



Process management in the public sector

Process
management in
the public sector

81

The experience of one-stop shops in Italy

Edoardo Ongaro

Bocconi University and School of Management, Milan, Italy

Keywords *Business process re-engineering, Customer orientation, Process management, Italy*

Abstract *Process management is a managerial approach characterised by the focus on business processes that can provide an important contribution to the management of public sector organisations. The significance of this approach for the management of inter-organisational relations in the public sector is highlighted. A model for the analysis of the factors enabling the implementation of process management in the public sector is proposed. The Italian experience of the one-stop shops for businesses is studied; the relevance of process management approaches for the success of this reform is shown. Implications for public managers at all levels of government are discussed.*

Introduction: public management reforms and the development of process management

Process management is a managerial approach characterised by the focus on business processes[1] as the criterion used by the top management (the strategic apex in the terms of Mintzberg (1983)) for the organisational design and the assignment of managerial responsibilities (Hammer and Stanton, 1999). Initially developed in the commercial sector, this approach has been subsequently employed also in the management of public sector organisations (Bouckaert and Halachmi, 1995; Linden, 1993; Packwood *et al.*, 1998; Willcocks *et al.*, 1997). This managerial approach has proved relevant in recent years for the implementation of reform initiatives having the aims of increasing customer-orientation and inter-organisational co-ordination in the public sector.

An example is provided by an Italian experience about the reduction of “red tape” for businesses. The one-stop shops for businesses have been created with the purpose of easing businesses of most of their administrative burden by identifying a single interface for issuing business licences between the public administration and the entrepreneur and by increasing co-ordination among public entities involved in regulatory management. The implementation of this reform has required many public organisations to engage in radical process reengineering interventions. At the same time, the reform has created conditions favourable to the spread of process management approaches in the Italian public sector, which, in a number of cases, developed much beyond the activation of the one-stop shop according to the requirements of this reform.



The spreading of process management logics and techniques poses the issue of analysing the factors that can facilitate the adoption of this managerial approach in the public sector, by addressing questions like:

- (1) Is process management always possible?
- (2) What are enabling factors for process management in the public sector?
- (3) And, in particular, how can it be related to public management reforms carried on at the central level?

The questions are of interest for reformers of the public sector at the central level, as they contribute to determine such conditions.

A second issue concerns how to implement process management in individual public organisations, given the presence of enabling factors. The question is especially significant for managers of public organisations at the “street level”. Features of process management and instruments for its implementation are illustrated.

The adoption of this managerial approach raises further issues about the implications of process management for the accountability to the public, which are discussed in the final section. Before addressing the questions, a preliminary point regards the benefits expected of process management: reasons for the use of process-based approaches in the management of public administrations spring from two relevant trends.

The wave of managerial reforms in the public sector since the beginning of the 1980s has, to a large extent, produced the overcoming of the “traditional” self-orientation of bureaucratic systems. The re-orientation of public administrations to end-users conceived as customers (customer-orientation) is seen as a crucial component of the “legitimation” of the public sector in the society. Pursuing this goal is one of the main sources of innovation in public management since the early 1980s, as discussed in classical works on paradigm-change in the public sector (Barzelay, 1992) and the diffusion of the new public management[2] (NPM).

Customer-oriented approaches that originated in the commercial sector, like the business process reengineering (BPR) (Hammer, 1990; Davenport and Short, 1990), may (Hammer and Champy, 1993; Morris and Brandon, 1995) prove useful for this purpose. In particular, process-based managerial approaches may prove especially important in order to meet issues related to the improvement of customer-orientation, such as[3]:

- the necessity of increasing the organisational flexibility in order to adapt to a more and more complex and rapidly changing environment;
- the priority given to the reduction of “throughput times”, usually a key factor in the provision of public services; and
- the development of organisational models that can exploit the potentials of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Literature on BPR in the public sector concentrates mainly on the intervention aimed at reshaping the processes of a public entity, and the focus is usually on change within the individual public organisation engaging in the reengineering intervention (a local authority, a healthcare unit, etc.[4]). Contributions have emphasised the necessity of adopting an incremental approach in reengineering interventions and the difficulties in identifying and measuring performances as peculiar features of BPR in the public sector. However, other aspects of the analysis of organisational processes in the public sector have not been given the same attention: the present work addresses two issues:

- (1) how to ordinarily run public administrations by focusing on their business processes, a managerial issue usually – though not necessarily – following the reengineering intervention; and
- (2) how to employ process management for the effective management of inter-organisational relations in the public sector.

Another type of transformation affecting the public sector is the basis for providing a second set of justifications for the adoption of process management approaches: the increased fragmentation of the public sector. This phenomenon is the outcome of different trends: an increased specialisation (the establishment of more specialised, and usually more numerous, public organisations) and a drift towards decentralisation, both political (the transfer of central authority to elected public bodies at the intermediate or local level) and administrative (the transfer being to appointed bodies, external or internal to the public sector). An analysis of these trajectories of reform is reported by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2003, chapter 4) in a comparative study on public management reforms in a number of countries. Political decentralisation, in particular, is, although with exceptions, a widespread trend in many countries (OECD, 1997). As a result of these tendencies, in Kettl's terms[5], the public sector has become both more horizontal – since the government has come to rely heavily on for-profit and not-for-profit organisations for delivering goods and services – and more vertical – through both traditional hierarchical bureaucracies and multi-layered federalism.

This transformation raises the issue of managing the increasingly complex set of relations among public entities and with private organisations, which determines an increased need of co-ordination. The use of process-based approaches as organisational instruments to support the management of complex sets of inter-organisational relations is focused in the present work (thus contributing to the field of studies that can be classified under the label of “intergovernmental management”, in a broad sense (see Rhodes (1996) and subsequent works).

But under what circumstances is this managerial approach applicable and capable of improving the effectiveness of public organisations? The introduction of one-stop shops is a reform initiative whose purpose was to

increase customer-orientation of public entities as well as to address a perceived co-ordination gap among public organisations. Its actual implementation has required the adoption of process reengineering and process management logics and techniques. This reform has created conditions favourable to the spread of process management approaches well beyond the requirements of the reform. What lessons can we learn from this experience about how to create conditions favourable to the development of process management in public sector organisations? To address the question, a broad-scope, first approximation model of the factors enabling the adoption of process management in the public sector is proposed in the light of the experience of one-stop shops for businesses in Italy. The model can be employed for answering policy questions about the one-stop shops reform in Italy or similar innovations. However, the case is mainly used in an instrumental way, for drawing inferences about the factors that can enable the adoption of process management in the public sector. It is for this reason that, before illustrating the experience of one-stop shops in Italy, the features of process management are outlined by reviewing some of the most significant contributions to the study of this managerial approach.

Features of process management

What are the key characteristics of process management? What instruments can public managers employ to manage their organisations according to a process-based logic? Organising and managing in systematic reference to business processes means that certain “organisational doctrines” and instruments are systematically employed ([Hammer and Stanton, 1999](#)). A synthetic list of the features of process management[6] is summarised in Table I and briefly commented in the remainder of the section.

Diffusion of a process culture

The diffusion of an organisational culture oriented to processes is the first relevant aspect. The cases studied by [Majchzak and Wang \(1996\)](#) and Bartlett and Ghoshal (1995) point out that, in absence of such a culture, performances may even worsen in a process-based organisation compared to a more traditional organisational frame.

The diffusion of a process culture requires the use of specific instruments (Table I). The aim of the diffusion of a process culture is achieved if processes are perceived by personnel as the “place” where organisational resources are activated and employed (Hall, 1992; [Stalk et al., 1992](#)).

Identification of process owners

The process owner is responsible for process performances ([Hammer and Stanton, 1999](#)). The process owner must have authority on process aims and resources, on the organisation of labour in the process, and must be the leader of the process team (see Figure 1).

Principles of process management	Main features	Instruments
Diffusion of a process culture	Processes are perceived by personnel as the “place” where organizational resources are activated and employed	The description and analysis of the main processes. The development of process indicators (quality of the output, throughput time, costs). The assignment of process performance targets. The development of HRM systems based also on the evaluation and reward of the performance of the process team
Identification of process owners	The process owner, with regard to his or her own process: has authority on process aims and resources, is responsible of process performances, is responsible towards the customer of the process, is the leader of the process team, has to create the conditions for the continuous improvement of the process. The process owner is usually chosen in the organisational unit more involved in the process, or that has the key skills and resources to manage critical activities of the process. The process owner does not necessarily have direct authority on resources of the other organisational units involved in the process (see right column)	The direct hierarchical authority on personnel of his/her own organisational unit, and possible forms of authority over the personnel of the other units involved in the process. The authority over the process team, and powers in the definition of job description and overall job organisation within the process. The control of economic-financial resources to be employed in the functioning of the process. The “authoritativeness”, engendered by the fact of being the point of reference for the top executives for whatever regards the process
Alignment of core processes and organisational design	Alignment of the macro-structure and core processes. Reduction of layers (according to the pattern of the “lean organisation”). Alignment of the micro-structure – redefinition of tasks to reduce fragmentation of activities. Alignment of ICT solutions and processes	The integration of fragmented activities. The streamline of final (“core”) processes, by decentralising support activities to final processes. The introduction of a “pull” logic to identify the consumption of internal outputs. The distinction of different processes, avoiding them to interfere
Activation of supplier-customer chains	Organisational units downstream in the workflow have to be considered as customers, and organisational units upstream have to use the same care as if they were suppliers. Delivery time and other conditions of the output of an organisational unit delivered to another unit are relevant performance parameters	The systematic measurement of internal quality of outputs, throughput times, costs. The use of such measures in personnel evaluation and rewarding
Delegation and team working	Establishment of the process team. High degree of delegation	Organisational mechanisms consistent with a high degree of delegation, especially consistent rewarding schemes. The assignment of team targets. The adequate layout of the offices

Table I.
Features and
instruments of process
management

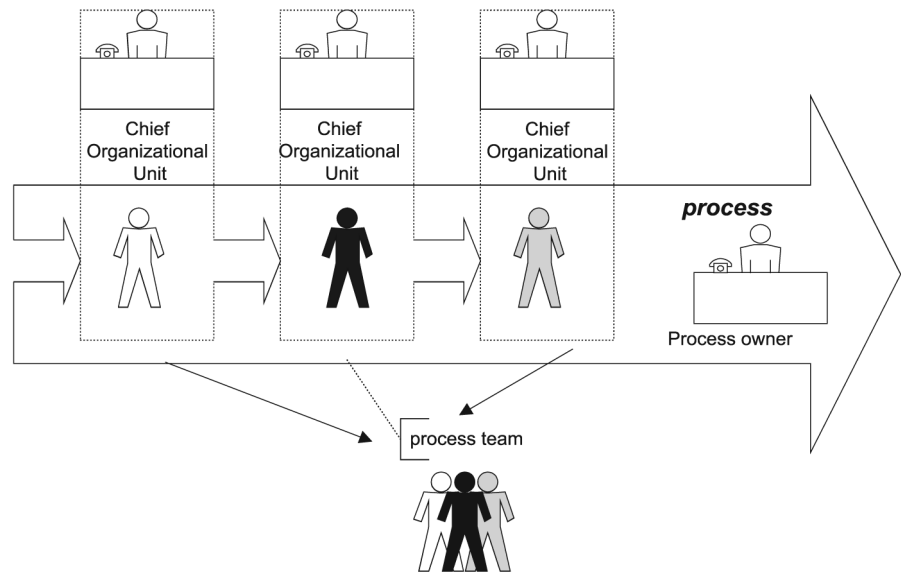


Figure 1.
Process owner, process
team, line responsibility

In case the process had to be radically redesigned, the process owner usually leads the reengineering intervention.

Alignment of core processes, organisational design and ICT

The implementation of process management affects the organisational structure. The reduction of organisational layers (according to the pattern of the “lean organisation”) and the redefinition of tasks to streamline processes are typical restructuring interventions aimed at improving the alignment of the organisational design and the core processes (Peppard and Rowland, 1995). The value chain concept (Porter, 1985) provides a frame for the distinction of processes in the two categories of primary processes (producing the outputs for the end-users) and support processes (whose outputs are employed for the functioning of the organisation), as well as for the analysis of the main business process linkages between the two sets.

Process management does not entail the absence of traditional hierarchical relations (an evolution that might be, in many respects, impossible in the public sector). Process management usually leads to a matrix framework that preserves hierarchical lines, integrating them with a systematic orientation to the core processes by using the set of principles illustrated.

With regard to ICT, the interconnection between information technology and the necessity to adopt a process-oriented approach to the organisational innovation is the starting point of the literature on BPR. ICT plays a complex role in process management that can be described with five components[7]:

- (1) automation of the activities of the process;
- (2) computerisation of the information system of the process;
- (3) support to the control of the process (tracking and informational functions);
- (4) support to the analysis and redesign of the process (when a reengineering intervention is needed); and
- (5) support to the project management of the reengineering intervention (when needed).

Activation of supplier-customer chains

A further element of process management lies in the reshaping of relations among organisational units according to the pattern of the supplier-customer relations. Organisational units “downstream” in the workflow have to be considered as customers, and organisational units “upstream” have to use the same care as if they were suppliers[8]. All intermediate organisational units, and not only end-users, have to be considered as part of supplier-customer relations (levers to activate such relations are shown in Table I).

Delegation and team working

Delegation and team working are two other relevant levers for implementing process management (Peppard and Rowland, 1995). Delegation is important to give personnel, who are still dependent in functional terms on an organisational unit, responsibilities on process targets. Complementarily, process teams (see Figure 1) are established to manage the interconnections of the different phases of the process ([Hammer and Stanton, 1999](#)).

Implementing process management

Having outlined the main features of process management (or, in other terms: the organisational requirements necessary for reshaping an organisation, or important parts of it, around its core processes), we can now turn to the questions:

- Is process management always possible?
- Is it always desirable?

Before addressing the first question and investigating the factors enabling process management – a central task of this article – it is useful to dwell briefly on the latter. We have already discussed the transformations affecting the public sector (the growing importance of customer-orientation and the trends to decentralisation and the subsequent need of strengthening co-ordination) that constitute reasons for the adoption of process management approaches. These transformations are not to be intended as universal problems, nor priority goals, under any circumstances. Thus, a first

point is that not any transformation affecting the public sector requires the adoption of process management approaches.

Moreover, one criticism of process management as an organisational doctrine is that it is output-oriented and therefore short-term-oriented and it may undermine the long-term development of the skills of the staff in an organisation (a crucial “input”, or asset), for this reason, negatively affecting its robustness and long-term development. Furthermore, as early as about a decade ago, the relationship between successful reengineering interventions and overall business performances was deeply questioned:

After months, even years of careful redesign [...] companies achieve dramatic improvements in individual processes only to watch overall results decline (Hall *et al.*, 1993).

More broadly, subsequent studies questioned the correlation between large-scale process reengineering and management approaches and business or corporate results like larger profits or return on investments (ROI).

Having made the point that, in the commercial as well as in the public sector, the desirability of process management is always “contingent” to priorities and context, we can turn to the issue of the feasibility of process management. The successful introduction of one-stop shops in a number of (but not all) Italian municipalities, which required the systematic adoption of process reengineering[9] and management logics and techniques, provides important evidence for drawing inferences about the factors enabling process management, as well as the management of change in individual public entities engaging in the implementation of the one-stop shops reform.

The case of the one-stop shops in Italy

The Italian economy is strongly based on the competitiveness of small and middle businesses, are numerous and located especially in the north and centre of Italy. The administrative burden imposed by a traditionally heavy regulation of the economic activity has always been a factor negatively affecting the performance of businesses in Italy, and especially of this crucial category. In order to fill this historical gap and improve the interface between the public and the private sector, in the late 1990s “one-stop shops” for businesses were introduced.

This innovation in regulatory management took place in a broader context of significant public management reforms during the 1990s in Italy, especially at the local government level[10]. The reform initiatives more significant for the impact on the one-stop shops were the introduction of management accounting and control and the development of performance indicators (since the second half of the 1980s), that contributed to swell the performance-orientation of local authorities, the increased organisational autonomy of local authorities (reform introduced in 1990), the increased separation of political decision making from the direct managerial responsibility of public servants (1993), and the direct election of the mayor, whose powers were also much strengthened (1993).

Subsequent important reforms (1998 and 1999) regarded human resource management.

Within this general frame of reforms, pressures of industrialists, particularly intense in the second half of the 1990s, contributed to set at the top of the political agenda the issue of softening the administrative burden over the economy. The programme for establishing one-stop shops for businesses in all localities throughout Italy was started in 1998[11] (Caccia and Valotti, 2000). They represent single contact points for whatever regards permissions prescribed by the law to exercise industrial activities. The responsibility to activate such interface between the public sector and businesses is given to municipalities, which can perform it both individually or through a consortia or other arrangements.

The one-stop shop is the interface for the firm to a wide range of public bodies, including the local healthcare unit, fire brigades, province and region, chamber of commerce, regional authority for the environment, and other public authorities. Relevant powers are given to the one-stop shop, which becomes the only one responsible in front of the end-user (the firm). Reform targets redesign the relations with the entrepreneur. Time to issue a business licence and the quality of the interface with firms become as important as the content of the permission itself[12].

The one-stop shop reform shapes a frame that favours the management of activities according to a process management logic. In fact, the structure responsible for the one-stop shop (which may be a lean organisational unit in the municipality, autonomous or integrated in one of the offices more involved in the relations with entrepreneurs) has to co-ordinate the activities of all public entities in charge of issuing one or more specific permissions, selected according to the kind of request of the entrepreneur.

The one-stop shop monitors the respect of times and the quality of documentation interchange with the entrepreneur and among the various public bodies involved. Furthermore, the one-stop shop has the power, with regard to the other municipal offices, to address the city manager or the mayor to obtain support for managing possible delays; and with regard to external public bodies, it can ask the mayor to convene a “services conference”, attended by all public bodies of a certain locality, which has the power to make decisions in the place of a defaulting entity. Consequently, the person in charge of the one-stop shop has all the main characteristics defining the role of process owner of an inter-organisational process (see Table I).

Within the frame of the one-stop shop, the activation of a supplier-customer logic is almost imposed by the short terms prescribed by law to provide the response to the entrepreneur. The chain is started by the one-stop shop that, activated by the entrepreneur’s application, transmits all documentation to the offices involved, co-ordinates each documentation integration request, and monitors times for each specific permission to be transmitted back. The

one-stop shop has the powers necessary to control all steps of the workflow, including the steps performed by other public administrations. The one-stop shop plays an “assembling” role of all the juridical acts, which are the “components” supplied by the offices of the different authorities involved. Previously to the reform, for each of these acts the entrepreneur had to manage a specific relation with the competent public body.

The establishment of forms of team-working, including staff from all the offices of the different bodies involved in the assembling process, becomes crucial. In particular, whenever permissions are internally linked (the authorisation by one authority is a pre-requisite for another authority to issue its own permission), the process team becomes an essential organisational mechanism.

Having discussed the design of the reform, we can now turn to implementation. Recent surveys[13] have shown a patchy situation in Italy. Part of the Italian municipalities have established very effective one-stop shops, others have not activated it yet. These results point out the relevance of factors at the level of individual organisations. The two following cases[14] show the successful implementation of forms of process management in a middle-large municipality (Modena) and in a network of small municipalities and the province of Bologna.

Modena

The one-stop shop of the municipality of Modena[18] was among the first to be activated in Italy after the one-stop shops reform had been enacted. Previously to the introduction of the one-stop shop, there had been many innovations promoted by the city manager and top executives, focused on improving the orientation to users.

A systematic analysis of all processes concerned had been preliminarily carried through, as part of the activation of the one-stop shop. This fact aligned organisational structure and processes in the management of the one-stop shop, and it enhanced the orientation to process management in the organisational culture. A consultancy was employed in the design of the one-stop shop.

The one-stop shop structure had a “strong” role, performing, among the others, the functions of:

- co-ordinating all organisational units involved, with the purpose of promoting their integration;
- overseeing the continuous improvement of the organisational interactions;
- constituting the single interface with users (although this did not mean that direct contacts between the entrepreneur and internal units were not allowed when useful).

Therefore, the responsible of the one-stop shop performed the role of process owner, and promoted supplier-customer chain approaches and team working.

Bologna

A particularly significant case is the network of one-stop shops promoted by the Province of Bologna[19] to support the activation of the one-stop shop also in the municipalities of the middle-small size present on the territory. The design elaborated by the responsibility of the one-stop shop of the province conceived the ten major municipalities in the locality, co-ordinated by the province, as “poles” for smaller municipalities. Part of the activities of the one-stop shops of these municipalities had been delegated to the one-stop shop of the major municipalities.

The most relevant problems of smaller municipalities in activating the one-stop shop are:

- scarce resources to devote to the implementation of the one-stop shop, which, in general, has to process only a very limited number of requests per year;
- lack of expertise, necessary to manage requests presenting high technical complexity;
- difficulties in interfacing with external bodies, also because of their limited “institutional weight”.

The activation of the network allowed ot to cope with these problems, that have caused many difficulties to small local authorities throughout Italy in the activation of the one-stop shop. In addition, the standardisation of procedures made the interactions with territorial offices of the state (usually established on a provincial base) much easier. Deconcentrated structures of the central government did not have to interface with a variety of municipalities each adopting different procedures.

At the same time, small municipalities usually have a higher flexibility also because of their limited organisational complexity. For these reasons, the sharing of tasks between smaller and larger municipalities improved the overall performances of the network of one-stop shops. In addition, in this frame, inter-organisational processes were more easily redesigned and more effectively managed, with the responsible of the one-stop shops of the larger municipalities centralising some of the activities of smaller municipalities.

An important condition that helped the start-up of the network was the pre-existence of an inter-institutional computerised information system which interconnected almost all local authorities of the locality. Besides being a key infrastructure for the management of the network of one-stop shops, its importance was also related to the fact that, as years went by, it had created a habit of co-operation among these municipalities and reduced resistances towards delegation of attributions to other municipalities (the poles) or to the province.

Discussion

In both cases, throughput times for issuing licences were reduced and a single interface with entrepreneurs was established and empowered (by on-the-Web interactions and other aspects of interfacing).

The second half of the 1990s was a period of profound renewal in the local sector[15] and the two local governments were very active in promoting innovations. The enactment of the one-stop shops bill came as an opportunity for these local authorities for reshaping their relations with the business sector. In the case of Modena, a municipality that was aiming at a reputation as a very innovative town, the city manager[16] played a key role in championing and triggering the introduction of the one-stop shop. The responsible of the one-stop shop played a crucial role in the province of Bologna, traditionally a very visible “shop window” in Italy, because of its fame as a very modern and innovative public administration.

In both cases, a strong support came from key stakeholders, mainly industrial associations. In the case of Bologna, also the municipalities of small dimensions considered the project promoted by the province of Bologna of interconnecting all one-stop shops in the locality as an important opportunity to cope with the difficulties of activating a one-stop shop in a small municipality. The enlargement, beyond the provisions of the law, of the scope of the one-stop shops to other categories, like shopkeepers and dealers, enhanced the support to this innovation.

The two cases were also characterised by a favourable organisational culture. Technological innovation and customer-orientation were values emphasised in formal and informal communications, commonly heard in conversations, and easily detectable in artefacts.

The role of the executive leadership proved crucial for the implementation of the one-stop shop as well as for the exploitation of the opportunities generated by this reform initiative at the level of individual organisations. The reform was in fact conceived in these municipalities, not just as a set of new tasks to be executed, but as an opportunity for an ambitious improvement of the performances in the delivery of services in the field of the regulation of economic activity and, more broadly, as a change in the context that generates new opportunities for reshaping the relations with the business sector, that “entrepreneurial” public managers of municipalities can exploit in order to create value for the public[17].

Enabling factors for the development of process management in the public sector

What lessons can be drawn from the Italian experience of one-stop shops which might be useful for other countries, or in other policy fields? We have seen that process management has been important for the implementation of such reform, especially for the effective management of inter-organisational processes. Evidence

shows also that the one-stop shop programme set favourable conditions that prompted a kind of managerial innovation at the level of individual organisations that went beyond mere compliance to the requirements of the reform.

What are the main factors stimulating and facilitating the adoption of process management approaches? The model illustrated in Figure 2 reflects and summarises the results of the case study, and proposes a first approximation model highlighting some key factors for the development of process management in the public sector. All the factors may be regarded as enablers, in a broad sense.

Practical implications are discussed in the final section.

Legal and cultural setting

By legal setting it is considered the set of legal rules influencing the management of public administrations in a given country. The legal setting determines the functions and powers assigned to public bodies and their organisational and financial autonomy. Therefore, the legal setting has a strong influence on inter-organisational processes, whose structure can be

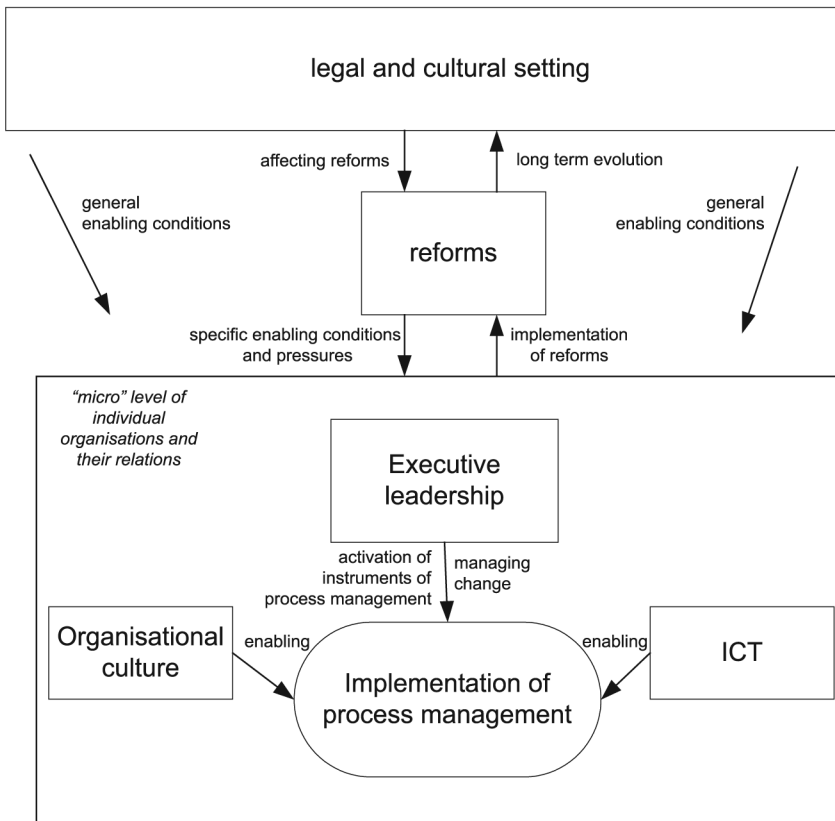


Figure 2.
Enabling factors for
process management in
the public sector

changed only within the frame of the attributions and constraints to which public bodies are subject. For example, compliance to strict formal rules and the fragmentation of power in different offices may make appointing and giving the necessary instruments to a process owner very difficult. In this case, identifying a process owner for the process of issuing business licences was practically impossible before the reform. The legal framework has a relevant role in determining the possibility to adopt new organisational models (like a lean organisation, high levels of delegation, etc.) that can, in some countries and sectors, face cultural and legal premises completely different from those required for the new models to work.

By cultural setting, it is considered the dominant paradigm and cultural models in the public sector. During the last two decades there appears to have been a great change in the administrative culture in different countries and, in general terms, the transition may be described as a change from bureaucratic models to more customer-oriented models ([Barzelay \(1992\)](#) analyses the phenomenon in terms of paradigm change, [Hughes \(1998\)](#) compares emerging models with the traditional bureaucratic model). Therefore, a first, rough distinction may be drawn between traditional bureaucratic models “versus” the emergence of customer-oriented models and paradigms in the public sector. Although harsh criticisms have been moved to the presumptive novelty and necessity of such changes (a powerful sample of this strand of literature is [Hood \(1998\)](#)), the distinction may be useful in the analysis of the factors affecting the adoption of process management approaches. The cultural setting wields an influence less direct than the legal setting, but equally decisive on the implementation of process management: it may impede process management, or at the opposite facilitate it.

Besides determining some general conditions affecting process management, the legal and cultural setting affects the implementation of reforms in public management, although there is not a causal, univocal line of inference (for a broad discussion of the influence of the politico-administrative regime of a country on public management reforms (see [Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2003](#))). In the longer term, also features of the politico-administrative regime of a country, such as the legal and cultural setting, evolve due to the influence of public management reforms (upward arrow in Figure 2).

The reform frame

The contents of reforms in public management[20] occurring in the public sector in many countries (often inspired by the NPM) influence the implementation of process management approaches in individual public organisations, by setting context conditions which make the activation of process management logics and instruments possible.

As an example, the one-stop shop reform designs for the responsible of the one-stop shop is a role of the process owner of inter-organisational processes.

As another example of the influence of public management reforms on process management, reforms in civil service and labour relations (like the trend to delegation and increased managerial responsibility experienced in Italy and in many countries), have provided important specific enabling conditions for the management of inter-organisational teams.

Another aspect of reforms is that they may provide specific pressures stimulating the adoption of managerial approaches capable of enhancing customer-orientation in public entities. The introduction of the one-stop shop was coercive, but, at the same time, the reform provided the municipalities with a prominent role in the promotion of the economic development of the territory. Directly elected mayors (since 1993), much more powerful than in the past in front of city councils, had in this reform initiative an ideal condition to reshape their role in the local system of public and private actors. Other examples of reforms providing pressures for increasing customer-orientation are market type mechanisms (MTM) (e.g. Le Grand and Barthlett (1993) in health and social sectors). The introduction of mechanisms aimed at creating conditions similar to the ones an organisation experiences when operating on a market, is a remarkable characteristic of public management reforms in different countries (although controversial in its results). These pressures forcing public administrations to re-orient to end-users may be important to prompt the adoption of a customer-oriented approach like process management. However, a wide range of reform initiatives, besides those inspired by MTM, can provide pressures, as the public programme for establishing one-stop shops in Italy shows.

All the factors discussed are macro-level factors, i.e. features of a country's public sector, or relevant policy subsystems within a national context. In the description of the model, it is now useful to employ a distinction between the macro-level and the micro-level. The reference is to the systems theories applied to social systems (Vickers, 1967); according to this approach, human activity systems can be analysed as part of wider systems and subsystems (Checkland, 1981), where a system is a set of interconnected elements (Boulding, 1956). The following factor operates at the micro-level of individual organisations.

Executive leadership

Reforms may create favourable conditions, but process management takes place in individual public organisations. It is an executive decision for public managers of individual organisations. The role of the executive leadership (Moore, 1995) in activating this innovative managerial approach proves crucial, as the highly-differentiated degree of implementation of the one-stop shops programme throughout Italy shows.

Two organisational roles appear crucial, the process owner and the top management. In the experience studied, the responsible one-stop shop is required to have, in particular:

- some skills;
- a cross-cutting view of the organisation, as well as the technical skills for analysing and re-designing processes;
- a strong identification with the customer-orientation credo;
- the capability of managing groups – especially inter-agency groups – and leading teams, while avoiding the pitfalls of decision making in groups (Doherty and Horne, 2002, chapter 6); and
- a wide knowledge of the public sector institutions and rules, especially because of the inter-institutional nature of the processes considered.

All these features appear of general significance for the role of process owner in the public sector.

The backing by the city manager proved very important[21] in giving to the responsible of the one-stop shop the authority and the authoritativeness (Table I) necessary for overcoming resistances, within the municipality and, especially, in external public entities. The support by the top management appears crucial, when the process spans across a wide range of sectors of the organisation. It is even more important in inter-institutional processes; in these cases, it is also important that the top management of the organisation promoting the innovation is empowered with adequate levers (in the case of the one-stop shop, the services conference and the other instruments by which the municipality can play a leading role in front of the other bodies).

In generalising beyond the experience of one-stop shops, another aspect has to be considered. The overall width of change determined by the implementation of one-stop shops can be considered according to two categories:

- (1) the degree of change; and
- (2) the speed of change (on this as other points concerning the management of change, a primary reference is Doherty and Horne (2002)).

In the case of one-stop shops, they both can be deemed as “average” change. Concerning the degree of change, the introduction of the one-stop shop was inter-sectoral and brought a novel logic in public entities, but regarded basically the interfaces and did not entail a radical overhaul of tasks within the offices; with regard to the speed, the reform prescribed short times for the implementation, but pressures on the speed of change were not particularly strong. Process management, when aimed at a radical overhaul of tasks, applied to the entire organisation, and carried on in more critical situations, may imply a big change (so-called “transformation” type of change). The

management of change towards process management may be more critical in those situations.

In activating process management, public managers can find two other factors of particular importance:

- (1) the organisational culture; and
- (2) ICT infrastructures.

The organisational culture

The organisational culture (Schein, 1984, 1985) of individual public entities has to be added to the general influence of the broad cultural setting that concerns basically the macro-level. Public administrations, still characterised by a very limited orientation to end-users (a pre-requisite for the development of a process culture), will meet many difficulties in implementing process management, even though the broader cultural setting has evolved. This aspect is, in the short-term, a constraint in part out of the control of people with executive responsibility in such administrations. For this reason, the pre-existence of an user-oriented organisational culture (as in the cases of Bologna and Modena) may be regarded, at the micro-level of an organisation or a set of organisations interconnected by relevant processes, as an enabling factor. Successes and failures in implementing one-stop shops in Italy illustrate the importance of this factor. However, an effective executive leadership may also pro-actively reshape the organisational culture, thus changing the conditions in which the implementation of process management approaches is carried on.

Information and communication technologies

ICT at the level of individual organisations represents another enabling factor, in part out of the control of the management. On the one hand, national policies on innovation and computerisation in the public sector have strong influence over investments and ICT infrastructures available to public managers of individual organisations. On the other hand, previous ICT investments may provide a public entity with important assets to be employed when the opportunity emerges (as in the case of the province of Bologna, which turned its pre-existing ICT network into an important platform for running one-stop shops), or the opposite, the scarcity of assets may represent a relevant constraint.

The causal arrows at the micro-level work also the other way: the organisational development produced by the implementation of process management can, in the longer-term, transform the organisational culture. Implementing process management may also be an opportunity for attracting central government funds for ICT.

Furthermore, the spread of successful practices of process management at the micro-level contributes to the implementation of reforms, like the one-stop

The implementation of process management in public administrations: discussion and practical implications

In the present work, a model for the analysis of the relations between process management – an approach for enhancing customer-orientation of public administrations, – and main enabling factors is proposed in the light of the experience of the one-stop shops. The case examined shows a favourable reform design that has, in significant cases, led to the implementation of process management approaches. These, in turn, have determined the achievement of the reform targets, as well as produced a significant managerial innovation in the public organisations involved.

In this paragraph, the model and the practical implications in implementing process management are discussed.

The model

As a first step, some issues about the factors that have been defined (the legal and cultural setting, the reform frame, the organisational culture, and ICT) are discussed, why these factors? And how have they been determined?

The purpose of the model is to define broad factors easy to identify. Important factors enabling process management have been defined, both at the macro-level, i.e. at the level of a country or a relevant policy subsystem in a given country, and at the micro-level of individual public organisations. Reformers at the national level may be interested in including the range of effects of a reform initiative and also the creation of conditions affecting managerial innovation in individual public sector organisations. Public managers at the micro-level may employ the model for a strategic analysis about the possibility of activating this managerial approach in their contingent context. Instruments for public managers to implement process management have been supplied; factors have then been constructed basically by determining their influence on the basic features of process management (Table I).

Considering the legal setting, it has been shown that, if a certain degree of autonomy to individual public organisations in the definition of the organisational model, and to managers in performing their role and assigning tasks is not allowed in a given sector, then inter-organisational process management may be impossible. Because, for example, no actual levers are available to the process owner, or inter-institutional teams cannot be built, or too many constraints limit the organisational design. Complementarily, failures of process-based approaches (reported in literature and confirmed in the case study) in situations where process culture is lacking show the influence of the cultural setting as well as the organisational culture of individual public entities.

Given a favourable legal and cultural setting, the case of one-stop shops shows the relevance of the reform frame to put into effect the levers of process management. It is important that macro-level organisational reforms of the public sector facilitate process management at the level of individual organisations and their interconnections, once developed, process management increases customer-orientation of public administrations and inter-organisational co-ordination. The diffusion of process management may, in turn, contribute to the success of these reforms.

The experience of the one-stop shops illustrates how macro-level reforms may contribute to enable and prompt process management in individual public sector organisations. The reform established the figure of the responsible one-stop shop, whose attributions and powers made him or her the natural process owner of the process of issuing licences to businesses, and redesigned the interface with end-users. Thus forcing the activation of a supplier-customer logic both internal to the municipality and, even more crucial, among the wide range of public entities concerned in issuing a business licence. The reform also empowered end-users, by establishing new rights for the entrepreneurs in terms of time for a business licence and a single interface with the public sector. Municipalities that adopted process management approaches not only met the required reform targets, but also strategically redesigned their relationships with the business sector in the locality. The one-stop shop became, in those cases, a broad-scope interface for a wide set of information, or, in some cases, also a “consultant”, especially for small businesses in the start-up stage, or even an important agent of local economic development[23].

The reform was not flawless. One criticism regarded the assumption that all municipalities, independently of the size, were capable of implementing the one-stop shop. Another criticism concerned the incentives to municipalities for implementing the reform. The overall set of incentives and sanctions for municipalities to comply with the reform appeared weak, notwithstanding the financial supports for ICT and training. Also “soft” instruments, like some form of rewarding, or even symbolic awards, to those municipalities that performed really well in establishing the one-stop shop were very limited and, according to many observers, the reform seemed to lose momentum after the important results achieved in the first two to three years. As a consequence, an evident split emerged between municipalities where the top management conceived the reform as a strategic opportunity for reshaping relations with the business sector and municipalities led by less entrepreneurial managers[24]. Even the problems of municipalities of small size were overcome or amplified according to the behaviour of the executive leadership (see the case of Bologna).

At the micro-level of local authorities, the two key figures for the success of the one-stop shop proved to be the city manager, champion and internal sponsor of the innovation, and the responsible of the one-stop shop, process

owner of the process of issuing business licences. They usually played a key role in defining the mission and contents of the one-stop shop, and made its implementation possible. The key action is building up an inter-institutional team composed by members of the public entities competent in issuing specific permissions. Making such teams work effectively is a difficult task and the group has to pass through different stages until it becomes performing. The specific difficulties of an inter-institutional team lies in its multidisciplinary composition and in the significant differences in the routines and organisational culture of each public entity. The deployment of all the levers available to the responsible of the one-stop shop appears crucial. In general terms, most of the efforts should be devoted to employing soft instruments for favouring the establishment of positive relations among all members (in this respect, the joint attendance of training courses by members of all public entities involved has proved to be a very important instrument). However, also hard instruments made available by the reform (like convening the services conference, that can force adoption of provisions even in the absence of a defaulting entity) should be deployed whenever necessary. The period immediately after the reform was enacted and appeared to have provided an opportunity window for establishing collaborative relations with the set of public bodies involved. Setting to work all the operating routines necessary for the one-stop shop in this time lag proved to be very important, while delaying in many cases implied that momentum was lost.

Results

In the cases of successful implementation of the one-stop shop, “throughput” time for issuing business licences has been significantly reduced (from an average of about 150 days to less than 90 days). Also the quality of the interface with users has in general improved: though the ultimate impact on the end-user may be questioned, an important progress has been achieved by establishing the one-stop shop, at least in terms of completeness and timeliness of information released.

Another important result is not expressed in operational terms[25], but considers the long-term effects of a major re-orientation in public sector organisations. In the case considered, the enhanced customer-orientation may be considered as a result in itself, which, in the long-run, could produce operational results like further reduction of throughput times or an increased output quality.

At a further level, an output-oriented organisation is also likely to have a greater flexibility, at least in terms of an increased capacity of monitoring users’ needs and quickly adapting the outputs accordingly[26]. Positive signals of an increased customer-orientation and flexibility have been detected in the most successful cases of implementation of the one-stop shop.

On the other hand, the one-stop shop also shows some risk areas, if not immediate negative results. Besides the costs for implementing the one-stop shop, to which expected benefits have to be compared, there are two other issues. The first one regards accountability, and is discussed below. The second one regards the long-term skills development of staff. While an inter-disciplinary team and a well-designed supplier-customer chain improve the quality for users, the core task of public entities remains the technical assessment of the different requirements (hygienic, in terms of job-place safety, etc.) to which firms have to comply. The expertise to perform such tasks is for the most part developed in the functional units of individual public entities. A proper balance between team-working in the process and the development of skills in the individual organisations has to be met, or else the performance of the core tasks will in the long-run be impoverished.

Accountability

The adoption of process management approaches has implications also for the accountability to the public. Two issues appear of especial significance. The first one concerns transparency and the identification of responsibility. Considering the experience of the one-stop shops, this practice provides the citizen with a contact point through which the status of processes internal to the public system can be more transparent, by creating a single interface for all public entities involved. But, at the same time, this interface represents a further layer. Municipalities, where one-stop shops are located, become responsible to the citizens for processes involving a wide range of public entities; this situation may blur the responsibilities of all the other public entities and alter the perception by citizens.

These problems are inherent to process management approaches, that identify a single responsible, the process owner, for complex inter-organisational processes and aim at a more “integrated” public administration, responsible as a whole in front of the citizen. Accountability structures should be re-designed according to the responsibility on processes and, internally, on segments of processes; however, this represents a major change from current accountability structures, centred on the individual organisation and, internally, its hierarchical structure.

A second issue is that compliance to rules and procedures prescribed when issuing an authorisation may be perceived only as a constraint in customer-oriented and time-reducing approaches like process management. Emphasis on the reduction of times and the empowerment of the citizen-customer (in the case considered, the entrepreneur) may entail the risk of weakening the norms protecting collective (public) interests. This problem is relevant in all approaches emphasising the citizen-as-customer vision of the modernisation of the public sector: who is the recipient of the service of the one-stop shop? Only the businesses or also the local community, whose citizens

have to be protected in terms of, e.g. workplace safety (protected by the local healthcare unit and the fire brigades), or the protection of the environment (by the regional authority for the environment)? While the businesses are the customer of the one-stop shop, the local community may be defined as the client, since it relies on public entities for having its collective interests protected. In this respect, professionals in public entities are engaged in professional-client relations with citizens (citizen-as-client vision). The presence of different types of relations and different assessment criteria within the same organisation (or set of organisations interconnected by operating processes) entails the adoption of different modalities of accountability. Thus, a possible answer to the question whether in the one-stop shop model there is a confusion of the two functions of service and control, is that while the one-stop shop as an interface is in charge of delivering a service to the entrepreneur (conceived as customer), the individual public entities issuing their specific licenses, perform in the one-stop shop system a “comptroller” role over the firm (conceived as complier to the norms), thus serving the local community (conceived as their client)[27]. However, a certain tension between the two functions is likely to occur, and setting a proper balance is a key task of the responsible of the one-stop shop.

Managing change

The experience of the one-stop shops in Italy provides some insights about the implementation of process management in the public sector. It highlights the two roles of the process owner and of the top management in implementing this managerial innovation, and shows the interconnections with the motivations and entrepreneurship of these key figures, as well as with the conditions in which they operate (determined by the broader reforms in public management).

In case process management is directly prompted by a reform (like in the experience presented in this contribution), momentum of the reform is important and the implementation of process management at the micro-level of individual public entities may be significantly favoured or hampered by the dynamics of the reform at the national level.

Engaging stakeholders is another important factor. Broadening the scope of the one-stop shops (for example, by including other categories, like shopkeepers and dealers) enhanced the support to the innovation. In some cases, broadening the boundaries may also concern other public entities: the network promoted by the province of Bologna engaged in a joint initiative, also small municipalities, often in big trouble with the implementation of reforms.

Further developments in the study of the implementation of process management in the public sector may come from the systematic application of the literature on change processes ([March, 1996](#); [March and Levitt, 1988](#); [Weick, 2001](#), among the leading authors), and especially the stream of literature focused on change in the public sector ([Barzelay and Campbell, 2003](#); [Doherty](#)

and Horne, 2002). It is exactly to the possible developments that we turn in conclusion.

Limitations and developments

The successful implementation of one-stop shops in a number of Italian municipalities has determined positive results for the businesses conceived as customers. Reduced times for issuing a licence and a single and a friendlier interface are the most significant tangible results of this reform.

However, evidence from the experience studied and considerations about the complexity of managing inter-governmental relations in the public sector highlight that process management cannot be conceived as a recipe by itself sufficient to increase the effectiveness of public administrations, but as an approach supporting public managers engaged in making their organisations capable of operating in complex inter-organisational contexts, as well as in developing collaborations in the public sector. The contribution of process management lies especially in making the “administrative machinery” of individual public organisations work in more interconnected ways.

The development of the research on the topic, thus, is linked with research questions about the management of complex networks (Rhodes, 1996; Kickert *et al.*, 1997; and in particular, O’Toole *et al.*, 1997) and the analysis of the general conditions for the establishment and development of collaborations among public entities (Bardach, 1998; Hudson *et al.*, 1999; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998) in an increasingly decentralised public sector.

Notes

1. A process may be defined as a set of interconnected activities and decisions, which produces an identifiable set of outputs out of given inputs. Customers of the output may be internal or external to the organisation or the set of organisations considered. Being the output (at least in principle) determined on the basis of the customers’ needs, focusing on processes is a way of increasing the customer-orientation of an organisation or a set of interconnected organisations.
2. For the purposes of the present essay, we can refer to the new public management as a set of doctrines about “organisation design issues” (in a broad sense) relating to the public sector (see Barzelay, 2001, pp. 234; Hood and Jackson, 1991, pp. 33-34). A seminal article on NPM is Hood (1991); for an approach to the NPM as a “consolidating field of discourse”, see, in particular, Barzelay (2001); for an overview of the current trends in NPM, see McLaughlin *et al.* (2002).
3. Process-oriented approaches may also provide a contribution for dealing with other issues, like the improvement of labour conditions. Significant benefits can in fact be determined for the staff involved, that can better get the perception of the outputs of their own job in process-oriented organisations. However, it must be noted that, at least in the commercial sector, BPR has often been closely associated with downsizing interventions.
4. See the cases studied by Packwood *et al.* (1998), Willcocks *et al.* (1997).
5. Kettl (2000); the work focuses mainly on the USA public sector.
6. In framing the features of process management, Bartezzaghi *et al.* (1999) has been especially useful.

7. The topic is widely debated since the early literature on business process reengineering: Davenport, 1993; Davenport and Short, 1990; for an introductory frame about ICT in the public sector, see Saxena and Amal, 1995; for a critical review about the role of ICT in process reengineering and process management, see in particular Hyde, 1995, and Venkatram, 1994
8. Scherr, 1993, defines a process as “a chain of supplier-purchaser relations able to produce a given output in a defined period”.
9. The introduction of forms of process management may, in many cases, be preceded by the implementation of a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) intervention, which has to be considered as part of the change towards the development of process management, although by itself a process reengineering intervention is not sufficient to introduce process management (since it does not entail the combined application of the “principles” illustrated). Project management techniques may help in the BPR phase.
10. For an overview of public management reform in Italy, see Pollitt and Bouckaert (2003).
11. On the importance of this reform for the modernisation of the public sector in Italy, see also *The Economist* (2001), *A Survey of Italy*, 7-13 July. one-stops shop as a case of “best practice” is recalled also in OECD (2001, p. 53). one-stop or “one-window” service delivery arrangements have proved popular also in other countries (see Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2003).
12. It may be noted that the entrepreneur is both customer and complier in this frame. The implications for accountability are discussed in the final section.
13. Reported in (2002) *Il Sole 24 Ore* (the most important Italian financial newspaper, published in Milan).
14. Embedded cases in the design of the research presented in this contribution: more than 15 cases of one-stop shops have been monitored during the period 1998-2001, in part by on-the-field visit and in part by the direct involvement in the implementation of the one-stop shops; for a comprehensive view, see Caccia and Valotti (2000) and SDA Bocconi internal documentation.
15. For an overview of the transformations in Local Authorities during the 1990s, see Valotti (2000)
16. Appointed by the directly elected mayor, this figure, previously almost in-existent in Italy, was becoming very important in that period for its role of director general of the organisation and key interface between politics and the administrative structure.
17. Moore’s (1995) conception of public value creation provides an effective explanation of the behaviour of public managers in these municipalities, who conceived the one-stop shop programme as “generating opportunities” for radically reshaping the relations between public organisations and the business sector, historically a weakness of Italy. Envisaging the one-stop shops as an opportunity to be exploited for the redefinition of the strategic positioning of municipalities represented much more than mere compliance to the reform design.
18. Modena is located in the Centre-North of Italy; the period of observation is 1998-2000. The study is based on SDA Bocconi internal documentation.
19. The Italian public sector is composed of four institutional tiers: state, regions, provinces, and municipalities. Bologna is located in the Centre-North of Italy. The study is based on on-the-field investigation; the period of observation is 1999-2001.
20. Public management reforms are defined, for the purposes of the present essays, as deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to perform better (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2003).

21. Besides the two cases considered, also other successful experiences, in particular in the municipalities of Trieste (North-East of Italy) and Carrara (centre of Italy), showed a strong commitment by the city manager to this innovation.
22. These considerations resemble the conclusions of Elmore (1979 and many subsequent publications) about backward mapping, i.e. that it is the lowest level of the implementation process that must be looked at to understand the causal chain that leads to implementation. However, in this case, the analysis is extremely simplified and the lowest level is identified with the level of individual programmatic organisations in the policy field considered. Furthermore, only a specific logic (process management) and a specific type of public programmes (reform initiatives in public management aimed at increasing customer-orientation and co-ordination of public entities) are analysed.
23. On the different goals, structure and overall conception of what the one-stop shop can represent for the municipality in the management of relations with the business sector, see Caccia and Valotti (2000).
24. Public managers is here used as in Moore (1995), including all people, politicians and public servants, who have some form of responsibility enabling them to contribute to the creation of public value.
25. We refer to the classification and analysis of results of public management reforms proposed by Pollitt (2002) and Pollitt and Bouckaert (2003). According to the authors, results are not only operational (in terms of savings, increased productivity, quality of outputs, and outcomes): results as process improvement, results as improvement of the public system and results as the realisation of a vision are all equally significant "results" of a reform.
26. This dimension refers to results as improvement of the public system (see Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2003).
27. The author is grateful to Les Metcalfe of the Bocconi University of Milan for the development of the conceptual distinction between professional-client relations and customer-supplier relations.

References

- Bardach, E. (1998), *Getting Agencies to Work Together*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- Bartezzaghi, E., Spina, G. and Verganti, R. (1999), *Organizzare le PMI per la crescita*, Ed. Il Sole 24 Ore, Milan.
- Barzelay, M. (1992), *Breaking Through Bureaucracy: A New Vision for Managing in Government*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Barzelay, M. (2001), *The New Public Management*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Barzelay, M. and Campbell, C. (2003), *Preparing for the Future*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- Bartlett, C.A. and Ghoshal, S. (1995), "Rebuilding behavioral context: turn process reengineering into people rejuvenation", *Sloan Management Review*, Autunno, pp. 11-23.
- Bouckaert, G. and Halachmi, A. (1995), "Reengineering in the public sector", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 61 No. 3, pp. 329-42.
- Boulding, K.E. (1956), "General system theory – the skeleton of science", *Management Science*, No 2.
- Caccia, L. and Valotti, G. (Eds) (2000), *Lo sportello unico per le imprese (One-stop Shops For Businesses)*, ETAS, Milan.
- Checkland, P. (1981), *Systems Thinking and Systems Practice*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.

- Davenport, T.H. (1993), *Process Innovation: Reengineering Work Through Information*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.
- Davenport, T.H. and Short, J.E. (1990), "The new industrial engineering: information technology and business process redesign", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 17, Summer, pp. 11-27.
- Doherty, T.L. and Horne, T. (2002), *Managing Public Services: Implementing Change: A Thoughtful Approach*, Routledge, London, New York, NY.
- Elmore, R. (1979), "Backward mapping: implementation research and policy decision", *Political Science Quarterly*, Winter, pp. 601-16.
- Hall, G., Rosenthal, J. and Wade, J. (1993), "How to make reengineering really work", *Harvard Business Review*, November-December, pp. 119-31.
- Hall, R. (1992), "The strategic analysis of intangible resources", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 13, pp. 135-44.
- Hammer, M. (1990), "Reengineering work: don't automate, obliterate", *Harvard Business Review*, July/August, pp. 104-12.
- Hammer, M. and Champy, J. (1993), *Reengineering the Corporation*, Harper Business, New York, NY.
- Hammer, M. and Stanton, S. (1999), "How process enterprises really work", *Harvard Business Review*, November-December, pp. 108-18.
- Hood, C. (1991), "A public management for all seasons", *Public Administration*, Vol. 69 No. 1, Spring, pp. 3-19.
- Hood, C. (1998), *The Art of the State: Culture, Rhetoric and Public Management*, Clarendon, Oxford.
- Hood, C. and Jackson, M. (1991), *Administrative Argument*, Dartmouth, Aldershot.
- Hudson, B., Hardy, B., Henwood, M. and Wistow, G. (1999), "In pursuit of interagency collaboration in the public sector: what is the contribution of theory and research?", *Public Management*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 235-60.
- Hughes, O. (1998), *Public management and administration: an introduction*, Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Huxham, C. and Vangen, S. (2000), "What makes partnerships work?", in Osborne, S. (Ed.), *Public-Private Partnerships. Theory and Practice in International Perspective*, Routledge, pp. 293-310.
- Hyde, A.C. (1995), "A primer on process reengineering", *The Public Manager*, Spring, pp. 55-68.
- Kettl, D.F. (2000), "The transformation of governance: globalization, devolution, and the role of government", *Public Administration Review*, November/December, pp. 488-97.
- Kickert, W.J.M., Klijn, E.-H. and Koppenjan, J.F.M. (Eds) (1997), *Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector*, Sage, London.
- Le Grand, J. and Barthlett, W. (1993), *Quasi Markets and Social Policy*, Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Linden, R. (1993), "Business Process Reengineering: newest fad, or revolution in government", *Public Management*, Vol. 75 No. 11, pp. 8-12.
- Lowndes, V. and Skelcher, C. (1998), "The dynamics of multi-organizational partnerships: an analysis of changing modes of governance", *Public Administration*, Vol. 76, pp. 313-33.
- Majchzak, A. and Wang, Q. (1996), "Breaking the functional mindset in process organizations", *Harvard Business Review*, September-October, pp. 93-9.

-
- March, J.G. (1996), "A preface to understanding how decisions happen in organizations", in Shapira, Z. (Ed.), *Organizational Decision Making*, Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.
- March, J.G. and Levitt, B. (1988), "Organizational learning", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 14, pp. 319-40.
- Mintzberg, H. (1983), *Structures in Five: Designing Effective Organisations*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Moore, M.M. (1995), *Creating Public Value. Strategic Management in Government*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Morris, D.C. and Brandon, J.S. (1995), *Reengineering your Business*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- McLaughlin, K., Ferlie, E. and Osborne, S. (2002), *The New Public Management. Current Trends and Future Prospects*, Routledge, London.
- OECD (1997), *Managing Across Levels of Government*, PUMA/OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2001), *Regulatory Reform in Italy*, GOVERNANCE/OECD, Paris.
- O'Toole, L.J. Jr, Hanf, K.I. and Hupe, P.L. (1997), "Managing implementation processes in networks", in Kickert, W., Klijn, E. and Koppenjan, J. (Eds), *Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector*, Sage Publications Ltd, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 137-51.
- Packwood, T., Pollitt, C. and Roberts, S. (1998), "Good medicine? a case study of business reengineering in a hospital", *Policy and Politics*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 401-15.
- Peppard, J. and Rowland, P. (1995), *Business Process Re-engineering*, Prentice Hall, London.
- Pollitt, C. (2002), "The new public management in international perspectives: an analysis of impacts and effects", in McLaughlin *et al.* (Eds), *New Public Management: Current Trends and Future Prospects*, Routledge, London and New York, NY.
- Pollitt, C. and Bouckaert, G. (2003), *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Porter, M. (1985), *Competitive Advantage*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- Rhodes, R.A.W. (1996), "The new governance: governing without government", *Political Studies*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 652-67.
- Saxena, K.B.C. and Amal, A. (1995), "Information technology support for reengineering public administration: a conceptual framework", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 4, pp. 271-93.
- Schein, E. (1984), "Coming to a new awareness of organizational culture", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 3-16.
- Schein, E. (1985), *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Scherr, A.L. (1993), "A new approach to business processes", *IBM Systems Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 80-98.
- Stalk, G., Evans, P. and Shulman, L.E. (1992), "Competing on capabilities: the new roles of corporate strategy", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 70 No. 3, pp. 57-69, March-April.
- Valotti, G. (2000), *La riforma delle autonomie locali: dal sistema all'azienda*, EGEA, Milan.
- Venkatraman, N. (1994), "IT enabled business transformation: from automation to business scope redefinition", *Sloan Management Review*, Winter, pp. 73-87.
- Vickers, G. (1967), *Towards a Sociology of Management*, Chapman and Hall, London.
- Weick, K. (2001), *Making sense of the Organization*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Willcocks, L.P., Currie, W. and Jackson, S. (1997), "In pursuit of the reengineering agenda in public administration", *Public Administration*, Vol. 75, Winter, pp. 617-49.