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Subtheme 2: Professionalisation

Public servants' expectations and perceptions of their managers' role and their behaviour in post-bureaucratic organisations

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis of the main expectancies of street-level civil servants related to their hierarchy. Based on the notion of various reference worlds inspired by Boltanski & Thévenot, it reveals the dominant influence of the domestic and industrial worlds over the commercial and civic worlds. These findings contrast very much with the (mainly normative) literature about public sector management and leadership. On the other hand, they are in line with the typical features of the Swiss way of management. Due to the explanatory character of this research, further investigations are needed in order to gain a better empirical understanding of what public managers actually do, how their behaviour is perceived, and if these factors are leading to better performance.

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Introduction

Long inspired by the Weberian "Ideal Type" (Weber 1956), the management of public organisations has undergone a profound transformation, notably through the development of *New Public Management (NPM)* (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2003). The changes that have taken place since the early 1980s are so far-reaching that the foundations of the bureaucratic model are being completely redefined, leading many analysts to speak of a change of paradigm. In many OECD countries (PUMA 2001; Reichard 2002; Bossaert 2005), the traditional conditions of civil service employment have been fundamentally challenged by the application of new public management principles: the abolition of the 'status' of public servants, the introduction of practices geared towards performance, and new organisational values emphasising quality, competitiveness, and public entrepreneurialism (Du Gay 2000; Emery 2000).

These administrative reforms often mobilise the same techniques and tools, largely inspired by those of private sector management, and thus represent a form of managerialisation (Pollitt 2000) of public management: a managerialisation that is itself the reflection of an administrative ideology more widely and generally present within our society (Gaulejac de 2005). It reflects not only the primacy of the economic sector, but also a hegemony of the model enterprise and managerial philosophy that have proved to be the most effective way of co-ordinating human activity and thus of piloting organisations in general (Chanlat 2003).

This new environment, which one might call *post civil service (Emery 2006),* neo-bureaucracy (Olsen 2006; Steen 2006) or neo-Weberian organisation (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004), has a significant impact on the staff, but also on public managers at

all levels of the hierarchy. Inversely, the staff and management of the public services also strongly influence the implementation of reform programmes and ultimately public performance. This is the reason for which it is of interest to gain a better grasp of "their" reality, perceptions and behaviour within the framework of these changes. However, there have been very few studies that examine these dynamics. This lack constitutes the main interest of our research project. Last year, we analysed the motivational issues and strategies adopted by civil servants in order to face this new environment[1]. In this contribution, the focus will be placed on the analysis of the expectations related to the way civil servants are managed.

Despite the fact that, in most public sector organisations, public managers have been trained to improve their leadership competencies (Emery, Budde et al. 2004), it remains very difficult to implement these new skills in a fast-changing environment, which is internationally characterised by :

- management practices inspired by new public management, which lead to the introduction of paradoxes within public organisations (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Emery and Giauque 2005)
- a strong pressure to reduce staff and improve the efficiency of public organisations
- a form of hybridisation of market and civic values (Giauque and Caron 2005; Rondeaux 2005), just to mention the main "worlds of reference" in the sense of Boltanski and Thévenot (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991), leading to a form of neo-bureaucracy (Olsen 2006)
- public servants who are becoming increasingly de-motivated, which can take the form of resignation, organisational detachment, a drop in productivity, and psychosomatic problems (Rouillard 2003; Emery and Wyser 2007)

In this somewhat confusing environment, is the entrepreneurial spirit that should inspire the new leadership style in the public sector (Delley 1994; Farnham, Horton et al. 1996; Van Wart 2003), a reality? What about the vision of Osborne/Gaebler "Let the managers manage" (Osborne and Gaebler 1993)?

Background and review of literature

Considering the importance of individual competences, motivation and performance on the overall performance of the organisation, especially at the bottom line (Emery 2004; Emery 2005), vital aspects of these transformations concern the roles, attitudes and behaviour of the managers at all levels of the hierarchy, as a catalyst of human potential (Farnham, Horton et al. 1996; Worrall, Cooper et al. 2000; Meier and O'Toole Jr. 2002; Gaulejac de 2005).

Roles and behaviour of public managers in general

We shall first mention some studies on an international level, reflecting various cultures, and shall then turn more specifically to the case of Switzerland: our selected empirical terrain.

Few studies are directly related to the perceptions of public managers' roles on the part of their subordinates, and in particular in the public sector where empirical data on questions of leadership (administrative leadership) remains rare (Van Wart 2003). Callahan, for example, proposes a series of recommendations aimed at designing

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[1] Paper presented at the 2d transatlantic dialogue in Leuven, "Surviving in the post-civil service environment : civil servants' perceptions of the main challenges involved and their strategies", 2.06.2006

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programmes for tomorrow's public managers, based on a rich palette of statements resulting from various evaluations and feedback by participants in these programmes, focus groups, etc. (Callahan 2007), but without ever mentioning the primary "clients" of these leaders, i.e. their own subordinates (termed "followers" in specialised literature). Other studies analyse the way in which managers use various typical methods and tools within new public management, with the aim of combating the ambiguity they experience within their work (for example Vakkuri). It is clear that the ambiguity inherent to the tools – stressed by the author who terms them "efficiency artefacts" – is itself amplified by the subordinate staff members' reaction to them. Although the author does not analyse this variable in his study, he nevertheless conceptualises it by stating that the artefacts are considered to be a "medium of human action" that facilitates or constrains actions between members of the organisation. He moreover stresses that the standards valid within the organisation (professional or ethical codes) can restrict their use. These standards are, however, handled from the angle of public managers' behaviour only and not from the subordinates' perceptions (Vakkuri 2007).

In a study carried out in Australia, Jones and Kriflik develop a leadership theory based on the subordinates' perceptions. The findings revealed that the subordinates' overriding expectation of their superiors consisted of being given the possibility to fulfil their full potential regarding their tasks and responsibilities while restricting to a maximum the gap between their current contributions and their maximum contributions (attainment deficit and in certain cases attainment excess). They expect their hierarchy to act as a buffer to protect them from excessive pressure from management while remaining aware of the problems they encounter, to show concern, and to resolve problems. Globally, two strategies can be implemented by the managers: the first consists of helping / supporting the subordinates directly, and the other is to attenuate the expectations and pressure arising from the environment.

In a study carried out in Botswana, expectations of public managers – corroborating former studies on the same continent – reveals the portrait of a person who consults his subordinates, respects them, promotes their development, and who helps them accomplish their mission while clearly indicating the direction to follow (Hope 2003).

For Hupe, when modelling relations between employees at base level and their direct hierarchy (Hupe 2007) and linking the findings to the organisation's performance, it is first of all clear that little information (and research) is available on the subject. The author highlights the fact that the practices of new public management, which have been emerging for several years, have probably contributed towards exacerbating the existing tension between professional values – as practiced by base-level employees – and managerial ones that first-level managers relay from general management. The first-level manages mainly follow one of three different types of action:
- amplification and reinforcement of general management's demands and expectations and in addition adding their own expectations
- finding ways around these demands,
- serving as a buffer to minimise the resulting pressure

It should be noted that the networks available to first-level management can provide considerable leverage within their work and can contribute towards increasing the organisation's performance. The theoretical model developed by Hupe has nevertheless not yet been tested empirically.

Berry takes the same direction, recalling that entrepreneurial leadership, promoted with varying degrees of explicitness by new public management, is seen as positive by certain analysts. They see it as bringing about leadership that is capable of working around bureaucracy in order to better serve citizens. Other analysts, however, consider this style to be incompatible with democratic values (Berry 2007). This latter approach is in line with more general debate on the discretionary power of public managers: the

"discretion debate" (Van Wart 2003). Referring to the classical dichotomy between manager and leader, the author asks what kind of public management we want: managers who faithfully execute the missions conferred on them by policy, or entrepreneurs who interpret and transform the main principles provided by the policy but with considerable leeway. Whatever type of reforms take place, Berry believes that public managers should contribute towards (competent) professional administration that is transparent, that involves citizens, that is responsible, that is accountable for its performance, that aims to provide high-quality services, that is accessible thanks to greater use of the Internet (e-government) but that at the same time acts in an ethical way and promotes clear values that it endeavours to put into practice. Here, we are typically falling within normative literature that should be examined empirically from the viewpoint of the actors concerned: no such study has yet taken place.

Taking the example of Great Britain's National Health Service (NHS), Wankhade and Brinkman demonstrate that the successful modernisation of this huge administrative body requires adopting a less hierarchical (top down) and pyramid leadership style and one more oriented towards teams and networks, reflecting the functional methods of this structure (Wankhade and Brinkman 2007). This new style is the subject of a competency reference work (the NHS Leadership Qualities Framework) for public managers, which places considerable emphasis on collaboration, involvement and empowerment of the staff: this is in line with other reference works drawn up for public managers (Bourgault, Maltais et al. 2004; Horton 2007).

These two approaches, however, do not handle the perception of the competences on the part of subordinate staff, which are nevertheless the primary "clients" concerned. When handling the evaluation of training programmes for senior civil servants in Great Britain (British Senior Civil Service), Horton analyses the system implemented and reveals a similar state of affairs: evaluation on the part of subordinate plays only an extremely minor role therein via 360° evaluations (Horton 2007).

Fairholm adopts an approach that is both normative and empirical. He presents five pragmatic perspectives of public management and leadership that should be considered as successive levels of practice with increasing degrees of complexity (Fairholm 2004):
- "scientific management" perspective corresponding to the classical school of management
- "excellence management" perspective; to be considered globally as being inspired by quality management
- "values leadership management" perspective, which highlights the importance of developing a shared vision and values (company culture)
- "trust cultural leadership" perspective, where the subordinates' role takes on its full importance within the sharing and experiencing of the values promoted by the organisation
- and finally, the "whole-soul (spiritual) leadership" perspective, which stresses the importance of considering individuals in a holistic manner (professional and personal) and notably inspired by emotional leadership according to Goleman (Goleman 1995).

A clear picture emerges that the higher the post occupied by the managers, the more they fall within one of the more sophisticated perspectives described by means of this typology. A specific conception on the part of the subordinate (follower) can be associated with each of these perspectives, depending on the individual that they pre-suppose and the dimensions concerned. This study, which is in fact extremely interesting, is based on around one hundred interviews with managers but the subordinates remain completely absent.

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When analysing the implementation of NPM within Norway's civil service, Christensen / Laegreid initially recall the major role of leadership practices within the implementation of reform programmes that are themselves strongly influenced by the political-administrative culture in place: an aspect that varies considerably from one country to another (Christensen and Laegreid 2007). These authors analyse in particular the impact of structural, cultural and demographic variables within the implementation of reform programmes. Concerning the cultural variables, there is clear evidence that the traditional roles and values attributed to civil servants (notably professional culture, values of legality, hierarchy and policy) remain extremely important while integrating certain aspects of the neo-Weberian model as portrayed by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004), i.e. the transparency and open-mindedness of the administration's "partners". On the basis of the responses provided by public managers at various levels of the hierarchy, the authors conclude that there is a form of *robustness* within the Norwegian administrative culture, which in fact is little influenced by the wave of new public management. Thus, the managers' identification with the role of "business manager" takes only the third position after that of mediator (66% of the subjects identified with this role) and researcher (50%). Identification as a business manager (34%) remained at the same level as 30 years previously! Similarly, the degree of liberty in carrying out the work (rules/established practice or discretion) remains extraordinary stable over the last 20 years, illustrating that the impact of NPM practices in fact remains extremely limited. Generally speaking it is the cultural variables that are the most significant in order to explain the implementation of the reforms under way, constituting a form of "cultural filter" that puts the projects initiated to test. A strong involvement on the part of the leaders is equally essential within the reform programmes, which are now calling upon "cultural" management tools such as ethics charters, knowledge management or team management to a greater extent than ten years previously. The author thus shares the views of other researchers who highlight the central role attributed to values within public service, and the essential role that public managers must play to develop them and act as examples thereof (Kernaghan 2003).

In this perspective, it is important to provide a brief description of various striking elements within the Swiss leadership culture, since our empirical data comes from this country.

Roles and behaviour of public managers in Switzerland

Switzerland is characterised by a managerial culture that has been the subject of several research projects over the last forty years. The comparative study by Hofstede, carried out during the 1970s, gave a first glimpse of the characteristics specific to Switzerland [2], i.e. compared on an international level (Hofstede 1980):

- a low power distance, 5th from the bottom of the relevant category, thus signifying a somewhat egalitarian vision between managers and subordinates
- an average position on the scale of uncertainty avoidance: neither conservative nor eager to accept change
- a position in the top third regarding the "individualism – collectivism" scale, indicating that the individual takes precedence over the group
- and finally, right at the top of the "masculinity – femininity" scale, indicating a leadership concept associated to characteristics considered as male-oriented. This was the most striking characteristic, at the time, of the "Swiss way of management".

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[2] It should be recalled, in this connection, that the study was carried out among branches of the IBM corporation, which no doubt colours the results

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Thereafter, within the framework of a comparative project in the same vein and called GLOBE (Wunderer and Weibler 1997), these characteristics became more relative around fifteen years later, notably when considering the effective practices of Swiss managers. The power distance in fact appears medium to high, uncertainty avoidance high and individualism somewhat average. Masculinity remained medium to high.

The work of Bergmann during the 1980s again made it possible to highlight the characteristics of the "Swiss way of management". By hypothesis, we can assume that they also concern the managers of public organisations (Bergmann 1994). In fact, Swiss management culture is clearly viewed as generic, taking all types of organisation into account, but with an empirical basis that above all concerns the private sector. For Bergmann, Swiss management expresses the complexity of practices, the "middle way", to be understood as rejecting dominant personalities to the benefit of a collaboration at different levels, the victory of indirect, functional authority (to the detriment of classical hierarchical authority) but also discretion (including in supplying information to subordinates), a focus on pragmatism (rejecting positions that are too theoretical or ideological), and finally a marked propensity towards conservatism.

Subsequent studies have made it possible to put these characteristics into perspective, notably revealing an evolution towards more open-mindedness (Führen als Bewegen – leading as movement), and towards a less masculine and more co-operative style. The person in a management position must of course provide a clear framework and objectives but also develop a relationship of trust with his staff, making use of his social skills and demonstrating considerable integrity. Integrity is the attribute of managers that takes first position, followed by inspiration (positive motivation, emotion), vision (innovation, anticipation) team spirit, performance, and finally determination and decision-taking capacity (Wunderer and Weibler 1997). In conclusion, these authors stress in their analysis that the Swiss style has evolved, and currently aims for a clear rapprochement between management and staff: a more participative style oriented towards teamwork rather than individuals, one that places importance on the atmosphere and on respect for staff.

The somewhat classical portrait of management style, based on empirical observations, contrasts rather strongly with the expectations formulated in relation to managers of public organisations involved in the modernisation process inspired by new public management. In fact, publications appearing between 1995 and 2006 describe, in a primarily *normative* manner, managers in the civil service as being persons required to act as leaders within the change process, to inspire their troops and to adopt entrepreneurial behaviour: a logical response to the freedom of action and autonomy conferred by NPM methods. Such a vision characteristically appears in works that constitute the foundation to new public management in Switzerland (Hablützel, Haldemann et al. 1995; Schedler 1995). It is then strongly reflected in various publications within the collections by the Federal Personnel Office (Office fédéral du personnel 2001; Office fédéral du personnel 2002; Office fédéral du personnel 2006), which reflect the dominant expectations that were formulated regarding public managers. It should be noted that these expectations are the result of approaches that were above all prescriptive rather than of empirical research. This was the case even when, in the Swiss tradition of pragmatism (see above), the expectations were expressed by well-known individuals in top management. When providing an overview of a day's workshop to reflect on public management in Switzerland, Müller highlights the key role of the managers' personality, their role model function, but also a vision of subordinates as persons with numerous resources (rather than shortcomings), in line with the transformational leadership concept (Bass, Avolio et al. 2003). This relationship with subordinates is completely essential, and must be based on trust and mutual commitment: the person in charge must be credible and inspire respect while

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protecting his team and helping its members realise their potential in line with the organisation's objectives (Müller 2001).

Most of the contributions cited on an international level (Van Wart 2003) and in relation to Switzerland (Office fédéral du personnel 2006) thus highlight the fundamental place of values in management/leadership activities, and since at least the 1980s. This relates to values in a general sense but also values specific to a country and an organisation in particular. We considered it interesting, as mentioned in the methodological section below, to analyse the expectations formulated with relation to public managers in Switzerland by applying reference worlds in which extremely varied, specific values are expressed.

Aims and methodology of the research

Having carried out major modernisation programmes of the NPM type and abolished tenure rights, the Swiss administrations have announced job cuts and, for the first time, redundancies (Blunschi and Ley 2004), which is consequently an area of analysis that is of great interest.

Our inductive investigations have the following objectives:
1. We intend to identify the main expectations public servants have regarding their own hierarchy, and their perception of the actual roles and behaviours of their managers.
2. Expectations and perceptions will be analysed using the typology of Boltanski and Thévenot (1991). It is particularly interesting to analyse this data in terms of the reference worlds presented by (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991). These worlds – each of them express a framework of values – in fact reveal potentially contradictory spheres of legitimisation to which the members of a collective entity or an organisation refer in order to justify their expectations and behaviours. Each world is based on a common higher principle inspired by political philosophies that have marked history and according to which the actions are judged. (Giauque 2004).

In using these authors' work as inspiration, the main reference worlds to be considered within the framework of this analysis can be resumed as follows:

Table 1: Typology of the worlds according to Boltanski and Thévenot

	Industrial world	**Civic world**	**Commercial world**	**Domestic world**	**Opinions world**	**Connexion world**
Higher common principle	Effectiveness and "functional" performance	Representative collective bodies	Competition and market value	Personal relationship, hierarchy, tradition	Opinions on the part of others. Perception by the public	Network, connexion and projects with others
Succinct presentation of each world	*Inspired by machines, the industrial world places functional performance, professionalism, appropriate action and perfecting resources at the heart of its legitimacy*	*Expression of democratic action, legitimised by legislation, the civic world is based on the emblematic figure of the citizen*	*Competitiveness and competition mechanisms surrounding potential "clients" are the central themes of the commercial world*	*Inspired by the family, the domestic world reflect benevolent relationships that animate a collective entity, a milieu*	*The existence and the value of a person, an action, etc. should be considered in the light of his renown, his recognition*	*The existence and the value of a person is related to the fact that this person is included in networks, projects, is connected with others, is "on line" and flexible*

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3. The results will be also analysed using the typical features of the "Swiss way of management" and other common prescriptions associated with new roles of "public managers" in NPM organisations (see review of literature).

4. Referring to this analysis, some conclusions and research avenues will be presented, related to new leadership competencies that must be faced by the hierarchy.

We shall use a qualitative approach inspired by the 'Grounded Theory' (Strauss and Corbin 2004) and the comprehensive interview according to Kaufmann (Kaufmann 2004). Subjects active in several public organisations, with opposing views (positive and negative), will be selected in order to obtain a complete picture of the main issues. This contribution is linked to a larger research project with 80 planned interviews, which will be carried out by the end of 2007. In this contribution, 36 interviews have been analysed.

Interviews

Starting from the idea of constructing a theory based on facts, we proceeded to carry out comprehensive interviews according to the methods developed by Kaufmann (Kaufmann 2004). This approach to interviewing opens up the possibility of freer interaction, allowing, among other things, a better understanding of the concerns of the interviewee. This process is continued until comments made by the subjects start repeating themselves during the interviews. This then guarantees the overall qualitative validity of the process.

Focus

During the interviews, we discussed relevant issues as perceived by our subjects who were faced with various reform processes within their work environment and their related behaviour, but without a clear focus on the notion of hierarchy. Although a question within the interview grid is associated with civil servants' relations with their superiors in a general way, no question specifically addressed the expectations and perceptions of civil servants regarding the role and behaviour of their superiors. It is therefore possible to reveal the importance and associated expectations linked to the notion of hierarchy in the eyes of our respondents, yet to avoid the well-known problem of inducing answers.

Sample: call for subjects

During this exploratory phase, and in order to constitute our first sample of subjects, we circulated and published a call for subjects inviting those interested to come and speak to us about their experiences as civil servants and the changes that had taken place in their departments. We did not define precise criteria in order to constitute a representative sample since we wished to carry out a non-exhaustive reconnaissance of the terrain in order to identify certain directions to follow. We simply ensured that the persons concerned were not of top management level in order to acquire information from civil servants who were not involved in decision-making processes.

The choice of the organisations and persons to be involved needed to be sufficiently diverse to reflect a wide range of situations experienced within the post-civil service environment.

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In the first phase, we conducted thirty-six in-depth interviews lasting on average one hour. In a second phase, we took several variables into account in order to acquire a more diversified sampling, such as selecting persons who have also had experience in the private sector (partial) or no such experience (exclusive), who have a number of years of service (8 years and above) or are "new" (2-8 years of service), plus some other individual variables that can be taken into consideration in the traditional way in this type of survey (age, sex, and level of education in particular). The results of this article are based on 36 interviews. The civil servants who took part in our research have extremely varied profiles. The majority consists of *street level bureaucrats*, only a few are of management level, and they work in a wide variety of administrative entities and sectors, at different levels of federalism. Half the sample has been working in the public sector for over 8 years. It is clear that the sample is not representative: the category with over 8 years in service is extremely over-represented, which led us to divide it into two according to the subjects' age.

Table 2 : Breakdown of the sample

Years in public service	- 3 years		3-8 years		8 + years		Total
Age	23 – 29	41	28 - 40	56	30 – 45	45 +	
No. of individuals	6	1	10	1	9	9	
Totals	7		11		18		**36**

Of course, the heterogeneity of our sample does not permit us to draw any general conclusions about civil servants' perceptions of public managers in Switzerland, but simply to have a panorama of individual cases from which we can identify directions to follow: this is thus the objective we have defined from this first, observation phase.

Results

Conception of hierarchy through what was said by the interviewees

Careful reading of the transcriptions reveals that the issue of hierarchy is very much present in the words and responses by the interviewees. In the absence of a centralised socialisation process among civil servants, it is thus probable that the reforms that are in progress in Switzerland, and in particular the major move towards New Public Management (NPM) that has been taking place since the mid-1990s (Ritz 2003), has had an impact on what is said by civil servants about the role of their hierarchy and how they perceive it.

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In the present project we have grouped together the main expectancies associated with the notions of hierarchy, including an assessment of the frequency associated with each theme.

The expectations mentioned by our interviewees related to the three following levels:
- immediate hierarchy (direct superior),
- hierarchy with management responsibilities (general management team)
- political hierarchy (executive level).

We have opted not to present the results relating to the perception of the political authorities' role in this article. There were, in fact, a minority of statements regarding the political level during the interviews: only 12 persons out of 36 mentioned the subject and most of them in a superficial manner only, thus providing very little material for analysis. This can be explained by the diversity of the Swiss system and the varying proximity of our subjects to the political level. The political levels concerned varied from that of the national level (Swiss Government Ministers) or the other extreme, i.e. at municipal level (municipal executive authority, which is often seen as a "supreme departmental head).

The results concerning the close hierarchy are moreover broken down in accordance with the variable "years of service" used to characterise our subjects, partially linked to aged in accordance with the modalities shown in *table 2.*

Initially, we wished to make a distinction between the public managers' expectations and actual behaviour, but such a distinction is difficult to operate within the subjects' responses because the description of actual behaviour usually assumes the presence of expectations. We thus opted not to address this differentiation. The results mentioned in the table below thus primarily reflect expectations regarding hierarchy (roles and behaviour that the subordinates wish to see).

The items are initially classified in accordance with the worlds to which they refer, and in a way inspired by the typology of Boltanski & Thévenot (1991).

The items within each world are organised in decreasing order depending on the frequency with which they arose in interviews. Hybrid items, i.e. those belonging to several reference worlds, are placed at the end of each column.

Table 3: Public agents' perception of the role and behaviour of their immediate hierarchy

	Years of service: 3 and below N=7	f	Years of service: + 3 to 8 N=11	f	Years of service: +8 (aged 30 - 45) N=9	f	Years of service: + 8 (aged 45+) N=9	f
Proximity hierarachym	*Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Legitimacy from the terrain ▪ Recognition ▪ Support / protection ▪ Taking needs into account *Industrial world* ▪ Feedback ▪ Use competencies of employees *Hybrid world (connexion and domestic)* ▪ Interface with management (presence in networks, support via negotiation)	5 2 1 1 1 2 1 1	*Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Support / protection ▪ Legitimacy from the terrain ▪ Recognition ▪ Support / accompanying / availability ▪ Sharing of values *Industrial world* ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ Feedback ▪ Balance needs and constraints ▪ Effective organisation ▪ Legitimacy via competence ▪ Focused on innovation *Hybrid world (civic, connexion and domestic)* ▪ Interface with the beneficiaries (guarantee the decisions taken, legitimising function) ▪ Collaboration ▪ Interface with management	9 3 2 2 2 1 5 2 2 1 1 1 3 2 1	*Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Legitimacy from the terrain ▪ Support / accompanying / availability ▪ Recognition *Industrial world* ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ Focused on innovation ▪ Coherency – follow up when implementing ▪ Balance needs and constraints ▪ Legitimacy via competence ▪ Anticipate problems ▪ Use of employees' skills *Hybrid world (civic, connexion and domestic)* ▪ Equity / justice (role model) ▪ Interface with management ▪ Autonomy for staff possible ▪ Interface with the beneficiaries ▪ Collaboration	6 3 2 1 4 2 2 1 1 1 1 3 4 4 2 1	*Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Recognition ▪ Support / protection ▪ Support / accompanying / availability ▪ Legitimacy from the terrain ▪ Respect for values *Industrial world* ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ Legitimacy via competence ▪ Balance needs and constraints ▪ Focused on innovation *Hybrid world (civic, connexion, and domestic)* ▪ Transparency / clarity of information ▪ Interface with management ▪ Autonomy for staff possible	5 4 2 2 1 1 3 2 1 1 2 2 2

f: frequency

Table 4 : Public agents' perception of the role and behaviour of management (immediate hierarchy)

	Years of service: 3 et – (N=7)	f	Years of service: + 3 to 8 (N=11)	f	Years of service: +8 (aged 30 - 45) (N=9)	f	Years of service: + 8 (aged 45+) (N=9)	f
Direction	*Industrial world* ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ Effective organisation *Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Recognition *Hybrid world (civic, connexion)* ▪ Equity / justice / role (role model) ▪ Interface with the beneficiaries	2 1 2 1 1 1	*Industrial world* ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ Effective organisation ▪ Coherency – follow-up when implementing ▪ Balance needs and constraints ▪ Anticipate problems ▪ See the reality of the terrain behind the indicators *Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Legitimacy from the terrain ▪ Recognition *Hybrid world (civic, connexion and domestic)* ▪ Equity / justice (role model) ▪ Autonomy for staff possible ▪ Interface with management	2 7 2 1 1 1 7 2 1 1 2 1	*Industrial world* ▪ Effective organisation ▪ Coherency – follow-up when implementing ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ See the reality of the terrain behind the indicators ▪ Recognise problems ▪ Balance needs and constraints ▪ Transparency in the right dose ▪ "strategic continuity" (when changes of management *Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Management that includes human aspects ▪ Recognition ▪ Support / protection ▪ Sharing values ▪ Participative approach *Hybrid world (civic and domestic)* ▪ Transparency / clarity of the information ▪ Equity / justice (role model) ▪ Using people in place	4 3 2 2 2 1 1 1 4 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 1	*Domestic world* ▪ Proximity / listens / human / trust ▪ Recognition ▪ Legitimacy from the terrain ▪ Respect for values ▪ Management that includes human aspects ▪ Participative approach ▪ Commitment for the future (personally, from management) *Industrial world* ▪ Effective organisation ▪ Clear position / decision / give structure / handle ▪ Coherency – follow-up when implementing ▪ Balance needs and constraints ▪ Use of staff's competencies ▪ "Strategic continuity" (when there are changes of management *Hybrid world (civic, connexion and domestic)* ▪ Transparency (clarity of information ▪ Equity / justice (role model) ▪ Autonomy of staff possible ▪ Interface with management ▪ Collaboration	4 4 2 1 1 1 1 4 3 2 1 1 1 3 1 2 1 1

f: fréquency

Discussion

The first part of the discussion will analyse the various expectancies linked to the hierarchy in terms of the worlds presented by Boltanski and Thévenot (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991). In the second part, more general comments will be made in relation to the review of literature, especially the Swiss way of (public) management.

Comments related to the worlds typology of Boltanski and Thévenot

The domestic and the *industrial* worlds as the dominant reference

As we shall see below, the meanings that we have highlighted above reveal worlds whose legitimisation varies, reflecting the different concepts of hierarchy. The arguments by interviewees that were resumed above are, it should be stressed, not self-restricting and some of them may be related to several of the worlds (so called "hybrid"). We have attempted to associate the most likely world legitimisation with them, by considering the overall content of what was said.

The dominant reference worlds are indisputably the domestic and the *industrial* worlds, since the most frequently mentioned arguments refer, to varying degrees, to elements of a "family" and "good organisation".

We note in particular for the domestic world:
- the importance attributed to proximity, listening, human relations rather than purely hierarchical ones
- the legitimacy given to superiors from the terrain: they are perceived as having a technical knowledge that can provide the appropriate answer to problems encountered
- the importance of recognition, often perceived as lacking in public organisations
- the need for protection, typical of a domestic relationship or inspired by the tribe, to which we can also associate the sharing of certain values

The sense of legitimisation of the *domestic* world is interesting because it contains several elements classified under "personnel management and support", and particularly relating to a lack of security (protection / support) and to collaboration without competition. Here, we can see the vision of a collective action that is marked by harmony and mutual respect within the framework of sustainable professional relationships. Beyond the idealisation within such a model, it no doubt reflects the fear of a competitive individualisation of working methods, which is one of the frequently-cited consequences of New Management Practices (Nomden 2003).

For the industrial world, we can highlight the following points:
- the importance attributed to a clear position on the part of the hierarchy, which must then take responsibility for its decisions and provide coherent action or even strategic coherency
- the desire for optimum work organisation, which calls for using the competencies that are in place
- the desire for a hierarchy that weighs up needs and constraints to find the right balance between all the expectations formulated for the attention of the team: typical expression of the "manager" orientation in Bass' sense, which balances the expected contributions while adopting a transactional management approach
- and to a lesser extent, expectations linked to anticipating problems and to innovation, a "leadership" orientation in Bass' sense but less developed

We could claim that this is the *industrial* dimension of Weber's model of bureaucracy. It was clearly present among those individuals we interviewed.

It should be noted that the domestic world is more present that the industrial world in the expectations linked to the *immediate* hierarchy, which by its proximity should show a more human face. Inversely, the industrial world is more present than the domestic one when it comes to general management since the latter is more distant and constitutes more of a blurred concept which is expected to ensure smooth operations and optimise the system.

Less presence of the commercial, civil and connexion worlds

With the predominance of the domestic and industrial worlds, added to a virtual absence of the commercial world, we can advance the hypothesis that the reforms under way – inspired by New Public Management - considerably stressed the aspect of the industrial dimension of Weber's model, and to a greater extent than that of the commercial dimension of NPM as is the case in other countries (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Lienhard, Ritz et al. 2005). In fact, the aspects relating to the *commercial* world (competitiveness for example) are in fact rarely visible within the framework of our sample. It is also possible that Swiss culture, marked by the model of the "well-oiled clockwork" - itself an archetype of the industrial world - further emphasises this orientation that does not, *a priori,* seem to appear in debates that diametrically oppose the civic world and the commercial world.

With the civic and connexion worlds, we find statements related to the clarity of the hierarchy's missions and its role being to resolve public problems and to optimise the interface with "customers" of public services, to have transparent functioning, and to offer equal treatment. This facet of hierarchy, which we could associate with the *democratic* dimension of Weber's model, does not therefore seem, at present, to be a dominant one but neither has it disappeared with the wave of reforms in New Public Management.

Finally, we should mention the hierarchy in its dimension of a role model, which we could associate with the civic world on the one hand but also with the *opinions* world on the other since it refers to a desire for consideration that is likely to inspire other (private) organisations. However, this sphere of legitimisation remains marginal within the responses by our interviewees.

In the eyes of the interviewees, public managers should in general adopt behaviour fairly typical of a classical management style based on protecting the "family" of employees and on optimising the system in place. Several characteristics of the Swiss way of management recalled by Wunderer are present, such as developing a framework and clear objectives while creating a relationship of trust and proximity with one's staff (Wunderer and Weibler 1997). We are far from innovative public managers with a leadership style that masters the leeway attributed to them, as sketched out in the prescriptive literature coming from new public management (Thom and Ritz 2000). Should it be said that the subordinate employees have a wrong vision of what the hierarchy should do? Or do the particular conditions under which they are currently living (permanent change, often destabilising (Emery and Wyser 2007)) lead them to remain very down to earth? The information available does not make it possible to respond to this question in a convincing way. It is extremely interesting, however, to note that the great debate on the confrontation of the civic and commercial worlds within public organisations (Giauque and Caron 2005; Rondeaux 2005) does not appear to be in line with the expectations of the street-level employees, unless this confrontation of ideas takes concrete form in the determination by employees to have clear positions on the part of their hierarchy in order to obtain pragmatic solutions to the

tensions felt on the terrain. We could thus advance the hypothesis that the industrial world is a "refuge value" in which the employees believe they can find the pragmatic solution to the existing competition between the civil and commercial worlds.

Previous analysis[3] has also led us to believe that civic values are above all expressed in relation to the services provided and the beneficiaries ("clients") of public organisations and less in relation to the employees. The same could be true for commercial values.

The group of those with 3 years or fewer of service seems to have fewer expectations in relation to the hierarchy, and to attribute less importance to the role and behaviour of the hierarchy than the groups with more years of service (items in relation with the hierarchy more frequently mentioned and more details). Moreover, they are more concerned about their direct superior (mentioned twice as often as higher management), since for them, higher management is something of a blurred concept. Unlike the idea according to which new members of staff have a greater need for support and structure and that those with more years of service are more autonomous, our information leads us to believe that the longer the individuals have accumulated experience with the hierarchy, the more they develop specific, detailed expectations. Differences between the responses from the three other categories of interviewees do not appear clearly at this stage.

General discussion related to the review of literature about (the Swiss way of) public management and leadership

It is first of all striking to see the importance attributed by the subordinates to a benevolent management concept, in the sense described by the pioneer Likert (Likert 1961). Bass' "manager" orientation (1985) is incontestably predominant, while the attributes and behaviour of a leader focused on the renewal of his department and the development of a strategic vision occupy a limited place, as does networked leadership championed by Wankhade and Brinkman (Wankhade and Brinkman 2007). A reference to Mintzber's classical typology reveals that the decision-making and inter-personal roles are strongly present, while the entrepreneurial role remains extremely modest (Mintzberg 1984).

This *manager* orientation is however declined within an environment that can be assimilated to that of the family, where many of the elements of the "Swiss way of management" emerge: notably proximity to subordinates, the creation of a respectful and more participative climate within a clear framework of action. The importance attributed to protecting the staff and balancing expectations, which could be compared with that of the "Mittelmass" (middle way") by Bergman (Bergmann 1994), is probably a result of the current situation, linked to the incessant reforms under way. This buffer role (Hupe 2007) on the part of the hierarchy (interface – support for negotiation: support – protection) is more evident for immediate superiors who must be both a member of their team (an "almost equal") and function as a relay from management.

These "protective and benevolent" elements that nevertheless also *develop* staff potential (Müller 2001) corroborate the findings of Australian studies (Jones and Kriflik 2006) and that from Botswana (Hope 2003). They include both a classical patriarchal dimension in management models (Blake and Mouton 1969), but also a modern

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[3] Paper presented at the Eleventh International Research Symposium on Public Management (IRSPM XI), 2-4 April 2007, Potsdam University, Germany, "Public servants' perceptions of the performance and their behaviours in a fast-changing environment".

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dimension inspired by transformational leadership (Berry 2007), or even trust cultural leadership (Fairholm 2004).

A special mention should be made of "legitimacy from the terrain". In fact, at a time when many specialists call for real "public managers", it has been clear from the beginnings of NPM (Hasenböhler 1995) that staff place great emphasis on having credible managers who come from the terrain. This leads to supposing both that these managers "are one of them", i.e. that they belong to the same in-group, but also that they master the technical competences arising from the operational problems encountered and know how to find the appropriate responses. It is thus a plea for finding managers who are of course competent in the field of management, as trained at management courses in many countries (Horton 2007), but who are also good technicians.

Conclusion and need for further research

This research provides a first indication of the expectations formulated by employees with regard to public managers in Switzerland. The findings and analysis arising from it can under no circumstances be considered representative of the Swiss management culture / public leadership, but the considerable differences noted in comparison with prescriptive literature lead us to believe that this type of empirical investigation is absolutely essential in order to fill the gaps in knowledge on the subject (Van Wart 2003), including in Switzerland.

We do not yet have sufficient information to present, in a systematic way, the way in which the expected role and behaviour on the part of managers are in fact fulfilled. The underlying tendency within our subjects' words is nevertheless clear: the expectations discussed in the present contribution are not, for the most part, fulfilled. These findings should nevertheless be regarded with caution, because the information was collected during interviews that concerned the different reform processes of their work environment, without having a clear focus on the notion of hierarchy. It is thus possible that the information has a certain bias that could highlight the potential for improvement perceived by the staff more strongly than the positive aspects already achieved

The fact remains, however, that the employees' perception of their superiors' behaviour is not only essential but increasingly taken into consideration within the framework of 360°-type evaluations, or ascending evaluations, even if these latter remain relatively little used within public services. (Emery and Gonin 2006). Ideally, the expectations of the subordinates could be compared with reality, but it would also be useful to widen the perspective by questioning the managers' other partners, in a 360° perspective: notably the political executives but also other managers (colleagues at different levels of hierarchy). By placing various points of view in perspective, it would be possible to obtain a wider understanding of the leadership phenomenon in today's public organizations.

In this way, it would thus be possible to grasp the extent to which the dominant influence of the domestic and the industrial worlds effectively correspond to a marked tendency regarding the expected roles and behaviour of the hierarchy, and if the civic and commercial worlds are really so little in evidence.

Certain specificities of Switzerland, cited hypothetically in this paper, could explain the predominance of the bureaucratic model - in its double industrial and democratic dimension - over the commercial world, at least for internal considerations. If we wish to further develop an understanding of the "Swiss way of public management", it is

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necessary to carry out far more systematic investigations, at different levels of the hierarchy but also in various public organisations within the framework of Swiss federalism, while integrating socio-demographic sampling variable (which was not possible with the methodology used in our case).

Finally, the concern for effectiveness and efficiency traditionally attributed to the hierarchy remains fundamental: i.e. what are the links between the behaviour adopted by public managers and the results obtained by their departments? A breakdown according to contextual variables (organisation and forms of governance adopted) and personal (socio-demographic) variables would make more refined data available.

It is thus clear that the research projects to be undertaken are numerous and are potentially extremely motivational for researchers and practitioners within public organisations.

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