use a formal and recognised academic style, as is the case with the most public administration and management research texts (Goodsell 1992; Moe 1994; Williams 2000). Instead, the work of Osborne and Gaebler (1992), and Osborne and Plastrik (1997) is considered to be of a poor scholarship standard. This lack of academic style and rigour is deemed by some to

result in recommendations that are not consistent and in the presentation of ideas that are devoid of knowledge of public administration and its historical context (Coe 1997; Fox 1996; Goodsell 1992; Kobrak 1996; Nathan 1995; Russell & Waste 1998; Wolf 1997; Williams 2000). This inconsistency and the lack of logic in the recommendations translate into confusion and misunderstanding for their intended audiences (Williams 2000). What Osborne and Gaebler (1992), and Osborne and Plastrik (1997) have produced is deemed by many to be simply a collection of anecdotes to make generalisations and a number of cases studies that have not been soundly documented (Fallows 1992; Fox 1996; Frederickson 1996; Goodsell 1992; Kearney & Hays 1998; Roberts 1997; Russell & Waste 1998; Thompson & Jones 1995). As such, these works are considered to be simplistic and empirically without foundation.

Other consultants and management gurus, who participated in the reinvention movement and new public management, have also influenced the constitution of public sector management, especially during the 1980s, when the growth of management fads and fashions was exponential (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Pascale 1991). The growth was directly related to the vast amounts of monies that were to be made by the management consultancy industry who depend on continued government contracts for public sector reform (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). For example, in the UK public sector some £2.8 billion was expended on management consultants in 2005–06, which was an exponential 33% increase on the previous two years, such spending by the government and was comparatively more per employee than that spent by the private sector (National Audit Office 2006, pp. 5 and 15; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 14). A conflict of interest arose between consultants whose intellectual property was to be guarded in order that further monies could be made and the managers that they advised. These consultants and the industry that has grown around them have often driven management theory and its practices rather than following theory and practices (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996). Some public sector managers sought out the management consultants and adopted their advice and new public management practices seemingly without question. This may be because

many people who end up in middle managerial positions are promoted not for their managerial skills but for their excellence in other jobs, as engineers or lawyers or editorial writers [...] so they turn to people who “know” [...] buying a book on management, then organising a conference, with say a

consultant from McKinsey to act as a “facilitator”. (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996, p. 65)

The consequences for the constitution of public sector management were that such ‘management ideas are now an institutionalised part of government’ (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996, p. 351). Table C4 below provides a summary of the core influences of public sector reform in the USA, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C4. USA: Influences of Public Sector Reform

USA: Influences of Public Sector Reform	
Private sector management practices	(Box, Marshall, Reed, & Reed 2001; Kettl 1997; Light 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Thayer 1978)
Perceived public sector inefficiency	(Box et al. 2001; Thayer 1978)
Classical microeconomics	(Udehn 1996, p. 1)
Macro technological, economic - political cycles	(Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Van Riper 1958)
Changing levels of public trust (especially re crisis and scandals)	(Light 1997; Light 2006)
Neo-liberal conservatism and the 'reinvention movement' ('new public management')	(Brudney & Wright 2002; Brudney, Herbert & Wright 1999; Calista 2002)

Source: Original table derived from literature

The objectives of public sector reform in the USA were diverse across successive governments' efforts to reform the public sector, as well as varying across levels of government (such as federal, state and local). President Carter's Civil Service Commission's Federal Personnel Management Project of 1977 advocated in its Final Staff Report for a focus on public personnel management practices that were efficient akin to those practices of the private sector (Thayer 1978). A fashioning of the public sector along the lines of the private sector to achieve multiple objectives was prevalent. These included increased accountability, greater efficiency and effectiveness, performance and productivity improvement, as well as the quest to reduce 'red tape'. There was also value placed on adopting a market-oriented approach for the operation of government. These objectives were prevalent across public sector reforms and especially derived from NPM (Box et al. 2001; Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Pautz & Washington 2012, p. 656). A similar but stronger quest to adopt a market orientation for public sector reforms was enshrined in the National Performance Review of the Clinton Administration in 1993 (Box et al. 2001), which also advocated that the private sector deliver traditional government functions.

More recent public sector reform objectives have morphed into a focus on the need to remove or reduce the 'barriers to a high performance workforce' (Winter Commission 1993, p. 11; see also Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 551), enabling, in particular, public

sector managers to become more effective. The Winter Commission of 1993, especially, and reforms from that point, aimed to improve and modernise personnel/human resource management practices incorporating recruitment, selection, compensation (Elling & Thompson 2006; Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 550) human capital development, and career development systems (Nigro & Kellough 2008). Furthermore, aims articulated incorporated the promotion of labour-management relations and a greater engagement in and motivation of public employees to realise high performance and achieve greater levels of public confidence (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 551). A central goal of the Winter Commission's reform agenda was the requirement for a 'new type of public manager' (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 551). Further aims included the need to improve the management capacity and performance of the executive (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 550). As in other parts of the world, American public sector reforms aimed to achieve both 'letting' and 'making' managers manage (Kettl 1997, p. 454). However, the Winter Commission was especially focussed on the need for state and local governments to develop management cadres with capabilities and an orientation in both management and leadership (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 551; see also Winter Commission 1993, p. 45).

Other reform aims include those of American Vice-President Al Gore's 'reinventing government' movement (Kettl 1997; Williams 2000), which set ambitious goals to reduce federal government employees by about $\frac{1}{8}$ (or approximately 250,000 employees). Aligned to NPM, the National Performance Review (NPR) of 1993 comprised a minimum of three iterations or phases of reform and focussed on a range of objectives (Kettl 1998). The overarching objective of the NPR was to embed the 'adoption of entrepreneurial bureaucracy' that had been articulated during earlier reforms (Gualmini 2008, p. 83-84). Objectives associated with the NPR during its first phase included rationalised procurement processes, better customer service provision, and cutting back the administration (Brudney et al. 2002). The second phase of NPR introduced the objective of differentiating what work government should perform and what work should be outsourced (Brudney et al. 2002). The third phase has targeted an outcomes orientation for government and, in particular, shoring up the economy and ensuring safety in society (Kettl 1998). To give substance to these aforementioned objectives, a range of policies and processes and practices were put in place across the USA although, as will be discussed below, reform was based on continuous and

incremental change rather than radical change (Gualmini 2008). Table C5 below, provides a summary of the core objectives of public sector reform in the USA, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C5. USA: Objectives of Public Sector Reform

USA: Objectives of Public Sector Reform	
No singular and definitive set of objectives	(Box et al. 2001; Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Pautz & Washington 2012, p. 656)
Better public sector performance at lower costs (an overarching aim)	(Kettl 1997 Light 2006)
Efficiency and accountability	(Box et al. 2001; Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Pautz & Washington 2012, p. 656)
Market-oriented approach to public sector management	(Box et al. 2001; Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Nigro & Kellough 2008; Pautz & Washington 2012, p. 656)
Enabling democracy	(Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 551; Winter Commission 1993, p. 45)
Realignment of the machinery of government to the dynamic of technological, economic and social changes over time	(Condrey & Battaglio 2007; Kiel & Elliott 1999)
Improve labour-management relations	(Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 551)
Improve manager and management performance (to 'let the managers manage')	(Kettl 1997, p. 454)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

Outcomes

As with other public sector reform efforts across Anglo-American polities, there exists little comprehensive empirical research that evaluates or reviews the outcomes and consequences of such reforms in the USA (Kiel & Elliott 1999, p. 634; Light 2006, p. 9; Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 552). This may be in part related to lack of funding available for longitudinal evaluative studies of public sector reform (Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 556). This is especially the case in relation to federal public sector reforms where there appears to be more rhetoric about the outcomes of reform than the actual production of such results (Kettl 1997, p. 449). Nor do measures appear to be in place with which to evaluate reform efforts. In particular, the degree of success with which federal statutes

have been implemented appears to be a critical measure that is not in place in reform databases such as that produced by Light (1997, 2006). Other complicating factors such as a lack of time, complex variables, and poor databases possibly prevent a 'rigorous empirically grounded' understanding as to what were the outcomes and consequences of public sector reforms in the USA (Condrey et al. 2007, p. 427). Some efforts at public sector reform evaluation have been made such as the Government Performance Project (GPP) and the American State Administrators Project (ASAP). Some knowledge of reform outcomes can be gleaned from within the literature more broadly (see *Review of Public Personnel Administration* Summer 2002 and Summer 2006, in Condrey et al. 2007, p. 426), but most refer to state-based reforms (and relate specifically to personnel systems), albeit indirectly (Barrett & Greene 1999, p. 17; Brudney et al. 2002, p. 359; Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 553). Instead, what exists are a range of views and opinions sourced from federal public employees and public sector reformers such as those obtained in surveys conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates (2001), whereby public sector reform, reorganisation and/or reinvention are acknowledged (Light 2006, p. 15): and both positive and negative outcomes and consequences are noted. Thus, while there exists a gap between the rhetoric of public sector reform and its real outcomes and consequences, it is accepted that public sector managers understand public sector reforms to be a reality rather than simply a phase of reform rhetoric (Kiel & Elliott 1999, p. 635).

The sheer volume and pace of public sector reform in the USA has proved a barrier to an understanding of its outcomes and consequences. Light (2006, p. 7) notes that both the number of reform statutes (some 177) introduced and the complexity of each of these statutes have increased over time. In particular, the frequency of public sector reform via statutes has escalated, especially between 1945 and 2002, with a greater focus on reform of the organisational structures and processes of the public sector. The volume and pace of reforms inhibits reformers from considering and analysing the value of proposed reforms prior to implementation (Light 2006, p. 17) and hence creates a situation where new reforms and statutes are simply mandated onto past reforms. This creates a situation where unintended consequences, such as not improving the performance of the public sector, result via misunderstanding, 'misinterpretation, maladministration or conflicts with already existing reforms' (as was the case with the

reorganisation of the Internal Revenue Service in 1998) (Light 2006, pp. 11/17; Rosotti 2005).

In essence, public sector reforms have not been implemented in a systemic manner to address the perceived problems and issues of the public sector but rather a 'market of reform' has evolved whereby more and more reform is produced in a frenzied quest to meet the public and Congress's demands (Light 2006, p. 17) for better government/bureaucracy. One unintended consequence of such a 'market of reform' is that as public trust in government has fallen, Congress's participation (together with the Government Accountability Office) in public sector reform has grown. In turn, this has created a distrust of presidentially initiated public sector reforms, culminating in presidential retreat from generating and managing legislative-based administrative reform (Light 2006, p. 13; Thompson & Ingraham 1996). As Moe (1994) suggests, the more permanent role of the President within the Executive Office in setting and managing/leading the reform agenda for the public sector cannot be substituted by the more short-term and budget-bound role currently played by the Congress and its associated Government Accountability Office (Light 2006, p. 14).

Outcomes and consequences of public sector reform have been difficult to identify for other reasons. Like Australia, the USA has a federal system of government, one of the most decentralised in the world (Box et al. 2001, p. 613). In this decentralised system, public sector reforms were initiated and started locally rather than nationally (Osborne & Gaebler 1993) and hence there have been diverse experiences with implementing public sector reforms and especially those associated with NPM. However, managerialist reforms such as those enshrined within the NPM movement have had much less impact in the USA as a result of America's decentralised system of federal government (Box et al. 2001, p. 613). The results of the NPM/reinvention movement are ambiguous and diverse at both the local and national levels (Brudney & Wright 2002, p. 355; Kearney, Feldman & Scavo 2000; Thompson 2000). However, a range of disparate outcomes and consequences can be identified, some positive and some negative.

Public sector reforms have created 'unanticipated political risks for elected officials and public managers' (Kettl 1997, p. 456) by further separating policy-making from policy implementation. This creates a disconnection between officials and public managers and

their accountabilities (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 86). Public sector reforms, especially those most closely defined with the NPM movement, have redefined the roles between elected officials and public sector managers (Kettl 1997, p. 457; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 86), challenging democracy. By fashioning the public sector along the lines of the private sector via managerialism, contracts, and performance measurement, the substantive model of democracy has been challenged by NPM reforms and the public sector may have a decreasing ability to deal appropriately with public problems (Box et al. 2001, p. 609; Condrey et al. 2007, p. 425; Denhardt & Denhardt 2000; Jos & Thompkins 2004; Kelly 1998; 2001; Moe 1994; Moe & Gilmour 1995; Terry 1993; Terry 1998; Wamsley & Dudley 1998). Public sector reform which has applied a market model to public management is considered by some to have all but devalued democracy as a value and has 'weakened the connection between citizens and the broader community' (Box et al. 2001, p. 609; see also Condrey et al. 2007, p. 425), limiting citizens' ability to contribute constructively to policy and administration (Box et al. 2001, p. 613). Although some reform efforts may have been well intentioned, especially those geared to creating greater public accountability, unintended consequences have resulted (Pautz & Washington 2009, p. 656), such as reducing accountability. Reduced accountability has been the outcome of reforms that, in trying to increase efficiency and decrease bureaucracy, have indirectly overlooked or cut the procedures in place to ensure accountability (Deleon 1998, p. 541). However, these outcomes of public sector reforms appear somewhat contradictory or at least at odds with the claims made by some authors that public sector reforms were not necessarily implemented in a coherent and unified manner or with great impact in the USA, given its decentralised system of government.

Public sector reforms did generally change the employment contract (reducing permanent tenure), providing financial incentives for performance, and they have given public managers a new mandate to 'manage better' (Kettl 1997, p. 453). At the federal level these reforms have not necessarily equipped public managers to manage better via further development and training nor have performance management systems been introduced to enable managers to better manage their people and their work. Instead public sector 'managers have had to use existing civil service systems to cope with growing expectations and cuts in government programs' (Kettl 1997, p. 454). Some fifty percent of federal employees have provided feedback that federal public sector reforms (which took place over a five-year period from 2001) have made their work

‘either somewhat or much more difficult’ (Princeton Survey Research Associates 2001, cited by Light 2006, p. 15). As such, these public sector reforms may have unintentionally created a climate of low morale, distrust, lowered commitment, and greater resistance towards future reforms, among public sector employees and in particular public sector managers (Light 2006, p. 17). For the Senior Executive Service (SES) created via the *Civil Service Reform Act 1978*, public sector reforms appear to have failed to build a bridge between the management functions of governance, policy and administration (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 86). What resulted, perhaps unexpectedly, was an ‘exodus of senior career officials (1,600 in 1979–81) [273,000 in later decades] and [...] low morale caused by criticism of the career services by politicians ... ’ (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 87; see also Gualmini 2008, p. 84). Furthermore, the systems introduced to assess the performance of the SES (such as annual performance appraisals, financial incentive based rewards, and non-appealable demotions) together with their required mobility, contain contradictions that drive different outcomes than those intended (Thayer 1978, p. 310). While SES are expected to focus deeply and specifically on achieving the goals of the agency in which they operate, such is not possible when they are also expected to be actively mobile across many diverse agencies to ensure they achieve a wide and broad range of experiences and knowledge of government business, issues, projects, and functions (Thayer 1978, p. 310).

Indeed the concept of a mobile SES may be considered a failure if one acknowledges the current state of mobility across the SES. This was reported in the ‘Mission Driven Mobility Report’ (‘United States: reports find SES mobility inactive’, 2012, p. 1) as only ‘eight percent [of SES] have worked at more than one Agency during their SES tenure’. Furthermore, approximately fifty percent of SES in the US public sector had worked in only one position in the one agency in their entire SES career (‘United States: reports find SES mobility inactive’, 2012, p. 1). Further contradictions are found in the responses provided by some sixty percent of members of the SES to the question of the impact of the federal public sector reforms (which took place over a five-year period from 2001) on their work. Respondents said that the federal public sector reforms had ‘made their jobs a lot or somewhat easier to do’ (Princeton Survey Research Associates 2001, cited by Light 2006, p. 15).

The Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS) of US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara (Gregory 2007, p. 234) was a technocratic tool introduced to bring about a

greater discipline of management across the public sector, but it too produced contradictory outcomes. However, the Clinton administration's National Performance Review (NPR) achieved some major positive changes and development across many federal agencies (Gualmini 2008, p. 88; Kettl & DiIulio 1995; Kiel & Elliott 1999, p. 634). These positive changes included the introduction of innovative e-government measures which put the USA at the front of this field globally and the further development of strategic planning and management by objectives techniques within federal government (Gualmini 2008, p. 88). But even then, the effectiveness of these changes are difficult to confirm because despite the various assessments conducted of the NPR, there is no single NPR to evaluate but rather a number of versions (Kettl 1998). Where evaluations have been attempted, the degree to which NPR concepts were adopted by federal agencies shows substantial variation across federal agencies in relation to the degree of implementation and the results secured (Brudney et al. 2002, p. 355; Radin 1995). Other outcomes attributable to public sector reforms, such as the National Partnership for Reinventing Government of the Bush Administration, have been identified as substantial cost savings of \$108 billion over a five-year period, the rationalisation of the federal public service (by some 273,000 employees), the introduction of pay for performance mechanisms via the *Government Performance and Result Act 1994*, and the formalisation of new Chief Operating Officer positions in federal Agencies (Gualmini 2008, p. 84). Table C6 below, provides a summary of the core outcomes of public sector reform in the USA, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C6. USA: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform

USA: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform	
Little empirical research on evaluation of USA public sector reforms	(Light 2006, p. 9; Kiel & Elliott 1999, p. 634; Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 552)
Volume of reforms causes a barrier to understanding outcomes and consequences	(Light 2006, p. 7)
Market of reform developed	(Light 2006, p. 17)
Diverse and ambiguous and contradictory reform outcomes	(Brudney & Wright 2002, p. 355; Kearney, Feldman and Scavo 2000; Thompson 2000)
Further separation of policy-making from policy implementation	(Kettl 1997, p. 456)

USA: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform

Climate of low morale, distrust, lowered commitment, and greater resistance towards future reforms, among public sector employees and in particular public sector managers	(Brudney & Wright 2002, p. 355; Kearney, Feldman and Scavo 2000; Thompson 2000)
Exodus of SES personnel from the public sector	(Gualmini 2008, p. 84; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 87)
Some deregulation of human resources systems	(Nigro & Kellough 2008, p. 555)
Challenges and attacks on established public sector principles	(Box et al. 2001, p. 609; Condrey et al. 2007, p. 425; Kettl 1997)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

Given the lack of systematic and comprehensive evaluations and the mixed outcomes reported, public sector reforms have shed little light on the constitution of public sector management. The USA already had in place a decentralised system of government and an established entrepreneurial and managerial public sector that was focussed on efficiency and effectiveness principles and practices on the NPM. The changes made to personnel management systems, delegated financial and budgeting systems as well as corporate planning systems (such as management by objectives) further promoted private sector management approaches. The establishment of the cadre of senior managers (the SES) brought about changes for the most senior public sector managers, such that their performance was further linked to pay. For the constitution of public sector management the reforms perhaps led to a reinforcement of the NPM and its market model of public sector management but this is not confirmed by empirical research. Where public sector managers were often left to their own devices to make sense of many public sector reforms and to implement them as best they could, what such meant for public sector management practices is not clear. Yet USA public sector reforms, like UK public sector reforms, influenced other Anglo-American polities and the management practices of their public sectors.

C.3 Canada

Influences

The Mulroney Progressive–Conservative Party government, which came to power in Canada in 1984, was much influenced by the public sector reforms which had taken place at the time in the United Kingdom under Prime Minister Thatcher and in the United States of America under President Reagan (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 222; Paton

& Dodge 1995, p. 17). Other public sector reforms taking place in Australia and New Zealand also influenced Canada (Foley 2008, p. 283; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 17). As in these other Anglo-American polities, there was pressure to rethink the way in which government and the public sector operated. Following the recession in the early 1980s, a fast-changing complex environment, which was technology, knowledge, and information rich, where changing demographics, growing customer expectations and global economic competition had become the norm, challenged the concept that a 'bigger and centrally controlled [public sector] is better' for Canada (Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 6; Caiden, Halley & Maltais 1995, p. 91; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Maor 1999, p. 14). A number of lobby groups and associations, academics, unions, businesses, and citizens criticised and challenged the way in which the public sector operated (considering it to be too big, too costly, and its debt load too great) and added to the calls for and influences on reform (Caiden, Halley, & Maltais 1995-91) including calls for changes to public sector culture (Foley 2008, p. 284) and its governance (Maor 1999, p. 14). But it was not until the 1990s that radical public sector reforms took place, influenced predominantly by the financial position of the Canadian government.

By 1993 the Conservative government of Canada had brought the government's fiscal position to the 'brink of a financial crisis' (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 227; see also Foley 2008, p. 284). In the same year Canada had reported a deficit of 6% (\$12.4bn) of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and had accrued a debt of 75% (\$97.2bn) of GDP, which together with that of the provincial governments took its debt to more than 100% of GDP (Barnes 1997, p. 28; Smith 1997, p. 35). Concerns about public sector costs, productivity and accountability were mounting (Foley 2008, p. 287). Canada's dire fiscal situation, international financial pressure, and turbulent global markets in 1994 led to a call for a change in fiscal policy. The control of expenditure became the key issue for public sector reforms (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 91; Foley 2008, p. 284; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225). Prime Minister Chretien who came to power in 1993 understood the mounting pressure for major public sector reforms and took up the mantle (via his Programme Review Exercise) during 1994–1996 to direct Canada on a 'course of balanced budgets' (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 227). However, a number of scandals, both political and individual in nature during the 1990s and into the 2000s, damaged the public's perceptions and trust of government and so influenced further the call for public sector reforms (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 228). The challenges and turmoil of the

1990s and beyond influenced public sector reforms such that administrative reforms became necessary and inevitable (Caiden, Halley, & Maltais 1995, p. 85; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 17).

Adding to the financial challenges facing the Canadian government was a constitutional crisis that took place in 1994 (Smith 1997, p. 35). The Canadian government operates in a confederated manner and is dependent on provincial governments for public sector reforms (Barnes 1997, p. 28). The constitutional crisis took place as the newly elected separatist government of Quebec took up a referendum to split Quebec from Canada (Smith 1997, p. 35). At the same time other provincial governments were calling for greater autonomy from the federal government (Smith 1997, p. 35). The federal government was seen to be too costly, too big, and too debt-ridden and calls were made for it to be downsized, effectively managed, and alternative service delivery mechanisms put in place using cost-effective models (Barnes 1997, p. 29). These events challenged the federal government, its authority and power, and forced it to reconsider the role it played (Smith 1997, p. 35). This also influenced its public sector reforms. However, it was not until 1995, that the government, in earnest, reconsidered and refocused its public sector reform efforts on the better management of government (Barnes 1997, p. 29). This focus on better public sector management was to coincide with the New Public Management movement that had become a ‘worldwide phenomenon’ in the mid-1990s (*The Economist* 1992, quoting Christopher Hood; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 6). Table C7 below, provides a summary of the core influences of public sector reform in Canada, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C7. Canada: Influences of Public Sector Reform

Canada: Influences of Public Sector Reform	
Perception that public sector managers were bound by too many rules	(Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 216)
Managerialism and new public management movement (‘let the managers manage’)	(Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 217)
Perceptions of mismanagement of Canada’s economy	(Caiden et al. 1995, p. 91; Foley 2008, p. 284; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225)
Challenges to concept of bigger and centrally controlled public sector	(Caiden, Halley & Maltais 1995, p. 91; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Maor 1999, p. 14; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 6)

Canada: Influences of Public Sector Reform

Financial and constitutional crisis in Canada (Smith 1997, p. 35)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

The dire financial and economic situation that Canada faced during the 1990s, together with the constitutional crisis that prevailed, directed attention and reform efforts at the public sector and the constitution of its management practices. But those responsible for reform efforts appeared to be less interested in what constituted public sector management, and more interested in what constituted Canada's political/economic agenda (Aucoin 1995, p. 15). The issue of capture by rent seekers, right-wing think tanks, consultants, and lobbyists, although less discussed in the literature, may have had a part to play in the promotion and adoption of the NPM agenda in Canada as in other Anglo-American polities.

The objectives of public sector reform in Canada were diverse across successive governments' efforts to reform the public sector. No overarching theme is evident across the objectives that were adopted over time. From the early 1960s to the 2000s, there is evidence of a range of objectives encompassing: modernising public management, de-bureaucratising the public service, reducing costs of administration, increasing the efficiency of government, enhancing services to Canadians, and improving the accountability of public administrators to the cabinet/parliament (Barnes 1997, p. 29; Caiden, Halley, & Maltais 1995, p. 86; Foley 2008, p. 284; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 216; Maor 1999, p. 11; TBS 1988; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 8; Tellier 1990). The objectives tended to reflect the challenges that were faced by the successive federal governments of Canada, although it is not clear that there was a strong philosophical or ideological orientation that underpinned these objectives (or the reforms from which they emanated). While Canada took note of and was influenced by public sector reform efforts and developments in other Anglo-American polities, it also led the way in relation to public sector reforms especially, the New Public Management, well before this movement had become popular across the globe (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 217).

The Mulroney Progressive Conservative Party Government, which came to power in 1984, had a clear objective for public sector reform: government was 'simply to govern

– and to let the managers manage’ (Savoie 1990b). The Mulroney Government had in effect reverted to the broad objectives of the Glassco Commission (delegated authority and less central controls) (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 222). The Mulroney Government launched its Increased Ministerial Authority and Accountability (IMAA) initiative in 1986 which aimed to simplify administrative policies by reducing centralised controls, increasing authority, and enhancing the accountability of departmental managers and ministers to enable them to better implement their programs and the policies of the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and realise results (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 223; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 8; TBS 1988). In essence this initiative, implemented by the Administrative Policy Branch (APB) of the TBS tried to ‘put the manager back into management’ to enable public sector managers to make sound judgements and decisions with sufficient power and authority (TBS 1992, p. 3; see also Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 15).

In 1989, the Mulroney Government then launched Public Service 2000 (PS2000): The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada White Paper on public sector reform (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 87; Canada 1990). This had the overarching goal of improving public services to Canadians (Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 10) as well as numerous other objectives. PS2000 included objectives of: improving government service quality; holding public sector employees more accountable for performance results; improving productivity and cost efficiency (Foley 2008, p. 284; Maor 1999, p. 11); renewing the public sector of Canada and making it ready for the twenty-first century (Caiden, Halley & Maltais 1995, p. 86; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 10); and developing a public sector management culture which was oriented to people, clients and results above all else (Caiden, Halley, & Maltais 1995, p. 86; Maor 1999, p. 11; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 10; Tellier 1990). In effect the purpose of PS2000 was to further previous reform:

efforts to make the public service more responsive and accountable, more flexible, less bureaucratic and less centrally managed, and to cover all these demands within a new administrative philosophy that would de-emphasise old bureaucratic values and incorporate new managerial values. (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 92)

Later public sector reforms such as those couched within the Program Review Exercise (PRE) (undertaken during 1994–1996) by the Chretien Government, aimed to reduce the costs of the public sector (Barnes 1997, p. 29; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 226). This

reform purported to be more than a cost-cutting exercise driven by results. However, it had no convincing philosophy or well-designed plan for the systematic reinvention or redesign of public sector management (Thomas 1996; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 226). Table C8 below, provides a summary of the core objectives of public sector reform in Canada, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C8. Canada: Objectives of Public Sector Reform

Canada: Objectives of Public Sector Reform	
Modernising public management	(Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 10; Caiden, Halley & Maltais 1995, p. 86)
De-bureaucratising the public service	(Caiden et al. 1995, p. 92)
‘Let the managers manage’	(Savoie 1990b)
Improving the accountability of public administrators to the Cabinet/parliament	(Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 223; TBS 1988; Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 8)
Reducing costs of public sector and its administration	(Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 226; Barnes 1997, p. 29; Foley 2008, p. 284; Maor 1999, p. 11)
Increasing the efficiency of government	(Foley 2008, p. 284; Maor 1999, p. 11)
Improving and enhancing public services to Canadians	(Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 10)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

The varied objectives encountered across the public sector reforms reflect the lack of an underlying philosophy or ideology of public sector reforms and concomitantly of the constitution of public sector management. While there appeared to be a general desire for public sector management practices to become more modern and less bureaucratic, under the influence of the NPM the focus was not on how to constitute public sector management to become more so inclined. Instead there was a focus on objectives less directly related to public sector management, such as to improve public sector productivity, cost efficiency, accountability for results, and service delivery. Similar objectives to those sought across the other Anglo-American polities were sought by the Canadian reformers including the mantra of ‘let the managers manage’ but with less attention to how this might be practically implemented.

Outcomes

Consideration of the outcomes of public sector reforms in Canada has been made by a number of academics (Barnes 1997; Caiden et al. 1995; Foley 2008; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Maor 1999; Paton & Dodge 1995; Smith 1997) indicating mixed results which have somewhat changed the public sector of Canada but often in unexpected ways and with unintended/undesired consequences (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 218). These mixed results were in part related to public sector reform processes in Canada being less systematic or ‘technocratic’ than in other countries such as in New Zealand, and the

United Kingdom (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Lonti & Verma 2004; Mascarehnas 1990; Wallis, Dollery, & McLoughlin 2007) where strategies of reform prevailed that were based on administrative theory, with its focus on ‘design of administrative structures and procedures to facilitate the efficiency of and effectiveness of bureaucratic hierarchies’ (March & Olsen 1983, pp. 282; see also Gregory 2007; Mascarehnas 1990; Salamon 1981, p. 472). Thus, rather than being a planned and controlled strategy of reform which does not necessarily engage with the ‘realpolitik’, Canadian public sector reform processes were somewhat ad hoc and reactive, leading to varied outcomes. Furthermore, Canadian public sector reform efforts have suffered from a lack of appropriate attention and consideration of the context in which Canada’s public administration takes place replete with political, government and constitutional mechanisms. Other difficulties in securing significant and substantive reforms have included the complexity of synchronising or synergising the directions, views, commitments, and capabilities of the political and bureaucratic arms of the public sector (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 228).

Prime Minister Mulroney’s public sector reform efforts were hindered by a number of factors in 1984 including: 1) a backdrop where fiscal tightening was preferred over bureaucratic reform; and 2) bureaucratic resistance and political indifference towards the reforms (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 222). As the Glassco Commission reforms had proposed earlier, the Mulroney Government believed that the problems of the public sector could be resolved by implementing private sector management principles and practices into the public sector (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 222). The Nielsen Task Force lacked the support of ministers and bureaucrats. It attempted to reform the public sector from the outside, and caused great offence, opposition and mistrust. External business representatives who were expected to ‘fix’ the public sector based on their superior private sector knowledge, experience and capabilities largely drove the initiative (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 223). Hence the Nielsen Task Force on Program Review (PR) resulted in little true reform across the public sector and little, if any, overall change of organisation structure and administrative practices (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 223; Savoie 1994b). While the government adopted the recommended contracting-out policy, just \$500 million worth of spending cuts were put in place of the \$7 billion which were put forward, because the government chose not to consider the majority of the recommendations.

In 1986, several months after being presented, the Program Review initiative quietly folded after Nielsen left office. No bureaucrat or minister was willing to champion and carry forward the proposed reforms (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 223; Saint-Martin 1998). Instead, of a major public sector reform, the exercise was seen as nothing more than a cost-cutting exercise. The IMAA project that followed the Program Review also had mixed outcomes (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 224). While some departments secured greater flexibility via Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), many found that their reporting requirements had increased rather than decreased, as had been promised and constraints to better management were not removed (Clark 1994; Savoie 1994b; Savoie 1990b). The limited and questionable outcomes of the IMAA initiative were to be outdone by yet another public sector reform for the Canadian public sector.

The PS2000 reform, unlike earlier reforms, yielded some visible though minimal results. These included: improved operations (incorporating ‘finance, personnel, informatics, infrastructure, [and] supply management’) and changes to administration policies (such as ‘the introduction of single operating budgets and the simplified job/position classification system[s]’) and improved service delivery (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 224; Clark 2001; Edwards 2001; Silverman 1993). Other outcomes included the introduction of a new management philosophy in the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) that provided departmental managers with greater authority and flexibility creating efficiency in decision-making, delivery of public services, and improved accountability (Paton & Dodge 1995, p. 14).

However, in contrast to the above positive outcomes there were negative outcomes, especially in relation to the often-touted service delivery improvements. Public sector jobs cuts, perceptions of increased workloads, an exponential growth in part-time and casual work, rising job insecurity, and a drop in employee motivation (Canada Privy Council Office 1997) plagued the public sector, impairing its ability to provide quality public services (Armstrong 1998; Verma & Lonti 2001). Additionally, there was deterioration in the physical and mental health of some public sector executives as a result of disempowerment and a consequent impact on their leadership capacity (Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada 1997). Some have argued that Canada has advanced little in the delivery of public services and in the empowerment of its public sector workforce as a result of the reforms of the 1990s, largely due to opposition from management and a lack of decentralised authority and

accountability for implementing reforms (Lowe 2001). While the outcomes of PS2000 reforms depended on public sector culture change via a new public sector management philosophy, some consider it failed to achieve its objectives because there was a mismatch between the rhetoric of empowerment and client service and the significant cuts in programs, staff and wages on the ground (Clark 1994). There is a perception by some that the Canadian government focussed its reform efforts on increasing productivity and efficiency rather than employee welfare and development and that its methods for securing commitment for such reforms have been 'stick' versus 'carrot' based (Foley 2008, p. 298).

Some have characterised the outcomes of PS2000 as a 'paradigmatic change, fundamental radical and institutional' (Silverman 1993). Others have seen PS2000 as a relatively benign administrative improvement, characterised by 'managerial, attitudinal and legal changes' (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 90; Plumpre 1993). It provided a degree of flexibility but did not fundamentally transform the public sector nor suggest a new philosophy of public management (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 224). Furthermore, others argue that PS2000 was not a fundamental reform initiative, as it never challenged some of the core principles and tenets of the public sector (such as security of tenure, internal competition for jobs, and a career public service (Kernaghan 1991, p. 566; Maor 1999, p. 12) Perhaps this is because in the early 1990s, the continuous political commitment that such public sector reforms required was missing, as the following quote makes clear:

The ministers in office in the early 1990s, like virtually all of their predecessors since Confederation [i.e. the constitutional founding of Canada], had little interest in the workings of government or the design of programs. These are simply not subjects that readily capture the attention of hard-pressed people at the political level. Unfortunately in the absence of sustained attention by ministers, the scope for significant changes in the workings of government or the definition of its functions is very limited. (Kroeger 1996, p. 24)

As Aucoin (1995, p. 15) further points out, the Conservative Government

did not see [public management reform] as centrally connected to the dilemmas they faced. Nor did they see any votes in advancing good management. For them management reform was essentially an internal bureaucratic preoccupation that could be tolerated so long as it did not detract from their political agenda.

Thus, PS2000 fell short of expectations and secured mixed results although the reforms have morphed into a much broader plan to reinvent the federal public sector and the role the government plays in the lives of Canadians (Caiden et al. 1995, pp. 85/90). PS2000 had been given few resources, had no performance indicators against which to measure progress or report results and outcomes and had no detailed implementation plan. The implementation of PS2000 was replete with ‘unanticipated contradictions, tensions and paradoxes’, not easily reconciled to the original objectives (Aucoin 1990, Caiden 1991, Harmon 1995, Quinn 1988). Its principles were at odds with some circumstances, were internally inconsistent, and questioned the established public sector values and ethics (including ‘non partisanship, [...] dispassionate service, [neutrality], blurred political-administrative accountability, and [...] purposes and missions of agencies’) (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 97).

The constitutional crisis that took place in the 1990s distracted the PS2000 reforms, as did the economic crisis that prevailed at this time. Against this backdrop was a range of measures which overshadowed the PS2000 reforms including frozen program budgets, retrenchments, downsizing, the fixing of wage rises to corresponding reductions in public sector employment, restrictions on strike action, restructuring and de-layering, and reductions in the numbers of public sector managers (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 92). PS2000 ceased to be considered a legitimate public sector reform some four years after it had been launched (ibid.). Nonetheless, as a program of reform, even though PS2000 was disregarded and considered by some as ‘dead’ a number of years after it was launched, it did provide a much-needed attempt at public sector reform in Canada (Caiden et al. 1995, p. 100; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225).

The Program Review Exercise (PRE) (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225) which took place between 1994 and 1996 was able to realise a number of outcomes including a significant restructuring of the Canadian public sector. These outcomes were possible because the PRE reforms were driven from *within* the public sector with a strong champion in Prime Minister Chretien. Senior bureaucrats and their departments developed tailored reforms to meet the needs of their specific programs and departments (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 227; Peters & Savoie 1998). A number of departments were able to completely reorganise their portfolios in order to deliver better public services. However, these outcomes have been criticised by some who argue that departments appeared to depend unquestioningly on the solutions offered by the proponents of the

new public management, rather than consider more carefully the challenges posed by ‘political choices and governance’ (Thomas 1996, p. 43).

Furthermore, PRE outcomes included CDN\$29bn worth of spending cuts, and the resulting reduction of 45,000 public sector positions between 1995 and 1998 (Armstrong 1998), translated to a decrease in public sector employment of seven percent during the decade (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 226; Lowe 2001). In large part, these outcomes reflect a keen focus on fiscal restraint and expenditure reductions rather than a strategic rethinking of the proper role and reinvention of government and its administrative arm the public sector (Paquet 1996). As such, it is unlikely that the PRE achieved any significant governance reforms (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 226). As they have argued, it is hard to attribute the outcomes to a considered approach to ‘reinvent the [public sector based] ‘on a clear design or compelling philosophy of public management’, as they appear to reflect those outcomes one would attribute instead to an ad hoc results-driven exercise (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 226). Table C9 below, provides a summary of the core outcomes of public sector reform in Canada, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C9. Canada: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform

Canada: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform	
Mixed and diverse reform outcomes	(Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 218)
No comprehensive reform of public sector administration or political governance	(Kroeger 1996)
Core elements of the established public sector administrative practices remained in place	(Caiden et al. 1995, p. 97)
Greater centralised systems of control across the public sector	(Caiden et al. 1995, p. 91; Foley 2008, p. 284; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225)
Improved operations (incorporating ‘finance, personnel, informatics, infrastructure, [and] supply management’) and changes to administration policies (such as ‘the introduction of single operating budgets and the simplified job/position classification system[s]’) and improved service delivery	(Clark 2001; Edwards 2001; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 224; Silverman 1993)
Public sector jobs cuts, perceptions of increased workloads, an exponential growth in part-time and casual work, rising job insecurity, and a drop in employee motivation impairing its ability to provide quality public services	(Privy Council Office 1997)
Deterioration in the physical and mental health of some public sector executives and a consequent impact on their leadership capacity	(Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada 1997)
Significant restructuring of the Canadian public sector	(Caiden et al. 1995, p. 100; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 225)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

The outcomes of public sector reform in Canada suggest an attempt to reform the public sector and its management practices along the lines of NPM, but as with other Anglo-American polities there is little empirical research to suggest what such reforms meant for the constitution of public sector management. The reforms may have modified public sector management practices by requiring business-like planning processes, higher service standards, a client orientation, greater accountability frameworks, greater autonomy and delegation for departmental managers, and the reduction of bureaucratic controls and ‘red tape’. However, the extent to which the constitution of public sector management changed appears to be confined to micro process changes related to finance and budgeting, personnel administration, information and infrastructure, and goods and services management (Clark 2001; Edwards 2001; Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 224; Silverman 1993).

Beyond these changes, how the constitution of public sector management changed is not clear. The adoption of NPM was desired by reformers but it did not necessarily become fully implemented in Canada as it did in other Anglo-American polities such as New Zealand and Australia.

C.4 New Zealand

Influences

In New Zealand the major influences leading to public sector reform were of an emerging dissatisfaction with the growth and inefficiency of the public sector, views that the public sector was crowding out the private sector, and pressure for public sector reform growing from neo-liberal or conservative governments in the US and UK during the 1980s (Mascarenhas 1993, 1990) who wanted to introduce a ‘new public management’ (Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt 1990a). More specifically, in New Zealand during the first term of the Labour Government from 1984 to 1987 and continuing into its second term from 1987, came a more vehement quest to improve the public service with a focus on efficiency and economy (Mascarenhas 1993, 1990). This quest was based on a radical version of the ‘new public management’ which some have argued was almost an archetype of the new public management paradigm (Hood 1991; Mulgan 2008a).

Unlike Australia, in New Zealand the influence for public sector reform came from within the government, rather than from a range of commissions, committees of inquiry, and studies encompassing consultation with the broader community. The New Zealand Government, and in particular the Treasury, was focussed at the time on economic theoretical arguments proposed by ‘new institutional economics’ which drew on agency theory, and public choice theory (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 80; Gregory 2007; Hood 1991; Scott & Gorringer 1989; Treasury 1987). Concerned with the economic environment that prevailed during the 1970s and 1980s and the run on the NZ\$ which caused a constitutional crisis in 1984, the Treasury generated a document called ‘Economic Management’ in which it presented an agenda for public sector reform (Mascarenhas 1990). This document established the basis for the Labour Government to put forward its own ‘manifesto’ for public sector reform, when it came into office during 1984.

In 1987 the Treasury, with the support of the State Services Commission, released a paper to the Finance Minister, called ‘Government Management’ which promoted the

ideology of the ‘new public management’ (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 324; Hood 1990, p. 7; Hood 1991; Treasury 1987; Wallis, Dollery & McLoughlin 2007). The Treasury paper captured the reform agenda ideas that the Labour Government had initiated during its first term in office. These reform ideas and the content of the Treasury paper were then encapsulated into the *State Sector Act 1988* and the *Public Finance Act 1989*. The Treasury paper and these two Acts reflected the reorganisation of major government trading activities into state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Mascarenhas 1993; Scott & Gorringer 1989) which the Labour Government had put in place during its first term. Together the two Acts ushered in the basis for public sector management based on a private sector model and a market-based economy whereby objectives are clearly defined, performance is incentivised, results incur rewards or punishments, managers have autonomy and accountability for their portfolios, and evaluation is based on sound data/information systems (Mascarenhas 1993; Scott & Gorringer 1989). Table C10 below provides a summary of the core influences of public sector reform in New Zealand, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C10. New Zealand: Influences of Public Sector Reform

New Zealand: Influences of Public Sector Reform	
Emerging dissatisfaction with growth and inefficiency of public sector	(Mascarenhas 1993 1990)
Concerns the public sector was crowding out the private sector	(Mascarenhas 1993 1990)
Neo-liberal or conservative government pressure for reform in the US and UK during the 1980s	(Mascarenhas 1993 1990)
Views of Treasury Officials with experience of neo-liberalism at institutions such as the OECD, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund	(Scott 2008b)
A quest to achieve efficiency and economy	(Mascarenhas 1993; 1990)
Economic theoretical arguments proposed by ‘new institutional economics’ which drew on agency theory, public choice theory, and transaction cost theory	(Mascarenhas 1990, p. 80; Gregory 2007; Hood 1991; Scott & Gorringer 1989; Treasury 1987)
Economic decline, constitutional crisis, run on NZ\$	(Mascarenhas 1990)
New public management ideology and a preference for market-based or private sector management practices	(Hood 1991; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 324; Hood 1990, p. 7; Treasury 1987; Wallis, Dollery, & McLoughlin 2007)
Perception that public servants had too much power over Ministers and stifled the latter’s ability to govern	(Mascarenhas 1990; Mulgan 2008a)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

The influence of the neo-liberalist managerial agenda for public sector reform, emanating from the US and UK during the 1980s, was strong in New Zealand and, in effect, led to a mimetic isomorphism (Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Scott 1987, 2003b, 2008a, 2010) of the NPM. Professionals from within New Zealand Treasury, with experience of neo-liberalism and the ideas of managerialism at institutions such as the OECD, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, in effect transported these ideas (Scott 2008b) to New Zealand in a seemingly unquestioning way. There was little consideration given to their appropriateness for the constitution of public sector management; instead the ideas became readily institutionalised (Di Maggio & Powell 1983).

The objectives of public sector reform in New Zealand as in other Anglo-American polities were also varied. One objective was geared to the Labour Government’s concerns about governance imbalances in its public sector (Mascarenhas 1990; Mulgan 2008a). The concerns pertained to the perceived imbalance in the relationship between politicians and public servants in executing their governance or directing roles, based on

a view that the public service bureaucrats were inappropriately controlling and influencing the policy domain of the ministers. In turn, ministers were threatening management efficiency if they were able to interfere with implementation or operationalisation of policy (Mulgan 2008a). Thus one core objective was to reduce the imbalance between the ministers and chief executives/departmental heads by giving greater power to the ministers to govern, relative to their civil servants (Mascarenhas 1990). The primary aim was to decouple responsibility for policy-making and political governance, considered the domain of ministers, from the administration and implementation of policy which was to be the domain of chief executives/departmental heads (Mascarenhas 1990; Mulgan 2008a). That is, ministers were to be responsible for outcomes and chief executives/departmental heads were to be responsible for outputs. There were consequences with the decoupling of policy and administration as will be discussed below.

Another objective the Labour Government endeavoured to achieve was to establish a framework for public sector management based on the private sector model of management. It was envisaged that public sector efficiency and effectiveness were able to flourish only if certain private sector management principles were adhered to. These principles were: role clarity for agencies and core actors, such as politicians and public servants; clear specification of performance objectives; flexibility to choose inputs and processes; and accountability for performance (Mulgan 2008a). Thus the aim of the New Zealand public sector reforms was based on the premise that one could apply 'clear assumptions and unambiguous principles' to public sector management (Mulgan 2008a, p. 2) as in the private sector, and that private sector management was superior to public sector management (Savoie 1990b, 1994b). What constituted public sector management was not considered; instead, the assumption that public sector management could simply become like private sector management was made as the influence of the NPM became institutionalised.

In this sense, the New Zealand Labour Government public sector reform agenda was seen to follow a technocratic reform strategy based on administrative theory with its focus on 'design of administrative structures and procedures to facilitate the efficiency of and effectiveness of bureaucratic structures' (March & Olsen 1983, pp. 282-283; Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Mascarehnas 1990; Salamon 1981, p. 472; Wallis, Dollery, & McLoughlin 2007). The technocratic reform strategy is a planned and controlled

strategy of reform which does not necessarily engage with the ‘realpolitik’ (March & Olsen 1983, p. 282-283; see also Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1990; Salamon 1981, p. 472). This technocratic reform strategy is quite different from a political reform strategy as discussed below, which tends to be based on broad consultation with various parties/actors, and a staged, incremental, continuous improvement and innovation-based approach to reform. Public sector reform in New Zealand was not based on an election manifesto or mandate (Kettl 1997; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993) but instead on a rational ‘coherent theoretical blueprint’, implemented in a comprehensive and consistent manner (Mulgan, 2008, p. 1; Gregory 2007; Treasury 1987). Table C11 below, provides a summary of the core objectives of public sector reform in New Zealand, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C11. New Zealand: Objectives of Public Sector Reform

New Zealand: Objectives of Public Sector Reform	
Give greater power to ministers to govern relative to public servants	(Mascarenhas 1990; Mulgan 2008a)
Decoupling of policy-making from administration implementation	(Mascarenhas 1990; Mulgan 2008a)
Introduction of private sector management principles to the public sector	(Mulgan 2008a)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

New Zealand’s acceptance and advocacy for the NPM and its managerialist principles was complete. New Zealand’s agenda for public sector reform set the scene for a range of policies, processes and practices which would initially challenge the established constitution of public sector management but eventually result in unintended consequences (Mascarenhas 1993) prompting a reconsideration of this advocacy.

Outcomes

There has been some evaluation of the outcomes of early public sector reforms in New Zealand via several major reviews by government and a number of comprehensive examinations by academics (Boston et al., 1996; Schick 1996; Logan 1991; Mulgan 2008a; Scott 2001; State Services Commission 1991). One such review was that conducted by the Centre Advisory Group. It was commissioned by the Labour/Alliance Government which came to power in 1991 (State Services Commission 1991). The

Centre Advisory Group presented its findings in 2001. Collectively, these evaluations have identified a number of strengths and benefits as well as a number of weaknesses of the public sector reforms. Some of the strengths and benefits and in particular their association with the new public management have been contested (Jesson 1999; Kelsey 1997) and some strong criticisms have been levelled at the public sector reforms (Mallard 2003). Recommendations for minor modifications as well as for major changes to the public sector have ensued but these recommendations did not necessarily change the constitution of public sector management.

Several outcomes of the public sector reforms in New Zealand have been observed. These can be viewed as beneficial or debilitating depending on the perspective one adopts towards public sector reforms and the new public management. The managerialist initiatives that were introduced such as the relaxation of central agency controls over processes, the adoption of a results orientation by agencies, the introduction of strategic planning, the separation for accountability of outputs and outcomes, and a greater reliance on contractual agreements, resulted in benefits. The benefits have been greater management autonomy, and a greater prominence by agencies on objective setting and planning more generally as well as improved efficiency, economy and effectiveness, although these latter benefits have been contested (Schick 1996, pp. 23-26). In effect, the managerial role of public servants had become greater (Mascarenhas 1990). Savings have also been realised from the disaggregation of public sector service provision via 'outsourcing, corporatisation and privatisation' mechanisms (Mulgan 2008a, p. 3).

Other outcomes were considered to be less than beneficial and in parts debilitating for the New Zealand Public Sector and its public service employees. In particular, while the theoretical perspective and principles adopted to frame the public sector reforms in New Zealand were considered comprehensively, the practical implications were not considered well (Mascarenhas 1993). As a result of the public sector reforms founded on predominantly economic theories, introduced via a technocratic strategy (as discussed above) and largely without consultation, in 'one shot' (Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Mascarenhas 1990; Wilenski 1986) much anxiety, uncertainty, resentment and confrontation took place across the public service. Public service employees were at odds with the government that had adopted a market-oriented philosophy to the public sector reforms that conflicted with their more social and humanistic values. Indeed, the

values of the public sector were fundamentally challenged and changed as a result of the public sector reforms (Mascarenhas 1990; Schick 1996).

Another outcome of the public sector reforms which was somewhat debilitating for the public sector was the damaged relationship which ensued between ministers and their CEOs/department heads. The policy administration dichotomy which has been contested by academics on the basis that policy-making and administration cannot be separated and instead are a shared domain for both politicians (ministers) and public servants (CEOs/departmental heads) was at the heart of the damaged relationships (Campbell 1988; see also Gregory 1998, p. 524; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993; Mulgan 2008a, p. 15; Riggs 1986). The New Zealand public sector reforms which incorporated a separation of policy, governance, and administration, drove a wedge between the ministers and their CEOs/departmental heads (Mascarenhas 1990). In particular, the reforms allowed ministers to appoint policy advisors and seek external advice, which to some extent subordinated their CEOs/departmental heads and gave rise to concerns about possible political interference and partisanship (Mascarenhas 1990, p. 89).

Given the mixed outcomes, the New Zealand public sector reforms became subject to revision by the Labour/Alliance Government, which came into office in 1999. They created a Review Centre Advisory Group (Mulgan 2008a, p. 3), which in particular recommended an alignment between accountability for outputs and outcomes. The output/outcome structure of responsibility was somewhat overturned in 1994 when the New Zealand Government adopted a public sector wide framework for strategic planning incorporating the use of Strategic Result Areas (SRAs) and Key Result Areas (KRAs) (Boston et al. 1996, pp. 282-284; Gregory 2007), which was aimed at broadening the domain for which departmental heads were to be held accountable. Later in the 2000s, the Labour Government went further in overturning the output/outcome structure of responsibility by introducing departmental 'statements of intent'. These statements of intent include consideration of outcomes as well as outputs although the core accountability for outcomes rests with ministers (Robinson 2002). In this way, the New Zealand Government acknowledged the unworkability of separating responsibility for outputs from outcomes, when essentially they go hand-in-hand and encompass the core of the relationship between ministers and their chief executives/departmental heads (Gregory 2007; Mulgan 2008a). Interestingly, even though these latter changes were

made to the output/outcome structure, earlier values and practices had simply continued and not changed; senior public servants had understood that the initial reforms to outputs and outcomes were unworkable (Mulgan 2008a, p. 15).

Public sector reform outcomes in New Zealand introduced a greater managerialist agenda into the public sector. But the public sector reform outcomes in New Zealand might be considered as an ‘unsuccessful attempt to ground public management on clear assumptions and unambiguous principles’ (Mulgan 2008a, p. 2) and ‘ideal models of [...] private sector’ management (Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326; Bogdanor 2001; Gregory 2007) replete with their focus on accountability. This is essentially because in Westminster systems, such as New Zealand’s public sector, established conventions of ministerial accountability and responsibility are deeply embedded in the political culture that prevails and such cannot be easily uprooted by technocratic reforms. In addition, the complexities and ambiguities of the public sector in New Zealand as in other Anglo-American polities are such that public sector reforms anchored to simple replications of private sector practices will inevitably not be a neat fit and so be contested. Table C12 below, provides a summary of the core outcomes of public sector reform in New Zealand, during the last half of the twentieth century.

Table C12. New Zealand: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform

New Zealand: Outcomes of Public Sector Reform	
Some evaluation conducted	(Boston et al. 1996; Logan 1991; Mulgan 2008a; Scott 2001; Schick 1996; State Services Commission 1991)
Greater management autonomy, a greater prominence by agencies on objective setting and planning more generally as well as improved efficiency, economy and effectiveness	(Schick 1996, pp. 23-26)
Savings realised from the disaggregation of public sector service provision via ‘outsourcing, corporatisation and privatisation’ mechanisms	(Mulgan 2008a, p. 3)
Anxiety, uncertainty, resentment and confrontation took place across the public service	(Gregory 2007; Kettl 1997; Mascarenhas 1990; Wilenski 1986)
Values of the public sector fundamentally challenged and changed	(Mascarenhas 1990; Schick 1996)
Damaged relationship which ensued between ministers and their CEOs/department heads	(Campbell 1988; Gregory 1998, p. 524; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993; Mulgan 2008a, p. 15; Mulgan 2008a, p. 15; Riggs 1986)
Managerialist agenda increased in the public sector	(Bogdanor 2001; Gregory 2007; Mulgan 2008a, p. 2; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326)

Source: Original table derived from the literature

While the outcomes of public sector reforms in New Zealand were mixed, as in other Anglo-American polities, reforms did challenge the way in which public managers were expected to operate, and hence the constitution of public sector management, although empirical evidence for such is scant. In particular, the managerialist agenda became significantly prevalent in New Zealand’s public sector. The establishment of the cadre of senior managers (the SES) brought about changes for the most senior public sector managers, such that their employment became non tenured. The State Services Commission’s role became one of ‘employer of the chief executives and advisor to government on general management and personnel issues’ (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011, p. 302). Public sector managers were to become more autonomous and accountable for the performance and results of their departments. Strategic planning and its associated strategic result areas, key result areas, and statements of intent, were adopted for public sector management. Policy advising was removed from the administration of departments, removing this responsibility from public sector managers. As in other Anglo-American polities, market-type mechanisms were introduced including

outsourcing, corporatisation, and privatisation, which modified the context of public sector management but it is difficult to determine what this changed context meant for the constitution of public sector management. In Australia a different but related story emerged.

C.5 Summary of Components that Comprise the Constitution of Public Sector Management in Australia

A summary of what constitutes public sector management work, in the APS, post reforms, derived from the literature, is provided in the table below. This summary encompasses components that have been translated from the Anglo-American polities across to the Australian context.

Table C13. Constitution of Public Sector Management Work in Australia Post Reforms

Constitution of Public Sector Management Work in Australia post Reforms	
Structural and organisation changes modify the context of public sector management including: the creation of 16 super departments by amalgamating 26 departments; abolition of the centralised Public Service Board; and the creation of a Public Service Commissioner, with reduced functions and powers.	(Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990; 1993; Wilenski 1986)
Significant downsizing of the APS and privatisation of the core functions of the APS (such as macro-economic policy changes re commercialisation and or privatisation of GBEs) bring about changes to systems, organisation structures and management work. Opportunity to engage contract-based service providers using agreed procurement processes becomes a feature of public sector management work.	(Barrett 2000; Commonwealth of Australia 2010a; Johnston 2000; Singleton 2000)
Expectation that public sector management work embraces and reflects private sector management principles and values of economic efficiency, incentives, and performance measurement, challenging traditional bureaucratic culture (based on an ethos, experience, knowledge, and loyalty in the public service, and a focus on the public interest).	(Hood 1990; Mascarenhas 1990; Pollitt 1990a)
Ministers given greater control over their departments and greater autonomy re appointment of Departmental Secretaries resulting in possibility for politicisation of the APS and the constitution of public sector management work. The placement of Departmental Secretaries on fixed-term contracts with consequent loss of tenure potentially challenging their ability to deliver frank and fearless advice.	(Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 82; 1993, p. 324; Wilenski 1986, pp. 271-272, 275)
Appointment of ministerial advisers/consultants by ministers means Departmental Secretaries now expected to focus on policy implementation rather than policy advising, that is now shared with ministerial advisors.	(Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 82; 1993, p. 324; Wilenski 1986, pp. 271-272)
Policy administration dichotomy modified existing relationships between ministers and Departmental Secretaries challenging the execution of public sector management work, dependent on this relationship.	(Hawke 1989, p. 9; Mascarenhas 1990;83)
Establishment of the SES as a cadre of executive managers expected to execute their work applying private sector management principles. Introduction of performance management and performance based pay systems intended to hold public servants to account for their work and reward them in a monetary sense for achieving fixed accountabilities.	(Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 82; 1993, p. 324; Wilenski 1986, p. 275)
Amendment of the Public Service Act's 'chief objects' clause to introduce equitable administration as well as efficient administration, emphasising the use of managerial principles and practices in public sector management work.	(Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 82; 1993, p. 324; Wilenski 1986, pp.

Constitution of Public Sector Management Work in Australia post Reforms

		271-272)
	Greater autonomy, accountability and responsibility for the way in which senior public servants manage their departments and for its performance.	(Mascarenhas 1993)
	Expectation that public sector management work encompasses corporate and strategic planning for a future time period incorporating the measurement of programs, outputs, and outcomes.	
	Responsibility for the industrial relations framework, enterprise bargaining and recruitment of staff devolved to the department/agency. Such public sector management work requires less approval from a central agency (such as the Public Service Commission) or ministers.	(Barrett 2000; Singleton 2000)
	Augmentation of a system of administrative laws; affirmative action and industrial democracy programs mandated via legislation; introduction of a statutory requirement for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity plans; and the introduction of permanent part-time employment arrangements. These administrative requirements are expected to be factored into public sector management work.	(Hawke 1989; Mascarenhas 1990, p. 82; 1993, p. 324; Wilenski 1986, pp. 271-272/275)
407	Introduction of Efficiency Scrutiny Unit (ESU) and the introduction of mandatory efficiency dividends for the APS requiring public sector management work to incorporate a focus on workplace productivity.	(Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990; 1993; Wilenski 1986)
	Financial management features more prominently in the constitution of public sector management work as a result of the introduction of the Financial Management Improvement Program (FMIP) and Program Management and Budget (PMB) program. These programs require a focus on forward year estimates for financial planning purposes, the use of accrual based accounting and program budgeting procedures.	(Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990; 1993; Wilenski 1986)

Source: Original table derived from the literature⁴⁸

⁴⁸ There were many references associated with the table and as such they have not all been reproduced above. A comprehensive list of references is provided in the reference list at the end of the thesis.

Appendix D: Departmental Secretaries' Demographic Details

The following tables provide an overview of the participants' demographic details. Table D1 represents current Departmental Secretaries' demographic details and Table D2 represents former Departmental Secretaries' demographic details.

Table D1. Current Departmental Secretaries' Demographic Details

Participant ⁴⁹	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Qualification	Residential Area
E	M	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics/Law	Sydney NSW
N	M	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Master Public Policy	Canberra ACT
I	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Accounting/IT	Canberra ACT
O	F	40-49	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor of Applied Science/Master of Information Science/Master of Business Administration	Canberra ACT
J	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Commerce	Canberra ACT
U	M	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics	Canberra ACT
W	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Arts	Canberra ACT
X	M	50-59	European	Bachelor Economics/Law	Canberra ACT
A	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics/Master Economics	Canberra ACT
D	M	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Arts/Law Master Law	Canberra ACT
H	M	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics/Arts/Masters Economics/PhD Economics	Canberra ACT
L	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics/Master Science Economics/PhD Economics	Sydney NSW
S	M	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics	Canberra ACT

⁴⁹ Alphabetic letters were randomly assigned to provide anonymity and de-identify all participants. Quotes from participants which are referred to throughout the thesis were coded for record-keeping purposes using numerical values which cannot be cross-referenced with the alphabetic letters.

Table D2. Former Departmental Secretaries' Demographic Details

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Qualification	Residential Area
M	F	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Arts/Bachelor Economics	Canberra ACT
P	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Arts-Law/Master Industrial and Labor Relations	Canberra ACT
C	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics/PhD Economic Geography	Canberra ACT
T	F	50-59	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics	Canberra ACT
G	F	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Psychology/Master Public Administration	Canberra ACT
Y	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics	Canberra ACT
K	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Economics	Canberra ACT
F	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Science/PhD	Canberra ACT
R	M	70-79	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Law	Canberra ACT
B	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Science	Melbourne VIC
Q	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Arts	Melbourne VIC
V	M	60-69	Anglo-Saxon	Bachelor Arts	Melbourne VIC

Appendix E: Departmental Secretaries' Public Service Career Details

The following tables provide an overview of the Departmental Secretaries' public service career details. Table E1 represents current Departmental Secretaries' public service career details and Table E2 represents former Departmental Secretaries' public service career details.

Table E1. Current Departmental Secretaries' Public Service Career Details

Participant	Decade of Commencement	Career Public Servant	Experience in Only One Agency
E	1970s	Yes	No
N	1980s	Yes	No
I	1970s	Yes	No
O	1980s	Yes	No
J	1960s	Yes	Yes
U	1980s	Yes	No
W	1960s	Yes	No
X	1970s	Yes	Yes
A	1970s	Yes	No
D	2000s	Yes	Yes
H	1980s	Yes	No
L	1970s	Yes	No
S	1980s	Yes	No

Table E2. Former Departmental Secretaries' Public Service Career Details

Participant	Decade of Commencement	Career Public Servant	Experience in Only One Agency
M	1970s	Yes	No
P	1960s	Yes	No
C	1970s	Yes	No
T	1980s	Yes	No
G	1970s	Yes	No
Y	1970s	Yes	No
K	1970s	Yes	No
F	1970s	Yes	No
R	1950s	Yes	No
B	1960s	Yes	No
Q	1960s	Yes	No
V	1960s	Yes	No

Appendix F: Empirical Findings from a Public Actor Perspective

Table F1. Empirical Findings From a Public Actor Perspective

Theme	Concepts Derived from this Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵⁰
Public Service Archetypes	'Public service archetypes' are imbued with public service traits which influence the constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that Senior Executive Service would provide a broader base of capable and service-oriented senior management cadre is unfounded (Wilenski 1986, p. 275)
Political/Ministerial Indifference to Management	Ministerial indifference to management, results in the appointment of Departmental Secretaries for policy work which shapes the constitution of public sector management work	Bureaucratic preoccupation with policy and political indifference towards public sector management reforms is supported (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 222)
Qualifications/Professionalisation	Formal qualifications are not a strong driving force for constituting public sector management work, and instead technical expertise in their field, professional knowledge of public service and experience gained from practice strongly influence the constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that formal qualifications will turn lawyers and economists into NPM technocrats is unfounded (Pusey 1991)
Cultural Tribalism	Membership of the 'Canberra centric' cultural 'tribe' is a powerful driver for their constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that public service culture and values have endured is supported (Ackroyd et al. 2007, p. 9; du Gay 2006, p. 158; Eichbaum 2000, p. 38; Faux 1999; Reich 1999; Talbot 2001, p. 299; Wallis et al. 2007)

⁵⁰ The public sector reform literature referred to in this table represents only a selection of the key references drawn on. For a more comprehensive list of the references drawn on from this literature see reference list.

Theme	Concepts Derived from this Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵⁰
Cultural Tribalism		Assumption that an entrepreneurial culture could be introduced is unfounded (Box et al. 2001, p. 612; Elliott 1999, p. 633; Gualmini 2008, pp. 83-84; Kiel & Thomson 2014b; Rosenbloom 1993, p. 506)
Public Service Ethos	A belief in public service ethos/ethics endures and strongly influences the constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that reformers could challenge and superimpose a commercial or managerial based ethos over the 'public service ethos' is unfounded (Acroyd 2007, p. 23)

Appendix G: Summary of the Impact of the Environments and Their Elements on the Constitution of Public Sector Management

Table G1. Summary of the Impact of the Environments and their Elements on the Constitution of Public Sector Management Work

Political Environment	Constitutional, Legislative, Regulatory Environment	Financial Environment	Modern Media Environment
<p>Connection to multiple ministers requires significant investment in relationships based on gradual development of trust in a political context.</p> <p>Relationships required with multiple ministers from all sides of politics can be complex and fraught, and on which the survival of Departmental Secretary is contingent.</p>	<p>Australian Constitution provides the authorising/ legitimising framework for the constitution of public sector management work and hence there is limited autonomy.</p>	<p>Appropriated funds are in part conditional on Australia's economic and fiscal position. Constitution of public sector management work is constrained/limited by appropriated funds.</p>	<p>Increased scrutiny imposed by the modern media means Departmental Secretaries spend much time in numerous Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry, responding to such scrutiny.</p> <p>Demands by the media for transparency contrast with demands by the public for privacy and confidentiality. These conflicting demands impact on the constitution of public sector management work.</p>
<p>Connection to Prime Minister, Cabinet, government, parliament and committees requires an understanding of and participation in the political sphere.</p> <p>Meta- institutional issues such as political power games, contests, debates and decisions, invoke a non-rational and a highly political arena in which they constitute public sector management work. Political environment is akin to an 'adversary chamber' and constitution of</p>	<p>Myriad of Acts apply and govern the constitution of public sector management work.</p> <p>Collectively the Constitution, legislation and regulations impose strict governance requirements on the constitution of public sector management work severely restrict the freedom of the Departmental Secretary.</p>	<p>Budget cycle and forward year estimates are four years out. Allocation of budgets is annual allowing limited long-term planning if any for the constitution of public sector management work.</p>	<p>Rapid take up of new information and communication technology (such as social media) means many citizens can know communicate in instantly and immediate ways in public debates and discourses. Departmental Secretaries are required to respond to such debates and discourses.</p>

Political Environment	Constitutional, Legislative, Regulatory Environment	Financial Environment	Modern Media Environment
public sector management takes place within this ‘combative political prism’.			
A ‘whole of government and national approach’ mandated by government/ministers contributes to the political dimension of the constitution of public sector management work.	Administrative Arrangements Orders determine the organisation structures in the public sector but there are disputes and tensions about the boundaries of responsibilities and these create complexity for the constitution of public sector management work.	Capital raising is a cross public sector exercise requiring offsets from across the public sector. The process is managed by the Expenditure Review Committee and hence is opaque. This creates tensions for the constitution of public sector management work.	24/7 news and media cycle means Departmental Secretaries are now obliged to respond much faster and manage press releases and commentary by their ministers and Departments with greater turnaround.
Ministerial Office staff compete with Departmental Secretaries for influence in the provision of policy advice in a contestable policy arena, challenging the advice of the Departmental Secretary.	Public Service Act 1999 (amended 2013) is broad in its prescriptions on Departmental Secretaries. They are to be the principal policy advisor to the minister and manage the department. This frames the constitution of public sector management work.	<p>Departmental Secretaries are ‘cost managers’ of appropriated funds rather than focussed on the generation of revenue or profits. They are required to adhere to strict and bureaucratic financial governance and administration requirements.</p> <p>Ministers expect balanced budgets from their Departmental Secretaries and there are limited, if any, consequences for the generation of negative financial results.</p>	<p>Departmental Secretaries constitution of public sector management work is caught in the urgent short-term arena (generated by the modern technologies and media), rather than being focussed on the strategic long term.</p> <p>Volume of work has increased exponentially for the Departmental Secretary and their Departments as a result of the digital access to the public sector made available to citizens via improvements in ICT and their insatiable appetite for information from this sector.</p>
Avoidance-based risk management prevails in a political context and this translates to a conservative constitution of public sector management work.	Public Governance and Performance Act 2013 and Financial Management Act 1997 prescribe the principles by which Departmental Secretaries are to develop detailed management procedures.	Departmental Secretaries base their constitution of public sector management work on a ‘multiple bottom line’ of commitments to citizens, government, and their	Departmental Secretaries are reluctant to have high profiles but their constitution of public sector management work now requires a greater public profile especially as their

Political Environment	Constitutional, Legislative, Regulatory Environment	Financial Environment	Modern Media Environment
		<p>workforces. A public service ethos steers them towards the common good rather than returns for only one group of stakeholders (shareholders).</p>	<p>trust of the media has fallen and they need to avoid or constrain the political risks stemming from debates in the modern media.</p> <p>Modern media management have an impact on their constitution of public sector management work especially: when Departments are undergoing change agendas; as Departmental Secretaries seemingly want to control the dialogue with the media.</p>
	<p>Appointment and termination of Departmental Secretaries is documented within the legislation. Their lack of tenure affects their constitution of public sector management work.</p>	<p>Procurement processes are bound by prescribed and often cumbersome bureaucratic policies and procedures to ensure Departmental Secretaries have in place 'checks and balances' for procurement. These constrain the constitution of public sector management work.</p>	

Appendix H: Empirical Findings from the Public Sector Environment Perspective

Table H1. Empirical Findings from the Public Sector Environment Perspective

Theme	Concepts Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵¹	Travel of Ideas Literature
Political environment bond and nexus	Interdependence between the Departmental Secretary and the political environment creates a bond that prescribes, directs and constrains the constitution of public sector management work.	<p>Assumption that the challenges posed by the political environment with its ‘political choices and governance’ could be ignored, and supplanted with solutions by the proponents of the NPM is unfounded (Thomas 1996)</p> <p>Assumption that public management could be grounded on ‘clear assumptions and unambiguous principles’ (Mulgan 2008a, p. 2) and ‘ideal models of [...] private sector’ management, repudiating established conventions of ministerial accountability and responsibility which are deeply embedded in the political culture is unfounded (Bogdanor 2001; Gregory 2007; Mascarenhas 1993, p. 326)</p>	
Dominance of Legislation	Departmental Secretaries work within a constitutional, legislative and regulatory environment which serves as an authorising environment, one which directs their constitution of public sector management work.	Assumption of applying a market discipline to a constitutionally bound public sector, given the quandaries that constitutionality poses on public sector management is unfounded (Peters & Pierre 2007). Assumption that differences in the	

⁵¹ The public sector reform literature referred to in this table represents only a selection of the key references drawn on. For a more comprehensive list of the references drawn on from this literature see reference list.

Theme	Concepts Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵¹	Travel of Ideas Literature
Dominance of Legislation		authorising environment driven by governance, constitutional frameworks, accountability of parliamentary government, and principles of democracy, could be supplanted with principles of managerialism is unfounded (Foley 2008; Goodsell 1985; Julliet & Mingus 2008; Kettl 1997; Maor 1999; Mulgan 2008b)	
Cost Management of Appropriated Funds	The financial environment is highly prescribed and Departmental Secretaries have limited control over the allocation of appropriated funds, so it is cost management that is expected of them and that shapes their constitution of public sector management work.	Assumption that the introduction of private sector type financial management, principles and programs to provide ministers and senior public servants with greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy for the efficient management of their departments' resources is unfounded (Hawke 1989; Johnston 2000; Mascarenhas 1990, 1993; Wilenski 1986)	
Modern media environment complexities, vicissitudes	The modern media environment exerts complexities and vicissitudes that result in reactivity, short termism, incrementalism and adhocery, which compromise efficiency and effectiveness further shape the constitution of public sector management work.	Assumption that the public sector can operate in a rational, efficient and effective manner devoid of complexity associated with synchronising or synergising the directions, views, commitments, and capabilities of the political and bureaucratic arms of the public sector is unfounded (Julliet & Mingus 2008, p. 228)	Assumption that the modern world is characterised by competing and challenging institutional logics or models, which serve to stipulate the ways in which actors and organisations operate is supported (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Friedland & Alford 1991; Offe & Wiessenthal 1980)

Appendix I: Government Leadership Forums

- i. Secretaries Board (Chaired by the Secretary of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Australian Public Service Commissioner) formerly the Board of Management,
- ii. Management Advisory Committee, and the Management Advisory Board; the APS200;
- iii. Secretaries Roundtable on Industrial Relations; the Annual Integrity Secretaries Roundtable (Chaired by the Australian Public Service Commissioner);
- iv. APSC Advisory Committee; the Secretaries Information Communication Technology Governance Board;
- v. APS Leadership and Learning Advisory Board;
- vi. APS Design Council Board; and a range of other broader service wide forums and committees (*14:17; 22:29*).

Appendix J: Departmental Secretary Stakeholders

Table J1. Departmental Secretary Stakeholders

Stakeholders
<p>Australian community and its representative groups: Citizens, and citizens' rights groups, environmental groups, lobby groups, public interest groups, community groups</p>
<p>Parliament and its ministers: Parliament, Parliamentary Secretaries, Parliamentary Committees Prime Minister, ministers, elected government (including backbenchers, members of Cabinet, opposition government)</p>
<p>Media: Newspaper, television, electronic media including social media</p>
<p>Industry and business: Industry and industry groups, professional associations and groups, private sector small, medium and large business organisations, business groups, multinational organisations, employers and employees, farmers, consumer groups, charities, churches, not for profit institutions and non-government organisations, academia, think tanks and advisory councils, global bodies (such as the World Heritage Committee and parties to the Kyoto Agreement)</p>
<p>Commonwealth, state and territory public sectors: Peers in other Portfolios and Agencies, Statutory Authority Boards, Commission Executive Teams, international, Commonwealth, state, territory and local public service agencies, as well as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)</p>
<p>Central agencies and other departments: Central Agency Secretaries such as Secretary of Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury and Finance Departments, Australian Public Service Commissioner, Auditor-General, Australian Government Solicitor, Australian Government Ombudsman, Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audits (JCPAA)</p>

Appendix K: Empirical Findings from a Roles and Responsibilities Perspective

Table K1. Empirical Findings from a Roles and Responsibilities Perspective

Theme	Concepts Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵²	Travel of Ideas Literature
Prescribed predetermined and transactional visions, purposes, goals and directions	Prescribed and predetermined visions, purposes, goals and directions constrain and render the constitution of public sector management work transactional	Assumption that leadership role comprises discretion such that Departmental Secretaries can direct at their will or 'steer not row' (Osborne & Gaebler 1992) is unfounded. Assumption that it is possible to 'let the managers manage' and to 'make the managers manage' (Weller 2001, Weller & Rhodes 2001) is unfounded	
Governance reflective of specific public sector drivers	Governance frameworks reflecting public sector drivers, which are both prescriptive and institutionalised, influence strongly the constitution of public sector management work in a rational instrumental sense	Assumption that reformers have further modified the governance structures of the public sector is unfounded (Aucoin 1990; Gregory 2007, pp. 227/243; Hood 1990; Maor 1999; Talbot 2001)	
Subordinated administration	Although subordinated, a rational instrumental administration rather than discretionary management, influences the constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that reformers could challenge and overlay the governmental and bureaucratic components of administration with generic, rational, managerial mechanisms of private sector management work is unfounded (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999)	
Trojan Horse of stewardship of the whole	Departmental Secretaries are expected to		Stewardship exposures of the

⁵² The public sector reform literature referred to in this table represents only a selection of the key references drawn on. For a more comprehensive list of the references drawn on from this literature see reference list.

Theme	Concepts Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵²	Travel of Ideas Literature
public sector	deliver stewardship via cooperation and compromise but politics shapes this aspect of the constitution of public sector management work		Departmental Secretaries to organisations and institutions facilitates the transfer and translation of contemporary management ideas to the public sector after they have been considered fit, is supported (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevón 1996; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002)
Stakeholder Management for concurrence	Stakeholders relationships embroiled in the complexity of the political arena make concurrence almost impossible and this influences the constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that public sector managers manage stakeholders in institutionalised and instrumental ways is supported (Commonwealth of Australia 2010c, p. ii) Assumption that public sector managers execute stakeholder management by 'working at the seams' of government, is supported (Elmore (1986; see also Hecló 1977)	
Policy 'gamesmanship', the 'politics of policy' and the 'political sea'	Policy role which requires an immersion in the 'political sea', and the display of a certain policy 'gamesmanship', <i>per se</i> , is a primary role which exerts a powerful driver for the constitution of public sector management work	Assumption that reformers could challenge the primacy of the policy role and that the responsibility for policy could be dichotomised from Departmental Secretaries' administrative work is unfounded (Aucoin 1990; du Gay 2001; Gregory 2007, p. 227, 243; Hood 1990; Maor 1999; Talbot 2001)	

Appendix L: Empirical Findings from a Contemporary Management Ideas Perspective

Table L1. Empirical Findings from a Contemporary Management Ideas Perspective

Theme	Concepts of Grounded Theory Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵³	Travel of Ideas Literature
A perception of fads, fashions, variations of a theme, recycled and relabelled ideas	The perception held by Departmental Secretaries that reforms and contemporary management ideas are typically fads, fashions, variations of a theme, recycled and relabelled ideas, creates scepticism and cynicism which means their impact on the constitution of public sector management work is negligible.	Assumption that many reform concepts, ideas, and techniques were possibly nothing more than the ‘buzz words’ or jargon that accompanied the NPM rather than the actual constitution of public sector management work is shown (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996)	Assumption that public sector reforms were concerned more with the rhetoric of reform or isonymism than the actual reforms is shown (Clark 1994; Kiel & Elliott 1999; Kettl 1997; Powell, Gammal & Simard 2005, p. 233; Solli, Demediuk & Sims 2005, p. 31)
Local and ‘globalising webs’ of organisations, public sectors, and government institutions	Departmental Secretaries have limited time and make few (if any) resources available to devote to implement, ideas circulating from within local and ‘globalising webs’ (Hansen, & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214) so the constitution of public sector management work is not significantly modified by these ideas.		Assumption that the use of globalising webs or ‘crosscutting organisational arrangements premised on interconnectedness and alignment’ is a mechanism by which ideas can be translated as they travel is shown in part (Hansen, & Salskov-Iversen 2005, p. 214)
Ministerial Focus	Government driven reforms and contemporary management ideas do not significantly influence the constitution of public sector management work, because Ministers are not focussed on transferring NPM ideas into the public sector.		Assumption that certain criteria of an idea (such as the ‘carrier’ and the ‘context’) will determine the dimensions by which organisations will vary in their acceptance and transfer of ideas is shown (Powell, Gammal & Simard 2005, p. 239)

⁵³ The public sector reform literature and the travel of ideas literature referred to in this table represent only a selection of the key references used. For a more comprehensive list of the references drawn on from this literature see reference list.

Theme	Concepts of Grounded Theory Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵³	Travel of Ideas Literature
'Status quo' or institutional isomorphism, isopraxism and isonymism	Reforms and ideas driven by four central agencies and their Departmental Secretaries reflect a bias towards the existing constitution of public sector management work, and so reinforce the 'status quo' and so their impact on the constitution of public sector management work is marginal.		Assumption that reforms, and management ideas were received in a differential manner some resembling institutional isomorphism, isopraxism and isonymism is shown (Powell, Gammal, and Simard 2005, p. 233)
Tailoring, translating, and transforming	Reforms and contemporary management ideas address predominantly the instrumental not the substantive elements of the constitution of public sector management work and so although tailored, translated, and transformed their impact has been limited.		Assumption that translation involves transformation is shown (Czarniawska & Sevon 2005, p. 8, drawing on Serres 1982; Czarniawska & Joerges 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon 1996; Hedmo et al. 2005, p. 195; Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall 2002)
Slow, cautious, incremental change	Slow, cautious, incremental changes (generally legislative) are made to the constitution of public sector management work over long periods of time to suit the public actors, their environments and their roles and responsibilities.	Assumption, that a paradox has developed across public sectors in the Anglo-American polities (such as Australia) over the past four decades (from 1980 – 2010), by waves of reforms and contemporary management ideas that have changed the public sector and yet it remains constant and stable, is shown (Barzelay 1992; Commonwealth of Australia 2001; du Gay 2001; Egan 2009, p. 11; Talbot 2001, p. 299)	
Governmental, bureaucratic and	Frameworks that prevail in the public sector	Assumption that the public sector	Assumption that modern world is

Theme	Concepts of Grounded Theory Derived from the Chapter	Public Sector Reform Literature ⁵³	Travel of Ideas Literature
political logics	restrict the feasibility and hence limit the impact of reforms and contemporary management ideas on the constitution of public sector management work.	is dominated by different logics from those operating in the private sector is shown (Allison 1971; Allison & Zelikow 1999; Bertelli et al. 2003, p. 264; Peters & Pierre 2007)	characterised by competing and challenging institutional domains or logics is shown (Friedland & Alford 1991; see also Davis, Diekmann & Tinsley 1994; Scott, Reuf & Caronna 2000; Thornton 2004; Westney 1987)
Managerialism does not prevail in the public sector	Managerialism underlying reforms and contemporary management ideas, has not been embedded in the constitution of public sector management work because its principles and practices were deemed unusable and unsuitable.	Assumption that management ideas have been adopted and become institutionalised within government and the constitution of public sector management work is unfounded (Micklethwaite & Wooldridge 1996, p. 351)	

