The rise of executive agencies: comparing the agencification of 25 tasks in 21 countries

Sandra van Thiel & CRIPO team

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Abstract

Agencification is an international trend, but studied mostly through case studies. This study offers systematic evidence of the creation of semi-autonomous agencies to carry out 25 executive tasks in 21 countries. Based on an expert survey, several patterns of agencification have been found. The creation of agencies turns out to be a longstanding practice, which has accelerated from the 1980s on, under the influence of New Public Management. Recently, governments prefer agencies with fewer degrees of autonomy, but there are no indications that they create lesser agencies on the whole. The transitional countries of Eastern Europe are the most radical reformers at the moment, while other countries have a slower pace of agencification (e.g. federal states) or display a mixed pattern of old and new reforms (e.g. the Nordic countries). Tasks such as meteorology, bureau of statistics and unemployment benefits have been agencified in almost all countries under study, while tasks like the railways, airport and broadcasting are almost always privatized.

About the authors:

Dr. Sandra van Thiel is associate professor Public Administration at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Correspondence: vanthiel@fsw.eur.nl

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Introduction

Agencification is an international trend. The studies listed in the bibliography of this paper show that no part of the world is unaffected by it.

Agencification refers to the creation of semi-autonomous organizations that operate at arms' length of the government, to carry out public tasks (regulation, service delivery, policy implementation) in a relatively autonomous way i.e. there is less hierarchical and political influence on their daily operations, and they have more managerial freedoms. There is much controversy over the definition of agencies but a consensus has grown that an 'agency' in terms of agencification concerns an organization that (i) is structurally disaggregated from the government and (ii) operates under more business-like conditions than the government bureaucracy (Talbot, 2004a:5). Agencies can for example have a different financial system and personnel policies, although the degrees of financial, personnel, and management autonomy vary per (type of) organization (Pollitt et al., 2004). It is exactly this degree of variation between (types of) organizations that make it impossible to develop a more precise definition.

The lack of a uniform definition complicates research into agencification, both within and between countries (Bouckaert & Peters, 2004). Comparisons over time are hindered by changes in organizations and types of organisations; comparisons between countries are further complicated by differences in institutional contexts and the differences in the translation of the agency idea in different countries (Smullen, 2007; Moynihan, 2006, Pollitt et al., 2001). Therefore, although the omnipresence of agencies is evident, most research emphasizes the differences (divergence) rather than the similarities (convergence) between them. Or, as Pollitt (2001, 2002) puts it, there is much discursive and decisional convergence, but divergence when it comes to practices and results.[1] Politicians and policy makers around the globe talk about agencies and decide to create them, but what happens after that is much less clear – and much less studied as well.

Research into agencification is plagued by yet another deficiency. It is often "based on impressionistic rather than systematic methods of analysis" (Pollitt, 2002:489). It is "soft theory and hard cases" (Hesse, 1997:120). There are numerous detailed case descriptions – although biased towards the western world – but few systematic explanations of similarities and differences between cases (for an exception see Pollitt et al., 2004), apart from some (implicit) generalizations about for example state traditions, institutional differences and international trends.

The study reported in this paper aims to address both problems in the study of agencification. First, it offers more systematic evidence of patterns of agencification. Based on an expert survey, we will map the agencification of 25 different public tasks in 21 countries. Data collec-

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[1] This article will not investigate the causes of agencification. Interested readers can choose from a range of theoretical explanations (Pollitt, 2004a), ranging from policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1998; Bennett, 1991), the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1995), institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), the transformative perspective (Christensen & Laegreid, 2003, 2006, 2007), or the task specific path dependency model (Pollitt et al., 2004), to rational choice and institutional economics (Van Thiel, 2001, 2008).

tion on such a scale is unprecedented (Pollitt, 2002; Hood, 1996). Second, to overcome the definition problem and enable comparative research, a categorization of agencies has been developed for this survey. This instrument turned out to be easy to apply by the expert respondents to the situation in their home country, and is therefore a promising instrument for future comparative research. We will use the data to answer three research questions:

1. Which types of agencies exist and how has their number evolved over time? Which patterns can be discerned?
2. Which tasks have been agencified, in which (dominant) form, and when? Which patterns can be discerned?
3. Which countries have agencified (which) tasks, in which (dominant) form, and when? Which patterns can be discerned?

After an overview of existing knowledge on patterns of agencification, we will present the findings of the survey and draw some conclusions. Before we do so, we need to point out two limitations of this study though. First, we will only consider agencification at the national level. Local agencies are not included, and in federal states only agencies at the federal level will be discussed. Second, this study has focussed on executive tasks; regulatory tasks have been excluded.[2]

Patterns of agencification

The two elements of the definition of agencification outlined before – structural disaggregation and business-like management – fit with the 'doctrinal components' of the New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Aucoin, 1990). NPM comprises a range of reforms that most (western) governments have been implementing from the 1980s onwards. Following the NPM-logic, the structural disaggregation of units will improve public sector performance because interference by politicians is reduced. The adoption of new management techniques will make agencies more cost and customer aware, leading to higher efficiency and quality. And finally, agencies and politicians will each be able to focus on their core tasks; respectively, policy execution and policy development. Agencification (also known as delegation) is thus believed to have all the benefits of specialization and de-politicization (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007a; Majone, 2001).

Evaluation studies show however that the objectives of agencification are not always achieved, and that there are unintended consequences as well. The rise of unelected bodies ('agencies') has created problems for the democratic accountability of ministers in parliament, and has on occasion led to perverse outcomes such as corruption, underperformance, loss of control and coordination, (financial) scandals, and so on (see e.g. Vibert, 2007; Caulfield, 2006; Pollitt et al., 2004; Boyne et al., 2003; Beblavý, 2002; OECD, 2002). Governments' responses – in the UK known as joined-up government (James, 2004), and in Australia and New Zealand as

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[2] See Jordana & Levi-Faur (2006) for a comparative study of regulatory agencies in African and Latin American countries, and Braun & Gilaridi (2006) or Gilardi (2008) on diffusion of regulatory agencies in Western Europe and the EU.

'whole-of-government' (Halligan, 2007; Gregory, 2003) – focus on re-gaining control and coordination by among others re-centralizing or re-organizing agencies (mergers or splitting up), imposing new and stricter regulations, commissioning investigations into the performance and conduct of agencies, supporting the development of governance codes, and so on (see for several examples Christensen & Laegreid, 2007). It is however too early to conclude that NPM – or agencification – is over (Lapsley, 2008). In fact, it could seriously be questioned whether agencification and NPM were new inventions to begin with (Wettenhal, 2005; Pollitt et al., 2004; Greve et al., 1999). Or as Light (1997:2) puts it "there is truly nothing new under the sun when it comes to making government work. Human beings have been reforming government ever since they invented government". Depending on their state traditions governments have always decentralized tasks, created agencies of some sort, or used corporatist arrangements (self-regulation), outsourcing or public private partnerships to realize policy objectives. New reforms are added onto he previous ones all the time, a process which Light (1997) has labelled sedimentation (cf. Pollitt, 2008).

There have been several studies into the patterns of the diffusion of NPM and/or agencification in different countries (see e.g. Ongaro, 2008; Gualmini, 2008; Kettl, 2006; Caulfield et al., 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004; Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, 2006, 2003; Pollitt et al., 2004; Pollitt & Talbot, 2004; Torres, 2004; OECD, 2002; Hood, 1996). Although researchers have used different labels for the patterns they identify, there are many similarities between the patterns they distinguish. Reviewing the literature one finds at least two patterns that are almost always mentioned: (i) the radical reforms in the Anglo-Saxon countries (UK, Australia, New Zealand) and (ii) the more incremental approach in Continental Europe. The difference between these two extremes is frequently stressed and illustrated with case study evidence (see e.g. Pollitt et al., 2007).

     In addition to the two dominant patterns, a third pattern is sometimes mentioned, but with varying labels and descriptions. For example, Kettl (2006) lists the Nordic countries as a (third) group of 'hybrid' reformers. However, in other studies the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway) are usually included in the group of incremental reformers (cf. Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). Christensen and Laegreid (2008) even label Norway a "reluctant" reformer. Nordic countries have a longstanding tradition in creating agencies (see e.g. Larsson, 2002, and Pierre, 2004, on Sweden). Recent reforms in those countries are therefore less focused on creating agencies and more on reforming existing agencies, for example by splitting up multi-purpose agencies into single purpose organizations (Christensen & Laegreid, 2008), or by making their management more business-like by using e.g. performance measurement techniques (cf. Binderkrantz & Christensen, 2008; Smullen, 2007). Other labels for the existence of more than two patterns are for example the threefold "systemic", "pragmatic" and "tactical" reforms by Feigenbaum et al. (1998) or labels based on the legal tradition of countries: Germanic, Nordic and Southern European (or Napoleonic) countries (Torres, 2004; see also Peters, 2006). Next to different labels, researchers also cluster different groups of countries. For example, Kettl (2006)

places the United States in the group of incremental reformers (cf. Moe, 2002), whereas Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004), Gualmini (2008) and Feigenbaum et al. (1998) conclude that the Americans belong to the more radical reformers.

Controversies over reform patterns are caused by the uneven distribution between radical and incremental reformers. The radical reformers consist of the same countries in almost all studies (UK, Australia, New Zealand), but the group of incremental reformers currently consists of the 'rest of the world'. This distribution is clearly skewed. Moreover, there is a strong bias towards western and OECD countries. Asian, Latin American, developing and transitional countries (Eastern Europe) are seldom included in agencification studies (see for some exceptions: Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004; Moynihan, 2006; Hood, 1996).[3] Therefore we need a more elaborate typology, to better classify (groups of) countries.

Rather than create a whole new typology, we will expand and refine an existing one. The typology of 'trajectories of reform' as developed by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004:ch.4) is one of the most cited typologies. We will use this as the basis for a typology of patterns of agencification. Pollitt and Bouckaert distinguish four trajectories of public management reforms in ten OECD countries: maintenance, modernization, marketization and minimization.

Maintenance
Countries in this group are tightening up the government bureaucracy but do not implement any (or hardly any) fundamental restructuring. They focus on making current structures and practices work better. Pollitt and Bouckaert mention Germany as example. Based on Hood (1996) we can probably also include Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Japan and Turkey in this category as they can be typified as "low NPM reformers". Torres (2004:102) emphasizes that countries such as Germany and Switzerland have a very legalistic administrative tradition, complex federal systems and a strong hierarchical civil service system. As a consequence they would be expected to prefer decentralization over agencification.

Modernization
Countries in this trajectory believe that the state should play an important role but that fundamental changes in the administrative system are necessary such as budget and personnel reforms, extensive decentralization and devolution. As a result there is a strong preference for hybrid forms of public sector organizations rather than outright privatization. Also, there is a need for more attention for the participation and role of citizens (or customers). According to Pollitt and Bouckaert examples of countries with this trajectory are: Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, The Netherlands and Sweden, although they stress that there are differences between countries in emphasis,

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[3] For more information on agencification in Asian countries, see e.g. Nakano (2004) and Yamamoto (2004, 2008) about Japan, Bowornwathana (2004, 2006) about Thailand, Thynne (2006) about Hong Kong, and Kim Pan S. (2003) and Keunsei Kim (2008) about South-Korea. Information on Latin American countries can be found in Talierco (2004), Jordana & Levi-Faur (2006) and Parrado & Salvador (2008).

pace of reform, and preferred organizational forms. This is an important point that we will use to make further distinctions between (groups of) countries.

Based on Hood (1996) we can also include Austria, Denmark, Portugal, USA and Ireland into this group, as they are labelled "moderate NPM reformers". However, it would appear that although all these countries share a moderate passion for NPM and agencification, they do so for different reasons (Torres, 2004). The Nordic countries for example have a strong tradition of service delivery through agencies; as a result ministries (central government) tend to be very small. Most Southern European countries on the other hand have a mixed pattern of decentralization to sub-national governments and corporatization, rather than (extensive) agencification. Therefore, within the group of modernizers a distinction should be made between different groups of modernizers, based on their preference for different types of agencies. We will return to this point later on.

Marketization

Marketizers are also known as the radical reformers (cf. above). In these countries, the government bureaucracy is fundamentally reformed and slimmed down ('retreat of the state' or 'rolling back the state'). There is a strong preference for the use of private sector techniques, the introduction of competition, and the creation of internal markets within the public sector, for example in health or education. Examples are the: UK, Australia, New Zealand (and moderately NL, Finland and Sweden, according to Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004).[4]

Minimization

The fourth and final trajectory points to massive privatization and downsizing of public sector organizations, leaving only a 'Nightwatchman' state. Although this model is advocated in some countries (like the US and UK), it is actually not found to exist by Polllitt and Bouckaert (2004).

Using these four trajectories, we can already distinguish two different types of 'incremental reformers': maintenance versus modernization. Within the latter group a further refinement can be made, between countries with different reform strategies, a different historical and institutional context, and different preferences for certain types of agencies. Take for example the Nordic or Scandinavian countries that have a longstanding tradition in agencification, with recent reforms not being aimed at reducing or increasing the number of agencies but only the conditions under which agencies operate. This strategy is very different from the Southern European countries with their Napoleonic legalistic tradition, with comprehensive reform programmes led by strong central government – favouring corporatization (creation of companies) and decentralization (delegation to local and regional governments) over agencification.

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[4] Based on Hood (1996) and Fyfe & Fitzpatrick (2002) we could also include Canada in this category. However, Graham & Roberts (2004) claim that Canadian reforms have not been that radical. Therefore, we have not included Canada here explicitly.

To be able to make these refinements, we need to briefly address the definition of agencies again. For there are many different types of agencies, at varying distance from the government, with varying (legal) forms and varying degrees of (managerial) freedom. For example, some agencies may have legal independence (or legal personality) but others will not, some agencies can even be based on private law rather than public law, some agencies can raise their own revenues while others depend entirely on the government for funding, and so on. These differences are reflected in the number of different types of agencies within and between countries, ranging from for example the non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and Next Steps agencies in the UK, so-called ZBOs in The Netherlands, statutory authorities in Australia, public establishments in France, Italy and Portugal, different types of executive and/or contract agencies in the Scandinavian countries, to so-called bureaus and boards in Eastern European countries (Allix & Van Thiel, 2005; Pollitt & Talbot, 2004; Christensen & Laegreid, 2003; Wettenhall, 2003; OECD, 2002). See table 1 (below) for more examples.

Using the differences between types of agencies, we can make more precise predictions about the patterns of agencification in different countries. For example, Southern European countries would be expected to make more use of corporations than other countries. Similarly, Germanic countries are expected to prefer decentralization over agencification. Countries with a legalistic tradition will prefer agencies with a clear legal basis; probably based on public law in Germanic countries and more often on private law in Southern European countries.

Finally, we need one more addition to our model, namely the inclusion of transitional and developing countries. There are not that many studies yet into agencification in these countries, but research among the CRIPO partners has revealed some first findings.

Transitional countries
Beblavý (2002) characterizes the reforms of the post-communist countries as similar to the OECD countries' experiences in some ways - particularly when it comes to agencification. As the "emphasis has been placed on refocusing on its unique and core competencies, on significantly more extensive use of private sector techniques in management and organisation and on transparency of public administration as a means of delivering more accountability to the public and politicians" (Beblavý, 2002:122) we cannot conclude otherwise than that they would fit best with the trajectory of the modernizers (see above).

However, these reforms have taken place in a unique context (vis a vis legal characteristics and a redefinition of the role of the state), at a very high speed (see e.g. the Latvian case; Pollitt, 2004b; or Sarapuu, 2008, on Estonia), with a larger scope than in most OECD countries, and with much less funding and 'reform capacity'. Under the communist regime, many agencies already had legal personality; agencification therefore refers not so much to granting legal autonomy, but to for example financial and personnel autonomy, and to changes in the management of these organizations (more business-like, including more attention for accountability). This would imply that transitional countries have followed a path similar to the Nordic countries (Christensen

& Laegreid, 2006; Torres, 2004), but in a less harmonic way as agencification in transitional countries was seldom pursued within a systematic conceptual and legal framework, partly because of the lack of administrative capacity but also due to the speed with which it was undertaken (see e.g. Moynihan, 2006, and Beblavý, 2002, on Slovakia). Hence, some of the results are quite paradoxical (see for an interesting case in Estonia: Tavits & Annus, 2006). Beblavý (2002) points for example to the fact that agencification has often been used to raise the tax burden; agencies are allowed to charge user fees, but there is no equivalent reduction in general tax levying.

In sum, transitional countries could be labelled as modernizers but with a minimization twist; the scale and speed of agencification have left a very small government bureaucracy. Moreover, the high level of distrust in the government in most transitional countries (cf. Nakrosis, 2008, on Lithuania) makes it difficult for the government to take on an important or central role, in the agencification process or elsewhere.

Developing countries: maintenance or modernization?
Agencification in Sub-Saharan African countries is in many respects similar to experiences in Western Europe (Caulfield, 2004, 2006; Minogue et al., 1998). This can be attributed to both the colonial heritage of most developing countries and the important role of international (western) donor organizations like the World Bank. Differences in the strategies between francophone and Anglophone countries can almost directly be related to former colonial powers in these countries. For example, the Tanzanian agency model is largely copied from the Next Steps Agencies model in the United Kingdom (Sulle, 2008; see for more examples Minogue et al., 1998; Caulfield, 2004, 2006). That would imply that developing countries could be categorized in the same trajectory as their former ruler; Tanzania would for example be listed in the group of marketizers.

However, there are also important differences. Agencies are not a new phenomenon in most developing countries. Not only were many agencies created during colonial occupation, but agencies are often seen as an alternative to already existing state-owned companies which are plagued with corruption. African governments have a hard time balancing the requirements of international donor organizations like the World Bank (that stress the necessity for a well-performing, efficient and modern public sector) against the needs of the population (who want basic services like water, health care and infrastructure).[5] Agencification is characterized by comprehensive reform programmes in which types of agencies are granted a uniform statutory basis (cf. Sulle [2008] on the Executive Agency Act in Tanzania). Execution of these programmes is however undermined by several weaknesses, such as weak state capacity, negative economic growth, poverty and aid dependence (Caulfield, 2006). In developing countries like Tanzania - but also in transitional countries like Eastern Europe (see Pollitt [2004b] on Latvia) – state capacity should perhaps come first, before (extensive) agencification (Caulfield, 2006). For without

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[5] A similar conclusion can be drawn about other developing countries, like Jamaica (Talbot, 2004b).

state capacity there is (i) little to put at arms' length and (ii) insufficient competency to steer or control agencies.

The developing countries in Africa display a slightly mixed picture when it comes to patterns of agencification. There are strong pressures to modernize the public sector and in fact there is often an inherited tradition of agencification (although not as longstanding as in for example the Nordic countries). However, developing governments themselves seem keen on building more state capacity, which is for example reflected in the programmatic approach when it comes to agencification. Both characteristics are shared with other modernizers, but it should be noted that developing countries may prefer the aforementioned second generation of reforms (like whole–of–government) more than the initial NPM reforms that were implemented in the 1980s.

When we refine and expand the original four trajectories model, we can describe different patterns of agencification (see table 0). We can use this new typology to describe the patterns of agencification that we have found from the expert survey reported below. Therefore, we have already included the names of the countries that we will report on, in the table below.

*** insert table 0 about here ***

Method and data

Respondents
To be able to compare patterns of agencification, an expert survey was held among the members of the CRIPO network, a network of researchers from more than 30 countries who study public sector organizations and agencification: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. In addition, experts from Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, the United States, Canada, Tanzania and Thailand participate in the network on occassion. CRIPO was established in 2006, thanks to funding by COST (EU), building upon a previous network (COBRA). A majority of the researchers has carried out a survey among public sector organizations in their home country. For more information see the website: www.soc.kuleuven.be/io/cost. By using the knowledge of these experts in their home country, we are able to map and compare agencification over a large number of countries. An e-mail questionnaire was used, to facilitate quick and efficient data collection. Both the questionnaire and the list of respondents are included in the appendix.

All experts were invited to fill out the questionnaire. In 2008, seventeen replied and in 2009 four more experts submitted data on their country. Therefore, in total 21 countries are represented in the dataset.

Selection of tasks

The respondents were asked to indicate for their own country whether 25 selected, executive tasks were considered tasks for which the government is responsible, if so what kind of organization is in charge of carrying out this task, and in which year that organization was established. It was decided to ask about the agencification of executive tasks for two reasons. First, there is already much research into regulatory agencies, but less into agencies with executive tasks (service delivery, policy implementation). Second, agencies often carry out more than one task. Take for example agencies in charge of the payment of different benefits (unemployment, child support, pension schemes, disability, student loans, etc.) or subsidies, or organizations in charge of registering, licensing and regulating a similar group of citizens (e.g. professionals like doctors) or companies. Countries will use different organizational arrangements for such task combinations; in one country tasks may be combined, and in other countries they are distributed across different organizations. Comparing tasks was therefore expected to be easier than comparing organizations.[6]

The next decision was to decide which tasks would be included. Agencies carry out a many tasks (Bouckaert & Peters, 2004), ranging from service delivery, to payments or collection of money like taxes, regulation and inspection, giving advice or even policy development, providing information to citizens and companies about for example regulations and subsidies, qualification and certification, research and education, tribunals (quasi-judicature), maintenance, registration and licensing, and so on. For this study a very broad approach was chosen; a list was made of all tasks that are known to be agencified in at least a few countries – based on existing case studies and reports. Next, only executive tasks were selected. And finally, very rare or country-specific task were excluded. This led to a total of 25 tasks (see table 3).

Types of agency

Based on the answers of the experts, a categorization was developed to enable a comparison of the different (legal) types of organizations. Table 1 shows this categorization – which is loosely based on the quango-continuum by Greve, Flinders and Van Thiel (1999). Following this categorization, a category was ascribed to each type of organization in charge of a task. The experts were asked to check and if necessary adapt the categorization of the organizations in their country. Although each expert often emphasized the peculiarities of the politico-administrative system in their home country, they were able to classify almost all cases; out of the 525 possible combinations (25 tasks, 21 countries), respondents could identify 498 (95%). Table 1 also lists the number of organizations in each category.

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[6] Also, there are several indications that task is an important factor in agencification decisions, for example with regard to the decision to disaggregate specific units and/or the way in which semi-autonomous agencies are managed internally or steered by the parent department of oversight authority (cf. Pollitt et al., 2004; Christensen & Laegreid, 2006).

*** insert table 1 about here ***

Data were analyzed using SPSS 17. In the analyses below, attention will focus mostly on the organizations listed as category 1 and 2 as they are exemplary for 'agencification' – the main topic in this paper. They are also the most common type of organization for the tasks studied here (47% of all combinations). The creation of organizations listed as category 3 can be construed as privatization, and category 4 bodies are created through decentralization (or delegation or devolution).

Recoding the data
The original data were regrouped in three ways. Firstly, countries were grouped into six groups, based on their geographical position (see table 2). Most of the 21 countries are unitary states (17 out of 21, 81%) and member of the EU (16 out of 21, 76%).[7]

*** insert table 2 about here ***

Secondly, tasks were grouped into six groups based on task characteristics (see table 3). Respondents were asked whether a task is considered a government task in their country (yes, 92%) and whether it is carried out at the national level (yes, 77%). Two tasks are often not conceived as a governmental task: student loans (no, 7 countries) and EU subsidies (no, 8 countries). Obviously, the latter task does not exist in non-EU countries (5), but in a number of EU member states it is also not a task for a singular organisation; subsidies are then distributed by many different (other purpose) organizations.

*** insert table 3 about here ***

Thirdly, the year of establishment of a certain organization was grouped into twelve decades (before 1900, ten decades between 1900 and 2000, and since 2000). Unfortunately, in about 35% of the cases (186 out of 525) respondents were unable to mention the year in which organizations in their current form have been established. In most cases, this concerned tasks that are carried out by government units like ministries (66, 13%) or tasks that have been decentralized (42, 8%). These 'organizations' have no clear date of establishment, except in states that have recently been established or gained independence like Israel (1948), Tanzania (1961) and some Eastern European countries (early 1990s). As a result, missing data on the date of establishment is found most

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[7] A number of EU countries is missing: France, Greece, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and the Czech republic. For more some of these countries information about agencification is present. For France, see Guyomarch (1999), Rochet (2002), Allix & Van Thiel (2005), Elgie (2006) and Rouban (2008). For Greece, see Spanou (2008). For Latvia, see Pollitt (2004). And for Slovakia see Beblavý (2002) and Moynihan (2006).

often in countries where many tasks are carried out by the government (like Tanzania), or in federal countries where tasks have been decentralized (Switzerland, Germany, Australia). Also, in some cases tasks are carried out by clusters of organizations (universities, museums, hospitals) which means that we could not identify one date (hence missing). Finally, there are a number of countries where respondents were unable to provide this kind of information for a higher number of tasks than on average (Ireland, Denmark, Spain and UK).

Please note that as respondents were asked about the organization in its current legal form, predecessors are excluded from the analysis. This may create some underestimation of trends over time – we will return to this point later on.

Results: agencification

The number of executive agencies (categories 1 and 2) has increased over time; see figure 1. There are some small spurts of growth in the 1950s and 1980s, and strong increases in the 1990s and 2000s. As mentioned before, respondents were asked to indicate the year of establishment of an organization in its current form. Therefore, organizations may have been established earlier and re-organized (split up, merged, etc.) into their current form at a later time. This is not uncommon; for example in The Netherlands one in five public bodies is frequently re-organized (Van Thiel, 2001) and in Hungary one third of non-departmental public bodies (Hajnal and Kádár, 2008; see also Pollit et al. [2004] who find little long-term continuity in agencies in Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands). Such re-organizations can also lead to a change in the legal form, for example when an executive agency (category 1 or 2) is privatized into a foundation or corporation (category 3). Greve et al. (1999) labelled this quango-drift.[8] The current data set does not allow testing these changes over time, as we have data only about existing organizations in their current form.

*** insert figure 1 about here ***

There are some noteworthy patterns. First of all, government units clearly are the 'oldest' type of organization in charge of executive tasks. This is in line with earlier research into the life span of public sector organizations by for example Kaufman (1976) who referred to the 'immortality' of government organizations (or see e.g. Laegreid, Roness & Rubecksen [2006] on Norway). Table 4 shows the average year of establishment per category.

*** insert table 4 about here ***

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[8] The acronym quango refers to quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization, which is not an entirely accurate description (as admitted by its creator, Barker, 1982) but has become a customary collective concept to refer to different kinds of semi-autonomous organizations. Since then, the label 'agencification' (Pollitt et al., 2001) has however become more common and is therefore used in this paper.

A second pattern is that agencification (categories 1 and 2) is an ongoing process, which has accelerated from the 1980s on. Executive agencies have however been established throughout the 20th century. "Agencies are an old idea that has been reinvigorated by contemporary management reform" (Schick, 2002:36). Later analyses (see below) will show that the recent increase – or rebirth – has occurred in all countries, but most strikingly in the Eastern European countries.

Third, there has been a shift in preference between the two types of executive agencies. Statutory bodies (category 2) were more popular than semi-autonomous organizations without legal independence (category 1) until the 1990s, but since then the number of semi-autonomous agencies has increased much stronger than the number of statutory bodies (see figure 2). This can be explained by two factors. First, in some countries organizations agencification programmes aimed at category 1 organizations were not introduced until the late 1980s and early 1990s, see for example the Next Steps Agencies in the United Kingdom and the 'contract agencies' in Belgium and the Netherlands (Rommel & Christiaens, 2009; Van Thiel & Pollitt, 2007; Brans et al., 2006; James, 2003). Second, the decreased preference for category 2 bodies is part of the governments' response to concerns about democratic and control deficits, like the whole-of-government debate that was mentioned earlier (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007b; Halligan, 2007; Smullen, 2007; Gregory, 2003). Apparently, governments prefer to keep executive agencies closer to the government than before (cf. Van Thiel, 2008, and Van Oosteroom, 2002, on the Netherlands). We will return to this point when discussing the results for different (groups of) countries below.

*** insert figure 2 about here ***

A fourth and final trend concerns privatization. This appears to be a relatively recent phenomenon (cf. table 4); most government owned companies were established in the 1990s, in particular railway companies and national airports (see also below). This might again point to quango-drift as in some cases agencified tasks could have been privatized. The number of tasks that have been privatized is however much lower than the number of agencified tasks.

Results: agencification of executive tasks

Table 5 below shows how many of which types of organization are in charge of it, and when they were established. There are some clear patterns about which tasks are agencified in which form (statistically significant, based on cross tabulations [Cramer's V, p<.001]). For example, tasks related to security issues such as the prosecution of criminal suspects, the police and prison service, the secret service (intelligence), and immigration (visa and permits) are predominantly carried out by government units and to a lesser extent by semi-autonomous agencies (category 1). Tasks involving registration are executed predominantly by semi-autonomous agencies or government

units, while tasks concerning payments are carried out by executive agencies (categories 1 and 2). *So, tasks that have been typically agencified are: meteorology (in 19 out of 21 countries), bureau of statistics (17), unemployment benefits (16), taxes (14), labour exchange (14), immigration (13), and museums (12).* To a lesser degree the secret service (intelligence) has been agencified (in 11 out of 21 countries), forestry (11 but also various other types), road maintenance (11, but also 7 privatizations), and universities (11). See also figure 3.

Finally, almost all countries have privatized the railways, the national airport and the national broadcasting company. To a lesser extent, road maintenance and the national museum(s) have been corporatized, next to being agencified.

*** insert table 5 and figure 3 about here ***

A number of tasks are typically not executed at the national level.[9] For example, in almost all countries housing companies and hospitals are decentralized to the state, regional, county or municipal level. Universities and museums are usually independent, statutory bodies, but in multiple numbers so we could not pinpoint one date of creation in most countries. Moreover, next to *public* hospitals, housing companies and universities several countries (e.g. Ireland) report the existence of *private* organizations (voluntary, charity, church) that also carry out these tasks.[10] Other tasks are often merged, like for example the labour exchange and unemployment benefits agencies, or agencies for vehicle registration and driver's licensing although these tasks are also decentralized in a high number of countries. And in some cases, a certain task is not part of the policy programme in a country. This is the case for student loans (stipends/support) and the distribution of EU subsidies. Finally, the only task without a clear pattern is forestry, which is carried out by organizations from all types.

The date of creation of organizations for specific tasks (in table 5) corroborates that tasks that are typically carried out by government units (security) are on average older than organizations in charge of tasks that have been agencified (1980s and 1990s) or privatized (1990s). Organizations in charge of registration and security activities are thus 'older' organizations, which have not been subject to reforms of late. In the 1980s a large number of tasks involving payments or collection of money have been agencified. The corporatization of broadcasting companies and infrastructural tasks constitutes the most recent group of reforms.

When we zoom in on tasks that have been agencified most often (categories 1 and 2), we can discern two patterns again. First, statutory bodies (category 2) have been established earlier on than semi-autonomous agencies (category 1). For example, the oldest agencified tasks are the

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[9] The existence of local offices (for customers) does not equal decentralization. Decentralization is defined here as the delegation of a task (and the matching competencies) to a lower governmental level i.e. elected officials.

[10] There are probably also private museums, however the questionnaire only asked about *national* museums only. The UK is the only country where all museums are reported to be self-financed.

bureau of statistics (average year of establishment: 1943), meteorology (1945) and universities (1949, but lower N). In some countries these tasks have been charged to semi-autonomous agencies (category 1), but that usually happened at a later date. The same trend can be found for other tasks as well, such as the tax office (category 2: 1974 and category 1: 1991), the unemployment benefits agency (category 2: 1974 and category 1: 1984), and the labour exchange (category 2: 1986 and category 1: 1993). The only exception is the secret service but the high number of missing cases on this task makes drawing conclusions very difficult.

Second, agencification has proliferated in the 1980s (for tasks such as: land registry, labour exchange, unemployment benefits, forestry) and 1990s (for tasks such as: immigration, road maintenance, student loans, development aid, labour exchange, forestry). Interestingly, even some traditional government tasks have been agencified in the 1990s in a number of countries, such as the prison service, the secret service (intelligence), the police, and the tax office. However, contrary to the aforementioned trend, these tasks have on average been charged more often to statutory bodies (category 2) rather than semi-autonomous agencies (category 1). In fact, it would appear that security tasks are, over time, placed at more and more distance from the government (see the average dates of establishment for different categories of agency in table 5).This counter-trend is also found for the most recently acquired task of all: the distribution of EU subsidies. This task is charged to statutory bodies more often than to semi-autonomous agencies (all in EU member states only). This could suggest a new trend – a 'return' to the use of statutory bodies, as of the late 1990s and early 2000s – but the current dataset does not allow testing conjectures about quango-drift (but see Pollitt et al., 2001, who observe similar reforms in Finland).

Results: agencification in different countries

Our third set of findings relate to patterns of agencification in (groups of) countries. Table 6 shows the number of categories of organizations for all tasks, per country and group of countries.

*** insert table 6 about here ***

As expected, the federal countries in our sample (Belgium, Germany, Australia and Switzerland) have decentralized tasks about twice as often as non-federal countries (statistically significant, based on Cramer's V, p<.001). Runners up in decentralization are Sweden and the UK. Non-EU member states like Israel and Tanzania carry out tasks more often through government units, about twice as often as the EU-states in this survey (statistically significant, Cramer's V, p<.001). And finally, the Scandinavian (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) and Eastern European countries (Estonia, Lithuania and Rumania – but Hungary less) have structurally disaggregated almost *all* executive tasks mentioned in the survey.

Overall, semi-autonomous agencies without legal independence (category 1) are the most preferred form (see also table 1), and particularly in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia (Denmark,

Finland, Norway but not Sweden) and Eastern Europe (particularly Estonia, Lithuania and Hungary, with Rumania being a bit more diversified). Statutory bodies on the other hand are preferred more in Southern Europe (particularly in Portugal and to a lesser extent Spain) and some individual countries like the Netherlands, Australia and Sweden. The Netherlands, Australia and Portugal apparently favour statutory bodies most (category 2). And finally, Austria, Italy and Spain seem to have no specific preference for one type of agency, as they use a highly diversified range of organizations for executive tasks.

When we also include the date of establishment of these organization, we can distil more differences between countries, relating to their pace of agencification. See table 7 for the results.

*** insert table 7 about here ***

Although most countries have implemented agency-reforms from the 1980s on, there are differences in the timing and pace of reforms between (groups of) countries. As government units have a longer average life span than other types of organization, countries where many tasks are (still) carried out by government units, like Israel, have agencified both fewer tasks and at less recent dates. Many countries display a mixed picture though, in which 'old' organizational forms are combined with more recently established ones. Take for example the Scandinavian countries that have been the first to use semi-autonomous agencies on a large scale but have more recently undergone a large number of privatizations of for instance the railway company. The North-Western and Eastern-European countries are the most recent reformers; NW from the 1980s on particularly the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and EE a bit later (from the 1990s on) in particular Lithuania and Estonia (cf. Sarapuu, 2008). Finally, there are some noteworthy differences within groups of countries. See for example the difference between two Southern European countries; Italy has the oldest agencies and Portugal the most recently established ones.

The survey findings appear to confirm a number of the patterns of agencification as described in table 0, but not all. First, there is a group of laggards (or non-) reformers that prefer executive tasks to be carried out by the national or sub-national government (cf. 'maintenance' trajectory in table 0). Clear examples are Israel and Tanzania, but in countries like Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Spain many executive tasks are also (still) carried out by the government. Reforms do occur in these countries but have not accelerated significantly recently. Also, executive agencies seem to have a longer life span on average, implying that once a task is agencified there is no further quango-drift. For two countries this patterns was expected, namely Spain and Switzerland, but not for Tanzania and Italy. However, other predictions for the two latter countries are corroborated; Tanzania has an extensive agencification programme but in many cases reforms are still underway and not yet realized (data provided by expert), and reforms in Italy indeed have a strong legalistic basis (even though that may also be a hindrance to reforms, cf. Ongaor &

Valotti, 2008). Surprisingly, Germany has turned out to have much more experience with agencification than predicted (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Torres, 2004). Bach (2008) offers two explanations for this finding: as a federal state, Germany often prefers decentralization over agencification so the number of agencies is lower, but for those tasks that remain at federal level there is a longstanding use of agencies (cf. Döhler & Jann, 2002) – which is confirmed by the average dates of establishment of German agencies in table 7. A lower number of agencified tasks in federal countries[11] could also explain why Belgium is included in this first group of countries based on the survey findings.

Next to this first group of countries, there are two more countries that do not seem to have a strong preference for agencification: Austria and Ireland. Both countries do not have high numbers of semi-autonomous agencies, but they have no strong preference for tasks to be carried out by government units either, which distinguishes them from the 'maintenance' group. Their style of agencification appears to be very gradual ('incremental'), both regarding the number of agencies they establish and the period in which they have done so (no peaks). The patterns as described in table 0 do not include a similar category, so a further expansion might be necessary (see recommendations for future research in final section).

As predicted, the Nordic countries are 'early adopters' of the agency model (Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden). As a consequence, they have a longstanding tradition of using semi-autonomous agencies. Recently, however, two countries from this group (Norway and Finland) have mixed their longstanding agency tradition with new reforms, in particular privatizations. This could point to quango-drift and should be investigated further.

The expected pattern for the Southern-European countries is only partially found to be correct. The programmatic and legalistic approach is clearly present in Italy, Portugal (cf. Corte-Real, 2008) and even in Spain and Belgium, however, the expected high preference for private law agencies (corporations) was not found; the number of private organizations (category 3) in charge of executive tasks is on average not higher than in other (groups of) countries.

Agencification is of the most recent date in the transitional countries: Hungary (1980s), Lithuania (1990s), Estonia (1990s-2000s), and Rumania (2000s). And more importantly, almost all tasks are either agencified (63% in category 1 and 2) or privatized (another 14%). This makes it clear that agencification in this group of countries is indeed 'large scale and quick' as predicted in table 0, and that there are but few tasks left for government itself.

Finally, we expected a group of radical reformers, in particular the United Kingdom and Australia. However, the patterns found in this study are not the most radical. Both countries have created large numbers of agencies (Australia: statutory bodies [Wettenhal, 2003], UK: Next Steps agencies, cf. Gains, 2004; James, 2003; Wall & West, 2002) but reforms date back some time (Australia: 1980s, UK: 1990s) and there do not appear to have been (organizational) reforms

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[11] While Spain is formally not a federal state, it has a strong tradition of regionalism. This might be the reason why Spain is in the group of countries with a preference for decentralization over agencification. Spain has had several agencification reforms though (see for more information: Parrado, 2008, and Zapico Goñi & Garcés, 2002).

since then. The pace of reform is nowadays much higher in the transitional countries, and in two other countries in our survey: The Netherlands and Portugal. For neither country such a pattern was predicted, but there are some potential explanations for their increased agencification. In the case of Portugal there is a clear reason for recent reforms, namely EU requirements (Corte-Real, 2008). In that sense, Portugal is almost comparable to the transitional – or even developing – countries where donor organizations have a great influence on the adoption and diffusion of public sector reforms. The recent reforms in The Netherlands can be largely attributed to re-organizations (mergers, splitting up) and quango-drift (Van Thiel, 2004). It would appear though that the 'radical reformers' of the old days are no longer the forerunners when it comes to agencification.

Discussion and conclusions

This paper aimed to address two problems in agencification research: the definition problem and the lack of systematic comparative research. While we will never be able to solve the definition problem – simply because there are too many differences between countries to be taken into account – we have been able to overcome it by creating a categorization of types of 'agencies' (cf. table 1). Our experts were able to categorize 95% of the 525 task-country combinations. That makes the categorization developed for this survey a promising instrument for future (comparative) research.

Using the data from the survey we have been able to map the agencification process in 21 countries, for 25 executive tasks. Of course there are some limitations to our study. For example, we cannot compare the establishment of organizations over time, or changes in their organizational form (so-called quango-drift). Also, as we asked about organizations in their current legal form, we will have underestimated the age of organizations and placed more emphasis on recent reforms. However, we have found a number of interesting patterns – or have been able to prove their existence, which was not possible before based on case study evidence. And we have found some new, sometimes unexpected patterns.

Agencification has been around for a long time, much longer than the NPM proponents claim. We have found many agencies predating the 1980s, when NPM kicked in. However, the rise of NPM has led to a proliferation of agencification and later (1990s) also corporatization. There has also been a shift in the preferred type of 'agency'. At first, statutory bodies were most popular but later on (from the 1990s), governments favoured semi-autonomous agencies without legal independence. This can in part be explained by the development of specific agency models (like the Next Steps in the UK) that were copied by other countries, and the advent of the second generation reforms known as whole-of-government in which governments are looking for ways to regain some of the control and coordination they lost due to extensive agencification. However, there are no indications that these new reforms have led to less agencification. In fact, we have seen a new counter-trend in which statutory bodies seem to have become more popular

again, both for traditional government tasks (related to security) or new tasks (like distribution of EU subsidies). Based on the current dataset we cannot explain these (recent) shifts and preferences, but they do seem to suggest that there is still a gap between rhetoric and reality when it comes to agencification (Pollitt, 2002).

Certain tasks are almost always agencified (meteorology, bureau of statistics, unemployment benefits) and other tasks are agencified in a majority of countries (tax office, labour exchange, immigration). Also, tasks are sometimes delegated to agencies of a specific type, either a statutory body (statistics, unemployment benefits, public universities) or semi-autonomous agency without legal independence (tax office, immigration, meteorology). Furthermore, we have seen tasks that are almost always privatized (railways, airport, broadcasting company) or decentralized (housing companies, hospitals). Knowledge about these patterns will facilitate the selection of cases for in-depth comparative research (see e.g. Polllitt et al., 2004).

Finally, we have seen a number of patterns between (groups of) countries. The most radical reformers at the moment are the transitional countries in Eastern Europe (cf. Beblavý, 2002). In fact, their pace of reform has overtaken the reforms in Anglo-Saxon countries that used to be the most prominent reformers of all. Typical lagging countries turned out to be a number of federal countries, but as we only included the federal level of government, we cannot exclude that lower level governments have agencified tasks that have delegated to them. Other slow reformers are Italy, Spain, Israel and Tanzania – the latter contrary to the expectation. Some reform patterns were corroborated (like the mixture of old and new reforms in the Nordic countries), or partly corroborated (see Southern European countries). But in two countries there was a strong discrepancy between expected and observed pattern: The Netherlands and Portugal. More research – connecting country-specific characteristics to the patterns of agencification – could offer an explanation for these unexpected findings.

This study focussed on executive tasks, leaving regulatory tasks out of the picture. While this selection was done on purpose – there is less systematic knowledge about the diffusion of executive agencies than about regulatory agencies (see e.g. Jordana & Levi-Faur, 2006) – this choice is not without risks. The delegation of regulatory tasks has been subject to many recent changes. For example, numerous multi-purpose agencies – that combine policy implementation, service delivery and regulation – have recently been split up (Christensen & Laegreid, 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004:ch.7). In our survey this splitting up of agencies into single-purpose agencies has been measured as the creation of a new agency, leading to an overestimation of the recent character of agencification in certain countries. A more longitudinal approach could offer more insight into exact changes in organizational structures and the motives thereof. Second, the rise of regulatory and executive bodies is likely to be interrelated. Agencification is often followed by an increase in the number and types of regulators, to supervise the newly created semi-autonomous bodies and/or internal markets (cf. Boyne et al., 2003). This would imply that the rise of (single-purpose) executive agencies precedes the rise of (single-purpose) regulatory agencies. However,

we cannot test such a prediction with the current dataset. Additional research should therefore be undertaken, to collect data on regulatory agencies in the 21 countries studied in this paper.

A third and final limitation of this study is the fact that although we have been able to map patterns of agencification, we cannot explain its diffusion, nor predict its consequences. We do know that there is a second generation of reforms going on (see above), but whether that has led to substantial changes in the number of semi-autonomous agencies, remains unclear for the moment.

Table 0. Patterns of agencification

Label	Countries	Pattern of agencification
Maintenance: strong role for government	Legalistic and/or federal countries: Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Austria (?)	Preference for decentralization rather than agencification. Low numbers of agencies, with low degrees of freedom
Modernization I: important role for state but always decentralized service delivery *Decentralized modernizers*	Nordic countries: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland Netherlands and Ireland	Longstanding tradition of agencification, with high degree of autonomy and agencies of different types. Recent reforms not aimed to reduce the number of agencies.
Modernization II: decentralized service delivery and strive for an important role of the state *Centralized modernizers*	Developing countries: Sub-Saharan Africa except South-Africa	Comprehensive programmes for agencification (in attempt to increase government steering)
Modernization III: important role for state but privatized service delivery *Centralized corporatists*	Southern European countries: Portugal, France, Italy Belgium (?)	Corporatization (private law agencies, privatization) preferred over agencification, strong central government steering (programmatic and legalistic approach)
Modernization with a twist: decentralized service delivery and minimalist state *Modern minimizers*	Transitional countries: Eastern Europe	Large scale and quick agencification following independence, limited government steering so high degrees of autonomy for agencies (no programmatic approach, so many different types)
Marketization: large scale introduction of market-type mechanisms	Anglo-Saxon: United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand	Privatization and agencification under market conditions (e.g. performance agreements, framework documents)

Table 1. Categorization of public sector organizations

Category	Definition	Examples	Number
0	Unit or directory of the national, central or federal government (not local, regional or state)	Ministry, department, ministerial directorate/directorate general (DG), state institution	104 (20%)
1	Semi-autonomous organization, unit or body without *legal independence* but with some managerial autonomy	Examples: Next Steps Agencies (UK), contract/executive agencies (NL, B, AUS, IRL), central agencies (Nordic countries), Italian Agenzia, service agency (A), state institutions (EST), central bureaus (HUN), Swedish 'verket', indirect administration (GER)	142 (27%)
2	Legally independent organization/body (based on *statutes*) with managerial autonomy, either based on public law (2a) or private law (2b)	Examples: Public establishments (IT, POR), ZBO (NL), NDPB (UK), parastatal bodies (B), statutory bodies or authorities (not corporations: A, EST, AUS, IRL)	106 (20%)
3	Private or private law based organization established by or on behalf of the government like a foundation or corporation, company or enterprise (government owns majority or all stock, otherwise category 5)	Examples: commercial companies, state-owned companies (SOC) or enterprises (SOE), and government foundations	62 (12%)
4*	Execution of tasks by regional or local bodies and/or governments (county, province, region, municipality)	Examples: Länder (GER), regions (B, I, UK), states (AUS), cantons (CH)	54 (10%)
5	Other, not listed above	Contracting-out to private companies and privatization with government owning minority or no stock	28 (5%)

*Note that only bodies at the national/central level are included. Therefore, it does not matter which type of 'agency' a body is at local/regional level; all bodies operating at local/regional level are listed as category 4.

Table 2. Groups of countries

Group	Countries included:
Scandinavia (SCAN)	Denmark (DK), Norway (N), Finland (FIN), Sweden (SW)
Eastern Europe (EE)	Lithuania (LIT), Hungary (HUN), Estonia (EST), Rumania (RU)
South Europe (SE)	Portugal (POR), Spain (SP), Italy (IT)
North-Western Europe (NW)	United Kingdom (UK), Ireland (IRL), Netherlands (NL), Belgium (B)
Central Europe (Mid)	Germany (GER), Austria (A), Switzerland (CH)
Non-Europe (Non)	Tanzania (TAN), Australia (AUS), Israel (IS)

Table 3. Groups of tasks

Category	Tasks included:
Security	Prosecution office, police, prisons, intelligence/secret service, immigration agency
Payments	Unemployment benefits, taxes, distribution of EU subsidies, student loans, development aid
Registration	Registration of drivers licenses, vehicle registration, land registry, bureau of statistics, meteorological office
Education and information	(Public) universities, museums, broadcasting company
Caretaking	Labour exchange, hospitals, housing companies
Infrastructure	Forestry, road maintenance, (national) airport and railway

Table 4. Average year of establishment of categories of organizations

	Number	Year
Government unit	104 (20%)	1956[a]
Semi-autonomous, no legal independence	142 (27%)	1979
Legally independent body (statutory)	106 (20%)	1978
Private (law) organization est. by government, also corporations	62 (12%)	1989
Sub-national body or government	54 (10%)	1988[a]
Other	28 (5%)	1990[a]

[a] *High number of missing categorizations*

Table 5. Average date of establishment of categories of organizations in 21 countries, per task

| Task	Categories (number)						(max. 21)
	Govern-ment unit	Semi-auto-nomous	Statutory body	Private org.	Sub-na-tional	Other	
Registration	**1944 (9)**	**1972 (44)**	**1964 (20)**	**2000 (2)**		**1927 (1)**	**1967 (76)**
Statistics	1943 (3)	1966 (7)	1943 (10)				1951 (20)
Drivers lic.	1984 (2)	1979 (7)	2002 (2)	2000 (1)			1982 (11)
Vehicle registr.	1948 (2)	1979 (7)	2001 (2)	2000 (1)		1927 (1)	1978 (12)
Meteorology	1913 (2)	1963 (16)	1945 (3)				1956 (21)
Land register	1973 (2)	1983 (7)	2002 (3)				1986 (12)
Security	**1951 (22)**	**1972 (35)**	**1979 (14)**		**1992 (1)**		**1968 (73)**
Prosecution	1942 (8)	1951 (2)	1948 (5)				1946 (17)
Prisons	1946 (4)	1960 (8)	1998 (2)				1961 (14)
Police	1951 (4)	1970 (7)	1992 (2)		1992 (1)		1970 (15)
Intelligence	1961 (4)	1957 (4)	1997 (4)				1972 (12)
Immigration	1984 (2)	1995 (12)	2000 (1)				1994 (15)
Education	**1983 (1)**	**1995 (30)**	**1969 (14)**	**1974 (12)**	**1998 (1)**	**1995 (5)**	**1978 (36)**
Universities			1949 (7)	1968 (1)		1983 (2)	1958 (10)
Museum(s)	1983 (1)	1995 (3)	2003 (2)	1961 (3)		2000 (1)	1985 (10)
Broadcasting			1986 (5)	1980 (8)	1998 (1)	2005 (2)	1986 (16)
Payments	**2005 (3)**	**1983 (28)**	**1985 (23)**	**2001 (5)**	**2001 (1)**	**2004 (1)**	**1987 (61)**
Unemployment		1984 (6)	1974 (10)				1978 (16)
Taxes	2005 (2)	1974 (9)	1991 (4)				1982 (15)
EU subsidies		2002 (7)	2005 (2)		2001 (1)		2002 (9)
Student loans		1968 (4)	1990 (4)	1995 (2)		2004 (1)	1984 (11)
Dev. aid	2005 (1)	1991 (3)	1991 (3)	2006 (3)			1997 (10)
Caretaking	**1959 (1)**	**1996 (10)**	**1990 (9)**	**1982 (4)**	**1978 (6)**		**1988 (30)**
Housing comp.		2003 (3)	2007 (1)	1949 (1)	1965 (2)		1985 (7)
Labour exch.	1959 (1)	1993 (7)	1986 (7)		1991 (2)		1988 (17)
Hospitals			2003 (1)	1993 (3)	1978 (2)		1990 (6)
Infrastructure	**1978 (2)**	**1995 (14)**	**1989 (9)**	**1992 (34)**	**2001 (3)**	**2002 (2)**	**1993 (64)**
Railway			1998 (1)	1990 (17)			1990 (18)
Forestry	1978 (2)	1986 (5)	1994 (6)	1995 (3)	2005 (1)		1990 (16)
Road maint.		1999 (7)	1981 (2)	1991 (7)	2005 (1)		1994 (17)
Airport		2004 (2)	1977 (1)	1999 (7)	1992 (1)	2002 (2)	1998 (13)
Total	**1956 (38)**	**1979 (134)**	**1978 (89)**	**1989 (57)**	**1988 (12)**	**1990 (9)**	**Total 339**

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Table 6. Categories of organizations in countries, for 25 tasks

Country	Govern-ment	Semi-autono-mous agency	Statutory body	Privat-ized	Decentra-lized	Other	Total
Scandinavia	**6**	**39**	**19**	**14**	**11**	**6**	**95**
Denmark	1	13	0	2	1	4	21
Finland	3	11	4	3	2	2	25
Norway	1	14	1	7	1	0	24
Sweden	1	1	14	2	7	0	25
East Europe	**9**	**47**	**17**	**12**	**5**	**6**	**96**
Estonia	1	16	2	3	0	0	22
Hungary	6	10	0	3	1	5	25
Lithuania	1	11	7	4	2	0	25
Rumania	1	10	8	2	2	1	24
South Europe	**22**	**6**	**25**	**12**	**3**	**3**	**71**
Italy	7	3	5	4	2	2	23
Portugal	6	0	13	5	0	1	25
Spain	9	3	7	3	1	0	23
NW Europe	**21**	**26**	**19**	**9**	**14**	**9**	**98**
Belgium	8	4	2	1	7	3	25
Ireland	6	5	5	4	2	1	23
Netherlands	3	5	12	2	0	3	25
UK	4	12	0	2	5	2	25
Non-Europe	**31**	**10**	**18**	**6**	**0**	**3**	**68**
Australia	4	2	14	0	0	2	22
Israel	11	2	4	6	0	0	23
Tanzania	16	6	0	0	0	1	23
Mid Europe	**15**	**14**	**8**	**11**	**21**	**1**	**70**
Austria	6	4	5	5	3	0	23
Germany	1	8	2	3	8	1	23
Switzerland	8	2	1	3	10	0	24
Total	**104**	**142**	**106**	**64**	**54**	**28**	**498**

Table 7. Average date of establishment of categories of organizations in charge of 25 tasks, per country and group of countries

| Country	Category (number)						Average
	Govern-ment unit	Semi-auto-nomous	Statutory body	Private org.	Sub-natio-nal	Other	
Scan	**1897 (1)**	**1961 (35)**	**1954 (15)**	**1995 (13)**	**1992 (1)**	**1988 (2)**	**1966 (67)**
N	1897 (1)	1948 (14)	1811 (1)	2000 (7)			1956 (23)
DK		1948 (11)		1999 (1)	1988 (2)		1957 (14)
FIN		1993 (9)	1912 (3)	1976 (3)			1973 (15)
SW		2005 (1)	1979 (11)	2004 (2)	1992 (1)		1985 (15)
Mid	**1934 (3)**	**1974 (14)**	**1968 (8)**	**1991 (9)**	**1975 (2)**		**1974 (36)**
GER	1950 (1)	1959 (8)	1952 (2)	1994 (1)	1957 (1)		1960 (13)
CH	2002 (1)	2004 (2)	1855 (1)	1977 (3)			1971 (7)
A	1850 (1)	1989 (4)	1994 (5)	1998 (5)	1992 (1)		1986 (16)
SE	**1957 (12)**	**1968 (6)**	**1987 (21)**	**1981 (12)**	**1978 (3)**	**1966 (2)**	**1976 (56)**
IT	1901 (5)	1934 (3)	1894 (2)	1955 (4)	1968 (2)	1927 (1)	1928 (17)
SP	1978 (1)	2002 (3)	1984 (6)	1981 (3)	1999 (1)		1988 (14)
POR	2001 (6)		2002 (13)	2004 (5)		2004 (1)	2002 (25)
Non	**1955 (10)**	**1986 (9)**	**1984 (12)**	**1978 (5)**			**1976 (37)**
IS	1955 (10)	1949 (2)	1983 (4)	1978 (5)			1965 (21)
AUS	1983 (1)		1984 (8)				1984 (10)
TAN		1999 (6)					2000 (6)
NW	**1961 (6)**	**1979 (23)**	**1989 (17)**	**1976 (6)**	**1997 (6)**	**1998 (3)**	**1983 (61)**
IRL		1904 (3)	1982 (5)	1969 (4)			1958 (12)
B	1952 (5)	1962 (3)	1977 (2)	1991 (1)	1997 (6)	1995 (2)	1977 (19)
UK	2005 (1)	1994 (12)			1989 (1)		1995 (14)
NL		1999 (5)	1995 (10)			2005 (1)	1997 (16)
EE	**1974 (6)**	**1994 (47)**	**1977 (16)**	**1999 (12)**		**2005 (2)**	**1990 (83)**
RU	1992 (1)	2001 (10)	1958 (8)	2001 (2)			1984 (21)
HUN	1961 (4)	1983 (10)		2001 (3)		2005 (2)	1984 (19)
LIT	2005 (1)	1995 (11)	1993 (6)	1996 (4)			1995 (22)
EST		1994 (16)	2001 (2)	2001 (3)			1996 (21)
Average	1956 (38)	1979 (134)	1978 (89)	1989 (57)	1988 (12)	1990 (9)	Total 339

Categories of organizations over time
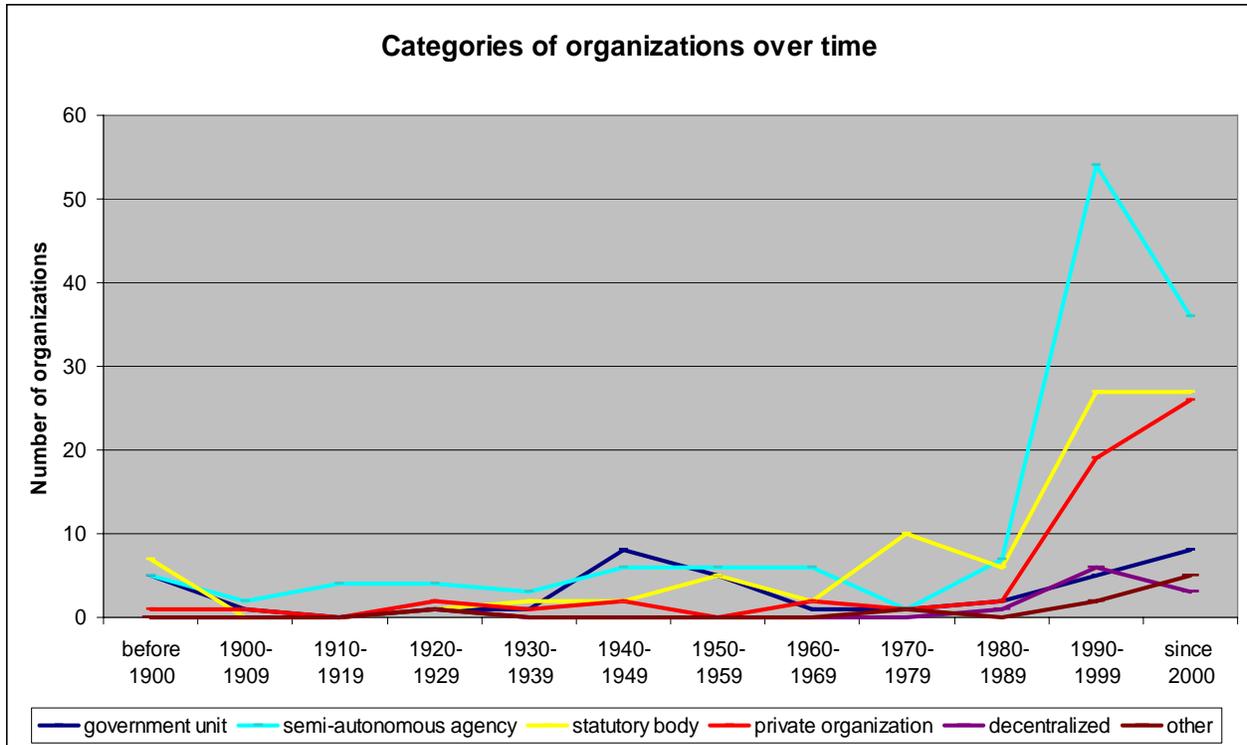
Figure 1. Establishment of categories of organizations over time, 21 countries
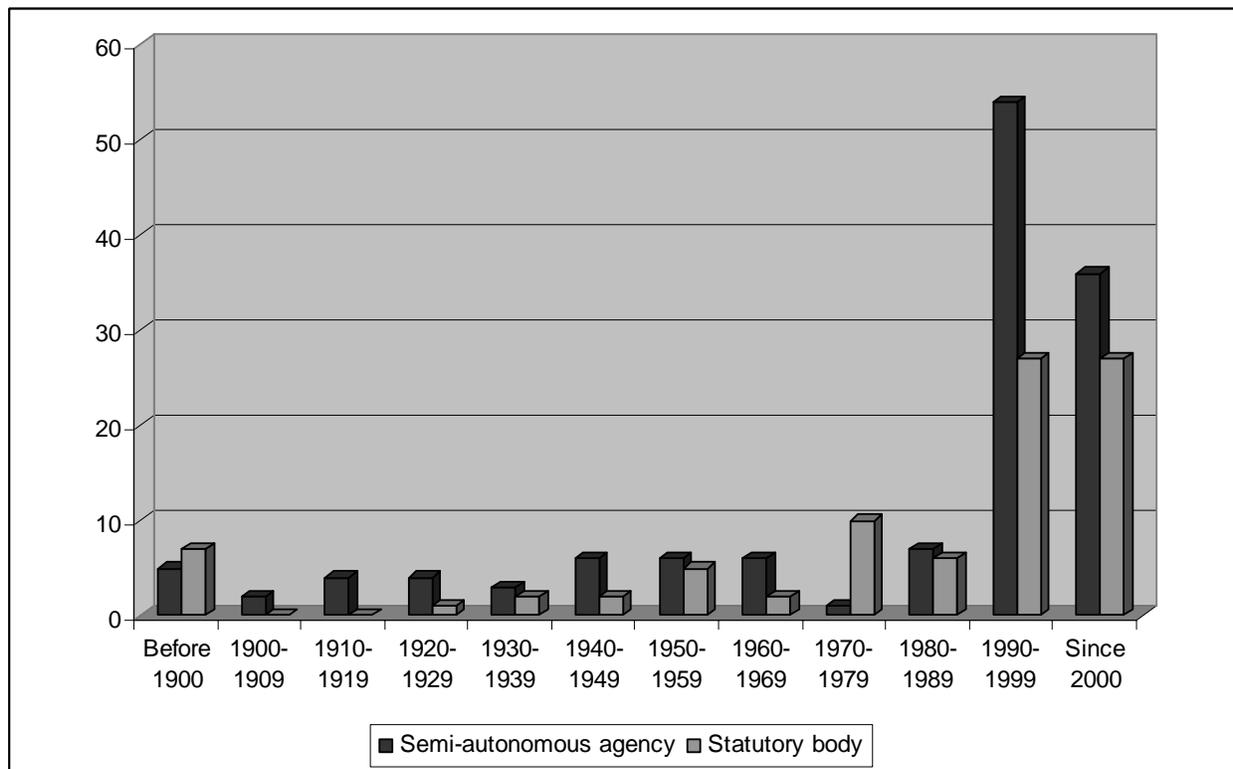
Figure 2. Increase in the number of executive agencies over time, 21 countries
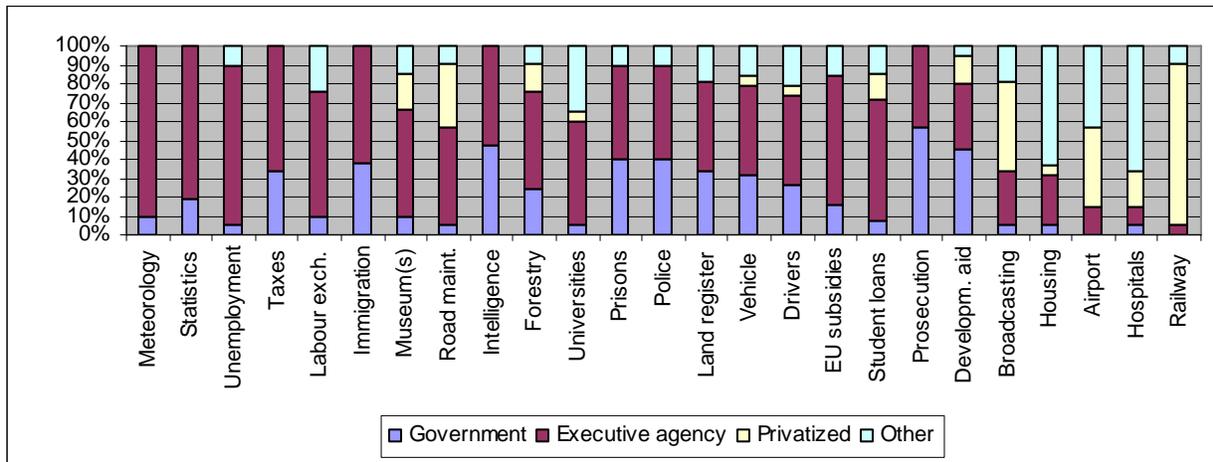
Figure 3. Execution of tasks by different categories of organizations, in 21 countries

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Appendix: List of respondents

Country	Name of respondent	Affiliation
Australia	Prof.dr. John Halligan, prof.dr. Roger Wettenhall	University of Canberra, School of Business and Government
Austria	Prof.dr. Gerhard Hammerschmid	Vienna University, Institute for Public Management
Belgium	Jan Rommel Msc., dr. Koen Verhoest	Catholic University Leuven, Institute for the Government
Denmark	Prof.dr. Jørgen Grønnegaard Christensen	Aarhus University
Estonia	Külli Sarapuu Msc.	Tallinn University of Technology, Public Administration
Finland	Dr. Olli-Pekka Viinamäki	University of Vaasa
Germany	Dr. Tobias Bach, Julia Fleischer Msc.	Potsdam University, Political Science
Hungary	Krisztiàn Kàdàr Msc, dr. Gyorgy Hajnal	MKI Hungarian Institute of Public Administration, Budapest
Ireland	Dr. Muiris MacCarthaigh	Institute for Public Administration, Dublin
Israel	Prof.dr. David Levi-Faur	University of Haifa
Italy	Dr. Davide Galli, Dr. Paole Fedele, Dr. Dario Barbieri, Prof.dr. Edoardo Ongaro	Bocconi University, IPAS
Lithuania	Dr. Vitalis Nakrosis	Vilnius University, Institute of International Relations and Political Science
Netherlands	Dr. Sandra van Thiel	Erasmus University Rotterdam, Public Administration
Norway	Dr. Paul Roness, prof.dr. Per Laegreid, Kristen Rubeckson Msc., dr. Vidar Rolland, dr. John-Erik Ågotnes	Bergen University, Stein Rokkan Centre
Portugal	Joaquim Filipe Araujo Msc.	University of Minho, School of Economics and Management
Rumania	Dr. Adrian Hudrea	Cluj University, Public Administration
Spain	Prof.dr. Salvador Parrado Díez	Madrid, UNED
Sweden	Birgitta Niklasson Msc., prof.dr. Jon Pierre	University of Goteborg
Switzerland	Etienne Huber Msc., prof.dr. Reto Steiner	University of Bern
Tanzania	Andrew Sulle Msc.	Tanzania (visiting fellow in Leuven, Belgium)
United Kingdom	Dr. Oliver James	University of Exeter

Appendix:
SURVEY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EXECUTIVE BODIES (COST-CRIPO COUNTRIES)

Name:	Country:
E-mail address:	

Instruction:

- **Please fill out the questions below as good as you can. If you don't know the answer for one or more organizations indicate 'don't know'.**
- **I have tried to keep the task/function description as generic as possible, selecting tasks/functions that have been charged to an agency of some sort in most countries (based on the papers for the last CRIPO meetings). Bodies with a singular regulatory task (monitoring, inspecting, supervision) have been left out as this survey focuses on bodies with an executive function i.e. service delivery.**
- **All questions should be answered based on the CURRENT situation; organizations that used to exist but were abolished, do not have to be mentioned.**
- **Try to keep your answers short but as clear as possible, to allow for comparative interpretations.**

Explanation per question:
- **Question 1: is there an organization? Answer: yes/no. The organization could also be a ministry or a local government. Please indicate at which level the organization operates (federal, central, regional, local)**
- **Question 2: is it an "agency"? The definition of "agency" is: an organization at arms' length of the core government, with some form of (managerial) autonomy. If you know which (legal) categories exist in your country, please use those. In case the organization has been privatized, please indicate 'privatization'.**
- **Question 3: when was it established? Please indicate in which year the organization was established in its current form.**

You can always use the column 'explanation' to add comments or explanations to your answers.

If you have questions or doubts, please feel free to contact me: vanthiel@fsw.eur.nl

Please return the questionnaire on (DATE) by e-mail.

Task/Function	Is there an organi-zation(s)? Level of government?	Is it "an agency"? Type?	When was it es-tablished? (year)	Explanation (if necessary)	Category (0-5)
1. Prosecution office					
2. Unemployment benefits agency					
3. Labour exchange (to help unem-ployed find a job)					
4. Forestry Service					
5. Prison Service					
6. Police Authorities					
7. Hospitals					
8. Road Maintenance Agency					
9. Tax Service					
10. (Public) Universities					
11. Agency for distribution EU sub-sidies					
12. Land registry					
13. Broadcasting company					
14. National museum(s)					
15. Immigration Agency					
16. Drivers license agency					
17. Vehicle registration agency					
18. Student loans agency					
19. Housing companies (renting houses to citizens)					
20. Development aid agency					
21. (National) Airport					
22. National Bureau of Statistics					
23. Meteorological Office					
24. Intelligence Office (national se-curity)					
25. (National) Railway Company					