An evolutionary framework exploring the role of periodisations in the modern development of a Baltic State: the case of HRM in the Latvian Public Sector.

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of 'periodisations' in the development of HRM in the Latvian public sector and consists of a series of 'elite interviews' with leading 'actors' identifying further 'periodisations' which are 'mapped' in an evolutionary framework. Immediately following independence in 1990 was a 'void' period being a time of turmoil. 'Transition' period followed from mid-1990 characterised by up-skilling and the emergence of awareness of HRM. The 'Emergence' period began circa 2008 with more consideration of its role and importance of acquisition of skills related to HRM previously transactional in nature. The 'emergence' period has great significance in modern developments of HRM in the Latvian Public Sector. The elite interview methodological approach does however have some limitations for generalisability and future quantitative validation may be required. This knowledge informs and enhances understanding of Post-Soviet behavioural factors and residual cultural effects offering a framework for future research.

Keywords Human Resource Management, Latvia, Periodisation, Post-Soviet, Public Sector

1. Introduction

Latvia achieved independence from the Soviet Union (SU) in 1991. Consequently, organisations moved from central control by State, needing to operate within different circumstances, towards aspects more familiar in 'so called' Westernised models of human resource management (HRM). This research explores emerging philosophies and paradigms which underpin management of human resources (HR) within the public sector of Latvia. It focuses on surrounding antecedents of differences in HRM, taking into account geo-cultural differences such as states, regions, socio-cultural and socio-political perspectives (Brewster, Morley and Buciuniene, 2010) using the theoretical lens of convergence (Brewster, Mayrhofer and Morley, 2004) and 'new institutionalism' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). This work explores the role of 'periodisation' of HRM prior to independence adding to this body of knowledge, examining the nature of transition of HRM ideologies and paradigms against the backdrop of larger scale dynamic developments in the Latvian public sector. A single definition of public sector does not exist within Latvia. Rather a functional approach is applied. According to this approach it is composed of State, local government institutions and other organisations subject to public rights (public entities). This paper adopts a systematic approach using criteria measurable for each period taking into account contributions from Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013) and Smith (2014) enabling the collection and analysis of raw data to theoretical interpretations.

2. Background

The Baltic States were forced to undergo radical political and economic restructuring as they moved from a centrally controlled Soviet economy to market based systems of work. There were 'fundamentally' different rules on regulation and control, and this changed the way 'management' of people was viewed and practiced. But, how would 'collective memory' influence development from both a paradigmatic viewpoint and how would it 'shape' culture and practices? In the early years following independence Western HR 'consultants' were employed to 'train and teach' skills and therefore ideologies. But what about cultural and political historical contexts? Would these indelibly colour how this would eventually develop and normalise within organisations? The research question therefore is how has the HRM function evolved taking these antecedents' into account? Indeed, it is possible to understand where former Soviet States have transitioned from, but not where they are transitioning. Comparative little research considers this from a Latvian public sector perspective. What exists generally considers Baltic States as opposed to an individual nation viewpoint. It cannot be expected that all former Soviet States will have changed radically or consistently (Brewster et al., 2010).

Since the end of the cold war and subsequent fall of the 'iron curtain', there has been greater consideration and attention to cultural research within Central and Eastern Europe. However, the Baltic States has been systematically ignored and to a large extent are still treated to what Heuttinger (2008) described as the "forecourt of Russia". Commonality is assumed due to geographical proximity and intertwined histories (Vadi and Meri, 2005). The role of State was as minder and carer for the family, providing free education, nursery places, places for the elderly and women considered to be 'worker-mothers' (McCaughrin and McCaughrin, 2005). The challenge in Latvia was to move to internalising new types of organisational behaviour and management practices which were essentially unfamiliar conditions.

There was a lack of debate over aims or processes of post-communist transition, as so-called 'third-way' experiments had been discredited many times by pre-1989 reform attempts (Sik,

1993). Some economists thought any attempts to slow down transition were almost treasonable, and therefore gave the communist system a chance for survival or revival. So fast introduction of a market economy was required being an important part of the process and vital to restoring democracy (Brom and Orenstein, 1994; Holy, 1996). The approach taken in transition followed the vision of evolutionary economists, such as Murrell (1992), and economic sociologists, such as Child (1993) and Whitley and Czaban (1998), who contended the need for fast changes (Souslby and Clark, 2006). But change that happens too quickly typically leaves a vacuum.

3. Political History

Latvia was governed by democratic coalitions until 1934, when autocratic rule was established by President Karlis Ulmanis. In 1939 they were forced to grant military bases to the SU with the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-aggression pact between the SU and Nazi Germany which resulted in control of Latvia being effectively handed to the SU and, in exchange, Nazi Germany gained control of Poland. This violated norms of international law which "did not permit agreements at the expense of independence of third party countries" (Meissner, 2001:440) and singularly destroyed the existing system of non-aggression pacts in Eastern Europe of both the aggressive great powers (Lipinsky, 1994). The year of occupation (1940-1941) became known as Baigais Gads, or 'Year of Terror' (Sneidere, 2005), characterised by mass deportations of indigenous Latvian citizens coupled with resettlement of peoples from other areas of the SU, particularly Russia (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, 2004). Following the end of World War 2 (WW2) they carried out a programme of 'sovietisation' within their territories involving occupation, annexation, integration and colonization, all aimed at political, economic and spiritual subjugation to the totalitarian dictatorship of the Communist Party (Sneidere, 2005).

As soon as Soviet repression began to ease, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania natives started campaigning and working to gain national independence, the first steps disguised as environmental protests, since these were the only causes permitted (Plakans, 1995; Lieven, 1993). National attention turned to condemnation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Soviet occupation. A popular front was established in 1988 which sought to restore independence, however Latvia 'stood back' from becoming too heavily involved since it held the largest Soviet military force presence (Plakans, 1995; Lieven, 1993).

Latvia had much larger and more important Soviet military installations attracting a sizeable Russian population and the main transit country for the region (Plakans, 1995; Leiven, 1993) therefore more tightly controlled than other States. The Baltic States were the first to break away following a 'singing revolution' led by intellectuals, writers, journalists, physicians and teachers. There were few economists or engineers (Balabkins, 1999). These indigenous peoples had always behaved with a certain antipathy towards Soviet style communism and even prior to the collapse of the SU, it was noted they did not view themselves as Soviet citizens, but as central and Western European (Alas and Rees, 2005). Because of this identity it was mooted they would cope relatively well with their re-emergence as an independent State, having strong nationalistic identity and ownership. However, to declare that the control dominated Soviet era had not left a shadow on practices and management is over simplistic (Tulik and Alas, 2006). The shift from systems of 'cadre' (those charged with responsibility of personnel) to what is recognised as HRM was relatively new in comparison to other European countries (Muldoon, 2008).

Balabkins (1999) commented that upon independence, the West and the prevailing intellectuals, politicians and journalists believed moving into Western-style societal structures would be rapid and relatively painless. If extensive changes were made, they were perhaps done without sufficient consideration of the extent of shifts from former quantitative-output methods to capitalist-welfare-type markets. Former communist educated lawyers, government officials, former members of the Communist party and so called 'red managers' would embrace this new ethos of Western-type society, and those, who were in effect symbolic of the outgoing regime, would be left 'in situ'. This is now known to be an unrealistic assumption (Cook, 2014).

4. HRM context

HRM is culturally embedded within an Anglo-Saxon or European paradigm, of how people should be and are managed. Such discussions focus around notions of individualism versus collectivism in terms of managerial thinking (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010) and long drawn out debate of best practice versus best fit (Farnham, 2010). However, the past invoked feelings of mistrust. The 'cadre' were the eyes and ears of the Communist party and a major disseminator of party doctrine. Selection and reward were driven by politically motivated criteria and not a meritocracy. Employee files were retained as dossiers on many aspects of personal life. Political affiliations, acquaintances' comments and observations made concerning the regime were documented and considered when making decisions on promotion or working lives. Therefore there were some remnants of negative image and perceived negativity of HR or personnel departments (Tung and Havlovic, 1996).

In Latvia, a significant tension in philosophy of managing employment relationships encompass patterns of individualistic and self-interested behaviours, arguably inherited from the Communist regime (Cook, 2014). It may in part be an inherent feature of the Latvian culture. In organisational terms, this trait is likely to have an impact in terms of institutional trust which is an important element of HRM from Western perspectives. If employees exhibit little faith in legitimacy of institutions in which they are employed, there are significant problems for management when attempting to implement change (Mills, 1998). This is exacerbated if management groups were the same as under the old regime and by belief that traditional informal communist networks continue to function. Not only is the institutional context an issue, albeit important, but also the cultural and societal norms (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Institutional or network theory has a profound influence on the nature and emergence of HRM within developing economies and even now the Latvian public sector may well be trapped in the web of institutional arrangements, societal and cultural norms (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; Cook, 2014).

'New institutionalism' theories concern themselves with wider institutional environments arguing that organisational practices are 'reflections of, or responses to, rules and structures built into their larger environments' (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). Organisations are, in effect, embedded in wider institutional environments, which could include formal and informal institutions. Practices and behaviours therefore are responses to rules and structures some of which may well be residual effects of Latvia's social and political past.

As 'rational actors', it is argued, management tend to make their organisations increasingly similar as they try to change them (homogenisation) a process of isomorphism which is fundamentally recognition of constraining processes that force one unit in the population to resemble other units that face similar environmental conditions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). Two types of isomorphism are competitive and institutional. For

this work, it is the 'institutional' that holds most interest and relevance and the presence of 'coercive mechanisms' such as 'informal and formal networks' and what is termed as 'a residual affect' or 'tenacious residualism' to systems more familiar in Soviet times (Cook, 2014). A 'clinging' to social networks. Couple this with the political will of new Government to gain legitimacy, the prevailing national fervour and constraints of social and working norms all play a part in shaping how organisations evolve (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; Cook, 2014).

Widely shared societal values or norms, understanding of 'how things work', what is perceived as fair, acceptable, or just plain inevitable. In mimicking these, it brings about legitimacy, or acceptance of an organisation in the wider society in which they operate. Consequently, this may impact on the shaping of HR practices and paradigmatic understandings of what HR is or should be (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; Cook, 2014).

The changes brought about by independence themselves would have brought about uncertainty, issues on what is acceptable behaviour or understanding in what new forms of management should look like. When goals are ambiguous, or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty, organisations may model themselves on other organisations (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). It may well be an organisational understanding from the past which is familiar and therefore gaining organisational legitimacy. As is the nature of public institutions and public management, their paradigmatic 'shape' is mediated by forces of economics and politics through networks of institutions (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). These networks may well have changed during the development and emergence of practices brought about by the political will to be 'something different', to break away from Soviet influences. However, enduring survivalist social networks which existed in times of shortages under Soviet control can and still do exist. It may well be there is historical compromise existing as suggested by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) who argue for a constructivist historical institutional approach. The cultural persistence being to revert to the traditional (Powell and DiMaggio, 2009). Even now, it has to be considered, how much of that old regime and residual behaviour persists, and how much historical context survives and plays a part in behaviour and organisational culture. It is possible that these influences affect efforts to re-define the nature of employment relationships.

Boselie (2010) offers a six-component model of strategic HRM (SHRM) based on theoretical building blocks that aid contextual analysis. Of these, it is the general institutional and internal organisational contexts stressing the importance of socio-political and socio-historical aspects of any study. This can provide a basis for exploration and gaining understanding of critical path or evolution of HRM within a Latvian public sector context. These cultural theories are useful in understanding and analysing current development and future changes. History and cultural sociology are useful in studying emerging economies aiding in the ability to describe, understand and explain typologies' of management (Hood, 1998; Bouckaert, 2015). This anthropological approach enables exploration of macro levels of culture (Douglas, 1982). By exploring past accounts and studies of 'periodisations', it gives basis or shape to what is emerging.

HRM within the public sector in Latvia followed a 'traditional' framework of bureaucratic policy matching 'Weberian' practices which are authoritative, rigid and structured. This is characterised by impersonal management, clearly defined job roles, strong hierarchy of authority, standardisation and meticulous record-keeping (Brown, 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). Thus providing rule-governed rational action, supported and controlled by central Government and political ideology.

4.1.'Periodisations' of Practices

To go forward, we need first to understand what has gone before. This gives some measure how contextually things have changed. This study explored the Latvian public sector in 'transition' from dependence to independence. The research takes a contextual paradigmatic view of HRM (Brewster et al., 2010; Moreley, 2004). The extant literature was explored on 'periodisations' of personnel management' from a Baltic States' perspective (Svetlik, Kaarelson, Alas and Kohont., 2007; Skorobagatov, 1981; Tŝižov and Tšurmantejeva, 1975; Možina, 1975; Kamušic, 1972). This enabled synthesis and ongoing consideration of historical and present context within the Latvian public sector.

4.1.1. Administrative-ideological period (1945-60)

Following WW2 until late 1960's, the nature of personnel management practices were staffing and administration. The Baltic States economy was subjected to pan-Soviet interests, with a centralised command economy and an influx of Russian labour. The Communist Party managed the economy, and demand for labour was greater than supply, which led to general obligations to work. Organisational management was characterised by unitary administrative authoritarianism influenced by political-ideological factors (Svetlik et al., 2007). Staffing policies were characterised by accounting and reporting for various purposes of recruitment procedure, application of strict working hours and compulsory military service. 'Personnel' departments served 'State' administering total control over employees. In comparison to other specialists and employees expertise was not considered essential apart from the ability to follow orders and maintain a watchful stance on all employed (Skorobagatov, 1981).

4.1.2. Initiation Period (1960- mid 1970)

A period of heightened or aroused interest in 'personnel' issues (Vanhala, 1995) still characterised as administrative, however, at the end of the 1950's and into the 1960's there was a mild 'period of thaw', brought about by need for moderate economic reforms, whereby Eastern Bloc countries were given a little more scope to develop their economy. These 'improvements' brought about an element of increased efficiency and consideration of motivational systems. The increasing demand for a qualified workforce was provided by a system of higher education (Svetlik et al., 2007). The need for increased productivity brought about an emergence of industry-related training centres, where workers were trained and could upgrade their qualifications (Svetlik et al., 2007).

However, 'HRM' was still characterised by routine work connected to accounting activities and staffing. Activities were uncoordinated with a lack of ability to develop and implement staffing policies. There was little or no employee planning, appraisal or qualification development for managerial staff. 'Personnel planning' was poor, which led to discrepancies between competencies required and those actually achieved. Personnel tasks were centralised within staffing departments, and still focused on administration and personnel policy controlled by the State (Cook, 2014).

4.1.3. Pioneering Period (mid 1970's – 1990)

Studies concerning people management in the Baltic States during this period were rare (Kavran, 1976; Brekiĉ, 1983). However, those carried out, indicated labour costs were disregarded. The right to work a constitutional guaranteed right. Any reduction to numbers of employees was simply not on any agenda, even if there were economic difficulties or technological changes. This attributed to the demise of many organisations following

independence. Personnel policy was defined via social agreements, adopted by 'self-managed communities of stakeholders interested in well-functioning employment systems' (Svetlik et al., 2007:44).

There were 'inklings' of personnel management reported possessing characteristics of connectedness between personnel and business functions in enterprises and their environments. As well as reports of open and adaptable systems aimed at contributing to aims of the organisation with devolvement of duties to line managers and personnel specialists assuming roles of advisors, lecturers and analysts *(*Svetlik et al., 2007:44*)*. However, the role of 'HRM' was still considered as low skilled/administrative and connected to the Communist ideology (Svetlik et al., 2007). Table 1 below is a synthesis of these typologies.

Table 1 - Periodisations within the Soviet Union / A synthesis of background research – pre Independence

1945 – 1960 Administrative-ideological period	1960-1970/80 Initiation	1970/80-1980/90 Pioneering
Staffing and administration Pan-soviet interests Centralised command economy Influx of Russian labour Economy managed by communist Party Organisations characterised by unitary administrative authoritarian standards Influenced by political-ideological factors Staffing characterised by accounting and reporting for various purposes of recruitment procedures Application of strict working hours Compulsory military service Personnel department there to serve the state and to administer total control Staffed by those with lowest qualifications	Staffing and administration but with heightened interest in 'personnel' issues Mild period of thaw Moderate economic reforms Eastern bloc countries given more scope to develop local economy Increased efficiency and motivational systems More of a demand for qualified workforce Relative change in balance of power Decrease in the instances of repercussions against workers Mainly routine work connected to accounting activities Staffing uncoordinated Little or no employee planning, appraisals or qualification development for managerial staff Personnel policy handled by the state	Advisors and analysts Administration role high priority Studies in personnel rare Reported to be the first inklings of modern HRM Labour costs disregarded with right to work a constitutional guaranteed right Introduction of enterprise works councils and commissions Connectedness between personnel function and other business functions reported Start of recognition of contribution to organisations aims Focus of personnel function moving from specialists to the line managers Personnel took role of advisors, lecturers and analysts Still connected to Communist ideology

Based on works of: Svetlik et al., 2007; Skorobagatov, 1981; Tšižov and Tšurmantejeva, 1975; Kamušiĉ, 1972 and Možina, 1975

5. Research Methodology

This case study explores the role of antecedents in the evolution of HRM ideologies and practices in the Latvian public sector. It is based on ontological assumptions that the practice of HRM, people management or personnel management, is influenced by each nation's cultural and political idiosyncrasies and historical contexts. Convergence theory embodies these views, and acts as a theoretical lens for the research as does 'new insitutionalism' theory (Brewster et al., 2004; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991), taking a contextual paradigmatic view of HRM (Brewster et al., 2010; Moreley, 2004). It explores contextual factors, or surrounding antecedents that shape HRM within the public sector in Latvia as it has transitioned from pre-independence. Public sector was chosen because of its continuity throughout this process. This research uses grounded theory (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2014) to create a case study. The case study is designed to identify the role of antecedents in the evolution of the 'HRM' ideologies and practices in the Latvian public sector.

Grounded Theory is recognised as a valid methodological approach when studying aspects of social change, interaction, perceptions and behaviour, and Glaser and Strauss (1967) offered a methodological framework for 'emerging' theoretical work which supports the notion of allowing research to continually evolve through data collection, with questions being informed by theory as it emerges. It is therefore not a 'static' process, but dynamic. A grounded theory approach involves research moving 'in and out' of data collection and analysis. This is known as 'iteration' with grounded theory involving multiple iterations (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). The collection and analysis adopts an analytical technique enabling systematic movement from raw data to theoretical interpretations (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013) (Table 2).

A background study was undertaken which investigated accounts of pre-independence from Baltic and other Soviet States giving grounded historical context of socio-historical and socio-political settings (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). This informed the themes explored within 'elite' interviews as is the nature of grounded theory (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).

Table 2 Data Analysis: Stages of Analytical Process

Stage	Analytical Activities	Output
Develop thick descriptions to generate initial insights.	Background literature. Accounts from pre-independence. Historical accounts via academic works. Literature Review with theoretical lens of convergence and new institutionalism theory.	A grounded understanding of historical context. An exploration of previous understandings, socio-historical and socio-political settings. Research objectives defined; a priori construction and relationship study. Identification of themes. Understanding and synthesis of past 'periodisations' of practice building typologies of ideologies and practices prior to independence. Insight to work surrounding HRM from a Soviet perspective. Identification of research gaps.
Identify key issues in each case.	Elite interviews.	Macro influences upon the study giving in-depth and causal explanations of patterns of behaviour and policy.
Identify patterns.	Emergent stories and accounts related to interviews and data coding.	Create tables to identify patterns of periodisations of practice post-independence.

Incorporate patterns to build theory.	Combine data on HRM post-Soviet times, institutionalism, socio-historical / socio-political settings to aid in the exploration and identification of emerging patterns. Integrate existing literature to inform.	A theoretical model of periodisations in the modern development of Latvian public sector.

Adapted from Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013) and Smith (2014).

5.1. Elite Interviews

Elites, it is argued, have insightful views, such as business leaders, government officials and academics. They provide overall views of policies, histories and plans (Aberback and Rockman; Dexter, 2006) from a 'particular' perspective. Table 3 illustrates profiles of those interviewed.

Table 3 Elite interview respondent profiles

Care has been taken not to identify these individuals

Respondent No	Code	Post/Role
Respondent 1.	**AS**	Various posts within Government/ Public Centre including Ambassador
Respondent 2.	G	Various roles including Professor, Lecturer, HR Manager and Executive HR Director
Respondent 3.	BS	University Professor
Respondent 4.	ES	Various roles including working for United Nations, Latvian Ministry of Welfare, Private Sector, and Academic
Respondent 5.	GM	Various posts held in industry and within the University of Latvia
Respondent 6.	HA	Chairman and owner of Large Private Sector Organisation (former public sector manager)
Respondent 7.	EM	A senior academic at BA School of Business and Finance
Respondent 8.	BS2	Senior Management in Private Sector (former Senior University Academic)

The interviews relied on a 'purposeful' approach, first gaining access to someone who would, it was felt, give a meaningful interview and insight who then introduced or recommended the next contact, which enabled access to circles otherwise closed. This 'snowball' sampling is used where it is essential to include people with experience or insight into the phenomenon being studied (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). People in important, or exposed positions, are termed 'elite' and require 'VIP' interviewing treatment upon topics relating to their importance or exposure (Dexter, 2008). When undertaking elite interviews, it cannot be assumed, like typical surveys that all are of equal importance. Open-ended questions allowed freedom to respondents to articulate and provide rich data and stories to emerge (Charmaz, 2014). The main themes were antecedents' influencing the evolution of HRM exploring cultural and historical contexts in the Latvian public sector.

6. Findings

As a single case study it has been created over a period of seven years, harvesting data at different stages and points in time (Yin, 2014). The collection and analysis of data adopted an analytical technique enabling systematic movement from raw data to theoretical interpretations (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013; Smith, 2014). The background study investigated accounts of pre-independence from Baltic and other Soviet States giving grounded historical context of socio-historical and socio-political settings (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The self-identification with Europe (Smith, 1990) and a belief that they would cope well with changes brought about by independence (McCauley, 2001), combined with a "warped understanding of Western-type societal structure". There was a belief they would get all the 'blessings of

democracy' but not lose any of the support structures existing under Soviet rule (Backaitis, 1996:5). Tung and Havlovic (1996) first raised the question of 'trust' in authority, and in particular those entrusted with 'personnel' responsibilities, management and the so called 'red-managers', something that is echoed by others (Rislakki, 2008; RT News, 2013; Feldhûne and Mits, 2001). Representative 'dialogue' is presented below under general themes as a 'road map' of the interviews. Elite interviews then assisted in identification of key issues and patterns and areas for exploration during any ongoing research. The view being it is appropriate for people to tell their own story, which is the nature of elite interviews (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

6.1.Emerging Independence

When discussing the time leading up to and just after independence, political and social conditions were discussed giving insight into the situation and mind-set. Independence was brought about by a 'singing' revolution which was disguised as environmental protests, being the only form of protest allowed by the Communist Government. The following statement is typical of the commentary of respondents when exploring this time.
:

"……. The Soviet economy was already falling apart and it was just a matter of time [because we could just wait] …. I mean proclaiming our independence for a year or two before the Soviet Union imploded economically ……" (ES)

"there was all these shortages of food – and it doesn't matter if it costs next to nothing if it is not available …… " (ES)

It was against this backdrop of economic and political unrest that the 'HRM' needed to evolve. However, at this time it could be summarily described as:-

".. …….. basically people who were interested in filing …. Meaning everything private research of the people ….. even now we do not know what was in these files …. We did not see …… we know now that it was very, very uh, interesting research …. Nothing about the development of people ...." (G)

Interestingly, it was stressed that 'HRM' was nothing to do with strategy, more maintenance and control, showing little had changed since the works of Svetlik et al (2007); Vanhala (1995) and Skorobagatov, 1981) suggesting a clinging to traditional ideology of HRM (Brown, 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). The early days were described as 'chaotic' with little or no direction, symptomatic of the 'radical' changes taking place (Taylor and Walley, 2002). The role of the 'cadre' described quite vividly as monitoring and keeping dossiers and a connectedness to communist ideology. There were reports of a 'purging' of the system, dismissing those considered unable to 'fully' embrace new systems with questions of 'loyalty'. This has been labelled as the 'void period' (Cook, 2014). No formalised policies and procedures existing as far as managing people concerned.

6.2. Post-Independence

The 'State' was seeking its identity and endeavouring to put into place a government and legislature along with other necessary functions of Government with Soviet support systems fast unravelling on social support and a rapidly rising unemployment issue completely alien to Latvia due to past policies of over staffing and low technology (Bakaitis, 1996). The following supports the 'label of void period' and considers the ongoing journey post independence.

"… We established many areas of public administration from scratch, and in many cases we couldn't take over the existing staff …. [they] were completely disloyal to the new Government and to the new parliament" (ES)

Many were denied citizenship on the grounds of language and ethnicity with Latvian a pre-requisite for citizenship, many Russian speakers resisted even in 2012 some 300,000 were without citizenship unable to vote in elections, hold public office or work in Government institutions.

" … there was a barrier put up for Russian speaking to get citizenship, then obviously the ones that voted were Latvian, so you cannot participate in the elections, and therefore the members that get elected get elected by …. Well … they are not representative of the whole nation" (GM) (also supported by work of Rislakki, 2008).

" … They [Government] needed to ensure loyalty … it was too important" (EM)

Exiles began to return to take up some of the positions in public administration, but HRM as such remained non-existent and even now it is debatable if this concept, or ideology from a Westernised perspective is accepted:

"… OK, in our policy papers they use HR development system, but I hate it … it is not about people – personnel is people, but human resources is resources, like computers …" (G)

In the mid 1990's Western consultants 'arrived' to train and introduce 'their' management ideologies. Late in the 1990's formal associations of HRM formed, mainly managers in international companies to exchange knowledge and learn from each other.

"*… 1995, or something like that … there was project, a British Council project. People [HR consultants] came from the United Kingdom …" (G)*

It was considered by following this project, which trained those between twenty and twenty-five, they then could train others:-

However, "……. *it was not a quick process … the speed of the process very much depended on the organisation …. If the organisation had survived and already existed in Soviet times, then in many cases it was as it was before ….." (AS)*, which in the case of public sector, it had.

6.3. Emerging Themes

A subject that arose was of the continuing presence of 'Blat' a non-monetary transaction between friends which was practised within SU from about the 1930's onwards (Ledeneva, 1998). This was essentially a form of bartering and dealer brokering in order to overcome shortages and deprivations of the time. But, as Ledenva (1998) commented, this also affected many other practices such as legal and arguably formed part of the system of 'social capital', this being a combination of bonding and bridging ties that exist within a network of 'actors' (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). Yet, the idea of 'blat' still existing and this provided some interesting responses which indicated that in some processes, such as recruitment it affected decision making not based on meritorious ideology :-

"…….. I would have probably more favourable look on him or her, rather than on somebody else who has no reference or reference that is less important for me, or tells less – this is one thing – so I can say that the so-called 'blat' system – first of all it was deficit driven – if there were shortages of everything then those favours were mostly of the material exchange….."

This way of thinking is likely to be endemic in the Latvian public sector. Arguably such contamination of the recruitment process merely reinforces the feelings of mistrust and the inherent traditional forces of past ideologies and practices (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Brown, 2004). This was further supported by the majority of respondents who considered the role of HRM not to be a 'professional' area and that most management responsibilities lay with ministerial posts.

6.4. Emerging Periodisations

This research adds to the work of Svetlik et al., (2007); Skorobagatov, 1981; Tšižov and Tšurmantejeva (1975); Kamušič (1972); Možina (1975); Vanhala (1995); Kavran (1976) Brekič (1983) introducing further periodisations. In the early years organisations were considering their positions, how to compete in this 'free-market' economy. The public sector moved into a climate of public accountability, which meant there was growing importance and consideration being placed on management of human resources. A conscious effort to move from labour control and record keeping. There was also some recognition of concepts of 'personnel management' which did not exist, in the form, or the understanding of what was practiced within a Westernised context. Hereon is the question, what did it, or has it, evolved into?

The practice of 'personnel' was reported by respondents to be still procedural and based on record keeping, however there were efforts to introduce more clarity of roles based on business and people's as opposed to party needs. Those who were exiled started to return, but in the early years of independence, those working within 'personnel' functions still had little or no related qualifications.

The period of 'void' following independence (1990-1995) had no semblance of order where HRM was concerned. With the 'purging of the system', so many in authority, both from Government and within organisations were removed and their loyalty put into question. Despite reports by commentators, that it was believed former 'red' managers would embrace the new ethos of a Western-type society (Balabkins, 1999), or indeed even that they would be allowed the chance to change. This indicated the on-going mistrust of all that was related to the 'old style' of management. Many of the 'red' managers and those who were involved in the 'cadre' were removed from any positions of power. There were no formalised policies and procedures as far as managing people was concerned, and it was indicated by a number of senior respondents and academics that it was a very hard time as the 'State' sought to find its identity and to put into place government, legislature and other bodies needed to run the State and supporting organisations. This can be expressed by the following:-

"… we had to build it [the State] from nothing ...."(ES)

7. Conclusion and Discussion

This work has explored periodisations of practice within the public sector of Latvia using the theoretical lens of convergence and new institutionalism (Brewster et al. 2004; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). Transition and its preceding few years were chaotic with the period of 'void'. No formal consideration of 'human resource management' as well as

the existence or rather non-existence of formal functions to do with public administration, which is perhaps to be expected, as previously all ministries were *"branch offices of the Soviet ministries which were located centrally within Moscow" (ES).* Also, interestingly, *"any consideration of the ministry or aspects such as defence, and therefore a means (or will) to protect ourselves from any future hostilities did not exist"* (AS). This may prove significant today as much is made of trust in being a member of the European Union believing they will be protected from any further aggressive forces by NATO (Rislakki, 2008).

A framework of 'periodisations' is given in Table 4 based upon the findings of this research. It provides evidence of how the HRM function has evolved taking into account the prevailing antecedents. It adds to the HR transitional literature of 'administrative-ideological period', 'initiation period' and 'pioneering' period (Svetlik et al., 2007; Skorobagatov, 1981; Tšižov and Tšurmantejeva, 1975; Kamušič, 1972; Možina, 1975). A common theme throughout these 'periodisations' was command and control, staffing and administration. There to serve the State and administer control. This may be considered to be omnipresent throughout the previous 'periodisations'.

Table 4 Periodisation Post Independence

1990-2005 'Void Period'	2006 – 2008 'Transition Period'	2008 – onwards 'Emergence Period'
Period of chaos Purging of system to ensure loyalty Described as a 'void' with regards to any formalised thinking or existence of human resource management Open to Western influences, inviting consultants to train and educate Move from labour control, record keeping and human accounting to concept of Personnel Management in mid 90's Procedural Those that were exiled from the State start to return Still relatively low qualified	Administrative Data-driven Western Consultants training Move from administration to management 'Personnel Policy Phase' Starting to consider HRM strategy Skills and training becoming increasingly important Consideration of good practices Emergence (slow at first) of HR based subject areas being delivered within educational institutions No HR specific qualifications Questions start to arise of unequal status for those of Russian-Latvian origin Employee orientated labour laws Nationalistic bias in relation to restricting Latvian citizenship	Administration driven (probably due to global economic conditions) Data-driven Status rising but still relatively low low strategic importance Traditional based systems of management (Ostroff, 2000) Management centred Weak trainers but growing in importance Low involvers Hierarchical type monitoring and control Still emerging

Upon independence reports indicated that the general populous felt or hoped it would be relatively painless and 'red managers' would change to the new order and new ways with many of the injuries of the past healed (Cook, 2012; Cook, 2014; Balabkins, 1999). It would then, naturally, create a new freedom of speech, civil rights, freedom of religion, and, it was hoped,

miraculous healing and righting of any wrongs inflicted over the preceding fifty years of occupation.

Before independence, HRM from a Westernised viewpoint was non-existent *"it was basically people who were interested in filing .... Meaning everything* [to do with control and monitoring] *..... as well as private research of the people .... Even now we do not know what was in these files"*(G), within the public sector the 'cadre' was populated with those retired from military service or an active Soviet official, … *" the persons were coming from military service like Soviet servant or maybe better ..... military person)." (G).*

This was described as an '*empty period'* by one respondent (AS). Accounts of 'purging' of the system and those felt to be suspect where loyalty to the new order was concerned were ousted. This again concerns monitoring, controlling and rooting out undesirable elements. Therefore, the 'will of the state' was still the predominate ideology. Likened to the 'None' system of HRM Ostroff (2000) and certainly not to Nordic or Northern Cluster classification of focus on development and training, employee focused and high on involvement (Usinier, 1992; Spyropoulos, 1996)

The question is now "were all those in positions of power disloyal, or unable to pledge allegiance to the new order or was this a perception of those reclaiming their independence and therefore self-governance?" clearly there are issues of trust here.

"We had to start from scratch in many fields that I can think of in modern times of personnel management ..... they were just not there ... it was quite new to us" (BS)

"*They had no decision making things .... Something like that .... It was just papers in and papers out and this understanding of personnel and management means it was non-existent ..." (AS)*

The style of HRM practiced at that time was a 'Matching Model' of HRM matching tactics and management style to what was needed which was fundamentally 'traditional', bureaucratic and controlled (Brown, 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). However, it was not that thoughtful or planned. There was a 'ruthless focus' of people management based upon those within power focusing on a core strategy of ridding themselves of much of the past, to survive and distance themselves from the past. As a consequence forming or reinforcing their own Latvian national identity. This period could have been called the 'ruthless focus period', and therefore the '*void – ruthless focus period'.* As discussed above, in relation to any model of HRM, or any similarities with Westernised or European clusters of practices the answer would be no, as formalised considerations of HRM were not present, fitting in with the Ostroff (2000) system of *'None'* HRM.

The period of *'transition'* (mid 1990's onwards) was not about 'instant' or 'rapid' transformation and to think this had happened would be pushing boundaries of imagination and realistic probability. But, in the late 1990's managers who worked for international companies started to form formal associations of HRM and began to formalise and professionalise practices of HRM. This ***'transition'*** period is characterised with the move towards up-skilling those tasked with the role of managing personnel and an emergence of human resource based studies introduced and delivered within further and higher education. Although at that time there was no indication of a specific HRM qualification. There was a nationalistic bias restricting Latvian citizenship which continues today (Freeman, 2014),

The term HRM started to be recognised, brought about by training of new officers and managers by external consultants from the UK in the mid 1990's. This was on the basis of Westernised ideology and understanding of HRM and the role it 'should' play. There was the phenomenon of the *'……mirror effect taking place from the influx of organisations from other countries into the economy' (ES).* It is difficult to undertake an in-depth comparative study against clusters of practice from a UK, US or European perspective as practices and ethos or cultures were still taking shape and still settling down. There would have been an element of Westernised practices considered and 'experimented' with because of the influence of Western consultants' training and coaching. This is then cascaded down by those trained [train the trainer] and it is inevitable there would have been slippage and morphing into more traditional or recognisable ways of doing things as Taylor and Walley (2002) found within their study of Croatia.

The '*emergence period'* is still in transition and HRM is still in its embryonic state. There is evidence of underlying trust issues which may well be linked to the old cadre system and understanding of roles of management, which is persistent and difficult to eliminate (Tung and Hovolovic, 1996; Mills, 1998). Although the concept of HRM has been actively pursued, it is interesting to note the words of one Latvian Government minister with HRM as part of their remit who stated:-

"It is only a word … don't like human resource management, it is very technical and I don't like the name … ok in our policy papers …. But I hate ….. but this is not about people. Personnel is people, but human resources is resources, like computers'" (G)

This may well be indicative of the mentality of pre-independence still persisting (Tung and Havolvic, 1996; Heuttingers, 2008; Pichler and Wallace, 2009).

8. Contribution to knowledge and implications for future research

This research contributes to knowledge by identifying further 'periodisations' adding to works of previous commentators which are 'mapped' out in an evolutionary framework and provides evidence how the HR function has evolved taking into account prevailing antecedents as stated in the findings of this research. It is evident that the role of the 'emergence' period is significant in the modern development of HRM in the Latvian public sector.

Latvian public sector HRM managers need to be aware of periodisations in order to inform decision making and the future development of the HRM function. The results give a framework for 'periodisations' of historical contexts and the ongoing development of HRM ideologies. It serves to focus minds on consequences for future development. Whether or not the more culturally embedded notion of HRM practices will continue to emerge is a fundamental issue for Latvia as they continue their journey of independence. Whether or not it is converging towards Western style or European HRM remains to be seen. But, employee behaviours need to be considered if a more transformational view of HRM is required and this framework informs that process.

This research has primarily investigated the role of periodisations in the public sector taking into account prevailing antecedents. The elite interview methodological approach does however have some limitations for generalisability and future quantitative validation may be required. There are still many areas to be considered in relation to the emerging economy of Latvia. These include the influx of overseas companies and the question of the effect of the

large majority of real estate and financial control being held by Russian Latvian and Russians (Rislakki, 2008). Another issue to consider is citizenship or lack of it, the view of Torrington et al. (2008) concerning personnel and HRM being about social justice, can 'spark' debate of whether or not there is justice built into the system, be it societal or institutional (Herzenhorn, 2012; Feldhŭne and Mits, 2001), particularly the situation of 'statelessness' afforded to Russian Latvian citizens. Further, there is an opportunity to build relationships with academics and commentators in the university system to undertake wider research within both the public and private sector in order to correlate and compare data, which will have important policy implications.

Institutionalism is a useful lens to explore the paradigmatic evolution of HRM in transition countries such as the Baltic State of Latvia and offers valuable insights within the field of institutional theory. "Historical institutionalism" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004) has created a 'tie' to familiar, trusted, traditional and culturally acceptable institutional patterns or norms thereby providing legitimacy (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; Boselie, 2010).

This work has explored why and how institutional change has occurred and points to an importance of legacies and path dependency. The Latvian public sector is in effect 'tied' into sociological institutionalism based on social norms and perceptions with a large influence of power-relations of formal and informal institutions (Brown, 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004).

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