

Public Organizations Between Old Public Administration, New Public Management and Public Governance: the Case of the Tuscany Region

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Abstract This paper analyzes the presence of different managerial approaches in a public organization, the Tuscany Region of Italy. In particular, it highlights the phenomenon of the plurality of frameworks working in the organization, namely Old Public Administration (OPA), New Public Management (NPM) and Public Governance (PG). The transformation and coexistence of the above-mentioned models is tested with a content analysis based on the perspectives of policy makers and top-level managers expressed in interviews and on the context of administration planning and control systems found in documents. Each managerial logic has a different relevance in the organization.

Keywords Public management · Public administration · New public management · Public governance · Layering process

Introduction

In recent decades, public organizations have been profoundly transformed, justified by the need to evolve and adapt to the social, economic and political contexts of our post-industrial society. This implies that they are now facing numerous and sometimes conflicting ideas, considerations, demands, structures and cultural elements and, for these reasons, they are becoming increasingly complex and hybrid (Kickert 2001).

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Moreover, “*in a pluralistic society, where there are many criteria for success and different causal understandings, we have to go beyond the idea of a single organizational principle to understand how public organizations work and are reformed and look at them as composite organizations*” (Olsen 2007).

This study will explore the evidence of a composite public organization by testing two main hypotheses: i. The coexistence of different public managerial logics in the same institution in a certain period; ii. Regarding the theory of Christensen (2010; 2012), Olsen (2010) and Osborne (2006), the existence of a layering process of each model, rather than a linear substitution process from one model to another. The landscape we are referring to is an institution where “*some aspects of the OPA have been combined with NPM and PG features to create organizational forms in which governance and management elements coexist with other reform features*” (Christensen 2012). In particular, elements of an Old Public Administration (OPA) and/or New Public Management (NPM) and/or Public Governance (PG) will be tested in the case of the Italian Region of Tuscany. It is common knowledge that Italy has always had a “Napoleonic” administrative tradition (Capano 2003; Mussari 1997; Ongaro 2006) and that NPM and PG are unlikely to prevail (Fattore et al. 2012).

Firstly, a conceptual framework based on a literature review of the three different public management models was developed. Then, an explorative qualitative case study to verify the coexistence of different Public Administration models in the same organization at a certain period was conducted. The transformation process and the coexistence of different models were studied by analyzing the perspectives of top-level managers and policy makers in interviews and the context of administration planning and control systems found in documents and regional laws.

Public Administration Models

Osborne (2006) highlights the fact that “Public Administration and Management” (PAM) has gone through three different leading models: (i) a longer, pre-eminent model, the OPA model, spanning from the late nineteenth century to the late 1970s/early 1980s; (ii) the NPM model, spanning from the late 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century and (iii) an emerging model, the PG model. From the 70s, the Public Administrations (hereafter PAs) of western countries have been harshly criticized for self-reference, inefficiency and poor orientation towards customer satisfaction. Since the late 1970s, the majority of developed countries has carried out reforms to modernize and improve the efficiency of their public sector. The most widespread and successful paradigm is the New Public Management (NPM), formulated by Christopher Hood in 1991 (Hood 1991).

The New Public Management comprehends a cluster of theories and studies regarding the modernization of PAs through the introduction of specific management logics belonging to the private sector. The reforms that introduced NPM principles have been carried out in different ways from country to country. In some cases, reforms have focused on increasing the quality of public services for citizens-users and, in some others, they have emphasized the scaling of public equipment (De Vries and Nemeč 2013). The main goals were public service quality improvements (Balk 1996), public

spending savings, more efficient administrations and more effective public policy implementations (Flynn 1993; Frederic 1998; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000).

In the last decade, however, this model has been criticized and integrated with a new approach, namely the Public Governance (PG) approach (Osborne 2006). This new paradigm aims to overcome the limits of NPM, considered by its critics to be too close to the private sector environment and, in some way, inadequate with regard to the specificities of PA decision-making and management (Monteduro 2005). PG is based on: (i) a general orientation of public sector companies towards the outside (communities and other social and economic public and private actors in the area) rather than the inside; (ii) the importance of the relationship created between subjects belonging to a given socio-economic network and (iii) the ability of the public actor, who usually has the leading role, to manage these relationships (Badia 2007).

Transitions Between OPA, NPM and PG

When two reform waves, or sets of ideas, like NPM and post-NPM (in our case, PG), meet, there are different mechanisms at work. Christensen (2012) states that there are two different transition hypotheses. The first hypothesis is related to the replacement of different public management models. In this sense, Post-NPM represents a new era of administrative reforms by replacing the former NPM reforms. The hypothesis is often represented as a pendulum swing.

An alternative hypothesis that is closer to our view is the idea of layering, whereby reforms supplement or complement one another in a sort of sedimentation process (Christensen and Læg Reid 2010, 2011; Streeck and Thelen 2005). When new reforms are added to old reforms in a layering process, the reform landscape becomes more hybrid and complex. Rather than replacement, we see rebalancing, adjustments, continuities and mixtures of old and new reform features. Mergers and partnerships are installed, but NPM features are not rejected, and traditional bureaucratic forms of specialization and coordination are reintroduced in new versions. We may face coupling, followed by decoupling, and the reintroduction of traditional bureaucratic forms of specialization partly inspired by NPM. NPM cannot be said to be surpassed; rather it has been integrated and improved by the new principles of public governance: «Many NPM- based tools and instruments are still used and optimized in order to support process improvements. Internally governments are still trying to optimize their internal workings. They do this by many different patterns, at least partly diverging from the ideas of NPM, which in itself showed significant shortcomings, although the emphasis therein seems to shift from increased efficiency to improved effectiveness» (De Vries and Nemeč 2013). The consequence at an organizational level is the creation of new hybrid organizational forms, in which Old Public Administration has been combined with NPM and post-NPM features (Christensen 2012).

A Matrix for the Comparison of the Different Models

In order to systematize and compare the key management and governance aspects in each of the three different models (OPA-NPM and PG), a matrix has been proposed.

The matrix, as described in Table 1, is made up of a set of dimensions of analysis that are intended to highlight the rationale and philosophy of each model, by considering the main variables used by researchers to characterize the models. The framework is mainly inspired by the systematizations of Cepiku (2005), Galdiero (2009), Di Filippo (2005), Monteduro (2005), Rotondo (2011), Sancino (2010), Osborne (2006), Ewalt (2001), Barzelay (1992), Denhardt and Denhardt (2003), O'Flynn (2007), Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993; Mulgan (2000), Shamsul Haque (2000), Hinna (2008), Meneguzzo (2006), Considine (1999, 2001); Considine and Lewis (2003), Padovani et al. (2010). The dimensions consider the focus of each model on the predominant logic, the objectives and workload system, the internal and external relations of the PA, the accountability and planning and control systems orientation, and the organizational and governance models. Although each dimension has fuzzy limits, the matrix captures the value statement and basic assumption of the different models, so that the PA orientation is highlighted.

The Italian Context

With regard to the implementation of the managerial requalification of PAs, the Italian context lags behind the international cycle (Ongaro et al. 2013). Only since the 1990s, have NPM logics been introduced by Italian law and mainly with a top-down approach: this process has been described as “a process of modernization managed by law” (Di Filippo 2005; Cepiku et al. 2008).

The task of applying these reform logics is far from being accomplished; an “implementation gap” is highlighted in the international and national literature and in public debates on Italy’s public administrations and policies (Ongaro and Valotti 2008).

However, this gap is different in the various administrative sectors and regions because local administrations tend to be more creative, receptive and innovative (*ibidem*, Cepiku et al. 2008).

An analysis of the PA paradigms in a regional context is pertinent because of the continuing decentralization process in Italy. Italian regional administrations have a multifunctional activity, because they have many areas of expertise and there are two simultaneous decision-making levels; a political one and a technical one, with the latter performed by top-level management.

The Case Study The object of this case study is the Tuscany Region. Established as an “Ordinary Statute” region, Tuscany started to operate autonomously in the second half of the 1970s. The region now has about 3,700,000 inhabitants and it is one of the most developed and wealthiest Italian regions (ISTAT 2012). The Statute lays down regional planning as the core process of all regional activities and sets annual and periodical goals.

Tuscany is considered one of the most innovative regions regarding PA management and it is particularly dedicated to NPM (Cinquini and Vainieri 2008; Nuti et al. 2012). In 2011 (the year reviewed here) the regional PA had 2269 employees, 131 of whom were managers. The regional operating structure was composed of a Regional Attorney General, which is autonomous, and five General Directorates (GDs), each responsible for a different sector (Regional Law n. 01/2009). They are responsible for regional

targets in their areas of expertise and they each have independent accounting, planning and control systems.

Methodology

Our goal is to verify the presence of a single model or the coexistence of different models (or dimensions of the three models) through an exploratory analysis of a single case study in a specific period of time (Roberts and Bradley 2002). Our final aim is to verify the relation between the three models by testing the substitution or layering process hypothesis (Christensen 2012).

We conducted a content analysis method on (i) semi-structured interviews and (ii) regional laws and documents (listed in the [appendix](#)). Interviews were conducted with the general directors of the 5 GDs, the Attorney general and the regional vice-president (the policy-maker). In all, 11 people were interviewed and 20 interview hours were recorded from October to December 2011.

The semi-structured interviews were based on pre-selected themes and the most investigated were: (i) Managing activities and work systems; (ii) Management and control systems, goals assigned to the Directorates; (iii) Organizational performance evaluation systems and (iv) Future expectations for the work system and the evaluation, planning and control systems.

Documents and regional laws were selected by topic. They all refer to rules or regional laws dealing with planning and control issues, and they were issued both by the regional presidency and the single GDs. Table 1 was used as a template to perform a content analysis of the interviews and documents, highlighting the key concepts of each dimension and model.

Content analysis consisted in codifying pieces of writing into various items (or categories) depending on selected criteria (Weber 1922). This approach is used in the literature to carry out qualitative research in accounting, management and governance inside PAs (Fattore et al. 2012; Duriau et al. 2007). Following the content analysis method developed in Fattore et al. (2012), Marcuccio and Steccolini (2009) and Cinquini et al. (2012), a list of key words was identified for each OPA, NPM and PG dimension, in order to help classify relevant expressions (Table 2). We performed a textual analysis, as specified in Table 2, when dimensions did not have key words or when they had similar key words.

In order to enhance the reliability of our content analysis, interviews and documents were analyzed separately and independently by two different coders (the first and second authors), and discrepancies between them were re-examined in collaboration with a third researcher (the third author).

After completing the content analysis, the models were evaluated by counting how often each item appeared in each model, in order to fully understand the respondents' views.

The interview results of both the policy-maker and top-level managers were analyzed with two different perspectives: one concerned their actual *experience*, which refers to the way they usually run their daily activities, tasks, processes and flows, and one concerned their *expectations*, which refers to the way they "wish" to run their daily activities, especially concerning performance evaluation and planning systems.

Table 1 Public management models reference matrix. Referred to: Osborne (2006), Cepiku (2005), Galdiero (2009), Di Filippo (2005), Monteduro (2005), Rotondo (2011), Sancino (2010), Ewalt (2001), Barzelay (1992), Denhardt and Denhardt (2003), O'Flynn (2007), Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993; Mulgan (2000), Shamsul Haque (2000), Hinna (2008), Meneguzzo (2006), Considine (1999, 2001); Considine and Lewis (2003), Padovani et al. (2010)

	Old Public Administration OPA	New Public Management NPM	Public Governance PG
Leading logic/ Subject The most important logic which stands above organization management (Galdiero 2009).	Bureaucratic. Focus on Legitimacy , compliance with strict predetermined rules and procedures	Internal efficiency. Focus on Management and the working logic of each single PA	System efficiency, effectiveness. Focus on policy-making, public services, management and democracy
Systemic approach Dimension given by Galdiero (2009) and based on organization theory (Thompson 1967, Denhardt and Denhardt 2003)	Closed system The organization is centered on its internal bureaucratic and administrative dynamics with inadequate concern for the external environment	Partially closed system The organization is oriented towards results	Partially open system The organization is more oriented towards relationships and its strategic external environment, by stimulating process of integration and coordination.
Perspective Interventions viewpoint toward the external environment (Cepiku 2005, cfr. Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993)	Micro / Self-referential Procedures and rules-oriented.	Micro Emphasis on PA management features.	Involves all three levels: - Micro (each single PA); - Meso (PAs and company systems) - Macro (socio-economic systems). Action is focused on the outside, towards the governance of systems and networks involving social and economic subjects.
Relevant dimensions It refers to the most important aspects which concentrate all management activities and performance evaluations in PA. (Meneguzzo 2006; Brignall and Modell 2000; Di Filippo 2005)	Legitimacy and Administrative conformity with rules and regulations	Effectiveness, efficiency, economy The focus is on ultimate performance results in an economical and managerial perspective (cf. the so-called “3E’s” principles)	Effectiveness, efficiency, economy + Equity, transparency, ethics, quality improvement, economic, social and environmental sustainability of the implemented policies, accountability : ability to account for different internal and external stakeholders.

Table 1 (continued)

	Old Public Administration OPA	New Public Management NPM	Public Governance PG
<p>Internal relationships This dimension regards those features mainly involved in the relationships between subjects operating inside the organization. (Cepiku 2005; Galdiero 2009; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, Ter Bogt 2003)</p>	<p>Hierarchical relationships, planning principles of specialization and expertise</p>	<p>Separation of the political level from the administrative level (management). Politicians have a strategic, goal-setting role, and civil servants are supposed to be autonomous managers held to account through performance arrangements and incentives</p>	<p>The performance evaluation takes into account other dimensions than those of the “3E’s” principle</p> <p>Overcoming the politician-manager dichotomy Reconciling interests at the administrative level.</p>
<p>Decision-making contents Characteristics of the decision-making processes and evaluation criteria of decisions (Cepiku 2005, cf. Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993)</p>	<p>Specific and strict</p>	<p>Introduction of multiple criteria for the evaluation of decisions. List of criteria to be used in order to decide and evaluate the effectiveness of decisions</p> <p>– Flexibility + Differences in this dimension are nuanced between the two models, consisting in greater or lesser flexibility and adaptability of decisions regarding an administration’s interventions</p>	
<p>External relationships Nature of the relationship between PA and other public and private actors (Cepiku 2005, cf. Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993; Galdiero 2009)</p>	<p>Public monopoly PA is the only provider of public services</p>	<p>Competition / contrast public-private and public-private. Fragmentation/disintegration of the “PA system”.</p>	<p>Cooperation among PAs, other public and private subjects.</p>
<p>Accountability The principle of “being called to account for one’s actions” (Mulgan 2000; Shamsul Haque 2000).</p>	<p>User Citizen as a “passive” subject</p>	<p>Client Client is seen as a bearer of interests and needs PA</p>	<p>Citizen Not just service users or customers, but also active public policy recipients</p>
<p>Planning and control systems orientation (Hinna 2008; Ewalt 2001; Barzelay 1992)</p>	<p>Input, formal results Measurement system emphasis is on the resources used (input), especially financial resources.</p>	<p>Output Measurement system emphasis is set on goods and services delivered (output), instead of resources used.</p>	<p>Output, Outcome Multiple objectives are measured, including service outputs, satisfaction, outcomes, trust and legitimacy</p>

Table 1 (continued)

	Old Public Administration OPA	New Public Management NPM	Public Governance PG
Governance model The distinction refers to the four governance models (procedural, corporate, market, and network) framework by Considine (Considine 1999, 2001; Considine and Lewis 2003; Padovani et al. 2010).	Procedural governance Following of rules and protocols, high reliance on supervision, and an expectation that tasks and decisions will be well scripted.	Corporate governance Budgeting and reporting are considerably important, and using them in a public administration concentrates on outputs instead of inputs, focusing on specific groups of citizens who are receiving services.	Market or Network Governance Market governance, contracting out, competitive tenders, and principal agent separation are employed to respond to financial signals and competitive pressure. In network models, the government continues to rely on outside agencies, but in a stronger strategic partnership, and where competition and confidentiality of contracts are substituted by joint action.

Table 2 Key words for each dimension of public managerial models (key words in Italian, meaning in English)

	Old Public Administration (OPA)	New Public Management (NPM)	Public Governance (PG)
Leading logic/ Subject	Key words: burocra* (bureaucracy); legitim* (legitimacy); procedur* (procedures)	Key words: efficie* (efficiency); economic* (economy); controll* (control and to control); compan* (companies and private tools); management; innov* (innovation and renewal).	Key words: efficie* (efficiency); efficia* (effectiveness); governance; innov* (innovation and renewal).
Systemic approach	Textual analysis	Textual analysis	Key words: integra* (integration, to integrate), coordina* (coordination, to coordinate)
Perspective	Textual analysis	Textual analysis	Key words: confront* (to compare); benchmark*; ret* (network); integra* (integration, to integrate); coordina* (coordination, to coordinate); stakeholder
Relevant dimensions	Key words: legitim* (legitimacy); controll* (control and to control); procedur* (procedures); conformity	Key words: efficia* (effectiveness); efficie* (efficiency); economic* (economy); transparency	Key words: efficia* (effectiveness); efficie* (efficiency); economic* (economy); equit* (equity); trasparen* (transparency); quality* (quality); sostenibil* (sustainability); accountability, stakeholders
Internal relationships	Key words: gerarch* (hierarchical); separat* (separation or distinction)	Key words: politic* (political) level; ammministr* (administrative) level	Key words: integra* (integration, to integrate); coordina* (coordination, to coordinate); trasvers* (cross-functional)
Decision-making contents	Textual analysis	Textual analysis	Textual analysis
External relationships	Textual analysis	Key words: competitio Framment* (fragmentation)	Key words: cooperatio Coordina* (coordination, to coordinate); concerta* (concertation); conditv* (sharing)
Accountability (towards whom)	Key words: utent*(user); responsabi*(responsiveness)	Key words: client* (client); soddisfa* (satisfaction); accountability; responsabi* (responsiveness)	Key words: cittadin* (citizen); popolaz* (population) soddisfazio* (satisfaction); accountability; responsabi* (responsiveness); value for money

Table 2 (continued)

	Old Public Administration (OPA)	New Public Management (NPM)	Public Governance (PG)
Planning and control systems orientation	<p>Key words: input valuta* (assessment); cost* (cost); misura* (measure); obbiettivi* (target); indicatore* (indicators); programma* (program and programming); pianifica* (planning); cost* (cost); obbiettivi* (target, achievement)</p>	<p>Key words: valuta* (assessment); output; performance; misura* (measure); obbiettivi* (target); indicatore* (indicators); programma* (program and programming); pianifica* (planning); obbiettivi* (target, achievement)</p>	<p>Key words: confronti* (to compare); benchmark*; valuta* (assessment); output assessment; outcome assessment; performance assessment; impatto* (impact) assessment; misura* (measure); obbiettivi* (target); indicatore* (indicators); programma* (program and programming); pianifica* (planning); valore* (value); obbiettivi* (target, achievement)</p>
Governance model	<p>Textual analysis</p>	<p>Textual analysis</p>	<p>Key words: mercato* (market); rete* (network), fiducia (trust); relati* (relation)</p>

Results

Table 3 summarizes the results of the content analysis, reporting the frequency of items for each perspective and each managerial model.

The content analysis refers to: (i) Documents and planning laws; (ii) the Policy maker's experience and expectations and (iii) Top management's experience and expectations.

The Strategic Orientation of the Region: The Perspective of Regional Acts and Laws

As shown in Table 4, regional programming laws and acts appear to be strongly focused on PG logics: 73 % of them (46 out 63) express concepts on aspects of the PG model. The remaining (17 out 63) refer to NPM, and none refer to OPA.

Concepts related to the leading logic of PG are found in 11 cases out of 19.

This trend is especially highlighted in many parts of the programmatic speeches of the president and in the government program, which underlines the importance of the coordination role of the regional authority over the many different public and private subjects considered as a network, and it is a key element of post-NPM trends (Christensen 2012):

«Tuscany is a “network city” of about 3.7 million inhabitants. While its history and territorial characteristics would encourage us to protect the specificity and diversity of each town municipality, the development and the new concepts of networking and integration encourage us to overcome localism and local peculiarities (...)» (Programmatic speech of the Regional President).

The pursuit of efficiency at a systemic level and of effectiveness in terms of policy-making outcomes seems clear:

«For example, the various regional councilors (the equivalent of ministers in a national government, Ed.) can no longer limit themselves to forming policies;

Table 3 Overall results

Object of analysis	Old public administration	New public management	Public governance	Tot.
Regional acts and laws (the strategic orientation of the Region)	–	17	46	63
The policy maker: the vice-president (experience)	5	3	7	15
The policy maker: the vice-president (expectations)	–	2	3	5
Top management (experience)	29	19	9	57
Top management (expectations)	–	17	14	31
Total	34	58	79	171

Table 4 The strategic orientation of the region: results of our analysis of regional acts and laws

Dimensions	Old public administration	New public management	Public governance	Tot.
Leading logic/Subject	–	8	11	19
Systemic approach	–	–	8	8
Perspective	–	–	2	2
Relevant dimensions	–	6	4	10
Internal relationships	–	–	–	–
Decision-making contents	–	–	3	3
External relationships	–	–	2	2
Accountability (towards whom)	–	–	3	3
Planning and control systems' orientation	–	2	8	10
Governance model	–	1	5	6
Total	–	17	46	63

they must also take responsibility for the effectiveness of their interventions, to the extent of their competence». (Government program).

Several references to NPM logics and tools can be found in the same documents as well and they are considered essential for a smooth-running regional machine, such as a “mission budget”, a “modern system of analytical controls”, and a “system of performance appraisal”. They are regarded in PM literature as “efficiency artifacts”, i.e. a wide range of instruments employed by managers to solve current problems in public organizations (Vakkuri 2010).

All items regarding system dimensions, perspectives, contents, decision-making contents, accountability and external relations are attributable to the PG model. An open-system approach, characterized by integration and coordination logics, emerges in many of the regional laws examined, starting with Regional Law n. 26 of 1992, which regulates, for the first time ever, the regional planning process, focusing, *inter alia*, on the principles of participation and transparency. The underlying perspective is clearly of the multi-level type, and it integrates the micro, meso and macro dimensions.

Another important dimension that often recurs in the documents on planning is that of the economic and environmental sustainability of policies. It affects the orientation of the planning and control systems towards the PG model. The focus on obtaining results - seen through their impact on citizens - appears clear. Indeed, the Regional Development Program (RDP) includes a set of context indicators and comparisons between Italian regions, in addition to some result indicators on the action plans of the legislature.

The Perspective of the Policy Maker

The experience and the expectations perceived by the regional vice-president reveal a high prevalence of logics which are consistent with the PG model. As shown in Table 5,

this happens in 7 out of 15 concepts and almost all of them (5) are related to the internal relations dimension.

The regional vice-president's interview shows how she aims to overcome the politician-manager dichotomy (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011), and how she balances interests at the administration level through trust, collaboration and flexible relationships.

NPM-related elements stand out in the orientation of the planning and control systems (2 concepts out of 3 for the NPM model, and 1 out of 3 for the OPA model) which are mainly based on output indicators to measure targets and activities. However, according to the vice-president, they do not express the whole truth about target achievement:

This year, many indicators were related to output measures. The problem is to understand if these types of measures are sufficient or if, for some of the cross-functional issues, such as the management efficiency of the administration machine, it is possible to use a "true" indicator, not in terms of output but in terms of outcome, the equivalent of sales.

OPA-related concepts highlight critical issues due to lasting and typically bureaucratic logics, in particular, the lack of cross-functional thinking and flexibility. The vice president underlines the so-called problem of "silozation" (or "pillarization", Christensen 2012):

They still work too much in silos here and this is a serious problem in a public administration where knowledge, even a little knowledge, is power. In this way,

Table 5 The policy maker's perspective

Dimensions	Old public administration		New public management		Public governance	
	Expectations	Experience	Expectations	Experience	Expectations	Experience
Leading logic/Subject	–	1	1	–	–	1
Systemic approach	–	–	–	–	–	1
Perspective	–	1	–	–	–	–
Relevant dimensions	–	–	–	–	1	–
Internal relationships	–	–	–	–	–	5
Decision-making contents	–	–	–	–	–	–
External relationships	–	–	–	–	–	–
Accountability (Towards whom)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Planning and control systems' orientation	–	1	–	2	2	–
Governance model	–	2	1	1	–	–
Total	–	5	2	3	3	7

you completely lose any cross-functional way of thinking, and managers should work hard to overcome this.

Concerning the expectations of the vice-president, we should consider that, in this case, concepts are rather few (only five). They all belong to NPM and PG, although PG is prevalent for concepts related to planning and control systems orientation (2 out of 2).

The Top-Level Management Perspective

The daily activities of top-level management are largely dominated by OPA logics, as presented in Table 6. Indeed, as many as 51 % (29 out of 57) of the concepts belong to OPA, 33 % (19 out of 57) to NPM and only 16 % (9 out of 57) to PG.

Instead, top-level management expectations tend to be oriented towards the NPM model (55 % of the concepts, 17 out of 31) and, to a lesser extent, to the PG model.

Experience Almost half of OPA-related concepts (12 out of 29) apply to the leading logic which still appears to be bureaucratic in 12 out of the 16 concepts found.

NPM logics seem to have a problem establishing themselves, especially in the planning, reporting and evaluation mechanisms and operations; for example, delays are reported in planning documents, with a negative impact on management activities.

This kind of problem is also evident when there is a lack of differentiation. According to a manager's evaluation:

«Tuscany's regional managers are assessed with scores between 90 and 100 %. Now, even if I aspired to differentiate among them, I would not be able to.

Table 6 Top management's perspective

Dimensions	Old public administration		New public management		Public governance	
	Expectations	Experience	Expectations	Experience	Expectations	Experience
Leading logic/Subject	–	12	6	3	6	1
Systemic approach	–	2	–	1	–	–
Perspective	–	2	1	–	1	1
Relevant dimensions	–	–	3	3	3	–
Internal relationships	–	2	1	1	1	5
Decision-making contents	–	2	1	4	1	2
External relationships	–	–	–	–	–	–
Accountability (towards whom)	–	–	1	2	1	–
Planning and control systems' orientation	–	7	–	2	–	–
Governance model	–	2	4	3	4	–
Total	–	29	17	19	17	9

The possibility of giving more realistic assessments, with scores at least between 50 and 100 %, also involves a discussion on the targets' system» (GD 1).

Another manager agrees on this aspect:

«There is a problem in setting targets: you should not put year-on-year targets on things that need to be done. Those are not real goals, but fulfillments. The goal has to become the “how” or the overcoming of what I know I must do for competence» (GD 4).

This is confirmed by the experience reported concerning the orientation of the planning and control systems: 7 out of 9 concepts belong to OPA.

These systems and tools do not seem to improve managing activities; indeed, they appear to be partly self-referential and oriented towards the measurement of inputs and formal results. There are some indicators established by law, for example those on the mapping of legislative and administrative activities, but they are not regularly used.

«Mapping processes, considering their expiration and stressing the responsibility of the managers involved are not only elements of good administration, but they are also legal requirements. We are obliged to carry them out because we are responsible towards our citizens and every citizen should be able to know the deadlines for administrative procedures and the persons in charge of each procedure». (GD 2)

Of the nine PG-related concepts, most of them concern internal relationships (5). The relationship between top-level management and policy makers, which should aim to overcome the dichotomy between the two roles (as aforementioned by the vice-president), is confirmed by the managers interviewed. There is a relationship of trust between policy makers and top-level managers who often have to interact:

«Problems occur when there is a conflict between the area coordinators and the regional councilor or between the general director and the councilor, because it may impair the trust between them and compromise the performance of their activities». (GD 2)

Not a single concept emerged regarding external relationships, which confirm top management's disregard for this issue.

Expectations Most NPM-related concepts (6 out of 17) refer to the leading logic. The managerial innovations discussed in public sector research have not been completely implemented, as already pointed out above. A need to better define objectives and indicators to assess their achievements is strongly felt by top-level managers. Indicators should be better focused on actual priorities, budget management and allocation, and responsiveness to political inputs (including also informal ones):

«This is an important aspect, relating to priorities. In my opinion, the prevailing aspect is to ensure good budget management which is, by nature, a cross-functional activity. Even more important than budget management is the degree of compliance with political inputs that are not written in the stated objectives». (GD 2)

Most of the expectations of the managers moved to the PG are related to the decision-making contents (5 out of 14) and the orientation of the planning and control systems (4 out of 14). The managers expressed the need for greater system flexibility and instrument adaptability to enable the regional administration to face unexpected situations and new challenges posed by external environments, perceived as increasingly discontinuous:

«Another key element is flexibility. Nowadays, strictness, accompanied by a fair amount of flexibility, is essential, together with a strong willingness to change tasks and perspectives». (GD 3)

Adaptation to goals should suit political priorities and contingent activities as much as possible, and it should be carried out in a more timely and flexible way:

«The ability to understand where we stand is critical, so goal adjustment timeliness and achievement measurements are very important. They should also enable us, with the limitations I have represented, to be as close as possible to our political priorities». (GD 3)

As to planning systems, most expectations focused on the importance of setting targets in all the general directorates to improve the results of administrative action:

«Some targets should be cross-functional and they should involve all the general directorates, or at least, the most important ones. Let me add the ability to promote – I think this is an essential point – cross collaboration and cross-functionality». (GD 1)

The corporate model (NPM) dominates expectations about governance. This is clearly stated in two *verbatim* where respondents discussed the need to map all existing processes as a prerequisite to more virtuous organizational behavior:

«The other problem is networking: once we understand what our colleagues are doing, we can identify redundancies and interactions. This is the right way to improve in the future». (GD 3)

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper analyzes the current management models of public organizations, such as the Italian Region of Tuscany, with a qualitative approach. Our findings have to be cautiously interpreted due to research limitations. However, they provide a preliminary portrayal of the current logics of public organizations. Figure 1 summarizes the main results by describing the emerging logics for each actor and the documents:

(i) Documents and planning laws mostly embrace PG and NPM logics, as well as political leadership, with a focus on expectations; (ii) the experience of top managers highlights a prevalence of old public administration and partly NPM logics; (iii) GD expectations are more focused on NPM than on PG. Finally, they do not seem to be

completely aligned with those of top-level policy makers (as seen in the documents and by the vice president's interview).

The different points of view analyzed in our case study highlight two main results.

Hypothesis one: coexistence of different managerial logics in the same PA

Regarding the first hypothesis, we verified that OPA, NPM and PG backgrounds coexist in the same context (in our case, the Tuscany Region) and at the same time (2011). Evidence shows that different parts of the regional PA show a different prevalence of each managerial logic: that is, an OPA background for the experience of top management, a NPM background for policy makers and top management expectations, and a strong PG background found in documents, acts and regional laws. Although Italy has quite a long OPA tradition, this case study of the Tuscany Region shows elements of a transition to innovative public management logics. Nonetheless, the adaptability of a regional PA to the NPM model seems to be quite difficult for both top-level managers and policy makers. Even if the responsibilities of the regional institution are designed as decentralized and managerialized (the General Directorates in the regional administration work as an independent organization with a budget system), this form of organization is still perceived as too bureaucratic and lacking intra-organizational management and cross-functional focus – two typical NPM features (Osborne 2006). The Regional PA is still centered on policy implementation rather than outputs or outcomes. Moreover, the focus of policy implementation is “*organizationally distanced*” from the policy makers (Osborne 2006).

“*Having a lot of sectorial pillars or silos was seen as an obstructing solution of cross-sectorial problems*” (Christensen 2012). Even if poor inter and intra-organizational focus and vertical specialization are detected in the experience of policy makers and top managers, horizontal specialization and network governance (both features of PG logic) are considered a more important challenge than vertical specialization. The need to better coordinate a fragmented structure is a typical PG feature, but the process of orienting a regional administration towards the outside world, i.e. towards transparency and participation, is far from being accomplished.

Our results show, in accordance with Christensen (2012) and Olsen (2010), that public administration could present mixed management logics and reforms: “*we face a*

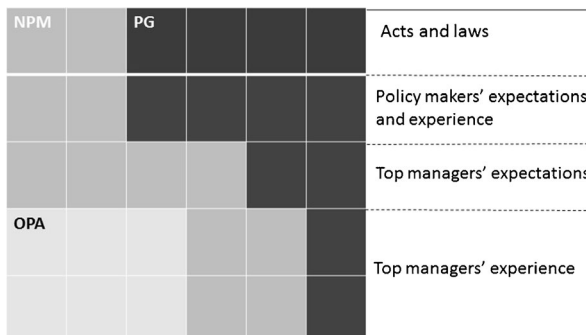


Fig. 1 OPA, NPM and PG as a layering process

dialectical development in which OPA has been combined with NPM and post NPM (in our case, PG) features to create new hybrid organizational forms” (Christensen 2012).

Hypothesis two: a layering process of culture and reforms

Considering the second hypothesis, new reforms are added to old reforms in a layering process, making the reform landscape more hybrid and complex. The “hybridity” of these organizational forms is caused by a layering process, whereby elements of the different models supplement or complement one another (Christensen and Læg Reid 2010; Streeck and Thelen 2005).

In our Tuscany Region case study, NPM or post-NPM reforms are introduced in a culture where there are still prevailing OPA elements such as traditional bureaucratic forms of specialization and coordination. The NPM reform wave, seen as a reaction to the challenges and problems of the ‘old public administration’, and the post-NPM reform wave, seen partly as a reaction to the negative effects of NPM, have become a complex sedimentation or layering of structural and cultural features (Olsen 2009; Streeck and Thelen 2005). In the course of this process (Røvik 1996), certain elements of structure and culture have appeared relatively stable and coherent (i.e. the “relevant dimension” focused on the same values both in the experience of top managers experience and in documents, see Tables 4 and 6), while others have become stronger or even institutionalized (i.e. the “planning and control system” dimension moving from OPA to PG logic, see Tables 4, 5, and 6), and others have become weakened or deinstitutionalized (i.e. the shift towards a PG logic on the “internal relations” dimension, see Tables 5 and 6). In our case, the layering process is generated both by: i. The different experience of top-level managers, policy makers and the values stated by regional acts and laws; ii. The coexistence within the same dimension and the same perspective of the three different managerial logics (see, for example, the “Internal relationships” or “Decision making contents” dimensions for top managers highlighted in Table 6).

figure 1 shows the actual distance between: i. the potential diffusion of management tools and culture (i.e. the expectations of top managers) and the expectations of policy makers, which are closer to NPM logics; ii. “*an even wider distance*” between the mere presence and the actual utilization of management tools (i.e. the experience of top managers) and what is laid down in laws and documents (i.e. the perspective of acts and laws). Ongaro and Valotti (2008) view this as an “implementation gap”. This could be due to a resistance to change in Italy’s dominant culture (historically a politicized and bureaucratic country), and, consequently, to weak organizational capabilities and poor managerial skills (Valotti 2012), and to a lack of administrative support and innovative tools. This result is also consistent with Panozzo’s claim (2000) that although reforms in the Italian public sector tried to introduce managerial logics to the domains of bureaucracy and formal compliance procedures, they were a product of the very culture they were trying to change.

The main limits of our research are related to the use of the content analysis methodology which can create biases due to the lack of independence and/or personal prejudices of the people interviewed, the quantification metric used and the subjective understanding of the issues by the researchers themselves. An ulterior limit may stem from the fact that our research comprises a single-case study in a limited time, which doesn’t allow us to generalize our results.

Finally, further research is needed to carefully investigate this subject by taking into account other variables, such as the individual characteristics of managers, organizational features, and time periods, to better understand management dynamics.

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Appendix

Table 7 Regional documents and laws

Title and section analyzed (in Italian)	Type of document	Year of approval	Year of enforcement
Toscana 2015. Programma di governo per la IX Legislatura →Section analyzed: 4. Programmazione e governance della Regione Toscana;5.1.10 Servizi pubblici locali; 5.1.11 Semplificazione amministrativa e rapporti con gli Enti locali	Regional Government Program	2010	2010–2015
Presentazione del Programma della IX Legislatura e della Giunta Regionale	Keynote speech of the President to the Regional Legislative Council	2010	2010–2015
Programma Regionale di Sviluppo 2011–2015. Identità competitiva e sviluppo responsabile → Section analyzed:PIS Semplificazione; Evoluzione del modello di programmazione, monitoraggio e controllo	Regional Development Program (DRP)	2011	2011–2015
La Toscana in chiaro: bilancio sociale 2011 →Section analyzed: Presentazione del Presidente; Presentazione dell'Assessore al Bilancio	Corporate Sustainability Report	2012	2011
Legge regionale 17 giugno 1992, n. 26, Prima attuazione dell'art. 48 dello Statuto. (First implementation of art. 48 of the Statute)	Regional Law		1992
Legge regionale 11 agosto 1999, n. 49, Norme in materia di programmazione regionale (Regional planning regulations)	Regional Law		1999
Legge regionale 2 agosto 2013, n. 44, Disposizioni in materia di programmazione regionale (Regional planning regulations)	Regional Law		2013
Legge regionale 27 dicembre 2007, n. 69, Norme sulla promozione della partecipazione alla elaborazione delle politiche regionali e locali. (Law to promote participation in local and regional policy-making)	Regional Law		2007

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