



*Ministero dell'Istruzione
dell'Università e Ricerca*



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO

*Tesi di Dottorato di Ricerca in
“Marketing e Comunicazione” (IX Ciclo)*

**Innovative Communication Trends in
the Public Administration – a
Democratic Marketing Tool or Just
Another Fallacy**

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Novembre 2010

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Acknowledgements

To Pino and my Family, with affection

and with Special Thanks to:

Professor Gerardo Metallo for his ‘unobtrusive’ guidance and support

My Tutor, Professor Maria Teresa Cuomo for her ‘infinite’ patience and ‘faith’ in me

Debora Tortora, PhD, without whose generosity and expertise this ‘joint venture’ would never have been completed

Finally, to my friends and colleagues in the Department for their kind support and encouragement

La democrazia di un paese si misura anche dalle possibilità di partecipazione dei cittadini alla vita culturale, sociale e politica, partecipazione che è possibile nella misura in cui questi sono messi nella condizione di conoscere e comprendere i contenuti dell'azione dello Stato, le ragioni che la muovono e le modalità con le quali viene attuata. Con altre parole, si può dire che si ha vera democrazia quando lo scambio di informazione tra lo Stato e i cittadini è la regola e non l'eccezione.

F. Faccioli (2001)

Introduction

Institutional communication has been a controversial issue for many years now in Italy; at least as concerns the difficult challenge of putting effective communication on a national scale between the citizenship and the State in place. Most likely what is lacking is a well defined policy of strategic planning to rectify in part what Rolando (1998) sees as “institutional communication activities conceived as random initiatives rarely destined for structured balance sheets or as part of constituted professional nuclei” and which Faccioli considers “no longer the exception but still not the rule”(F. Faccioli, 2001).

We are not yet on the verge of a communicational revolution although over ten years have passed since Italian Legislation (the so-called Bassanini, Law no.59 /97, Law no. 241/1990 and Law no. 150/2000 which specifically regulates Public Communication and is considered both the point of arrival and at the same time, departure point of the transformation process.) was passed with the aim of putting communication at the core of the evolution in act in the public administration (PA), communication considered as “ a strategic resource capable of drastically redirecting the pathway in evolution of the PA in order to build a tight network of relations with

the community of reference, based above all on trust and consensus” (Cuomo et al, in Metallo et Al, 2009). For the Authors, this process starting at the beginning of the 1990s, has still not reached full completion. During this period there was an attempt to adapt and transfer operative models characterizing the private industry sector to the PA in order to put in place more efficiently the public mission and to improve the level of deliverables in terms of services. In other words, the basic aim of the legislative decrees was to simplify excessively bureaucratic procedures ensconced firmly in the Public Administration system “and to favour communication and citizen-rapport, by abandoning the traditional, hierarchical and strictly self-referential models implemented by the State and substituting them with more productive and efficient organizations, sensitive towards creating relations with its different stakeholders (in the first place the citizens)”. The new remit of the PA was in essence, the sanctioning, implicitly or explicitly, of new democratic principles (transparency, participation simplified language addressed to the subjects involved and “the separation between policy and administration, subsidiarity, etc., flanked and/or substituted by traditional values, thus giving life to new models of governance and management of the res publica“ (Cuomo et al, 2009). By reducing the complexity of the information the State intends to convey to its citizens, if only in terms of bridging gaps and in making them feel slightly more closer to the State; “citizens are currently called upon, in the light of processes of modernization in act, to take a more active part in public service and in exercising their rights by means of new managerial models that render the delivery of public services more visible and transparent and the information conveyed, clearer and more exhaustive “ (Cuomo et al, 2009). Citizens have always found themselves at a distinct disadvantage in this respect: the State with its top-down impositions, high up in its ivory tower of bureaucratic jargon ; its subjects at best, passively submitting to public dictates or at worse, lost in the j ganglions of incomprehensible detail, . Clearly what has been lacking to date, is this relational aspect (Cuomo et al, 2009), linked to institutional inter and intra communication. As in any other complex system the latter is part of a much wider process inserted within the dynamics of a context of social relations and involving different stakeholders and scenarios.

With the advent of Law 150/2000, there was an attempt to regulate the complex scenario of Public Communication in Italy. The Law had the remit of re-organizing information and communication activities, concentrating on the structures that implement communication, the training of human resources and the definition of communication projects/plans/programmes. In other words, informing the citizens and communicating with them are currently “no longer discretionary and extemporaneous activities but an ‘institutional obligation: ceasing to be incidental and becoming a proper, legitimate and acknowledged function” (Cuomo et al, 2009)

A key factor lies in the building both of the sense of the State and the sense of citizenship. In other words, new spaces for institution-client/citizen communication imply new behavioural models and models of meaning geared to enhancing an individual’s sense of belonging to the State. At the same time, the new emphasis put on relational exchanges seeing as “they foster innovation and modify the organization of institutional work itself, changing ways of working and even relationships with citizens and the other institutions of the State” (Faccioli, 2001).. This means that as a consequence, institutional communication should be in the throes of “being interwoven with a process of cultural change investing the institutions and the citizens and being pivoted on the enhancement of public service in terms of the result of processes of interaction, communication and confrontation between the parties on issues and resolutions of collective interest” (Faccioli, 2001). Building a sense of the State however, is not easy, the pillar of the State is its reliability and authority, while recent years have seen the institutions become more and more delegitimized.

The European Union is undergoing the same kind of pressure on a larger scale. Their White Paper on Communication published in February 2006, talks about placing communication at the service of its citizens with the Commission launching what it calls a Plan ‘D’ for democracy, dialogue and debate. These recommendations can also be filtered down at a national institutional level. They stipulate the need for transparency on the part of institutions towards their stakeholders, and invoke other key concepts such as: targeted attention, participation, efficiency and efficacy, key constructs of the Viable Systems Approach (VSA) which has recently been linked with the Italian National Health Service System (see Saviano, Bassano et al, 2010). In

this context, in Italy with Law no.15 dated 4th March 2009, the Ministry of Public Affairs/Administration recently delineated guidelines for reforming the PA sector in areas of :performance, assessment/evaluation, transparency, incentives and sanctions. Furthermore, the Law currently regulates: planning, the transparency of acts, control and disciplinary sanctions and focuses specifically on integrity in the PA. In particular, Art. 4 of the said Law stipulates that citizens are to be guaranteed efficient services and transparency in public administration acts and if these goals are not met, then citizens may take up Class Action against the Public Administration involved. However, even if the business-like dimension of the State both in its central and peripheral form has become much more relevant compared to the past, (the 1990s) it cannot be said that all the differences between the State-enterprise can be eliminated. As Cuomo et al point out “the mission of the State, in fact, is not only that (as is so often simplistically declared) that of guaranteeing efficiency, and reduction of costs, (economic aspect), but also that of equity, transparency, legitimacy and management/control of social consensus. Citizens in effect, should be considered protagonists in the achieving of their personal needs together with the PA and even if the PA is still called upon “to satisfy in a dynamic way, the needs of the community in a logic of correct/appropriate management of resources, it cannot be separated from the social purpose it represents. Consequently, it is fundamental in this perspective, to attribute growing value to the relations with the community , with the proviso that in order to resolve problems afflicting the community, active and aware citizens rather than administered subjects are needed”, Cuomo et al, 2009). In the same direction, in the UK The Government has set itself the aim of public services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering – with the citizen always and everywhere at the heart of public service provision. With this in mind the initiative Customer Service Excellence was developed to offer public services a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within their organisations. The foundation of this tool is the Customer Service Excellence standard which tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also emphasis placed on developing

customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.

Chapter 1

Communication and The Public Administration

- 1.1. The shift towards transparency - the Legislative background
- 1.2. The significance of language for transparency in the Public Administration
- 1.3. Plain Language, Clarity and Creation of Value
- 1.4. Clarity in Language for Transparency in the Public Administration
- 1.5. Efficacious communication as a benchmark for excellence
- 1.6. Transparent communication and the creation of value
- 1.7. Language, information and ICT – Information: a resource and a tool

1.1. The shift towards transparency - the Legislative background

Communication in the twenty first century, a strategic resource capable of guiding the evolution of territorial systems in many directions thanks to its relation building capacity, plays a vital and highly successful role in cementing the bonds (based mainly on consensus and shared aims) that develop

between administrations, institutions and communities Only during the 1990s in Italy starting with Law n° 241 1990 and followed by the so-called Bassanini Laws¹ did an articulated process of change and communication occur within a specific applied framework, resulting in innovative and significant reform policies. These included a noticeable shift towards transparency widely advocated and launched in the public sector. The 1990s also witnessed the “advent of a revolution where the entire planet was to become organised around computer networks, the heart of the

¹ Bassanini a former Italian Government Minister for Public Affairs geared his efforts towards transparency and efficiency in the Public Administration, accountability and information for the end user. The legislation approved during the decade 1990s - 2000 marks the watershed dividing the waywardness of the traditional, unregulated Public Administration, especially as concerns social communication and the more regulated current scenario. For a more detailed description of the three-phase evolutionary process of public communication in Italy, see Rolando 1995.

information systems and processes of communication, and with most of human activity depending on the power of information in a sequence of ever more rapid, month by month technological innovations” (Castells, M.² *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Blackwell). *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996, 2000). The end of the century saw a Law passed - no° 150³ approved on 10 May 2000 – which paradoxically, was considered at the same time both point of arrival and point of departure. Dealing specifically with public sector communication (external and internal) its main remit was to thoroughly reorganise information and communication activities. An outcome of the process was that the Community, in the light of the reforms and the modernisation of the ‘bureaucratic machine’ of the Public Administration, was now called upon to make a more considerable contribution to public service activities, and at the same time to make citizens more fully aware of their rights. As a result, the main objective of 21st Century Public Administration (PA) is to privilege communication and understanding, to discard obsolete models, traditionally hierarchical and highly self-referential and to substitute them with more efficient and productive organisations that care about creating relations with the many citizens and stakeholders involved. These concepts are well expressed in the study *Egovernance and public communication for an inclusive eSociety*⁴. The work, a Report published in 2008, outlines the main policy issues of eGovernance, pointing out the key role of ICT in designing a new relationship between citizens and the institutions. It describes the evolution of the European eGovernment and Public Communication scenarios and underlines the importance of adopting an integrated approach that merges technical and organizational innovation. Contributions from Mario Morcellini, Luigi Nicolais former Italian Minister for Public Administration

²Castells, M.² *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Blackwell). *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), revised edition 2000 and “Lettera Internazionale” no 70 – Rivista trimestrale europea)

³ In particular this Law, in conformity with the principles that regulate the transparency and efficacy of action on the part of the Public Administration, sanctions and disciplines their activities of information and communication.

⁴ *Egovernance and public communication for an inclusive eSociety*⁴ The book is the Second European Observatory on eGovernance and Public Communication, jointly implemented by FTI, Associazione Italiana Comunicazione Pubblica and FEACP. Since 2006, the Observatory aims to promote and disseminate knowledge by editing documents on technical, regulatory, strategic aspects of eGovernment, eDemocracy and Public Communication systems, taking into account available public data and reports.

Reform and Innovation and Viviane Reding, among others⁵, examine the implications and analyse the state of the art application.. The Report also offers an interesting overview of information and statistics in term of effective approaches used by different countries and specific basic aspects of eGovernance such as Interoperability, Open Source, Electronic Identity Management.. According to Luigi Nicolais⁶ “One of the most important messages of the Report is that ICT should be introduced in order to increase people participation and inclusion and not to emphasize a technocratic tool to improve government practices, because it is possible to obtain full consensus from people only if they are considered as citizens and not only as consumers. And the citizen's support and satisfaction are capable of transforming technicalities into participation and information into better democracy”.

1.2. The relevance of language for transparency in the Public Administration

Among the new principles implicitly or explicitly sanctioned by the above-mentioned reforms, i.e. transparency, participation etc., *clarity of language* is of the essence in all communications addressed to citizens or other stakeholders. Also advocated is the separation between politics and administration, i.e. the flanking or replacing of traditional values, or in other words, the creating of new models of governance and public management⁷. There is now an institutional obligation – a legitimate and acknowledged function, recognized and accepted by the PA - that all

⁵Giorgio Pacifici, sociologist, president of FTI, deals with the social change in the eSociety. Technology Advisor of Public Administrations and director of research departments, he has held professorship in European and American universities. Pieraugusto Pozzi, electronic engineer, director of FTI, is responsible of projects and research activities on eCommerce, eGovernment, digital payment systems, ICTsecurity. Professor of digital economy at the University of Perugia. Alessandro Rovinetti, journalist, is professor of Public Communication Theory and Techniques in Bologna, Urbino and Naples University. He is Secretary General of FEACP and of Associazione Italiana Comunicazione Pubblica. Massimiliano Cannata, journalist, collaborates with technical and scientific reviews and is author of papers and essays concerning the impact of the digital innovation on organizations

⁶*Luigi Nicolais*, Former Italian Minister for Public Administration Reform and Innovation.

⁷. Arena G., Il ruolo della comunicazione nella amministrazione condivisa, in Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica, n°1, 1999.

communications of public utility and regulatory communications in conformity with legal dispositions have to respect specific standards⁸. Citizens have to know that their interests are safeguarded and that they have specific rights in terms of access to and clarity of information. One outcome of this process is that social/public communication is becoming part of the fabric of cultural change - investing both institutions and citizens - which pivots on the enhancement of social service in terms of results - transactions, communication and confrontation on specific issues between a plurality of actors in order to find solutions of common interest to the European Community.

1.3. Plain Language, Clarity and Creation of Value

In conformity with the dispositions of Ministry Guidelines⁹, the Public Administration is obliged to facilitate the citizen, guaranteeing in the first instance, that the text to be communicated is drafted clearly - clarity of information, naturally helps improve communication; secondly end users and processes need to be taken into account. i.e. Lasswell's paradigm - who is informed, when and how they are informed -Furthermore, the information has to be brought to the public's knowledge by the most suitable means. The guidelines apply to all texts produced by the Public Administrations. Rules that concern the communication, the juridical structure and the language of written texts. It will be necessary to rewrite even the most important Administrative and documents at present in act, in conformity with the indications contained in the guidelines and on the basis of information received by the Public Relations Front Offices (URP) in cases of scarce clarity. Finally, to facilitate the

⁸ (*Progetti di comunicazione a carattere pubblicitario* 1. Le amministrazioni dello Stato sono tenute ad inviare al Dipartimento per l'informazione e l'editoria, ai fini della formulazione di un preventivo parere, i progetti di comunicazione a carattere pubblicitario che prevedono la diffusione dei messaggi sui mezzi di comunicazione di massa. 2. I progetti di cui al comma 1 devono, in particolare, contenere indicazioni circa l'obiettivo della comunicazione, la copertura finanziaria, il contenuto dei messaggi, i destinatari e i soggetti coinvolti.

⁹See Appendix for The Guidelines (consisting in 10 basic factors) for efficacious communication and structuring juridical regulations endorsed by a former Minister for the Funzione Pubblica Franco Frattini: and Coordinator for information Services and Security in (2001).

application of the guidelines, the above-mentioned Department for Public Administration has also set up a helpdesk to assist Public Administrations on its website.

Since 15 May 2002, Public Administrations have been able to access a section dedicated to the simplification of language provided with constant assistance on line and can ask for relevant information, clarification and explanations on the website. As a consequence, the language used in the communication of information it goes without saying, plays an extremely significant role. Edelman¹⁰ underlines the fact that “the power of language does not lie in the words themselves but rather in their capacity to satisfy needs and to excite emotions” Furthermore, the constituent power of language and the consequent perceptions and relevant mind frames it produces, lie in its capacity to contribute to the reality of its enunciations by virtue of making them conceivable and above all, credible thus creating the *collective representation and will*, the words themselves are able to produce. Language is also measurable in terms of value. The idea of value of information, language and communication generally speaking and of government communication in particular, is fairly widespread¹¹. Wassenaar for instance, coins the expression ‘governmental value chain model’ which considers electronic governmental activities from a business perspective. The model aims to support practitioners in better understanding and achieving the realisation of joint organisational and information system innovation in the public sector. The model furthermore, consists of a legislative, administrative and juridical function embracing three fields: legislative governance, administrative (resource) management and governmental service delivery management. Each field is structured in terms of a strategic-constitutional, tactical-intermediation and operational-retail level. For Wassenaar, *this model is an effort to transfer business concepts to electronic government in the public sector*. Basically, governmental activities are considered as a value chain linking the "trading" partners i.e. citizens, administrative agencies and constitutional institutions. Quite clearly, the framework of Porter’s value chain has undergone extensive revision

¹⁰Edelman in Amoretti, 1997.

¹¹ See Porter, Borgonovi, Wassenaar et al., 2000.

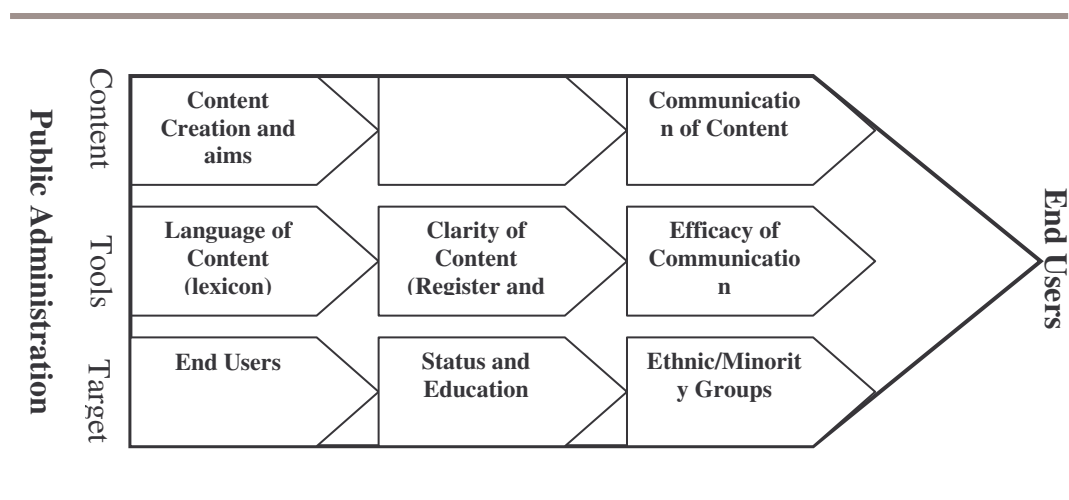
and applied to diverse purposes since the model was first created in 1985. However, its importance cannot be underestimated if we want to evaluate the efficacy of communication through *language content, lexicon, register/style, destination target, modalities/channel* - See fig.1 below. At the same time, as well as new communication criteria, new Public Management has to take into account citizens from every sector of civil life when planning communication: minority/ethnic groups such as senior, disabled, foreign or immigrant citizens and majority groups such as employed, unemployed, self-employed or retired citizens, educated to degree or diploma level or with no formal qualifications etc. At the same time, content - language content, clarity of lexicon, target, register, style and the tools - clarity of communication, modalities/channel, efficacy of communication etc., in managing information cannot be underestimated, as Geohagen et al¹² maintain “modelling info flows and needs – improving organisational effectiveness and service quality; the Public Administration has to generate socio-economic value and its obligation to communicate – inter and intra-systemically, constitutes the cardinal principle of New Public Management¹³, according to which ‘every territorial system’ through its process of communication, defines and redefines its strategies, activities, programmes, and expected results” (Geohagen p. 71). In other words, communication is considered an ‘asset’ – a key resource - its primary role being that of contributing both to improved performance in the public Administrations and of bringing the public closer to the Institutions. Furthermore, in addition to the concepts of information flows, content, channel and communication, a key concept, is that of value in terms of Porter and Millar’s¹⁴ paradigm, “information gives you competitive advantage”. Fig. 1 below illustrates the concept.

¹² L. Geohagan and J. Carver: “ICT for social welfare – a toolkit for managers” (2004).

¹³ Insert note 6 Arena G. on p. 4.

¹⁴ Porter M. & Millar V.E – Harvard Business Review 63, 4 (1985 pp. 149, 1997).

Fig. 1 - *The communication value chain*



Added value and competitive advantage also mean rationalisation of information chains. On a European scale for instance, as late as 1999-2000, government inspections of 10 social services departments in the UK found that at the most basic level, “telecommunication systems were not adequate to carry the volume of traffic and service users were unable to contact social workers” (SSI,2001, pp 12,22). Inspectors also found that the technology used by different agencies such as health authorities and trusts was often incompatible with that used by other agencies. In other words, no viable system of communication was in place. In the development of various ICT systems in the UK’s public services, a laissez-faire approach has meant that information ‘cannot flow seamlessly between these agencies’. Consequently, the current challenge is to integrate “cross-boundary operations, organisational structures, and information technology systems” so that ICT applications can become truly inter-organisational.(L. Geohegan et al, p.75). This appears to be easier in theory than in practice. For example again in the UK, it was estimated in1997 six different ‘chains’ were in place across the whole public service delivery network with 45, 500 outlets. Since government departments did not develop their ICT in any form of a shared data network, different parts of the government machine – Inland Revenue, local authorities, the National Health Service (NHS), the Employment Service etc were operating on individual information storage and processing systems and therefore, few benefits could be obtained from economies of scale or more

coordinated deliveries (L. Geohegan et al.) not surprisingly, debates on the problematic issues related to the desire and need for more clarity and accessibility in terms of public or social communication is particularly evident, in the work of many researchers. In their above-mentioned manual “ICT for social welfare – a toolkit for managers” in 2004 L. Geohegan and J. Carver had already embraced the concept that writing for social welfare clients, in whatever field, is “about communicating with people. It’s about helping people understand” (Hopkins, 1998, p.20¹⁵). For the authors there is a clear distinction between content and channel and predominantly, their view is that in making information accessible, ‘content is king’ (page 61).

1.4. Clarity in Language for Transparency in the Public Administration

An example of good practice in this respect, the UK pressure group: the Plain English Campaign, (www.plainenglish.co.uk) advocates and promoters of the benefits of clarity in written communication in printed leaflets or on websites. Their ‘Crystal Mark’ label (see below)



¹⁵ Plain English for Social Services: A Guide to Better Communication by Graham Hopkins (1998) The Author maintains that Reports written by people working in social and health care need to be: clear; direct; and easily understood by clients, carers and members of the public. The text is an informative guide for anyone involved in social care, looking openly at information produced by Social Services Departments to show how user-unfriendly they can be, and provides guidance on how to communicate better with their intended audience. By using many examples, the text advises how to: write clearly and concisely; use everyday words and avoid jargon; improve the layout and design; avoid common errors; and punctuate work effectively.

has become the symbol of the standard for quality communication that organisations should aim for when they produce public information.. The acknowledgement or logo/*brand* is usually awarded on the basis of testing both on a technical scale and after independent testing on the public. A similar innovative tool was developed in 2002 in Italy. The project denominated *Chiaro*, consisted in a series of guidelines¹⁶ compiled by the Italian Public Administration Department for the simplification of administrative language in communications intended for members of the Public. The guidelines outlined the need to avoid language which is highly technical and specialist, far from the language spoken by its target subjects the citizens; the key words are ‘easy to understand’ and ‘transparency’ in administrative action, keeping the reader in mind at all times and should be applied to every document both as concerns internal memoranda and documents destined for the outside. In particular, documents with a legal value have to have their legitimacy and juridical efficacy ensured not to mention their communicative efficacy. A competition was launched to find the best logo. The finished product was conceived along similar lines to that of Crystal Mark¹⁷.The guidelines on the simplification of language in administrative communication have been the outcome of a decade-long effort on the part of the Department of Public Administration (Dipartimento della Funzione Pubblica) in this endeavour. Appreciable results have already been obtained: e.g. the drafting of rules and regulations indicated in tools produced by the Department such as - il *Codice di stile* 1993 and il *Manuale di stile* 1997 – These however right from the guidelines onwards have acquired a more formal nature. The guidelines furthermore, are linked to the Memorandum dated 2 May 2001 issued by the ‘ Department for Legal Affairs (Dipartimento per gli Affari Giuridici e Legislativi), for the drafting of juridical texts. The Memorandum is a great development, as it is applied to texts which directly or indirectly, apply the law. It goes without saying that the language of the public administrations will be all the more clearer the clearer the juridical norms. From an empirical perspective, at a later stage, in the variegated Italian context of monitoring of communication processes, ORA the Observatory on Reforms and Innovation in the Public Administration, under the umbrella of the “Comunicazione Pubblica” COM.PA Association, was set up at the end of 2008 to analyse (amongst its other

¹⁶ See Appendix for List of Recommendations - i.e. Guidelines.

¹⁷ See website: www.funzionepubblica.it.

functions) to monitor the public Administration and its diffusion of mechanisms of innovation - and as concerns the specific objective of this study - to map and gauge the evolution of institutional communication, in particular within the paradigms of Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) and Citizen Satisfaction (CS). In a multi-disciplinary approach, the Observatory, made up of eminent Italian economists, researchers, consultants etc., collaborates with Public Institutions, with the working world, politicians, University Research Centres, Business Research Centres and so on, to promote plan and disseminate processes of administrative innovation (website consulted 17th February, 2010). In the perspective of new spaces for *institution-client/citizen communication* and new behavioural models, and in the context of models of meaning geared to enhancing an individual's sense of belonging to the State with at the same time, a new emphasis on relational exchanges 'seeing as they foster innovation and modify the organization of institutional work itself', an ongoing study envisaging the examining in a cultural key, changes that have taken place over the last decade in communication terms in Italy and their diachronic comparison with findings relative to communication scenarios in other European realities such as in the UK. The aim is twofold: (1) to delineate a cross-cutting approach indicating the type of communication progressively implemented, the growing efficiency, efficacy and transparency of institutional communication over a well defined timescale and (2) the improvements (if any) of relations between citizens and the Institutions (in terms of sense of the State) thanks to the gradual narrowing or bridging of the distance between them. The relevant research questions emerging focused on whether more efficacious and transparent communication had effectively succeeded in narrowing the distance between citizens and the Public Administration in Italy by promoting a more pronounced sense of the State and whether better and more transparent communication on the part of the Public Administration had actually increased efficient delivery of services and bring citizens closer in terms of aims, plans and implementation.

1.5. Efficacious communication as a benchmark for excellence

Efficacious communication, i.e. intended as benchmarks for excellence, could quite easily be applied in other administrations regardless of community or country, and undoubtedly, would be an excellent way of bringing citizens closer to the institutions by removing barriers connected to ambiguous or obscure jargon or language drafted in such a way as to make it inaccessible to the vast majority. Geohegan et al confirm this view: “one of the most common problems encountered in the context of social communication” they feel, is “agencies taking badly written printed literature and then loading it onto their websites, often heralding this as a breakthrough in improving access and communication with their clients”. Convinced that this “may signal a confusion of content with carrier – the assumption being that since the carrier is ‘cutting edge’ the content must be too”, the two researchers highlight three specific areas of difficulty concerning common problems in the language of communication (P. 61-63)

(a) the use of jargon “often used to impress and exclude” (Hopkins 1998) but that on the contrary, merely disorients and/or alienates the end user;

(b) writing for the wrong audiences – Too often local government officers “seem to be writing for other local government officers” (rather than service users or taxpayers); Similarly, another criticism addressed is that “civil servants tend to draft papers reflecting the syntax of current (in their case, ‘New Labour’) Ministers”;

(c) lack of clarity about the function of the communication effort – quite evident in the voluntary sector, where they maintain, “there are still too many ‘brochure sites’. Writing for such websites represents a particular challenge they warn “since individuals may visit the site from a range of agencies – funders, service users, trustees and potential volunteers”. (p. 49)

Although this context specifically relates to social communication in the UK, there are certain to be no confines or barriers erected against clarity of communication on a Europe-wide scale in any event.

It would appear that The European Commission has not yet created a set of stringent guidelines for common standards nor implemented benchmarking strategies to align Member Countries in terms of their social communication. Although in 2001 a White Paper on European Governance¹⁸ was approved. For the European Commission, five principles underpin good governance and the changes proposed in the White Paper: *openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence*. Each principle is important for establishing more democratic governance. They underpin democracy and the rule of law in the Member States, but they apply to all levels of government – global, European, national, regional and local. They are particularly important for the Union in order to respond to the various challenges highlighted in this issue. The most relevant principle for our study - openness - recommends that “the Institutions should work in a more open manner. Together with the Member States, they should actively communicate about what the EU does and the decisions it takes”. Of particular interest is the fact that “*they should use language that is accessible and understandable for the general public*”. This is deemed of particular importance in order to improve the confidence in complex institutions.□ Participation, the second principle underpinning European Governance which determines the quality, relevance and effectiveness of EU policies has to be ensured throughout the policy chain – from conception to implementation. As the White Paper states: “improved participation is likely create more confidence in the end result and in the Institutions which deliver policies. Participation crucially depends on central governments following an inclusive approach when developing and implementing EU policies”. The third principle accountability is also of fundamental importance: “rules need to be clearer. Each of the EU Institutions must explain and take responsibility for what it does in Europe”. In addition, “there is also a need for *greater clarity and responsibility* from Member States and all those involved in developing and implementing EU policy at whatever level”. Effectiveness: where it is stressed that “policies must be effective and timely, delivering what is needed on the basis of clear objectives, an evaluation of future impact and, where available, of past experience”. Effectiveness also depends on “implementing EU policies in a proportionate manner and on taking decisions at the most appropriate level. Finally, the fifth principle□ coherence is

¹⁸ Commission of the European Communities Brussels, 25.7.2001COM(2001) 428 final European Governance White Paper.

highlighted; “policies and action must be coherent and easily understood. The need for coherence in the Union is increasing: the range of tasks has grown; enlargement will increase diversity; challenges such as climate and demographic change cross the boundaries of the sector policies on which the Union has been built; regional and local authorities are increasingly involved in EU policies.

Coherence requires political leadership and a strong responsibility on the part of the Institutions to ensure a consistent approach within a complex system.

Each principle is important by itself. But they cannot be achieved through separate actions. Policies can no longer be effective unless they are prepared, implemented and enforced in a more inclusive way. Furthermore, the White Papers highlights the fact that the application of these five principles “reinforces those of proportionality and subsidiarity. From the conception of policy to its implementation, the choice of the level at which action is taken (from EU to local) and the selection of the instruments used must be in proportion to the objectives pursued. This means that before launching an initiative, it is essential to check systematically (a) if public action is really necessary, (b) if the European level is the most appropriate one, and (c) if the measures chosen are proportionate to those objectives. Consequently, in theory if all these principles are put into practice, excellent results should be the outcome. Perhaps however, it is not quite as simple as it would appear. Ken Ducatel¹⁹ a current Member of European Commissioner Viviane Reding’s ²⁰Information Society and Media Cabinet, in 2000 co-edited, part of the European Commission’s Think Tank (High Level Expert Group on the Information Society) a Report on the New Information Society in Europe. In his view the great potential of information in communication terms is too closely confined, it suffers from a lack of foresight and flexibility and is definitely not exploited to the full. Furthermore, he states “ in public services and public administrations there are vast repositories of information.

¹⁹ Ducatel, Ken; Juliet Webster; and Werner Herrmann, Eds. *the Information Society in Europe: Work and Life in the Age of Globalization* (2000 p.16) This text, an outgrowth of the European Commission's High Level Expert Group, delineates how the information society--the conversion of computing and communication--developed, probes the manner in which it has impacted business and individuals in the workplace, and evaluates its effect on several policy areas within Europe. The editors' goals are to analyze information and communication technologies (ICTs) at all levels of society and to emphasize social considerations. They assert, “It is not enough to develop and implement appropriate technology policies in isolation. Technology ¹⁹ policies and social policies have to be developed in a complementary way and strive for complementary objectives”.

²⁰ Viviane Reding; European Commissioner, Information, Society and Media.

However, much of this potential is locked up because of unhelpful and rigid structures, departmental divisions, the constraints of bureaucratic procedures and even entrenched attitudes”. A specific issue consequently, is the process – what are the means of bringing efficacious communication to the attention of the citizens involved? In the case of social communication or what Gadotti p.38²¹ calls “communication considered as an action of social persuasion addressed to stimulating collective behaviour which is functional to objectives of civil development and growth of society”. (Interesting in this respect is the pedagogic-didactic function attributed to social communication stressed by Morcellini, Casagrande et al, (1991, p.135)²² “Communication is intended primarily to raise awareness on the part of citizens on topics of a civil, social and economic nature, to promote an improved use of public structures, instruction, the defence of territory, the cultural patrimony and public goods in general terms, aimed at preventing or at least modifying, attitudes concerning specific problems or social subjects. In other words, communication considered as an essential intervention tool for social planning”. There is no doubt that a need exists for more awareness raising campaigns on issues of general interest and by definition, of great social relevance and for campaigns promoting greater awareness in terms of public opinion.

1.6. Transparent communication and the creation of value

In the evolving three-phase process of an efficacious social communication²³, (for a more detailed description of the process see Rolando 1995), the confusion arising concerning roles and definitions applied to public communication and commercial communication has led in recent times to a new definition of non-profit (considered in the past a synonym of social communication or of public utility) centred on the content, the purposes and the functions of the various kinds of social communication, a term which, according to (Gadotti, 1993) is still quite vague and general. Many new researchers (amongst whom Milanese 1998) in the light of the

²¹ Giovanna Gadotti (1993, *Publicità sociale. Lineamenti ed esperienza*, Franco Angeli.

²² Morcellini, Casagrande et al.(1991)

²³ (for a more detailed description of the process see Rolando (1995).

above, have delineated the characteristics of what they call public marketing confined within the structures of a more general category of “marketing for social value purposes”²⁴ (Ballardini, 2001). Obviously, the functions of public institutions vary greatly from those of private institutions. Communication in terms of territorial systems includes processes where transactions take place between the various actors, either public or otherwise, with the prospect of activating relations between Institutions and supra systems for promoting civil, social and economic development. Consequently, these are topics both of general and more strictly social interest in terms of which public opinion needs to be made aware. The actors who promote this latter mode of communication are the territorial systems with the view to achieving transparency and greater efficacy of action on the part of public authorities themselves, but also to make citizens aware of issues of particular interest and significance for the creation of public value²⁵ Public value is defined by Kelly et al (2001:4) as “the value created by government through services, laws regulations and other actions”. On the basis of a scheme developed by Kearns (2004), public values of e-government can be broken down into three main areas:

- service delivery;
- outcome achievement;
- trust in public institutions.

These can then be developed into a set of indicators as shown on the basis of Kearns Approach 2004.

²⁴ Ballardini in Faccioli, (2001), .

²⁵ For the definition of public value see Borgonovi E., il concetto di valore pubblico, in Azienda Pubblica n°2-3, 2001

Tab. 1 – Public value indicators

E-government		
Value Domain	Indicator	Description
Service Delivery	Take up	The extent to which e-government is used
Trust in Public Institutions	Satisfaction/Trust	The level of user satisfaction with e-government and trust in Public Institutions
Outcome achievement	Information /Outcomes	The level of information provided to users of e-government Information service provisions and e-government contribution to delivery of outcomes

Source: E-government - Public Value based on Kearns Approach 2004 (in Heeks R. "Benchmarking and E-Government" – Working Paper no.18, 2006, p.7

Distinctions are often made between social communication promoted by the Institutions and that of communication of social solidarity promoted by non-profit organisations for various reasons not least that of the role of the actors involved and the objectives to be reached even though often, the thematic contexts coincide and both move in the large and difficult to define container marked 'general/public interest'. The former above all, *are obliged* to envisage in their remit activating social communication on all those subjects/topics/issues that assume relevance for the community, while the latter *choose* to do so on the basis of the role they wish or are able to play in a specific period compared to other subjects who intervene in the process. The non-profit Associations by virtue of their nature feel authorised to make public opinion aware of *issues* of particular relevance, making recourse to modalities that provoke or that have strong emotional impact. In their message the issue of social solidarity has a prominent place. And this is the ground on which they have built their specificity and play a decisively innovative role even to the detriment of public sector subjects. On the basis of the role they play corresponding means and tones in representing/presenting the issue are adopted. Public institutions, precisely

because of their institutional role, are inclined to privilege more markedly educational functions that rely on persuasion and reminders to stimulate a process of civil and social development. The issue of social communication is an extremely controversial one, however, undoubtedly, a cardinal point is the promoting of a culture of Public Administration and developing a coordinated strategy of their communication in order to divulge an appropriate image of the State, its activities, civil society and public opinion in a *value-created* perspective.

The logic-conceptual foundations of a systemic viable approach (insert note), it is underlined, are considered core for good decision-making in terms of communication and territorial systems. A new image and the enhancement of identity mean a new visibility of the institutions that have to learn to interact with the media system, without however, renouncing their own space and objectives. On the other hand, the diffusion of mass communication media and in particular, innovative media helps citizens to become more familiar with closer and more direct relationships with the Institutions which in their turn, are asked to be present, credible and informed. The establishing of relations and confrontations between citizens and Institutions requires on the part of the public greater maturity and awareness in terms of respecting and enhancing the public sphere. However, the fact remains that the central role belongs essentially to the public Institutions which remain the principal reference for the Community, in terms of safeguarding and achieving general interest and whose basic remit in terms of functional communication is to:

- (a) inform on what the Institutions are doing,
- (b) listen to the needs of its citizens,
- (c) contribute to reinforcing social relations,
- (d) enhancing the consideration of their citizens as actors in and finally,
- (e) accompany this change both in terms of behaviour and social organisation.

Social communication in the past, was hinged almost exclusively on a structural framework, carrying out in this perspective, both an informative and divulging-normative function. This means that the transition towards a systemic-relational perspective is declining the communication factor in territorial systems terms, from

a thoroughly new perspective. Communication is a strategic and cross-cutting activity that involves all the decisions made by the territorial system itself. Consequently, it should be managed using coherent strategies aimed both at increasing territorial value and as a driver for a social process in which different supra and sub-systems interact and compete for acknowledged visibility and for expressing their point of view on issues of general interest for the community.

The management or control of this type of communication should concern above all, the identification of the vocation of the area, from which derives, in terms of the qualifying of the uniqueness and specificity of the area of reference i.e. place identity. In other words, not simply the search for a vocation, an identity, an image, but also and above all, the continual enhancement of the resources used in line with the expectations of the supra-systems, the changeable state of which implies constant monitoring in the context of reviewing the different identities emerging.

Accordingly, The *governance* of the territory must blend its communicational activities so as to avoid chasms between expectations and perceived image of the area, in other words, between what effectively the reality of specific areas is and how they are represented and/or perceived.

In Italy, in the context of improving social communication services, three focus areas that have been investigated emerge:

- (a) specific aspects such as the structures that implement communication;
- (b) the training of human resources and
- (c) the definition of efficacious communication programmes

The outcome in Italy has been a fundamental shift in the relationship that the Public Administration maintains with its citizens; whose previous passive²⁶ (G. Arena, 1999) status of ‘administered’ citizens has undergone a process of evolution giving way to that of ‘beneficiary/user’ citizens and (even more recently) to that of ‘client’ citizen. (see note). In the context of the latter however, the ‘client’ citizen has taken on a much more active role – now a demanding subject – who expects higher quality standards, the right to be informed and the opportunity for participation.

As a consequence, the mission of the State has had to change perforce – no longer simply to guarantee efficacy, efficiency and reduction in costs– but above all, to

²⁶ See G. Arena, *Il Ruolo della Comunicazione nella Amministrazione condivisa*, in “Rivista italiana della comunicazione pubblica”, (1999)

guarantee equity, transparency, legitimacy and the governance of social consensus. To succeed in resolving the problems of the community, in other words, there is a need for the participation of knowledgeable and active citizens, fully aware of their rights, who expect the Public Administration to act and transact, satisfactorily with them towards the public weal. The public area imposes certainty, impartiality, reliability and responsibility. Consequently a citizen's right to access to information is a socially acknowledged right. At the same time, communication of a public nature has both an informative and implicitly functional value - communication that aims at conveying information and knowledge and an "integrative" symbolic nature that aims at circulating values and symbols of general interest for the purpose of promoting attitudes and behaviours – persuasive, dissuasive and educational²⁷. As a result, the communication of territorial systems should engage in promoting public decision-making, favouring the circulating of information flows, the realisation of transparent and efficacious relationships and the comprehension /understanding of decisions taken. All this gives incentives for a constant dialogue with the local community through listening and participation. As a consequence, the territorial system should render the process operative, offering services which meet end-user expectations and in this context, produce communication which develops the community's critical thinking processes, enhances local identity, as well as seeing to the promotion and publicity of its services. In conclusion, institutional communication activities should pioneer a route that takes into account the multitude of subjects in the arena and the potential opportunities offered by other actors in the prospect of enhancing more rewardingly the public sphere.

In terms of the multitude of subjects in the arena, Manuel Castells in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996) maintains that "processes of social transformation [.....] deeply affect culture as well". "we have," he says, "entered a purely cultural pattern of social interaction and social organisation. That is why information is the key ingredient of our social organisation and why flows of messages and images between networks constitute the basic thread of our social structure". Experience is the action of human subjects on themselves, determined by the interaction between their biological and cultural identities, and in relationship to their social and natural

²⁷ See G. Arena *ibid.*

environment. It is constructed around the endless search for fulfilment of human needs and desires....Experience is structured around gender/sexual relationships, historically organised around the family, and characterised hitherto by the domination of men over women. Family relationships and sexuality structure personality and frame symbolic interaction." (Castells 1996,. Cornel West's theory suggested over twenty years ago concerning the new cultural politics of difference (1990) defines such policies as " creative responses to the precise circumstances of our present moment which focus on three basic challenges: the expansion of freedom, democracy and individual identities. On the other hand, Stuart Hall (1996) considers that while globalisation does have the effect of contesting and dislocating the centred and "closed" identities of a national culture, it also has "a pluralizing impact on identities, producing a variety of possibilities and new positions of identification and making identities more positional, more political, more plural and diverse; less fixed unified or trans-historical [. ...]. Identity and difference inextricably articulated or knitted together in different identities, the one never wholly obliterating the other"²⁸ The implications of this issue for social communication are clear. Addressing difference demands personalised communications and consequently, all the relevant sensitivity and attention this implies.

1.7. Language, information and ICT – Information: a resource and a tool

In more strictly linguistic terms to render the communication more efficacious, the need has also been identified for a basic lexicon that distinguishes between what Takeuchi and Ikujiro (1999) call tacit and explicit information. For these two researchers "tacit information is personal, context-specific, and therefore hard to formalise and communicate. In contrast, explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that is transmittable in formal, systematic language."(Takeuchi and Ikujiro, 1995, p.141).

²⁸ Hall Stuart.1997. The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity. In Anthony D. King (ed). *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

In any event, information is not static, “information can often migrate from informal and tacit models to formal and explicit ones – bottom up or top-down” (Geoghegan and Lever, 2004, p 37)

The efforts on the part of an Institution or organisation to systemise and develop tacit and informal information into formal and explicit information fall into the confines of knowledge management. In this respect information is to be considered both a resource and a tool. Information is a preliminary to effective decision making; information is one of the single most important aspects of social welfare practice or as Laming²⁹ in Geoghegan and Lever 1998 paragraph 3.4. p.20 in Geoghegan and Lever) maintains:

“Good information is essential to help users and the public in general find out about what is available and so make rational and informed choices”

In an Italian context, in *Media e Istituzioni di Governo - La Comunicazione Pubblica* (3.3.4.) Amoretti³⁰ points out that concomitant with the above-mentioned legislative reforms concerning communication during the Nineties, a new field of research was being defined in terms of awareness and issues relating to the institutionalising of public or social communication as a sub-section of political communication, Mazzoleni³¹, (1993). For Amoretti, despite the differences in terminology revealed during the ongoing debates of the time, substantial convergence existed on the idea that what in the past, was the acknowledgement of the right to information, had by now been transformed in the promotion of channels of communication capable of incrementing the information flow between institutions and citizens. Researchers and experts in the sector have stressed the importance of communication strategies for modernising institutional apparatus and for the creation of new forms of organisation and democratic participation in public life. According to Franca Faccioli, “the democracy of a country is measured by the opportunity citizens have to participate in the cultural, social and political life of the

²⁹ in Geoghegan and Lever (1998).

³⁰ *Media e Istituzioni di Governo - La Comunicazione Pubblica*, Amoretti F (1997).

³¹ In *La Comunicazione Politica* 3.3.4 *La comunicazione pubblica: open government o news management*, Amoretti, F. (1997).

country, a participation that is possible to the extent that they are informed and understand the content of State action, the reasons behind it and the way it is carried out. In other words, we can assert that there is true democracy when the exchange of information between the State and the citizens is the rule and not the exception”, (Faccioli, F. 2001).

Taking into account, that at the same time: that to appear trustworthy and credible, the State has to face a process of reconstruction of its identity. This is especially true if we consider the past involvement of the State in not altogether transparent (mal)practice and ambiguous situations and clearly, that as its mouthpiece, public communication has to be underpinned by many changes including the requalification of the public sphere, the enhancement of civic sense, the diffusion of means of communication. in particular the new media. As Franca Faccioli puts it: “the pathways of public communication are interwoven with the evolving process of growth of a democratic culture in our country (Italy)” (Faccioli, 2001)

On the contrary, Amoretti is not convinced that this process is going ahead: and expresses his doubts on the issue: “If we listen to the rhetoric that is accompanying their activation, we might think that these innovations are designing the image of a Public Administration more and more similar to that of what Faccioli (1994) calls a ‘glass house’³². It is precisely because it is centred on the potential and diversification of the functions of communication, that the process of modernising the institutional apparatus that has been started, favours on the contrary, participation on a symbolic level in the *res publica*”. Amoretti, (1997).

Amoretti’s ill-placed faith in the digital revolution in terms of more participation on the part of the citizens, is even more evident when in ironical terms he wonders whether the digital revolution will then transform the democratic process into one of a wider and more aware participation of the citizens in public life. The Author argues on the contrary, that the digital revolution will probably result in a greater digital divide than before, favouring only privileged groups (in Manuel Castell’s definition: the techno-élites) (Amoretti, 1997). And questioning the optimism provoked by the increase in the information flow, he remarks that:

³² F. Faccioli, (1994)

“ in the first place this optimism does not take into due account that one of the most serious problems is the overload of information. On average, citizens have neither the time nor energy, nor are they interested and above all, do not have the capacity to deal with such flows. Secondly, it is true only in theory that the new sources of information such as the Internet, are available to every single citizen. In actual fact, only those with adequate financial resources and a higher level of education can in practice, utilise them-. Neither does there appear to be any great foreseeable changes in the socio-economic structure of developed countries. It is far more likely on the contrary” Amoretti goes on to say, “that technological innovation widens the divide between privileged groups and the great majority of the population who are unable to use it” (Amoretti, 1997).

The outcome of this technological revolution has led public authorities in their functional and territorial guise, to make more and more recourse to communication strategies – advertising and promotions – and to the use of a wider spectrum of electronic technology to achieve their institutional purposes. They have placed emphasis above all on the transformations in the model of communication between the Administrations and the citizens, both on a central and local level, starting from an overview of the main innovations on a normative and organisational.-institutional scale. Amoretti considers the creation of the Italian *Dipartimento per l’Editoria* a driver in the process of change in the system of relations between the State and the citizenship which relies strongly on the communication factor. This Department, annexed to the Prime Minister’s Council of Ministers coordinates a range of initiatives (that are on the increase) ranging from the creation of offices organised for ensuring that information reaches the citizens on decisions that the government makes, to the promoting of the international image of Italy; from promoting culture to the perfecting of communication campaigns on issues of social relevance and needs: drugs, immigration handicap etc. Another factor that should not be neglected in this respect, is news management and the persuasive functions carried out by social communication. In this context, focus has mainly been on the strategic dimension of the flows and circuits of communication organised by the public Authorities.

However, in Amoretti's view, no research has been carried out in terms of assessing outcomes as well as in terms of news/information management (1997). Furthermore, If we consider that over ten years have passed since these reforms were put in place, not much seems to have changed on the Italian scenario. In actual fact, in Italy, communication and information still seem mainly to be the monopoly of top notch advertising agencies, publicity and promotional companies and the like. In other words, compared to the rest of Europe, Italy still seems to be in a preliminary phase especially if we take into consideration that ICT systems can provide benefits that are cheaper, quicker, more effective and more accurate than paper-based or mental systems ³³(Heeks, 1999).

In this respect, in Italy, in order to narrow the gap, the current Minister for Public Administration, Renato Brunetta, declared that by the year 2009³⁴, paper was to become a 'thing of the past' and all communication was to take place via the web. Apart from the fact that paper is still very much a 'thing of the present', there are many disadvantages as well as advantages linked to such a reform: Are we really certain that ICT will effectively be able to memorise and file every single document where necessary? Furthermore, the gate-keeping dilemma exists – i.e. who will decide which documents need to be filed and saved and which can be eliminated. And what about historical documentary communication, material or literature? Is there not the risk that by filing and memorising these documents electronically, somehow or other, *volente o nolente*, there will be no guarantees as regards mistakes or lacunae in their transcription? Another aspect of social communication is the advertising process. – Speakers at the 8th International Conference on Organizational Discourse³⁵ held in London in 2008, discussed the implications in terms of social advertising and the ideological construction of social issues, while at the same time, the different aspects of Identity Construction were analysed (in terms of identity, differences are crucial). As regards Italy, in the context of social advertising, the *Fondazione Pubblicità Progresso*,

³³ See also R. Heeks, Paper No. 18 Benchmarking eGovernment: Improving the National and International Measurement, Evaluation and Comparison of eGovernment 2006 Development Informatics Group. Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester.

³⁴ Paper is still very much a thing of the present.

³⁵This Conference, hosted by the School of Business Management at Queen Mary, University of London, was organized under the auspices of the International Centre for Research in Organizational Discourse, Strategy and Change (ICRODSC) took place in London in July 2008

an institutional not-for-profit organisation, has the aim of contributing to the solving of moral, civil and educational issues of the community, placing communication at the service of the citizens. As the acknowledged and authorised Agency for social advertising, up to now it has made tentative attempts to create a paradigm for communicating institutional information of social relevance to the citizenship. However, in its declination particularly significant results have not been achieved. Sporadically, using mainly the TV and the Press to channel its information (Events have also been organised, but participation is mainly restricted to experts in the field) *Pubblicità Progresso* has succeeded in making a *minimum* impression on its most important target – the citizens. In its advertising campaigns the message is fleeting – perhaps one of the best campaigns (with few exceptions) was the one in defence of the environment with its efficacious slogan: *il verde è tuo: difendilo!* (*the environment is yours defend it*), launched in 1972-73. The strategies of the great *private sector* advertising agencies are disdained or not exploited to the full, (Mancini³⁶ explains this as due to a sense of embarrassment felt in utilising traditional publicity or advertising strategies) the outcome being a communication which is flat and dull. However, on the other hand, it is also true to say that at the time of writing, glimpses of the potential of fairly recent social communication campaigns (e.g. Reti Amiche) are emerging. Simply worded messages, clear concise language, clearly defined targets, etc., these are just some of the virtues of the New social campaigns in Italy. It is significant that in times of economic crisis a real scenario for almost all the Western countries due to the recent recurrent Stock Exchange crash, Italian social advertising is finally picking up (paradoxically, even an Italian Trade Union Organisation has launched an advertising campaign addressed to temporary or unemployed workers). Nevertheless, almost a decade has passed since recommendations were launched in favour of greater accessibility of social communications; evidently now “the time is ripe”. Efficacious examples of this kind of communication are the campaigns advertising services the Italian Government is offering, for instance, the possibility to make payments of various kinds or to obtain pensions or passports directly from a special counter in Post Offices, thus eliminating long waits for citizens in Ministry Offices. Long queues it would seem,

³⁶ Mancini, P., *Manuale di Comunicazione Pubblica*, (1996).

are now to become a thing of the past in General Post Offices in Italy. A specific sector of social communication is addressed to difference, diversity and disability. An analysis of the EU Diversity Management guidelines and the online Report on Costs and Benefits of Diversity commissioned by the EU, where the slogan is “*Yes to difference - No to discrimination*” reveals how the ‘*stop discrimination*’ issue is cutting edge. Documents on Diversity and Equal Rights are numerous. Studies have been carried out by: the European Association of Small and Medium Enterprises) , Local Government in Europe, the European Chamber of Commerce, the European Confederation of Trade Unions. Specifically, in the U.K., equal opportunities are guaranteed by law (see The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005). In this context an interesting Handbook for Managers in Higher Education is (Leeds Met University) Managers’ Handbook and Guide to Good Practice (Page) The Equality Challenge Unit, Disclosure & Support Issues for Disabled Staff in Higher Education, which sets out the guidelines for equal opportunities and non-discrimination of personnel with impediments or disabilities. Following these lines is the Manchester Met University with its Report 2008 compiled on the Diversity & Equality of Opportunity Committees 2007.

In Italy, however, legislation is slightly more lukewarm. In the Public Administration in some cases, priority is given to disabled candidates with respect to recruitment for specific jobs available, but on the whole, apart from legislation which falls within the social service sector; Italian Law No. 104/92 is a case in point, it would seem that in Italy disabled subjects are not considered a core target for communication. Notwithstanding, in general terms of diversity, in a managerial context, the importance of communication cannot be underestimated; in the case of diversity management in the UK - Ahu. Tatli³⁷ discussed his concept of discourse as a marker of paradigm shift and a boundary setter. We are reminded that: “previous attempts to explain group diversity effects have generally suggested that process variables such as *communication* mediate relationships between diversity and performance outcomes”. Lawrence (1997).

On the contrary, other researchers feel that“ *empirical support* for mediated explanations has been relatively modest” Simons, Pelled & Smith (1999), The

³⁷ Internation Conference on Discourse, July, 2008.

Academy of Management Journal, vol.42 (Dec., 1997) This would seem excellent grounds on which to measure the effectiveness of communication with regard to diversity. Furthermore, important distinctions between different kinds of diversity are identified. For Pelled et al “diversity types are differentiated by the degree to which they are directly related to the job at hand, and this “job-relatedness is the extent to which a type of diversity captures distinct experiences, skills or perspectives relevant to cognitive tasks at work”, Simons, Pelled and Smith, (1996) Academy of Management Journal - Making Use of Difference, Diversity, Debate & Decision Comprehensiveness in Top Management Teams.

Reviews on extensive group diversity literature have recorded mostly mixed empirical results describing diversity (more than ten years ago) as both a “Two-edged sword” (Miliker and Marlins 1996) and “a Mixed blessing”, (Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). In a perspective of difference between lower and top management, Rouse & Keeley (1990), maintain that “top managers’ functional background diversity predicted firm financial performance” while West et al (1996) evidenced no such relationship between top management diversity and performance³⁸.

³⁸ See Cuomo et al., La Risorsa Umana “Diversamente Abile” nell’Economia dell’Azienda”. Disability Management and accountability, (2009).

Chapter 2

An in depth study on innovation in Communication in the Public sector

- 2.1. **An in depth study on innovation in Communication in the Public sector**
- 2.2. **From Communication to involvement**
- 2.3. **The Dynamics of Public government Decisions**
- 2.4. **E-government - ICT applications and tools to support interactive participation**
- 2.5. **Technological innovation for active citizen participation, more efficient communication and improved levels of efficiency**
- 2.6. **Mapping and positioning best practices in place**

2.1. An in depth study on innovation in Communication in the Public Sector

Since the beginning of the Third Millennium it is true to say that language for Public Administration purposes has changed drastically; for some Authors³⁹ the only reform that has taken place in the Public Sector is that of language. Pellicano et al in their in depth study on governance in the Public Administration⁴⁰ would most probably beg to differ and it would certainly seem slightly reductive to see Public Administration Reform only from a formal rather than substantive perspective. In terms of public governance, the Authors maintain that besides being a term widely used to which are attributed different and at times, contradictory meanings, in particular, they consider Public governance “a relationship model aimed at building consensus on specific decisions and that the legitimacy of public decision-making is not the exercise of

³⁹ See Publin Report No. D8. Studies of innovation in the public sector, a literature review Rannveig Røste. NIFU STEP, Oslo, Norway 2005.

higher-level powers that result in formal and mandatory consequences but, rather creates the conditions so that all stakeholders feel involved and participate in public decision-making, Pellicano et al 2009⁴¹. It is a foregone conclusion that knowledge does not end when it is consumed, but rather the more you share the more it increases in value. The continuous exchange of ideas, knowledge and information produces a form of "cooperative intelligence" capable of consistently increasing socio-economic value. In addition, the support provided by ICT, through virtual relationships, enables the adoption of a process of widespread communication that directs ever more efficient and effective business and government towards the creation of value (Camussone, 2000).

Pellicano et al furthermore, believe along with many other Authors that if in the private sector the exchange of information and management of customer relationships defined the studies of *Customer Relationship Management* (Payne and Frow, 2005; Reinartz *et al.*, 2004; Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2001), in the public sector this approach is qualified as *Citizen Relationship Management*. The difference between the two concepts lies mainly in the purpose (Schael *et al.*, 2003). Both are based on creating and adding value through improved ability to interact with customers; for both the customer (who in the public sector is also a citizen) this is the starting point and destination planning and management service (Farinet and Ploncher, 2002). While it goes without saying that the ultimate goal of CRM in the private sector is to increase profitability and competitiveness, that of CRM in the public sector Pellicano et al argue, "is to optimize the functions of protection and satisfaction of individual and collective needs" Pellicano et al., (2010)

In the public sector, the culture of the development of relations with the recipients of public action is spreading in order to facilitate understanding of their needs and, therefore, meet them in the best way possible (Ballabeni and Forghieri, 2004). It is fundamental that the citizens and all stakeholders who demand satisfaction of their expectations, should not be regarded as passive recipients of public choices. As Pellicano et al rightly point out, "the participation of citizens and other stakeholders

⁴¹ Citizen Relationship Management to Stakeholder Relationship Governanc An Analysis of Communication in the Italian public Administration Pellicano, M, Ciasullo, M.V., Monetta, G., *Department of Research and Business Studies, Faculty of Economics, University of Salerno, Italy*

in public choices (ideas, information, etc) has to be perceived by public administrations as a strategic resource in order to facilitate understanding of their needs and to develop a culture of care and attention to relations with stakeholders. It is essential therefore that the public administrations recognize their active role”. Furthermore, the Authors point out: “Public governance has to be designed to encourage the relationship and involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making and beyond the view of the limited participation only as concerns electoral support (Tivelli, 2003).

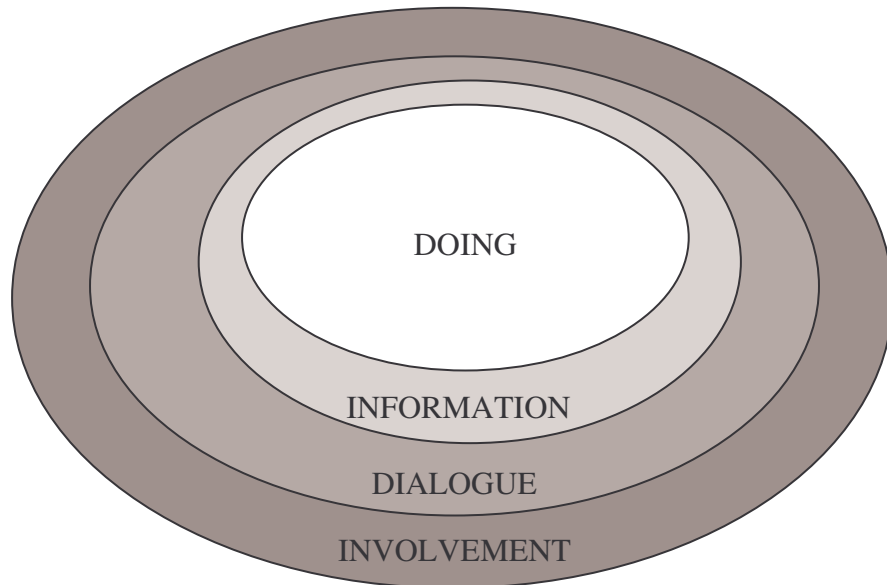
2.2. From Communication to involvement

Public Administration reform should above all, be envisaged in cultural terms as regards changes in the mindset and attitude of those responsible for government on behalf of stakeholders. Democratic dialogue is needed which is aimed at *participation* and being “strategic and mature, will start a real cultural revolution both in terms of policy choices rather than in terms of managerial choices” (Mele, 2006; Salvioni and Bosetti, 2009).

In their study, Pellicano et al trace in synthesis (Fig.1) the four stages of the process of evolution in the relationship between public administrations and their various stakeholders (citizens, businesses, etc.). The process starts from a mere exchange of resources, it continues through the transmission of information by means of different forms of dialogue and arrives finally, at the progressive involvement of all stakeholders in order to better contribute to the creation of economic and social value.

In a preliminary stage (Fig. 2) communication is implicit in the behavior as public administration governance is involved merely in performing the functions for which it is responsible. The widespread view in the literature, attributes the task of defining the trajectory of development of public administrations and subsequent decisions, to the exclusive prerogative of the political body (Smith-Ring and Perry, 1985; Del Vecchio, 2001; Vesci, 2006).

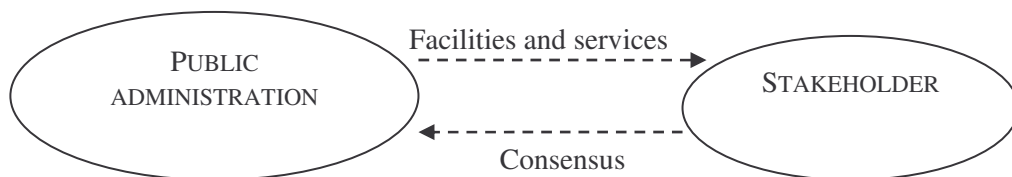
Fig. 1 – *The communication route towards expansion*



Source: (Pellicano, 1992; Levi, 2004; Gregorio, 2004).

The objective is to achieve as much consensus as possible in order to gain more opportunities for re-election to the government body in charge of the administration.

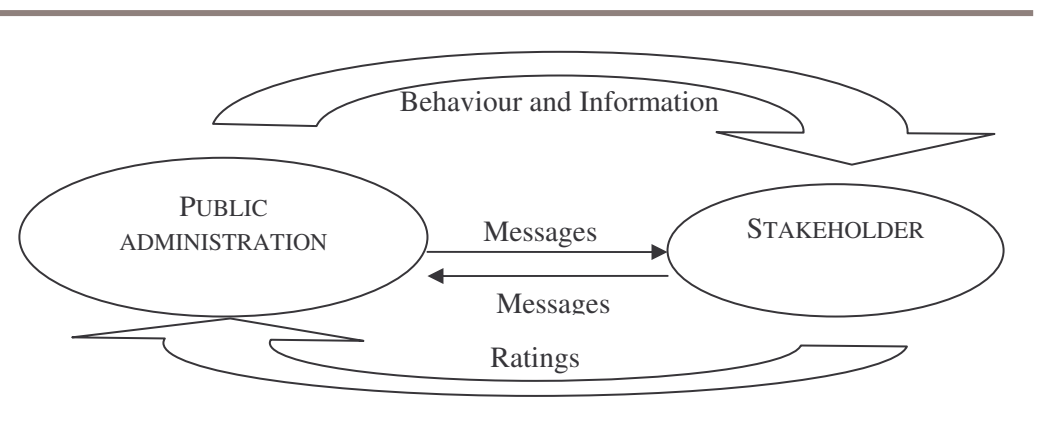
Fig. 2 – *Communicating through “doing”*



Source: Pellicano et al, 2010

Stage 2 sees communication becoming more explicit through the transmission of the message on the part of government in order to provide information to stakeholders to enhance their level of understanding and appreciation.

Fig. 3 – *Communicating through "information" and "dialogue"*



Source: Pellicano et al., 2010

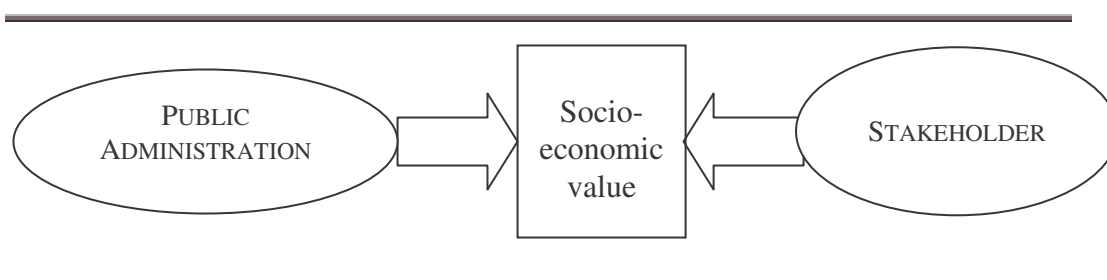
Communication, however, grows richer in content, only when the governing body is pressing ahead to develop a constant and constructive dialogue aimed at establishing and cultivating resonant relationships⁴². The two-tier level of communication becomes more structured when the audience is given the opportunity to interact with the public sector through the use of voice tools (Hirschman, 1974). The government is enabled to build on the considerations and judgments of the community in terms of perceptions in order to meet their overt or latent needs, as well as to generate psychological, positive reactions. Therefore, communication becomes circular, the communication flow and return are related and uniquely governed and organized (Fig. 3).

The last phase consists of organized and governed involvement (Fig.4). The government promotes and encourages community participation in order to obtain participation in solving the problems of the territory of reference and a more focused

⁴² The Authors highlight the example of "Gouvernincontra" a campaign of communication through which the government organized local meetings to inform the community of public initiatives and, at the same time, to listen to their needs.

and rational use of available resources. In this case, communication takes on a different role in what appears as a relational process in order to generate knowledge, understanding and mutual trust through collaborative interactions which produce synergistic effects.

Fig. 4 – *Communicating through "involvement"*



Source: Pellicano et al., 2010

2.3. The Dynamics of Public government Decisions

Communication through involvement is also reflected on the definition of public strategy choices. Decision-making is no longer centered mainly on the role and responsibilities of the governing body Agenda but extends to involving stakeholders in the process of value creation (Pellicano et al., 2010).

Even in the public sector new models of ideation and implementation of policy choices are being defined: choices not the result of decisions taken by the governing body independently but with the decision-making process, having an essentially relational nature and content, involving a variety of stakeholders.

So, the decision process is broken down into chronologically /temporally separated steps and placed in accordance with a rational sequence of input-output, becoming a decisional dynamic that implies specific stages, at times contemporary, set within a circular logic (Pellicano and Esposito De Falco, 2003).

With reference to international studies (Nutt and Backoff, 1992; Bryson, 1995), Pellicano et al identify the decisional dynamic as:

- a) *Ideation*, in which the governing body listens to various stakeholders to fully understand their needs and expectations and accepts useful contributions focusing on ideas or visions of possible initiatives to be developed through participation⁴³;
- b) *Definition*, in which the governing body translates the ideas into projects, ensuring ex ante the economic feasibility, the degree of compatibility and harmonious integration of all the initiatives planned;
- c) *Implementation*, in which the governing body involves the various stakeholders again in active and responsible participation in the practical implementation of the project initiatives defined.;
- d) *Monitoring*, in which the governing body constantly monitors trends and outcomes.

The stages of decisional dynamics show that the governing body is still the "protagonist" (Fazzi, 1982) involving the various stakeholders however in devising and carrying out the government mission. In other words, government action facilitates, drives and attempts to address dynamic decision-making using common substantive levers, such as: the clarification and dissemination of principles and values, as well as visions and missions and the activation of an ongoing dialogue and constructive dialogue with various stakeholders (Fig.5).

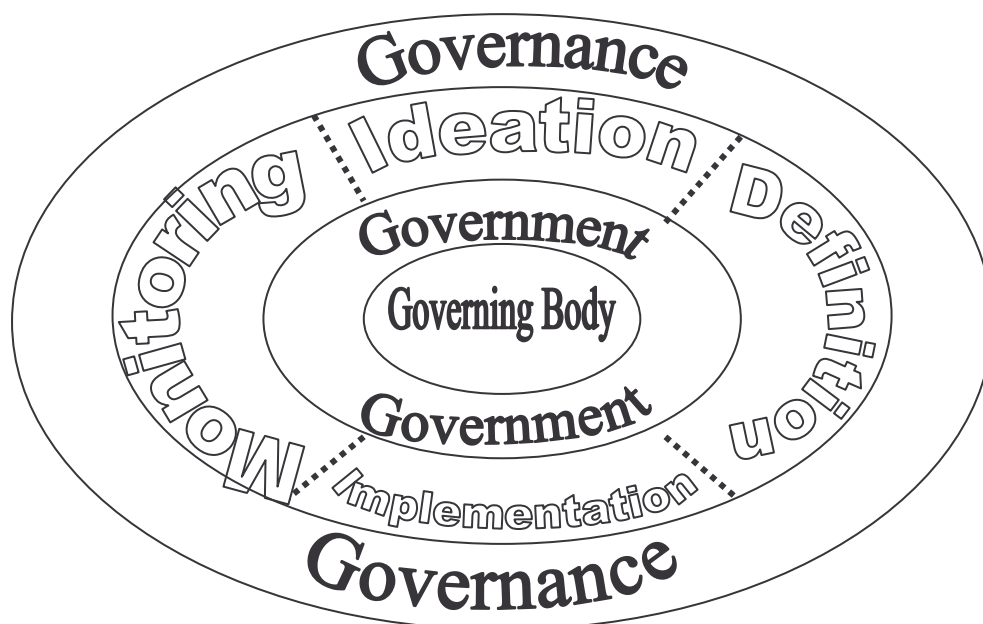
In this respect Pellicano et al apply the following classifications:

- *Governing body*, as a body which performs the title role of the dynamic strategy;
- *Government*, understanding how the strategy is carried out from a subjective perspective, starting from the Agenda in order to direct and guide the administration
- *Governance* is the result of the interaction between stakeholders and in different ways, may affect dynamics. In this case, the perspective is interactive (Ciasullo, 2010) as “not treating it as a single entity can influence the dynamics of decision making

⁴³ An example is “Piano Casa”, with which Central Government by showing the Bill to the regions and other local authorities involved, enabled them to propose in advance, specific actions to amend the provisional legislation.

but addresses special attention to the various stakeholders who can influence and affect choice”⁴⁴

Fig. 5 – *Dynamic decision-making*



Source: Adapted by Pellicano, (2010). *La dinamica strategica*. In M., Pellicano, M.V., Ciasullo (Eds.). *La visione strategica dell'impresa* (229-258) Torino: Giappichelli.

For Pellicano et al., the concept of government invokes the use of hierarchical and proprietary tools with the intent to increase the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of public action (Longo, 2006; Bovaird and Loeffler, 2003) and, therefore, the different stakeholders are seen as mere recipients (Kickert, 1997). Governance, conversely, better fits the current dynamism of modern society as priority must be given to tools to address and to promote the social utility and effectiveness of all the actors which in some way, affect the public interests (Kooiman, 2003; Ferlie *et al.*, 2003; Pollit, 2003). The perspective of governance greatly expands the concept of governance of the government (Rhodes, 1996; 2000), dissociated from the mere

⁴⁴ Barile and Golinelli, 2008; Freeman *et al.*, 2010; Golinelli, 2000; 2005.

exercise of powers and functions. The logic of public governance has to take into account issues of common interest through the collaboration of all stakeholders with the aim of building consensus (Fici, 2004; Borgonovi, 2002). The logic of governance demonstrates its full potential in all those complex situations where negotiations are the tool for exercising all its power (Franzoni, 2004; Borgonovi, 2004, Meneguzzo, 1996). In the public sector, the process of governance and coordination of a variety of economic and social interests, is aimed at identifying shared goals, to balance the different public interests (Cepiku, 2005; Mele *et al.*, 2005). The basic definition of elements of the government-governance dichotomy are useful in highlighting a decision-making process with a greater consultation and cooperation between actors in the definition and implementation of policies (Cepiku, 2008). In this sense, the principle of a "relational" approach to the governance of public administrations emphasizes the importance of carrying out a streamlining of internal processes but also the enhancement of relations with all stakeholders, working together in the co-production of socio-economic value (Pellicano, 2002) in terms of attention to missions such as: citizen satisfaction, trust, communication and collaborative relationships. Several legislative initiatives geared to understanding the needs of citizens are underlined (from the law relating to administrative simplification no. 241/1990 up to the most recent legislation concerning public communication) Pellicano et al., 2010. Extensive studies on *Citizen Relationship Management* have been developed precisely by virtue of such legislative guidance and have stressed the importance of determining in advance the target users of public services, analyzing the needs of each target (Schellong, 2007). In other words, public management has to address attention to the different types of users (city residents, commuters, visitors to the city, those who use remote services) and not least, take into account special needs (Storlazzi, 2006; Storlazzi, 2009).

For Pellicano et al, the Italian public administration is characterized by the presence of "so many differences". Empirical evidence indicates public administrations as having a "relational" culture, in order to provide better services for its citizens. In this category, citizens are considered partners of the dynamic decision-making process

during ideation and implementation. In other public administrations⁴⁵, however, bureaucratic and rigid logics are still prevalent and the former are often unable to effectively implement relational processes with the relative stakeholders. In this respect, Pellicano et al suggest a broader view of how public governing body interaction with the various stakeholders should be classified. They maintain that “*Stakeholder Relationship Governance (SRG)* refers to all types of stakeholders in public administrations in contrast to CRM which concerns citizens as a whole. The reference to the type of stakeholders is not only referred to end users (citizens, workers, tourists, etc.), but also to any other player contributing to improving the quality of public services and therefore, involved in the co-production of socio-economic value” , Pellicano et al., (2010). In other words, the Authors advocate an "extended" relational process in which the many actors involved at various levels in the chain of service delivery must be called to participate.

The range of stakeholders expands Pellicano et al point out, because communication is not active only in respect of the community (citizens, businesses, families, etc.), but extends to the various stakeholders (employees, companies public services, local administrations involved at different levels, etc.).

The public administration model that comes closest to this approach is the network, characterized by its flexibility and interactivity, the slogans of which are: *connect, communicate and collaborate* (Meneguzzo, 2006) . Thus the Authors maintain, it is possible to refer to inter-system relationships in which the single public administration virtuously connects with all types of stakeholders in order to define a unique delivery system and use of services, Pellicano et al., (2010).

In short, for these researchers, SRG is therefore, an evolution of CRM as it addressed to a wider range of stakeholders considered (from citizens to other actors involved in providing and delivering the public service) a far more intense relationship (an evolution from top down one-way communication to bottom up continuous interaction).

⁴⁵ Evidence of this can be found in periodic reports published by the Italian Ministry of the Public Function (Bobbio, 2007; Bobbio, 2004; D’Orta and Marconi, 2002).

2.4. E-government - ICT applications and tools to support interactive participation

In this process of reform, as many Authors would agree, in particular Pellicano et al., the importance of ICT applications and tools to support interactive participation cannot be underestimated.

The availability of appropriate technology is an asset to the public administrations as they can through the tools available, deliver public services and 'drive up a wealth of knowledge and information' (Camussone, 2000). ICT is showing increasingly, that it can be used by public administrations to achieve important strategic objectives. In particular, ICT can play a key role in the decentralization process by increasing efficiency, transparency, participation and citizen engagement as well as strengthening public trust in government (Senese, 2008).

The new technology offered by ICT applications is a fundamental tool to support interactive participation of users and collaboration with other public service companies and local administrations to improve the delivery system of service and to create synergistic value. In particular, the support of ICT affects the relational intensity as the public administrations may move from a simple act of publicizing information to a process of widespread communication in an attempt to improve the delivery of front-office services through the experimentation of participatory involvement (Levi, 2004). Many studies have emphasized the potential offered by ICT: the speed, interactivity disintermediation, etc. In particular, the contribution the technology tools make also affects cultural change and management of the public sector if, in addition to improving the delivery system of service, they allow the creation of new and effective forms of participation by stakeholders (Di Maria and Micelli, 2004; Howard, 2001; Pollifroni, 2003).

2.5. technological innovation for active citizen participation, more efficient communication and improved levels of efficiency

Since the processes of technological innovation can affect the mode of communication and active citizen participation, *e-government* is fully part of the path of renewal and transformation that public administrations must address to improve not only the levels of efficiency but also the degree of satisfaction of several users of public services. More precisely, e-government includes the set of processes and structures functional to electronic delivery by institutions of public administration, information and services to citizens, businesses and other public administrations (Okot-uma, 2001). More precisely, depending on the type of stakeholders, the processes of e-government can be divided into (Pollifroni, 2003):

- a) *Government to Citizen* (G2C): including activities for the provision of services to its citizens (web portals, online services, etc.);
- b) *Government to Business* (G2B): lending business services (i.e. possibility of transmitting electronic tax returns);
- c) *Business to Government* (B2G): supplying goods and services by the public administrations through the channel of e-commerce (i.e. activities of e-procurement);
- d) *Government to Employees* (G2E): supplying services to its staff (i.e. distance learning, e-learning, etc.);
- e) *Government to Government* (G2G): including the interrelationships between public administrations belonging to a nation-state and inter-relationships of public administrations of different nations.

It would also be appropriate to use the term *e-governance* to include interactive features through which the public administrations are experimenting with vertical relationships with the users of public services and horizontal with the other companies and institutions involved in the chain of supply services, through the integration of micro, meso and macro perspectives (Fici, 2004; Cepiku, 2005). This model is similar to the evolutionary models of *e-government* in four, five or six stages (Layne and Lee, 2001; Chandler and Emanuels, 2002; Irani *et al.*, 2006) in which public administrations integrate services and provide in their databases connections

with other institutions operating at higher levels. In addition, the term e-governance includes the testing of new forms of citizen participation in political life. Enabling citizens to participate in government initiatives through the use of information technology tools (e-participation) enhances and expands the e-democracy approach. The goal of e-participation is to increase citizen access to information (e-information), to engage citizens in discussion (e-consultation) and to support a participatory decision making process (e-decision making). The E-participation framework includes key dimensions of e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making, all of which represent important features of e-democracy (Tanese, 2008). E-government designates accordingly, the delivery of public services online, while e-governance refers to activities that are not only related to typical government service delivery that public administrations can put in place through ICT, Pellicano, 2010).

In other words, the government-governance dichotomy can be re-examined in a digital key (Mele, 2006) where governance is not limited to the provision of services online, but in the broadest sense, is the ability to balance the needs of different stakeholders, distinct, far reaching policies and actions considered to be mutually beneficial. The relationship between public administrations and stakeholders can be profoundly altered by new channels and ICT can play a crucial role in the process.

Basically, reference is not to individual processes identified but rather to the logic of e-governance which should lead to the rethinking of the dynamics of government relations. Pellicano et al believe that the support offered by ICT would increase the value created for all types of users through the network of virtual relationships at the various levels of other public administrations and companies. In other words, the effects of ICT impact on their interaction with the users of public services in terms of involvement and interactive participation and mechanisms for coordination of the various authorities responsible for carrying out public functions in terms of flexibility of the services provided and delivered Pellicano et al, (2010).

In their survey, Pellicano et al focused on a specific research question: Does the Italian public administration present a relational approach "extended" to all stakeholders aimed at participation and involvement of those in public decision-making? They investigated the degree of dissemination and application of the CRM methodology, in order to detect traces of a relational approach "extended" to all

stakeholders aimed at the participation and involvement of the same in public decision-making.

Their information was collected through the exploration of existing secondary data. The main source was the Ministry of Innovation and Public Function by means of which they defined the field of reference and the sample for selection. The field of analysis focused on public administrations operating at different territorial levels (regions, provinces and municipalities) as they were considered welfare agencies for the needs of the community, the development of the territory in which they are located and therefore, for the creation of socio-economic values. A case in point was the experiences and practices of good governance, carried out in 2009 by local public administrations published in the Ministry database.

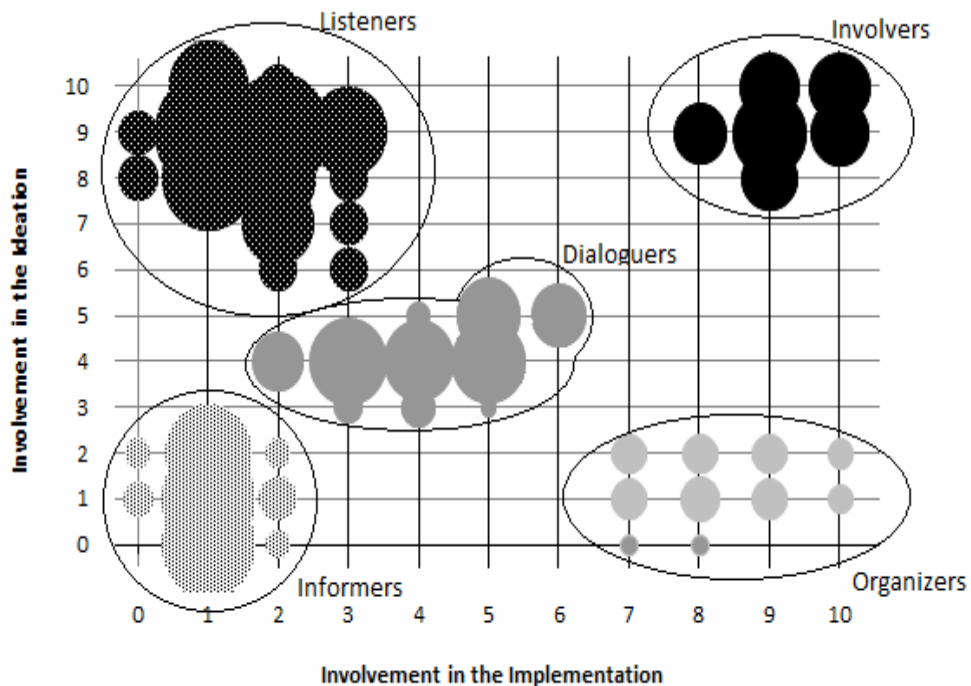
Based on the data collected, 565 experiences of local administrations were selected. These were divided into: 127 carried out by the Regions, 135 Provinces and 303 by the Municipalities the distribution by type of administrations (regional, provincial and municipal) was chosen merely for descriptive purposes. In the analysis and selection of the sample, quantitative parameters (territorial size and population) were not taken into account but only the initiatives undertaken by the public administrations were assessed. Focus of the data analysis was on modalities. The research took into account scenarios in which the communication activities undertaken had an explicit form (information, communication and involvement) while the experiences where the administrations investigated took care to provide a service to the community through forms of implicit communication ("doing") were highlighted. The sample reduced by a percentage of 9%, i.e. not exclusively confined to the experience of "doing " reported activities of 50 local administrations (9 regions, 33 provinces and 8 municipalities) (Pellicano et al, 2010).

2.6. Mapping and positioning best practices in place

The interpretation and study of best practices in place highlighted the various ways in which the public administrations selected, paid attention to the satisfaction of citizens needs in terms of initiatives to target specific recipients of public services

(citizens, businesses, etc.). The concept, understood as "conceptual framework through which scientists look at the world" (Kuhn, 1969), is due to the interpretative vision according to which reality cannot simply be observed, but has to be interpreted (Weber, 1958). understanding therefore, was gained through information and appropriate tools and from the analysis of the modalities inspiring the actions of the public administrations concerned. In this context, Pellicano et al mapped (Fig. 6) each administration in proportion to the level of involvement of stakeholders in the experiences of best practices and good governance.

Fig. 6 – Mapping and positioning of public administrations by level of stakeholder involvement



Source Pellicano et al, 2010)

the level of involvement referred not only to users of public services but also to any others involved in providing and delivering services. It was measured in the two decisional stages (ideation and implementation) of the dynamic decision-making in which the governing body is open to listening to and dialogue with the different stakeholders. Consequently, the measure of participation and involvement of the

stakeholders in both decisional stages enabled the placing/positioning of experiences of good governance.

From a measurement approach i.e. measurement defined as a set of rules under which the characteristics are attributes of the numbers of events, people and objects (Corbetta, 2003), the Authors used a range of 0 to 10 and converted the observed experiences into quantifiable information. 0 representing experiences in which there was no involvement at all by stakeholders while 10 was attributed to initiatives, designed or implemented, with a high degree of involvement by stakeholders.

The placement shows concentrations of different sizes depending on the number of administrations investigated in specific points on the graph. Next to each position the number of public administrations is shown. In addition, the graph evidences clusters, distinguished by colour, from which a taxonomy of initiatives can be drawn up.

In the ideation stage a number of listening initiatives (42% of the total sample) emerges. Practices are located in the graph at the top on the left. These initiatives aimed primarily at understanding the needs of citizens, include using ICT to improve the quality of service and to guide the government in the design of such services. The purpose of the experience in the “listeners” cluster is to involve citizens in service design in order to offer more appropriate responses to their needs. It follows, therefore, that involvement is only in the ideation stage. It should be underlined that mainly the users of public services and in particular, citizenship as a whole were considered and targeted. Very sporadic initiatives are *customized* i.e. aimed at specific users (i.e. the young, elderly, disabled, etc.).

In the implementation stages organizing initiatives (6%) are evidenced. Practices are located in the chart at the bottom right hand corner. In order to establish a comprehensive system of delivery and supply of public services, the involvement of stakeholders concerns public authorities and private organizations and it is high especially in the implementation stage. Therefore, the objective of the “organizers” cluster is to eliminate unnecessary steps and to make administrative procedures more streamlined. There is also specific initiatives of involvement aimed at improving organizational effectiveness of public employees. The Authors underline practices carried out together as families, as a specific category of stakeholders to which some

administrations have entrusted the responsibility of public policies in their favor by taking at times, the role of active participants in welfare projects, education and training. On the other hand, some local authorities have supported self-organized workshops in which parents, rather than bearers of requests, manage individual listening points and debate with the community.

A cluster is located in the lower left of the graph where 19% of the total is concentrated. The intention of these administrations, defined as “informers” is to give transparency to public action taken in terms of right to information, access to the file, etc.. The Authors point out that involvement of stakeholders is low both in the ideation and in the implementation stage. Most of the experiences in this cluster set up by the administration offer a new online information service providing the opportunity for citizens to be constantly abreast of public activities and have access to online consultation of legislation. Information is almost exclusively addressed to the citizens as a whole. Furthermore, the Authors underline that targeted to a specific category of stakeholders (tourists) concern the advertising of routes, events or to enhance the natural and cultural heritage.

A further cluster, defined “dialoguers”, is positioned at the centre of the map. Experiences concern a number of administrations (19% of the total sample) mostly municipalities, that through the web, have initiated forms of dialogue with citizens. The goal, the Authors point out, is to give more opportunities for citizens to express their views on municipal services and transparency, not only in accounting for actions undertaken and achievements but also to publicize results (excellence and critical) emerging from the investigations. In this cluster, the involvement is not particular high both in the ideation and in the implementation stage. The modalities are: reporting; customer satisfaction in relation to specific public services provided (registry services, municipal police, etc.); implementation of a system for managing claims. These practices have also required changes, sometimes including training sessions to give staff preparation to carry out surveys on users (customer satisfaction), employees (auditing), analysis needs etc) and accountability to the citizens of the results and their plans for improvement.

The Authors record high involvement in both decision-making stages of opening government to stakeholders in special practices (the right of citizens to participate

actively in ideation stage) and their involvement in the implementation of related public policies. For this reason, the Authors explain, "involvers" are positioned in the top graph to the right and turn out to be 14% of the total sample. Even the tools of negotiated planning are inspired by this logic, based on a broad stakeholder engagement and efforts concentrated on common and shared goals. Many initiatives in this cluster are implemented by some regional governments, in order to qualify their role of authority over local, had the objective of promoting the culture of participation in social life, provincial and municipal governments. In addition, some regional initiatives relate solely to the involvement of other institutional stakeholders belonging to the health system or education for the establishment of councils are able to design and implement appropriate policies and adequate health or education. In short, the Authors' aim in this study was to verify with the results of empirical evidence, the emergence of a cultural change in the attitudes of the Italian public administrations.

From their theoretical analysis the Authors noted more extensive forms of public communication and, in particular, confirmation of an "extended" relational approach, where the exchange of information and dialogue with stakeholders helped to develop collaborative measures and to involve them in the creation of socio-economic value. The conclusions reached indicated the awareness on the part of the governing body that "a more active participation of stakeholders produces positive effects: in the short term, the quality of services provided and the degree of customer satisfaction; in the long term, improves the quality of life, widespread prosperity and, ultimately, the degree of happiness" (Gregorio, 2006; De Biase, 2007).

Pellicano et al however, evidence that the good practices analyzed are included, for the most part, in actions of communication of information, or measuring the degree of customer satisfaction, through which to draw ideas to improve public services. This explains why the process of Italian public reform and the efforts made by the public administrations they investigated is precisely in this direction. For the Authors, in terms of technology, many changes have been noted spreading from relational communication expanded and spread to all types of stakeholders; however, the involvement of the same in public decision-making dynamics is still due only to sporadic initiatives.

Recent innovations in communication and collaborative relationships, the Authors conclude on the other hand, “show little about contributions in terms of creation and distribution of socio-economic value. Therefore, it would be desirable to determine whether such intervention through the provision of public services and the redesigning of jobs, is effectively evidenced” (Pellicano et al., 2010).

Chapter 3

Customer Satisfaction and value creation

- 3.1. Customer Satisfaction and value creation
- 3.2. Defining customer satisfaction
- 3.3. The role of customer satisfaction
- 3.4. The role of transparent communication in the Public Administration
- 3.5. Performance Management - An Overview
- 3.6. Performance Measurement in the Public Sector
- 3.7. An experimental phase in performance measurement
- 3.8. Customer Satisfaction Management
- 3.8. Measuring Customer Satisfaction

3.1. Customer Satisfaction and value creation

In a Public Administration that is truly Customer Centred or that as one Author who - more than ten years ago - stressed the importance of Customer centred policies in her volume *La Customer Satisfaction* published in 2002, still firmly believes: “should put Customers and their satisfaction at the centre of all decision making processes” (Cuomo, M.T., 2000). Organizations have to address constant attention to the citizens and consider customer satisfaction an approach with the objective of “penetrating and pervading the organizational system and guiding it on the basis of principles of quality, efficiency and effectiveness towards creating a virtuous spiral” (Cuomo, 2000) for its stakeholders. It has to be said that creating value for clients has never been a fundamental issue for Public Administrations generally speaking anywhere in the world. However, more than a decade has passed since reforms were approved relative to transparency of procedures and quality and efficiency in the public Administration in Italy and in our present day high tech globalized glass showcase society, best practices are finally starting to emerge in the innovative policies that the public Sector is attempting to put in place. On the other

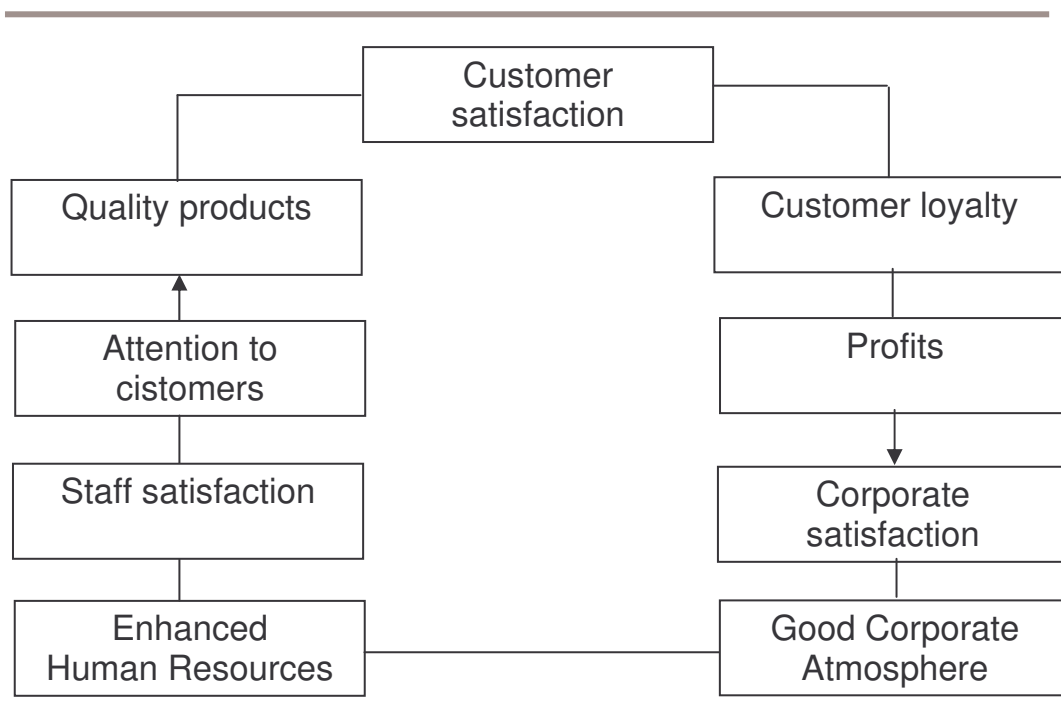
hand, citizens are much more demanding compared to the past, relative to their expectations of efficiency, quality services and bottom up interaction with their Institutions – seeking in a word “customer satisfaction” .based on a psychologically satisfying ‘cultivated’⁴⁶citizen-client-centric institutional relationship. In this respect, in the case of the Public Administration, as in a broader business context, “sociological, economic and cultural transformations cannot be underestimated, but need proactively, to be handled with awareness and in a strategic manner exploiting the underlying positive elements and permeating them throughout the organisational structures, renewing and improving them in a harmonious relationship capable of enhancing and relying on the internal resources of the organization” (Cuomo, 2000). In short, the Author maintains that in the context of business organizations - which applies equally well to the Public Administration - a series of instruments needs to be developed and implemented in order to “monitor the most significant drivers that influence or determine consumer behaviour and that are capable of bringing the client closer to the organization and its specifics and at the same time, to create value for them”(Cuomo, 2000). To this aim, the Author in terms of criteria for client proximity, perhaps not even vaguely imagining the plethora of interactive information technology (ITC) that we would all need to come to terms with at the present time, over ten years ago advocated the adequacy of specific tools such as interactivity i.e. bi-directional communication through web sites together with the development of bottom-up systems that disrupt or upset the existing order replacing it with new rules and new tendencies. In other words, consumer citizens from passively accepting top down impositions (goods or services products and in the case of the Public Administration as well as the communication relative to the same) should claim the right to decide, choose, look for alternatives, contributing with their suggestions, to improvements in decision making processes, indicating their own point of view and declaring their effective needs and the right to a better quality of life. In short, Cuomo claims, “this epochal shift overturns inevitably, the perspectives and models of many organizations imposing on them a radical unimaginable cultural change”. On the other hand, a culture of empathy, participation and internal and external involvement has to substitute that of unilateral

⁴⁶ Cuomo points out that the client/citizen should be considered a focal component to be ‘cultivated’ constantly from the relational point of view.

action, posing the instances, claims, rights and new needs as innovative criteria to follow for business conduct. Complexity, turbulence acceleration of change and discontinuity in Cuomo’s view, “can be governed, becoming a source of regeneration, improvement, performance growth and image as opposed to a that of risk and impediment”, (Cuomo, 2000). Organizations have to address constant attention to the citizens and consider customer satisfaction an approach with the objective of “penetrating and pervading the organizational system and guiding it on the basis of principles of quality, efficiency and effectiveness towards creating a virtuous cycle” (Cuomo, 2000) for its stakeholders.

However, customer satisfaction does not merely consist in satisfying the needs and demands of an organisation’s client portfolio or citizens in the case of the Public Administration. The scenario is far more complex as many Authors argue.

Fig. 1 – The virtuous cycle of Customer Satisfaction



Source – Valdani et. Al.,1995

For instance, Cuomo's several tier perspective of customer satisfaction inspired by the virtuous spiral model of Valdani et al. considers customer satisfaction not the ultimate aim but the very first "link in the chain for constructing customer loyalty" and a methodological approach towards resolving problematic organizational issues. (2000).

In short, Cuomo claims, "this epochal shift overturns inevitably, the perspectives and models of many organizations imposing on them a radical unimaginable cultural change". On the other hand, a culture of empathy, participation and involvement both internal and external, has to substitute that of unilateral action, positing the instances, claims, rights and new needs as a fresh criterion to follow for business conduct. Complexity, turbulence acceleration of change and discontinuity in Cuomo's view, "can be governed, becoming a source of regeneration, improvement, performance growth and image as opposed to that of risk and impediment", (Cuomo, 2000).

Interestingly, however, in marketing terms, while traditional communication conveyed through the normal channels of communication ends up by not guaranteeing automatic returns in terms of sales, services etc, seeing as it proposes consumption models that are highly standardized and no longer in line with new consumer attitudes that demand on the contrary, 'something new', 'something personal' and 'functional' to their needs. On the contrary, citizen-consumers of the Public Administration are demanding standardised, well regulated and clearly expressed communication that guarantees their segment, (i.e. citizen-consumers) not '*customized*', '*personal*' and '*functional to individual needs*' but rather '*transparent*', '*democratic*', and '*well regulated*' communication products or services that are conveyed through both traditional and innovative interactive channels. In other words, the shift we are witnessing sees citizens claiming and expecting, Public Administration communication no longer envisaged as a niche segment but on the contrary, a highly standardised, comprehensible interactive process that fully involves them in all its stages i.e. *citizen centred* and *citizen involvement*. While strategists of marketing are having to review consolidated and efficient schema based on well regulated systems of consumption societies, characterised by "a kind of cultural and value crystallisation, pushing everyone to desire and believe they need the same things and in an emulative

manner owning the same goods and enjoying the same services” (Cuomo, 2000 as a result, are having to look for new competitive strategies, Public Administrations on the contrary, are having to review the traditional image of ‘average customer’ by now in dissolution⁴⁷ for which marketers were well able to predict needs and purchases. As Cuomo points out, if in the past merely by knowing some aspects relative to the mass of consumers, it was possible to know everything about them, this is no longer the case. The ‘hedonist’⁴⁸ consumer who follows fashionable trends has been replaced by an individual-consumer, decisive and independent and with a degree of awareness that was practically unknown for example, in the 1980s. Furthermore, she maintains “customers have become extremely attentive in the choice of the different alternatives offered them, opting only for those that optimize the ratio between price and quality and in harmony with their universe of values and capable of thoroughly delighting them”. In short, “ consumers who are attentive and sensitive towards cultural and social issues, ready to sacrifice time ever more precious, in the search for the optimum which is the clear expression of individual and social identity” (Cuomo, 2000). In my view, the opposite is true as regards the Public Administrations. Citizens cannot be offered different alternatives. They all have equal rights; fashion and trends cannot dictate differentiation; consolidated and efficient schema have to be devised. Needs and demands have to be predicted and customer satisfaction guaranteed to one and all. New Public Management has to take this into account and not lose sight of citizen-centred goals. The paradigm is branching out into parallel strands; on the one hand, we find new *market oriented consumers* demanding coherently, fashionable products and services customized to their needs and to resolving their problems and satisfying their expectations *tout court* and on the other, *citizen consumers* demanding coherently, standardized public services that resolve problems for one and all and satisfy the expectations of consumers and society as a whole.

⁴⁷ See Cuomo, 2000.

⁴⁸ See Cuomo, 2000.

3.2. Defining customer satisfaction

In her volume, Cuomo *dissects* the concept of customer satisfaction with expertise and clarity and identifies three strands underpinning this basic need for firm survival in the light of radical changes in the relationship between business organisations and the market, although she points out that these are prevalent but not mutually exclusive outlooks: a) customer satisfaction in terms of the ratio between expected and effective benefits. In other words, from a psychological slant (the psycho-cognitive approach), where satisfaction is considered a cognitive state, the outcome of assessment which confirms or otherwise customer expectations. This viewpoint is shared by several Authors⁴⁹ who ground their theory mainly in an analysis of the psycho-cognitive mechanisms regulating satisfaction generally and the processes of achieving the same; b) customer satisfaction intended in terms of the sum/quantum of satisfaction promoted by each attribute of the product or service or in other words, the link between customer and product or service performance (the operative approach). This perspective quite widespread⁵⁰, qualifies the satisfaction of the consumer in merely instrumental terms; in other words, as a set of operative actions and technical solutions especially effective as concerns the client and circumscribed to one or more business functions directly in contact with the client (e.g. trade, claims, etc.). This does not imply however, reviewing the firm from an organisational perspective and does not modify the approach to problematic issues and strategic decision making on the part of the firm, remaining a purely marginal event. Finally, c) a third more holistic tendency - and one easily shared both by market oriented and by Public Administration organisations alike - (the strategic approach) sees customer satisfaction as a philosophical approach, a rule of thumb guide for businesses underpinning all long term business decision making, or what Cuomo defines as “a style of business behaviour explicating the capacity to create value for customers and anticipating and managing their expectations, showing in every strategic and tactical decision, competence and responsibility in satisfying customer

⁴⁹ On trends in the concept of marketing and the consumer see: Verona.G., Il marketing alle soglie del nuovo millennio, in *Economia e Management*, n.6,1999; Costabile M. Nuovi confini nell'analisi del consumatore, in *Economia & Management*, n.6, 1999.

⁵⁰ On the issue see Collesei et al., Customer satisfaction e lancio di nuovi prodotti, in *Micro & Macro Marketing*, n.3, 1995.

needs”⁵¹. In short, the customer-centred vision needs to involve not only the culture and mission of the organisation but also its “structures, knowledge and processes” (Cuomo, 2000), a permeating process that find its *raison d’être* in the continuous promoting of convergence and consonance between firm and customer⁵². Putting the client-consumer-citizen at the centre of the process as Cuomo points out: “naturally conditions both competitive strategies⁵³ and those of a more general nature and can be seen both as a source of competitive advantage and a means of creating value for all parties concerned” (Cuomo, 2000).

3.3. The role of customer satisfaction

The survival of the fittest of Darwinian inspiration does not only apply to the human species but is also extremely pertinent in the business world. Firm survival, paramount not only from an economic point of view in a market based scenario, has also become an issue of good governance and business practice fraught with complexity⁵⁴. Complexity in a business context implies, besides current/common critical and selective pressures that determine business performance, the interaction of increasingly more complex systems pursuing development and growth⁵⁵ and is as Cuomo points out “a new organizational path centred on the creation of alliances with various social actors both inside and outside the organisation who are fully involved in enhancing governance decision making processes in order to create value” Cuomo, 2000. A new role for customer-citizens is also envisaged in that customer satisfaction thus becomes the parameter to be constantly controlled as a

⁵¹. The proactive firm in a context of environmental complexity and competitive trends, welcomes new input as opposed to merely adapting to change; for the Author, the firm albeit an open system, succeeds in maintaining degrees of rigidity and relative flexibility. See Valdani, E., Un’impresa proattiva, virtuale ed eterarchica per progettare lo sviluppo, in *Economia & Management*, n. 2, 1994

⁵² See Golinelli, G.M., L’Approccio Sistemico Vitale (ASV) al Governo dell’Impresa, (2011)

⁵³ Golinelli refers to the concepts of *competitiveness* and *consonance* as the two drivers leading to value creation, rejecting the concept of *strategy* traditionally envisaged in the literature as a driver, seeing as he considers strategies intrinsically linked to governance, (Golinelli, 2011).

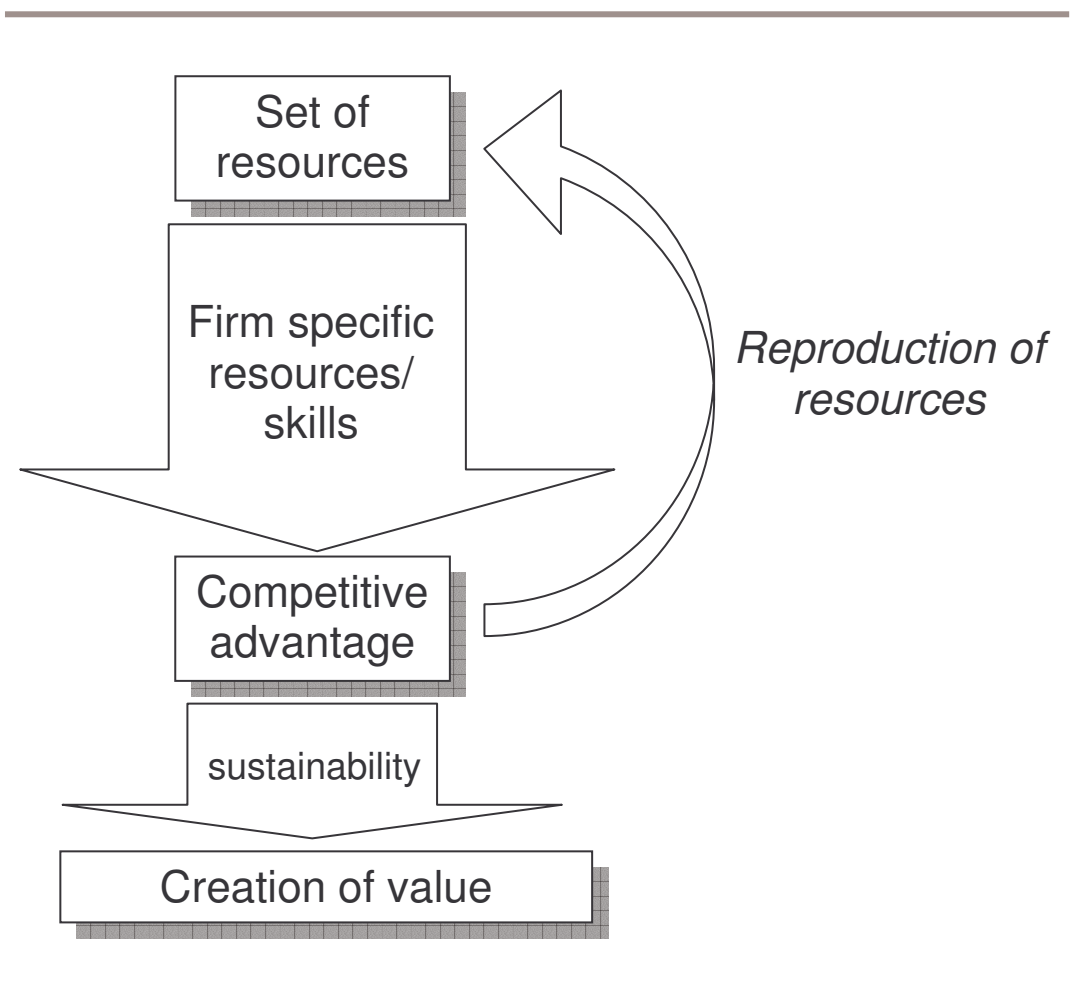
⁵⁴ For a definition of complexity, see See Golinelli, G.M., L’Approccio Sistemico Vitale (ASV) al Governo dell’Impresa, Chapter 4, 2000. See also Bocchi, G.L., & Ceruti, M, *La Sfida della Complessità* (1985); see also Morin, E., *Introduzione al pensiero Complesso*, and Zanarini, G., (eds) “*Caos e Complessità*, Sissa-Isas Napoli, CUEN, (1996).

guiding factor underlying all organizational decision making, representing the effective essence of change. In this context, Cuomo distinguishes between two strategic valences: one 'internal' the other 'external'. In other words, a) customer satisfaction considered as a cultural and philosophical governance approach corresponding to the strategic objective of efficient and effective economic sustainability, improved image and competitive positioning and b) customer satisfaction interpreted as a managerial system oriented towards long term competitive growth, reinforcing the organization's strengths in order to deal efficaciously with competitors (Cuomo, 2000). Naturally in the case of the Public Administration, being a monopoly it fears nor is interested in competitors. However, what is at stake regardless, is the competitiveness of *the system*, whether it belongs to the private or the public sector. In short, Cuomo maintains that this dual strategic valence impacts on the mentality of the organisation and provides analytical instruments/tools suitable for improving market relations both to establish competitive advantage and to achieve greater consonance with client-customers-citizens. In a communicational context, the role of customer satisfaction is paramount. The citizens are the Public Administration's core customers and their consonance or proximity with local or national procedures through the effective communication of the same or otherwise, will reflect to no small extent on their expectations or satisfaction with public policy. Relevant to the implications for future research, compared to the vast quantity of studies on innovation in the private sector, it is worth noting that to date there is a dearth of research on innovation in the public sector⁵⁶. Accordingly, it is difficult to measure satisfactorily, the degree of customer satisfaction regarding innovative forms of communication in the Public Administration in terms of transparency, equity, democracy and attention in other words, towards the citizen-customer providing the explicit freedom to express preferences, make suggestions, expect seriousness and transparent procedures. This shift towards respect for the citizen as an individual clearly shows the revolutionary

⁵⁶ See Innovation in the Public Sector, Windrum et al., 2008. The volume was published in the context of the project "Innovation in the Public Sector (PUBLIN) under the EU Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration on 'Improving the human research potential and the socio-economic knowledge base, 1998-2002' under the EU Fifth Framework Programme.

cultural trend in act implying radical changes in organisations, upsetting the status quo in terms of rules, flows and traditional decision making processes. These changes cannot be considered a mere transition in normal praxis but on the contrary, are deep-rooted and meaningful. As Cuomo points out: “ a cultural revolution is taking place which is imposing innovative changes in organizational practice and its underlying philosophy i.e. client centred leading to a virtuous spiral of customer satisfaction for new customer-citizens, experienced and wise decision makers who faced in the private sector with a vast and structured array of goods and services and in the Public sector with the need to be informed of choices and public policy, have to be considered front stage actors to be cultivated constantly with a view to maximising efficiency and creating value” (Cuomo, 2000).

Fig. 2 – Ratio between resources/skills and creation of value



Furthermore, for Cuomo, the client centred competitive horizon becomes the principle according to which the most powerful and constructive stimulus for a highly proactive business stems precisely from the customer, what she calls “customer oriented re-engineering” which in activating a virtuous cycle that creates long lasting added value, results in competitive advantage and as a consequence, the creation of value.

3.4. The role of transparent communication in the Public Administration

In short, the need to strengthen the communicational function (in any event a traditional prerogative of marketing) means shifting from mere mono-directional transmission towards a constant and interactive dialogue for the purpose of satisfying expectation on the part of all the stakeholders concerned. In other words, what is needed to inform and update the interlocutor, not to mention intellectual and affective participation aimed at exchange of information, knowledge and mutual trust. Relational quality and working together achieve added value by creating a virtuous, self-generating cycle of value which is fed by supplementary resources and contributions both in terms of market , the players of the competitive system and not least, the social interlocutors, resulting in obvious prospects of compensation and benefits for all. Such distinctive resources, consequently, are translated in terms of competitive advantage, i.e. added value for the citizens who are offered informed transparent *communication* relative to a product or service the underlying scope of which is to bring the citizens closer to the Public Administration which recognizes their role as focal in an efficient, effective and parallel process of added value creation.

3.5. Performance Management - An Overview

As is well known, most firms work in business scenarios of fierce competitiveness which are currently ever more complex and changeable. Consequently, businesses have to find and develop a series of sustainable competitive advantages which represent the effective driver for the creation of value (the prime objective of any firm⁵⁷ to meet the expectations of all the stakeholders concerned. Hence clients/customers and client-customer centred firms have greater opportunities and margins for success if a process of client customization is pursued which guarantees fidelity or in other words, customer loyalty. In this context, the specific value of customer satisfaction cannot be considered merely a superficial issue but on the contrary, becomes “a specific strategic element decisive for the development of businesses and for their success” (Cuomo, 2000.): One might well ask whether this criterion is actually applicable to the Public Administration seeing as “scenarios of fierce competition” are not exactly prevalent in the public sector. Needless to say, the exclusive, monopolistic nature of the Public Administration does not lend itself to the search for strategies that could increase sustainable competitive advantage considered logically, largely unnecessary by the Public Sector. To date, the Public Administration has preferred to continue unchanging, its slow, traditional route towards providing services that if not obsolete, are at least out of date, do not correspond to the needs of the citizens and furthermore, are delivered on a “take it or leave it” basis, over which the customer/citizens have absolutely no control. Not before time, it would appear that private sector regulatory and marketing mechanisms are now being seriously considered by the Department of Public Administration in Italy in an effort to reduce the divide between quality and performance in the public sector. The Ministry’s aim is to improve client/citizen participation, transparency, efficiency, better communication and as a result, delivery of efficient and more punctual services. By promoting best practices in standard performance relative to public administrations and favouring the consolidation of current management models and forms of incentives not to mention total

⁵⁷Metallo, G., Management & Sviluppo d’Impresa, 2008

accessibility and transparency of data relative to services rendered by the public administrations are bound to be ensured.

Taking into account however, that projects for Reforms in the Public Administration have been ongoing for some 20 years now and given the potential opportunities that innovative ICTs provide, it is of the essence that innovation in the Public sector is put in place and outcomes achieved as a result of far-sighted public policies managerial strategies and effective, transparent governance. In this Chapter an attempt is made to analyze how performance is gauged in the Public Administration in terms of Customer Satisfaction and the synergies that can be achieved in public policies by the use of specific tools and techniques commonly applied in the Private Sector.

3.6. Performance Measurement in the Public Sector

Public Administrations, in particular those delivering services to citizens/customers, are constantly faced with the need to improve their policies even by means of implementing and/or perfecting general managerial models of measuring, assessing and comparing levels of performance. In this respect, in 2008, the Department of Public Administration in Italy, together with a training Agency⁵⁸ and the University of Roma Tre, devised and implemented a Public Administration Performance Measurement pilot scheme. The aim was to contribute to the consolidation of knowhow and the improvement of performance of local authorities in Regions belonging to the Convergence Objective. This entailed: promoting best practices in standard performance relative to public administrations; favouring the consolidation of current management models and forms of incentives; ensuring total accessibility and transparency of data relative to services rendered by the public administrations.

⁵⁸ Formez A Government Training Agency

3.7. An experimental phase in performance measurement

The Italian legislative Decree No. 150/2009 also insists on the close link between performance and quality of services. Ministry officials point out however, that attention to quality has already been ongoing for some years now in the Department of Public Administration⁵⁹ Quality of online services and measurement of customer satisfaction promotes the delivery of public services by means of electronic channels to improve the quality of life of the citizens and to justify and broaden the latter's relationship with the Public Administration, evidencing how measuring customer satisfaction is a strategic element for the administrations in which resources should be invested. The delivery of public services by means of electronic channels represents an opportunity for quick and simplified services compared to traditional channels thus effectively improving accessibility to the services.. In particular in this respect, the widespread diffusion of the Internet as a tool for access to public services, requires, in the Ministry's view, the introduction of monitoring systems of client satisfaction on the part of the citizens for the services delivered by means of the online mode.. This channel of delivery and the construction of systems of "taking the citizen's voice into consideration" represent two strategic factors in that the adoption of suitable tools to systematically measure customer satisfaction of services on line is the starting point for achieving intervention strategies and plans for the improvement of the services themselves, Using the Local Public Administration information system - SIPAL – (standing for Sistema Informativo delle Pubbliche Amministrazioni Locali) an integrated analysis and evaluation model (available to Administrations online) the Ministry of Public Function proposed to measure performance in Italian Local Authorities. The aim was to facilitate permanent monitoring of administrative activity and to provide the Local Authorities taking part in the scheme with data in real time, with regard to the level of service delivery and performance reached. A fundamental element for the application of the model is that data is collected, processed and used/communicated systematically. This is considered crucial both in aggregate

⁵⁹ See the Italian 'Directive Stanca (2005).

(performance levels with respect to dimensions) and in analytical terms (performance levels with respect to services)⁶⁰. To date, various training and support learning laboratories/workshops have been set up to disseminate and consolidate the methodology. In a first stage, The Ministry invited any Italian Local Authority wanting to improve their management models of performance measurement, assessment/evaluation of citizen impact and standard of service delivered, to take part in the scheme. The schedule entailed two preliminary stages:

- a) an initial survey and setting up of “collaboration with organisations managing information and certified data in order to link up databases belonging to the various administrations and to optimize data gathering procedures at Local Authorities;
- b) a survey on experiences of measuring and assessing public administration performance levels, both on a national and international scale. From the analysis, a classification of the many experiences has been compiled on the basis of specific characteristics. The assessment and measuring of public performance appears to be an effective tool for controlling government action and a driver for improving services.

Subsequently, in its executive phase, the project was initially addressed to Local Authorities of 30,000 – 100,000 inhabitants of the Objective Convergence⁶¹ Regions, and then extended to a sample of Local Authorities with a resident population of between 15.000 and 30.000 inhabitants; the aim being to measure the carrying capacity of the model. The Local Authorities were involved in three learning laboratories held at Bari and Catania respectively, during the course of which discussions took place on the performance assessment practices currently in use in the various administrative scenarios.. This provided in real time, practical methodological and operative performance assessment tools. During the learning laboratories the *SIPAL* or Local Public Administrations Information System, was illustrated, Characterized by the capacity for data gathering and for setting up

⁶⁰ See Cuomo, M.T. Customer Satisfaction, (2000)

⁶¹ Objective Convergence countries are those envisaged by the European Union as in need of alignment in terms of knowledge, infrastructure, growth, development etc. to meet the requisites of the Lisbon Treaty, and allocated funds for this purpose see Citarella G., 2011

network systems *SIPAL* is an integrated model of performance analysis and measurement of Italian Local Authorities available to all Local Administrations online. The ministry is convinced that their activities will enable the Local Authorities to be part of a stable network, open also to other areas of the country for benchmarking practices. In this sense, action undertaken and results achieved will converge into a final assessment report, with the aim of extending to other administrative scenarios, performance measurement methodology and culture on the basis of the findings/results (in terms of customer satisfaction), from the initial application of *SIPAL*. The Ministry has put in place a standard questionnaire (pre-defined cross-cutting indicators) to survey the degree of customer satisfaction relative to the portal and to the set of services delivered on line . The procedure involves conducting the survey, analyzing findings and eventually putting in place corrective measures. This particular type of survey is based on a set of 22 transversal indicators of satisfaction, grouped in 7 dimensions (aggregates of semantically uniform/homogeneous indicators) for more effective data processing. One of the objectives of the data analysis is that of identifying areas for improvement in terms of quality and to fix priorities for intervention. Three types of measurement are in place:

- 1 .overall level of satisfaction with regard to the service:
2. level of citizen satisfaction with regard to basic services
3. degree of .importance expressed by citizens relative to the service (e.g. adequacy of information.

The Ministry's claim relative to innovation in the Public Administration and degree of customer satisfaction expressed. The phases for the survey consisted in:

- compiling of a standard questionnaire⁶²;
- sample plan;
- collecting and processing data;
- layout of questionnaire
- forma for database;
- Analysis of data (analyses of opinions of importance expressed)

⁶² The questionnaire was devised by Roma Tre University as part of the project for measuring performance in the Public Administration: See Ministry guidelines for the application of the model of evaluation of Customer satisfaction on the Ministry website:


3.8. Customer Satisfaction Management⁶³

As concerns this goal, during 2008, the Public Administration Department, devised a series of activities to experiment and analyze various factors of Customer Satisfaction Management: in collaboration with the Roma Tre University and with *Centro Nazionale per l'Informatica nella Pubblica Amministrazione (CNIPA)*, a pilot study was carried out to measure customer satisfaction relative to multi-channel services and involves the Administrations directly. To date In Italy, the Ministry's current project for systematic data gathering on customer satisfaction relative to public administration services involves using *emoticons*.⁶⁴ The objective of the initiative is twofold: the citizen-customer can express judgement in real time, on completion of every transaction effectuated through the various channels, (counter, website and telephone); while the Administration will have available a synthetic description of client/user perceptions on the service. A group of local and national Administrations are conducting the pilot project/experiment in conformity with the guidelines of the Ministry Department for the Public Administration. This initiative is open to all any Administration interested.

3.9. Measuring Customer Satisfaction

As long as a decade ago, Maria Teresa Cuomo⁶⁵ had already illustrated pertinent tools and methods for measuring customer satisfaction. Cuomo in line with many current researchers, endorses the view that “ the customer .is a continuous challenge

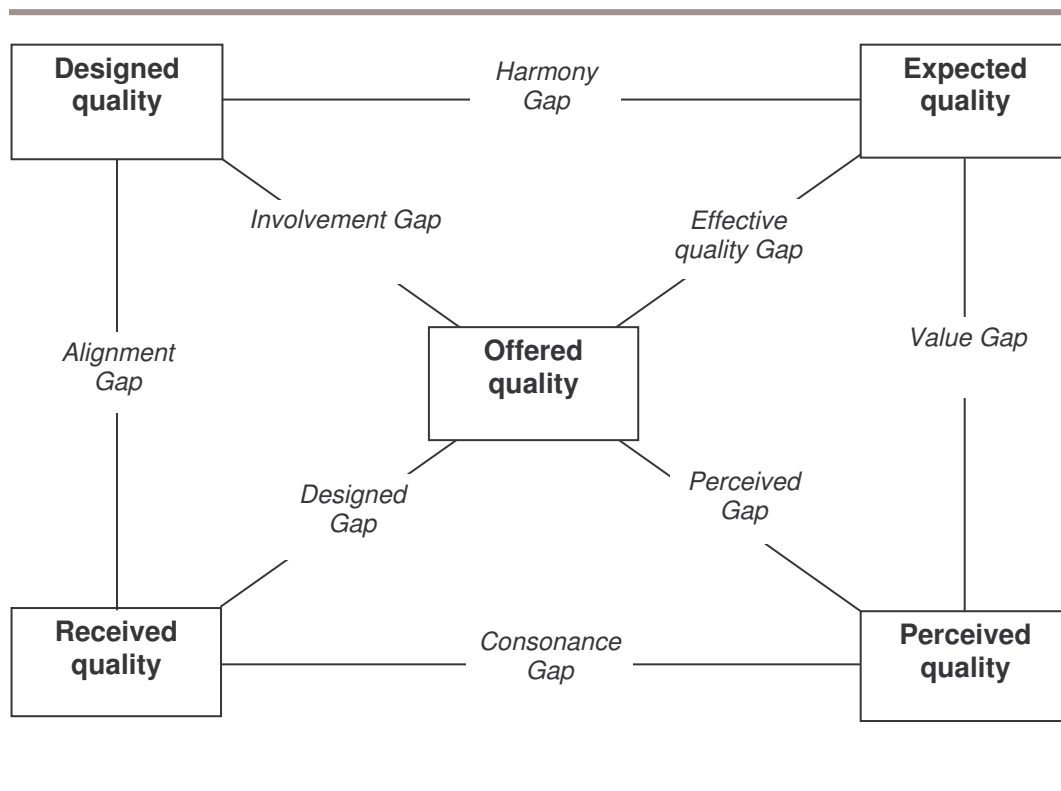
⁶³ For Costabile , M, “ Misurare il valore per il cliente”, p.36 (2000), the relation between Customer Satisfaction, quality and value can be represented by a circular causal process. All three constructs, Costabile/the Author insists, although different, are of extreme relevance in analysing and measuring the value generated in the trading process.. As concerns the Public Administration, See Metallo et Cuomo in *Micro & Macro Marketing Issue n.1. 2000.*

⁶⁴ Emoticons sometimes called “smiles” indicate perceived customer emotions: anger contentment,, etc.. Usually, they are chromatically symbolic (just like traffic lights) red for disapproval, , orange in between and green for approval. “*Mettiamoci la faccia*”  230 Public Administrations took part in this scheme which measures customer satisfaction by means of emoticons, devised by the Minister for the Public Administration, *Renato Brunetta*

⁶⁵ *La Customer Satisfaction*” (2000 pp.50-55)

, not a result which once achieved is annulled”. She also maintains that the concept of mere control is by now “obsolete”, preferring to promote an ongoing strategy of estimating, predicting and monitoring the degree of ‘customer satisfaction’ which can be translated in terms of ‘customer loyalty’, considered the principal aim of any policy geared to creating value for both the firm and for the customer (Cuomo, 2000). The problem is how can performance (and consequently, customer satisfaction) be measured? Cuomo suggests as a preliminary phase, utilizing Valdani and Busacca’s Gap Analysis Model (figure 3).

Fig. 3 – The Gap Analysis Model



Source – Valdani et Al., 1995

Performance in this context, is envisaged in terms of quality of service or product and the lesser or greater gap between services and/or product offered is in proportion to the degree of quality perceived by the customer and his/her level of satisfaction. In other words “to reach an acceptable level of customer satisfaction,

there must be coherence between client expectations⁶⁶ and effective satisfaction experienced by the customer, in order to create added value both for the firm and all the stakeholders involved” (Cuomo, M.T., (2000) . The Author also insists on the link between customer satisfaction and needs analysis, the latter, a useful tool for giving organizations the opportunity to translate customer orientation in concrete terms and on a practical plane to pursue and “achieve wider levels of satisfaction and a more general raising of the levels of quality” (Cuomo, p.58 (2000).

In her study Cuomo illustrates in detail, with a focus on the great importance in the business hierarchy the customer has acquired in recent years. i.e. protected by the laws in force in favour of consumers, the increased contractual power on the part of consumer associations, as well as greater levels of competitiveness). Customers-citizens are consequently, no longer a passive recipient of a service or a product). Cuomo illustrates the phases of analysis (which she classifies as direct or indirect) together with a series of techniques and methods starting from the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to the Problem Detection System (PDS) from the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) to the semi-qualitative model devised by Kano and the Profit Impact of Marketing Strategies (PIMS). To complete the picture, Cuomo delineates the SERVEQUAL technique, a quantitative method (using a Likert 7 point scale questionnaire) together with the APQ model for benchmarking/measuring the standard of quality in particular in the Public Administration (Health Service) analysing performance in terms of coherence between customer expectations and perceived satisfaction.

⁶⁶ Customer expectations according to Busacca, are reinforced by previous experience, by personal reasons, by the perceived image the customer has of the firm and by the communication of its competitors. These expectations concur in defining the value desired by the client /customer/citizen which is translated into expected value when the desired value is measured against the standard of the products and services offered. (Busacca, B, Marketing and Creazione del valore, p.63, (2005)

Chapter Four

The role of language for communication in New Public Management

- 4.1. The role of language in the shift towards transparency in the Public Sector
- 4.2. The role of language in achieving convergence in institutional communication
- 4.3. The implications for future research
- 4.4. The Implications of 'Progetto Chiaro' in Italy
- 4.5. New Public Management versus digital-era governance
- 4.6. Customer Service Excellence
- 4.7. The need for more research into language and language skills for enhancing communication

4.1. The role of language in the shift towards transparency in the Public Sector

The relevance of clear, concise and 'appropriate' language for facilitating consonance in institutional communication considered ever more in terms of participatory service to citizens and measurable, consequently, in terms of quality, efficacy etc. implies that a series of 'official' recommendations/guidelines could be devised based on a triple target approach: **effectiveness** , **efficacy** and **transparency** and that a common, converging 'grammar' underpinning these values, could be created. In this context, with reference to the framework of David Varney's Review of Service

Transformation (2006⁶⁷) the importance was considered of embedding processes across the public sector that not only bring the true voice of the customer into service design but also engage citizens and businesses as a focal point for services. For instance from a brief comparative analysis of the state of the art both in Italy and in the United Kingdom⁶⁸, it emerges that the Central Office of Information (COI) (created 1 April, 1946 and formed mainly from the production division of the Ministry of Information, including its regional organization and film unit, COI) was to provide services for all government departments at home and overseas. Since 1946 the COI has evolved from a government structure with its relevant limits to a well-oiled mechanism of public communication. During the 1990s - just as other countries such as Italy - with the advent of New Labour In 1997 the Labour Party ended 18 years of Conservative rule as Tony Blair was elected Prime Minister. New Labour was committed to efficiency and the modernisation of public services. COI responded to the growing demand for effectiveness and value for money. As communications became more complex, it set up new specialist services: Sponsorship, Events Management, New Media, and Informability. The New Media unit launched a website for No. 10 Downing Street and created the first British Monarchy website, which attracted over 1 million hits within 24 hours of its launch.. An ethnic communities information forum helped the Government communicate more effectively with Britain's ethnic minorities and the PR team's effectiveness forum produced a PR evaluation system for government departments. Informability was set up to advise on communication to people with disabilities, following the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. It launched a video magazine for the deaf -

⁶⁷ Launching the report, Sir David Varney said:

"The service sector has an increasingly important role in the economy and public service delivery needs to evolve to meet the emerging challenges. There are opportunities to deliver better public services through joining up service provision across the public sector, and by engaging more directly with users in the design and delivery of services.

"Over the next ten years there are opportunities to provide better public services at a lower cost to the taxpayer, if the Government takes these opportunities, then I believe the UK can create a world class public service economy with interactions with citizens and businesses that deliver real value and resolve problems first time." H. M. Treasury Website, consulted 21 April, 2010.

⁶⁸ See the Central Information Office website (consulted 6th May, 2010)The COI Regional Network was transferred to the Cabinet Office and renamed the Government News Network (GNN). GNN returned to COI in 2005.

A review of government communications was launched in 2003, chaired by Bob Phillis. The 2004 Phillis Report had wide-reaching consequences, and, soon after its publication, the first Permanent Secretary for Government Communication was appointed.

"Public scene" - and an audio magazine for people with sight impairments - "Sound advice". The new Sponsorship service secured £1.5 million from the private sector in 1998/99 for public safety campaigns. COI's Merchandising and Licensing service promoted Army merchandise via the Internet, raising income and increasing awareness of the Army as a career for young people.

4.2. The role of language in achieving convergence in institutional communication

In the current scenario Government has to work harder than ever to reach and convince its target audiences. Mistrust of authority, social diversity, fragmented audiences and a plethora of communication channels make the task increasingly complex. As concerns clear communication addressed to citizens, it appears that each year, in the context of their so called Plain English project⁶⁹ a list of words is drawn up for the public sector to avoid when communicating with the general public (In 2010, the list contained 260 lexical items). An ongoing research project envisages the compiling of a list of corresponding lexical items to be drawn up in Italian. Subsequently, from the analysis of the kind of language used in Public Communication in the two countries, the lexical items can be classified on the basis of a semantic/ neologism/etymological frequency/obscurity matrix and a series of synonyms identified in the two languages (Italian and English) to guarantee clarity in the information conveyed. The list drawn up in both languages could serve as a as a template for ' good' clear and effective communication language when dealing with the general public. A preliminary stage of the research envisaged the creating/ devising of a model of communication structured on **convergence-consonance-context- content-clarity-** (5 c- model see Table 1, for systemic application in the sector of public or institutional communication. In Italy it has emerged that there is a wide gap between Public Administration communication and the content to be

⁶⁹ The Plain English Project - For more details of the Plain English Project, see Chapter...

communicated, due to a norm-oriented approach and the unwillingness on the part of bureaucrats to take responsibility for putting innovation in place. Furthermore, In Italy, despite attempts on the part of governance to encourage the use of clear and simple language when communicating to its citizens, in actual fact, the language of communication is articulated upon a complex model of morpho-syntactic structures and lexical items that renders meaning at best ambiguous and at worst, unintelligible. However, taking into account the importance of the web and the revolution in terms of communication in act in the Public Administration, the barometer has been shifted to a certain extent and what appeared to be a consolidated and static system of communication has now turned itself right around scattering itself in every direction. The sky is the limit. With the putting in place of the CEM⁷⁰ (certified electronic mail), the Public Administration has certainly aimed at cutting the length of its communications. It is well known that emails need to be short and concise (there is no room for jargon). On the other hand, with its customer assistance call-line (Linea Amica)⁷¹ the Government has set up an efficient call centre – employing over 100 graduates in the back office and front office to deal with customer queries or complaints on every aspect of public sector services: pensions, birth and death certificates. One issue remains on the table; what about the citizens who have no familiarity with IT or modern day call centres; most likely the most needy citizens? One might well ask what plans have been made for them. Time in this case, will undoubtedly tell.

⁷⁰ CEM was launched officially on the 26th April, 2010 by the Minister for Public Administration Renato Brunetta. All Public Administration Offices are now obliged to communicate with citizens and with one another, exclusively using CEM. The savings both from an economic and environmental perspective are tenfold; in particular recouped spending on the reams of paper used in most Public Administration communication. This reform has been on the boil for some time now and furthermore, has been part of a pilot initiative since the beginning of 2000. As from yesterday the project is fully active, positive outcomes in terms of the triple target of efficiency efficacy and transparency should soon be on the horizon.

⁷¹ See website www.funzionepubblica.it consulted: 2010

4.3. The implications for future research

The issue lends itself to many implications for further research. In particular the study envisages opportunities for devising strategies and synergies to achieve systemic consonance in all Public or Institutional communication (considered in the light of public service) and ultimately, for compiling a prescriptive “grammar” to underpin Public or institutional communication, followed by the drafting of an up-dated Handbook of Appropriate and Clear Communication for the Public Administration

The dual objective of improving competitiveness on a global scale through processes of development and synergic learning, attained through the enhancement of capacity and competence, and the desire to combine the advantages of scale with those of variety⁷² imply the shift to an ever greater focus on Customer Service Excellence i.e. in this case. public services for all that are **efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering** (the five e-model⁷³). In this context, other standard indicators measure factors such as delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude, while great emphasis is also placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user’s experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction in a perspective of value co-creation. In this scenario, the elaboration of more agile and less bureaucratic paradigms and processes of communication capable of guaranteeing greater strategic efficacy and greater operative efficiency is fundamental, taking into account that clear communication and the use of **appropriate** language saves vast amounts of time and money and it makes economic sense for governments and organisations to invest in ensuring that their language is understood by the people to whom they are speaking and writing.

Clarity of language as a fundamental factor in institutional communication appears to have received little attention in research so far and the convergence between communication and content has apparently not even been considered. Applying a viable systems approach in the public sector to the communication of content to the citizens, apart from facilitating communication at every level would go far in devising

⁷² Saviano M. (2003)

⁷³ The UK Government model for Customer Service Excellence standards – for more detailed information, see Appendix

more agile and less bureaucratic paradigms and processes of communication capable of guaranteeing greater strategic efficacy and greater operative efficiency.

In line with numerous Authors (Barile,2010 Golinelli, 2011, Saviano,2010 Bassano,2010 et al.,) taking into account the extreme complexity, i.e. the variety and variability of any given phenomena, the need emerges to devise an articulated framework in which to contextualise the relative evolutionary dynamics of phenomena that routinely come under investigation. In this respect, there is growing awareness that context influences to no mean degree such dynamics, creating an interlinking and interdependent relationship. In this respect “the limits emerge of traditional analytical-reductionist approaches for explaining such dynamics and shifts the focus onto finding methods which are coherent with the kind/nature of the phenomena investigated, and consequently, capable of explaining their relevant dynamics” (M. Saviano., 2003). Furthermore, in order to analyse a phenomenon perceived as complex, deriving from its articulation in a great variety of aspects, components, features, relations, causes and effects that increase continually, due to the “incessant manifestation of elements, aspects and new events that modify its configuration”(Saviano, 2003), a ‘holistic’ approach is needed which shifts the attention from the parts of a phenomenon to the whole. For Saviano” a holistic vision of reality is at the basis of systemic thought and in systemic thought the vision of reality is integrated with knowledge matured in objects of subject matter which are apparently, quite distinct one from the other”(Saviano, 2003). To complete the shift from the parts to the whole in conceptual terms, the Author underlines the need to introduce other conceptual categories that lead to the definition of what she calls ‘structure’ and ‘system’. In other words “two cardinal concepts of the systemic vision , which express the dual nature of the phenomenon observed or more precisely, of how it is observed” with the distinction between structure and system taking on (in Kuhn’s terms) a paradigmatic valence.

if the structural-systemic paradigm were applied to the context of public sector or institutional communication, the outcome would be a more economic, time-saving and effective means of citizen-centred communication based on a more agile, less bureaucratic model of communication (structure) underpinned by a viable replicable process (system) ensuring **convergence** between **context, content, clarity** and

communication⁷⁴ in Italy to date, the aim of public communication has been mainly to mystify rather than to clarify. Gregorio Arena talks of the 'secret nature' of the Public Administration with its bureaucratic and self-referential approach⁷⁵ where there is a shift from the principle of "everything is secret except for what I want you to know from the pillars of my discretion, my friendship or grace of favour, to a new kind of right where everything is public and accessible with the exclusion of specific information pertaining to the privacy of third parties"⁷⁶. In the past, this 'secrecy' had led to a progressive disinterest on the part of citizens towards delving into the intricacies of institutional jargon, of finding their way out of endless labyrinths of discourse intended basically for 'those in the know'. The result has been a barrier erected between the citizens and the State and the concomitant distancing from principles of participation, transparency etc., common in other parts of Europe and the United States. Compared to these nations with their more pragmatic approach, Italy had always followed a more norm-oriented pathway. In this context, a series of reforms concerning the Italian Public Administration were gradually put in place in the 1990s - starting with Law no 241/1990 - which stipulated regulations for more participative, transparent, efficient and simplified

9. One of the areas needing clear communication on the part of the institutions is in the Health Service. Health literacy for instance is an important issue in Ireland today. It involves a person being able to understand basic health information whether they receive it in writing, in person or over the phone. It also involves a person having the knowledge to understand their options and make informed decisions about their own health. People working in the healthcare sector play an important part in improving health literacy by communicating more clearly and making information and services more accessible to patients. According to the International Adult Literacy Survey, conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1997, over 50% of Irish adults are affected in some way by literacy difficulties. Many people have problems dealing with the increasing demands on their literacy skills from materials they come across in work and everyday life. Research shows, for example, that people find it difficult to read and understand health-related information such as signage, health information leaflets, directions on medicine packs, consent forms, prescriptions and medical advice.

Website: Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards, 2008-2010 - visited 31st May 2010..

⁷⁵ Added to which, Italian civil servants it would appear, feel that they are badly underpaid and are not motivated towards changing their professional *modus vivendi*, unless economically rewarded for doing so. The only duty considered fundamental in the Public Administration is keeping the balance of the Financial Statement and this, according to Regulatory Auditors called in to approve Public Administration budgets, is because the civil service officials are held personally responsible in pecuniary terms, if discrepancies occur. For many analysts, poor pay and the lack of sensitivity towards the problems of the citizenship together with an extremely weak sense of community spirit combined with the knowledge that communication which does not have clarity as its object (and consequently, an alibi for inefficiency, lack of transparency and so on), are the reasons for which present-day Italian civil servants, despite the fact that legislation to contrast such a scenario has now been in place for more than 20 years, are not motivated to change.

⁷⁶ G. Arena, (1999).

administrative procedures and the citizen's specific right to ask for and to receive information⁷⁷ as well as the right of access to administrative documents). These regulations were also stipulated in Law no.142 of 1990; however, only at a local level. In the Legislative Decree No. 29 of 1993 the obligatory as opposed to discretionary nature of communication was set out laid down. If however, as Cuomo et al point out "the mission of the State is not only that (as is commonly assumed) of guaranteeing efficacy, efficiency and reduced costs (economy), but above all, equity, transparency, legitimacy and the channelling of consensus, then the citizens in effect, should be considered central to this process. In other words, "protagonists in the fulfilling of their needs, on a par with the Administration itself". For these Authors, the Public Administration albeit qualified more and more as a service industry, is called upon to "satisfy in a dynamic way the needs of the community, in a logic of a correct and appropriate policy of resource management which can in no way, detach itself from the social purpose for which it exists" (Cuomo et al, 2009). Furthermore, in this perspective, they feel that it is fundamental that relations with the community should be attributed far greater value as it is clear that in order to resolve the problems of the community, the Public Administration needs to deal with citizens who are aware and active, rather than merely passive subjects (Cuomo et al, 2009). One step towards measuring or at least rendering visible the correct or appropriate activity on the part of the Public Administration can be traced back to the period of the so-called Bassanini Laws⁷⁸ (in particular the Cabinet Directive dated 27th January 1994, which envisaged the adoption of a Charter of Services based on principles of equality, impartiality, continuity, competitiveness, participation and information, efficiency and efficacy in

⁷⁷ Establishing the obligation not only to listen, to address attention and to inform citizens correctly but also establishing other communicational obligations as the responsibility of the Public Administration (See Rolando, 2001, *La Normativa nei primi anni Novanta.*, page 64)

⁷⁸ Named after a former Minister of the Public Administration, appointed in 1996 and consisting in Law No.59/97 (dealing basically with simplification in the Public Administration); Law No. 127/97, Law No. 191/98 and Law No. 50/99 dealing with rendering Public Administration procedures more simplified and agile, reducing red tape, promoting staff training and environmental sustainability by eliminating the need for many of the useless reams of paper required to print the piles of certificates (death, marriage, birth, residence etc.) all having a validity of no longer than 3 months. Bassanini also eliminated the requirement for signatures to be endorsed by public dignitaries and officials (Law No. 127/97) In this respect, suffice it to say that in 1996 it was found that 68,753,663 (1.18 per resident) certificates were produced compared to 1999, when the number dropped to 34,821,372 (0.59 per resident) (Stefania Tamborini –(Regione Lombardo and the Iulm University Milano) *Basi Normative in Rolando, (2003)*

delivering public sector services having both economic and non-economic relevance. The introduction of the Charter intended as a preliminary *ex ante* and *ex post* indicator for monitoring the rate of customer satisfaction, was considered more as a deontological code as opposed to an effective tool for measuring and evaluating performance and furthermore, of juridical application in achieving the purpose of efficacy and efficiency. The Charter contained a section on communication, the aim of which was to guarantee the citizens full and accurate information and simple and clear content, at the same time, illustrating the means and conditions of delivery of the service and last but not least, the established standards of quality and the relative data of conformity with the same, as well as stipulating interpersonal relations based on respect and courtesy towards the users.⁷⁹ As might be expected, the Charter, as far as a tool for measuring efficiency and customer satisfaction in terms of services delivered was concerned, turned out to be chronically inefficient. In this context, as regards respecting the spirit of the law, Rolando points out that the use of the Charter of Services was disappointingly, not widespread, the lion's share residing mainly in the Education sector(not surprisingly!) and moreover, " that in August 1998, only 6,924 Charters had been received by the Ministry of Public Administration of which 298 in the Health Service (only 35% of the total structures) and 5,971 from scholastic institutions (only 10% of those officially recognized)(Roland, 2001) What was needed evidently, was an instrument preferably of a juridical kind that would fully render the Charter indicative as a parameter for measuring and evaluating the public services delivered.

As concerns more explicitly communication, the above mentioned Bassanini Reforms designed to make communication clearer and life simpler for the Italian citizen , endorsed the perspective that "communication is an effectively strategic source capable of guiding the evolutionary pathway of public sector institutions towards a sharp change in route , through creating an intense network of relations with the community of reference, based above all on trust and consensus. The process still ongoing, articulated and complex, achieved its own specific structuring only at the beginning of the 1990s when significant initiatives were put in place" (M.T. Cuomo et al, 2009). In this respect, albeit later, an effective tool, published in

⁷⁹ Rolando *ibid.*

1997, was the ‘Manuale di Stile’ (Handbook of Style) inspired by the “Codice Stile” (Style Code published in 1993) devised for simplifying language in the Public Administration. The Handbook laid down guidelines for improving the efficiency of written communication specifically in terms of the logical-conceptual organization of texts, syntax and lexicon, graphics and layout. Paradoxically, for some experts in the field of Public Innovation, the only effective reform that has taken place to date, is that of language⁸⁰. Stefano Rolando maintains and it is hard to disagree with him, that there was awareness in the Public Administration that the simplification of the language was one of the fundamental measures necessary for the modernisation of the Public Administration system and that “the obscure juridical language used by public officials had always been, in the perception of the citizens, perhaps the main element with which bureaucracy at its worst, had always been identified. Perhaps like no other sector, language, bureaucratic jargon is full of technical legalities, twisted syntax, ambiguous content, evident not only in legislation but also in memoranda, letters, bills, public notices in waiting rooms and offices. Obviously, bureaucratic jargon does not facilitate relations between the Administration and the citizens, denying the latter well- defined rights, and guarantees of transparency of all that the Administration wants or offers” (Rolando, 2001, p.69) in 1999, Law No. 59 dealing specifically with the simplification of communication and other procedures in the public sector was passed. Finally, with Law 150/2000⁸¹, considered by many Authors “the point of arrival but at the same time, the starting point for the transformation of and which effectively regulated institutional communication (external and internal) and reorganized information and communication activities, concentrating on specific aspects: the structures that dealt with communication, training human resources and the definition of communication plan/projects. In other words,

⁸⁰ Publin Report No. D16 Studies of innovation in the public sector, a theoretical framework. Rannveig Røste, 2005.

⁸¹ As concerns the routine application of the Law 150/2000, it would appear that according to Stefania Tamborini most Public Administration Offices “acknowledged an active role to communication”, while the difficulties of putting the Law into practice in her view, stemmed from “organizational problems, lack of staff, ongoing reorganization, economic shortfalls and shortfalls in knowledge and culture of communication”. Government officials on the other hand, recognize that there is a need for specialists who are able to communicate complexity in a simple way and “who know how to make accessible to citizens the great winds of change which are affecting all of us” Arturo Parisi, Bologna, September 1997 in Alessandro Rovinetti (I soggetti – Tipologie professionali e modelli organizzativi in Rolando, (2003).

informing and communicating to the citizens on the part of the institutions had to be considered no longer extemporaneous and discretionary activities but rather an institutional obligation, ceasing consequently, to be residual and becoming an acknowledged and legitimated function of the Public Administration” Cuomo, M.T., et al., 2009). Thus the way was paved towards facilitating relations and communication with the general public and towards harnessing the extremes of bureaucracy into manageable units of public interest. In this respect, in other parts of Europe, notably the United Kingdom, the difficulties relating to public communication had already emerged long before by virtue of the necessity to communicate with citizens who had not necessarily been born in the country⁸². This logically, posed problematic issues of language, comprehension and ambiguousness. The path taken was that of using elementary language (in other words, Plain English⁸³) for all and where necessary, equally elementary translation. In effect, it could be said that Britain together with other northern European countries, has effectively notched up a decades-long history of systemized clear, effective and transparent communication⁸⁴. Interestingly, the idea underpinning Plain English is the banning of all commonly used (or over-used) words in the Public Administration/ Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA has in actual fact for the last three years, issued an annual list of words that it believes the public sector should not use in communications with the general public. The Plain English initiative looks into the strategies for ensuring that local government communication is clear and easy to understand. Considered of particular importance are how the

⁸² The first wave of immigration to Britain had taken place in the early 50s.

⁸³ Plain English is a style of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it. It is a more efficient way of writing. To write in plain English you first need to put yourself in your reader's shoes. When you write in plain English you :write in clear language; give relevant information in the right order, and help people to find this information quickly. the advantages of using plain English increase the chance that everyone will understand your message, which saves time and avoids misunderstandings. Plain English makes good business sense. Studies have shown that when plain English is used, readers can better understand information. When material is written clearly, clearly, people can make informed judgments. Most people do not want to be forced to read material more than once to understand the message and decide what to do next. The Irish National Literacy Agency (NALA) recommends that all public sector bodies, including the Government, devise and implement policies to incorporate the use of plain English into their communications as standard practice. Plain English can help the public sector become more efficient because clearer information is more likely to save time, money and possible frustration that might otherwise be involved in making repeated requests for information, clarifying misunderstandings or contesting legal agreements that may be misinterpreted. Website: National Adult Literacy Agency, www.nala.ie.

⁸⁴ For more details of the The Plain English Project see Appendix.

texts are written and edited, how tricky grammar and syntax are handled and how common mistakes are avoided.

4.4. The Implications of ‘Progetto Chiaro’ in Italy

It should be mentioned however, in this respect, likewise in Italy (in 2002), a Ministerial Project entitled ‘Progetto Chiaro’⁸⁵ was devised. In this context, the then Minister of Public Administration endeavoured to define a series of guidelines to facilitate and clarify Public Administration communication addressed to its citizens. ‘Progetto Chiaro’, despite its name was evidently extremely unclear to most Public Administration officials, seeing as it was never really fully exploited or put into effect. The official explanation for this lay in the non-mandatory nature of the project; in other words, it was not a Law and as the duty of Italian bureaucrats is to respect legislation, no more, no less, clearly, they were certainly not obliged to respect recommendations or guidelines that had not been sealed officially with juridical or legislative wax! Regardless of how Italian civil servants consider their customer-client users, in the first instance, the importance of the relational perspective cannot be underestimated. “Personal relationships play a fundamental role in business relations, in which technical aspects of communication prevail on emotional ones” (Metallo, Gerardo, Cuomo, Maria Teresa and Festa, Giuseppe ‘Relationship Management in the Business of Quality and Communication’, *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 18:1, 119 – 133)

In the shift from an approach based mainly on the mere informing and externalising of institutional acts (the publication of laws, competitions, etc.) for which the institutions sidestep the needs of the community of reference, to one in which on

⁸⁵ See ‘Progetto Chiaro’ detailed in the Directive issued by the then Minister for Public Administration Franco Frattini, dated 7th February, 2002 to fill the gaps in the Law 150/2000 relative to the infrastructures, functions and modes of implementing communication in the Public Administration. Great importance was given to research (point 7) and to monitoring: “the Administrations have to verify by means of surveys, studies, research the annual implementation of communication plans and measure their efficiency “. Furthermore, the importance of training was emphasized “to update recruitment procedures and to improve the expertise of human resources dedicated to activities of communication and information as well as a focus on the assessment of management in terms of implementing to the full the application of the Directive (Point 10).

the contrary, in the relational approach or as Cuomo et al define the ‘ systemic-relational communication approach’, “the focus is on taking into account the expectations and pressures manifested/expressed by an institution’s supra-system of reference, not to mention their projections onto other players/stakeholders. Accordingly, institutional communication has to deal with promoting collective choices, favouring the circulation of information flows, cultivating relations based on criteria of transparency and efficacy and clearly communicated decision-making, in order to promote constant dialogue with the local community by listening to their needs/demands and encouraging participation” Cuomo et al, (2010). In this connection, it goes without saying that in democratic system dynamics, the Public Administration has found itself facing a growing need to communicate clearly its objectives, reasons and ways of working to the citizens. For Stefano Sepe⁸⁶, processes of transformation in public sector organisations and communications of general interest in the history of the Italian Republic, have had a specific link. He believes that “the cause of this transformation can be traced to two factors internal and external, i.e. social “pressure” and the need for Public Administrations to recuperate credibility and reliability”. In this combination Sepe continues, need to be inserted “on the one hand the democratic principles that have to underpin public institutional action and on the other, the perception of the community concerning the level of quality of the services the PA delivers. Sepe traces the watershed of change to a twenty year period beginning with “the completion of Regional legislation (Law No. 382 of 1975 and Bills No. 616 and 617 in 1977⁸⁷) and spreading to the processes of reform started by the ‘Bassanini’ Laws of 1997”. During this timeline, it was acknowledged⁸⁸ that the issue of communication between the Public Administration

⁸⁶ Stefano Sepe.

⁸⁷ With the passage from the State to the Regions of social services, education, economic development, and transport, “the Regions and Local Authorities, found themselves obliged to deal with the thorny issue of communicating to the citizens in radically new terms” (Sepe, in Rolando, p.544)

⁸⁸ Already in 1979, the then Minister of the Public Administration Massimo Severo Giannini in his Report on the main problematic issues of the Public Administration, emphasized the distance existing between the citizens and the State which depended for the most part on “the laws, many of which were not respectful of the guaranteed rights of the citizens, not least, that of the right to be informed on all Public Administration action” Giannini indicated in the absence of effective communication, one of the reasons for the “gap between the State and the citizens”, the former considered distant and estranged basically because unable to communicate appropriately with the latter. The need was highlighted to modify “by means of radical functional reforms, structural and procedural reforms, the wide gap existing between the public apparatus and the community”.(Giannini, Report 1979). In

and the citizens had become a crucial foundation factor and of enormous significance in the scenario of the Italian Public Administration for the ‘modernisation’ of the country. The reforms radically changed the face/profile of the Public Administration. Citizens were conceded rights of access to and knowledge of administrative acts, while the State was provided with the tools with which Public institutions could communicate top down to their citizens., In the meantime, however, more than a decade has passed since 1997 and an up to date account of the state of the art still needs to be put in place. With respect to efficiency effectiveness and excellence, governance in the Public Sector or in other words, New Public Management (NPM), Geraldine Doyle⁸⁹ considers this a two level phenomenon where at the higher level consists in a general theory or doctrine that the public sector can be improved by the importation of business concepts, techniques and values and at the lower level, “a bundle of specific concepts and practices – e.g. performance and measurement of outputs, a preference for lean, flat, small, specialized, organizational forms, market type mechanisms (leagues, tables, competitive tendering), and quality improvement techniques (Doyle, G., Seminar on Health Literacy, University of Salerno, 2010). In the context of New Public management(NPM), Pollit (2002) talks of four stages of convergence:

1. Discursive convergence, i.e. the rhetorical talk of NPM;
2. Decisional convergence,
3. Practice convergence and
4. Results convergence.

Lapsley, 2009) on the other hand focuses on (a) assessment in terms of general management, entrepreneurship, transparency and accountability;

- (b) mechanisms of change, structural reform, Performance management, incentives and motivation;

effect, the decade 1990 to 2000 (with the first real Law passed concerning communication -Law 150/2000) marked the shift on the one hand from ‘secrecy’ to transparency in the Public Administration with the so-called transparency Law (No.241) and on the other, from the gap in citizens-State relationship to citizen participation., the main tool encouraging this pathway being the URP Ufficio Relazioni con il Pubblico (URP). .

⁸⁹ Geraldine Doyle, Senior lecturer and Director of the Business School, University College Dublin, 2010

- (c) constraints - Audit society, professional boundaries social institutions and suggests new propositions for the future of NPM.

Lapsley more critical, also examines the “allure” of NPM solutions such as the NPM toolkit; i.e. the recipes for public sector transfer; the dependence on management consultants; the reliance on IT, or technology used for legitimising purposes; Audit, i.e. technology to regulate and control, encouraging a culture of compliance demonstrated by a ‘tick box’ mentality and finally, Risk Management as a stultifying effect on entrepreneurial arrangements. In the perspective of performance management as concerns the Health Service in particular, Lapsley (2009) identifies 3 phases of measurement of public management:

(1) the pre-80s period there was an emphasis on (a) performance measurement and management; (b) monitoring the quality of service in the Health sector, and (c) new accounting practices. In other words, the evolution of Performance Measurements in the Public Sector (Kaplan – balanced scorecard);

(2) the 1980s (a) a profusion of non-financial performances etc.

(3) the 1990s – during accreditation (a) the Performance Pyramid, (b) The Results of Determinants Framework (Fitzgerald, 1991 and (c) the Public Sector Scorecard (Moullin, 2001 a variation of Kaplan & Norton’s Balanced Scorecard with the addition of a strategy perspective (Doyle, 2010).

4.5. New Public Management versus digital-era governance

On the contrary, for Dunleavy et al., New Public Management is merely ‘old hat. They veer on the side of digital-era governance.⁹⁰ In this respect, in their Report on achieving innovation in central government organisations (maintaining that the role of innovations in improving government productivity and the effectiveness of

⁹⁰ See Dunleavy, Patrick and Margetts, Helen and Bastow, Simon and Tinkler, Jane (2006) New public management is dead. Long live digital-era governance. **Journal of public administration research and theory**, 16 (3). pp. 467-494. ISSN 1477-9803 And Dunleavy, Patrick and Margetts, Helen and Bastow, Simon and Tinkler, Jane (2006) Digital era governance: IT corporations, the state and e-government. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK. ISBN 978-0199296194

services has previously been little studied) Dunleavy et al concur that “organisational or administrative innovations in central government are diverse, but most involve improving performance management, introducing new IT projects or web services, as well as some physical technology changes”. Furthermore, they state that the innovation process in central government is top-down and dominated by senior management and that contributions from lower-level staff are not so important. Innovative changes are often launched because of either political or ministerial pressures or efficiency drives. However, once this external trigger is provided departments and agencies have a stockpile of possible innovations to hand which they use to sustain change. The availability of funding is cited as a key factor sustaining innovations, but using means to search for innovations such as specific innovation units can also play an important part. For these Authors “the main barriers to innovation are a reluctance to embrace new ways of working and fragmentation within government, creating ‘silos’ between agencies”. In terms of impact, they note that “. the main impacts of applied innovations are improvements in services and responsiveness, but innovations seem to be less successful in cutting costs or improving staff working conditions. There is scope for government to take a more systematic approach to developing innovations by improving costs and productivity data, communicating more simply to staff what kinds of innovations can be helpful, encouraging some counter-cultural thinking and methods for finding innovative solutions, and ensuring that approval and piloting processes are not over-protracted. The behaviours needed for innovation often challenge traditional ways of thinking and need to be recognised and rewarded. Departments and agencies can learn lessons from the private sector in developing more regular and serial innovations”. Dunleavy, Patrick and Margetts, Helen and Bastow, Simon and Tinkler, Jane and Pearce, Oliver and Bartholomeou, Patricia (2006) *Achieving innovation in central government organisations*. HC 1447-1. The Stationery Office, London, UK..Much less revolutionary, Lapsley, 2009) focuses on (a) assessment in terms of general management, entrepreneurship, transparency and accountability; from the point of view of convergence (in particular discursive convergence and that of results, the use of technology to facilitate citizen centred efficiency, transparency and participation for the purpose of measuring performance, the Public Sector

Scorecard would appear to be an extremely valid tool. The difference between Kaplan and Norton's balanced scorecard and Moullin's Public Sector scorecard, lies in the inclusion of the strategy aspect of the latter (Moullin, 2001). In the UK for example, the star rating system 0-3-(with reference to the Health Service) in vogue before 2005 when it was replaced by the Annual Health Check of risk rating and quality, implemented the widespread use of the scorecard to measure performance. For instance 28 indicators were included and envisaged a system of assessment, the measuring of clinical governance, key management targets based on an incentives and sanctions scheme.

4.6. Customer Service Excellence

The dual objective of improving competitiveness on a global scale through processes of development and synergic learning, attained through the enhancement of capacity and competence, and the desire to combine the advantages of scale with those of variety⁹¹ imply the shift to an ever greater focus on Customer Service Excellence i.e. in this case. public services for all that are **efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering** (the five e-model⁹²). In this context, other standard indicators measure factors such as delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude, while great emphasis is also placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction in a perspective of value co-creation. In this scenario, the elaboration of more agile and less bureaucratic paradigms and processes of communication capable of guaranteeing greater strategic efficacy and greater operative efficiency is fundamental, taking into account that clear communication and the use of **appropriate** language would save vast amounts of time and money and it makes economic sense for governments and organisations to invest in ensuring that their language is understood by the people to whom they are speaking and writing.

⁹¹ Saviano M. (2003)

⁹² The UK Government model for Customer Service Excellence standards

An ongoing project of research, taking into account the literature and the state of the art, in the context of a citizen-client-centred use of clear and simple language in public sector institutional communication, a qualitative comparative analysis is envisaged with respect to what the UK considers complicated lexical items to be abhorred when dealing with the general public and confronting them with their lexical equivalents or counterparts in Italy⁹³.

A second phase of the research in the context of the framework of David Varney's Review of Service Transformation (2006⁹⁴) considers the importance of embedding processes across the public sector that not only bring the true voice of the customer into service design but also engage citizens and businesses as a focal point for services. The research intends to start from an overview of the literature, proceeding with an analysis of the state of the art in the United Kingdom where it appears that each year, in the context of their Plain English project⁹⁵ a list of words is drawn up

⁹³ *ibid*

⁹⁴ Launching the report, Sir David Varney said:

"The service sector has an increasingly important role in the economy and public service delivery needs to evolve to meet the emerging challenges. There are opportunities to deliver better public services through joining up service provision across the public sector, and by engaging more directly with users in the design and delivery of services. "Over the next ten years there are opportunities to provide better public services at a lower cost to the taxpayer, if the Government takes these opportunities, then I believe the UK can create a world class public service economy with interactions with citizens and businesses that deliver real value and resolve problems first time." H. M. Treasury Website, consulted 21 April, 2010.

⁹⁵ The Plain English Project: Historical Factsheet: In 1983 Plain English Campaign published 'Small Print', a report on the gobbledygook used in contracts. In 1984 Plain English Campaign published the book 'Gobbledygook' the campaign's first collection of waffle. The Cabinet Office distributed 1,700 copies of 'The word is Plain English' a guide to clear writing for civil servants. In 1987 plain English became so successful throughout the Civil service that the campaign introduced the 'Inside Write' awards. These were given solely for internal government communication. In 1988 a new training package, 'The Plain English Course', was introduced. This allowed companies to train themselves in plain English for the first time. By our 10th anniversary, we were being consulted by the majority of major organisations in the country. In 1990 Plain English Campaign launched its Crystal Mark scheme. In 1992 a new one-year long 'Plain English Diploma' course was launched. This allowed companies to have a plain English expert in their company. The first graduate, Terry Denham, liked plain English so much that he later became a trainer for the campaign! A new corporate membership scheme was also introduced in 1992 to allow organisations to show their company-wide commitment to plain English. In 1993 Chrissie led campaigners on a crusade to the United States, protesting in New York and Washington DC. In 1994, 'Utter Drivel', the sequel to 'Gobbledygook', brings together another collection of baffling public information. Also in 1994, Chrissie was awarded the OBE for her lifetime's campaigning. In 1996 we published 'Language on Trial' a crystal-clear argument against legal jargon. The book was so well received that we began specialised plain English courses for lawyers. In 1998 campaign representatives John Wild and George Maher visited five continents in 80 days as part of a worldwide series of seminars and workshops. Possibly the campaign's finest hour came in 1999 as the Lord Chancellor's reforms of the legal system see Latin and legal jargon banished from England's civil law courts. In 1999 a television investigation, assisted by Plain English Campaign, found that almost a million people with learning difficulties found party manifestos and ballot papers difficult or

for the public sector to avoid when communicating with the general public (In 2010, the list contained 260 lexical items⁹⁶). A comparative study will be put in place and a list of corresponding Italian lexical items drawn up. From the analysis of the kind of language used in Public Communication in the two countries, the lexical items can be classified on the basis of a semantic/ neologism/ frequency/obscurity matrix. See Table 1. At this stage, a series of synonyms will be sought in the two languages (Italian and English) that guarantee clarity in the information conveyed and a list drawn up in both languages as a template for 'good' clear and effective communication language when dealing with the general public. A further stage of the research considers the creating/ devising of a model of communication structured on **convergence-consonance-context- content-clarity-** (5 c- model) See Figure 1, as a potential model for systemic application in the sector of public or institutional communication

Table 1. Taxonomy of items for classification on the basis of: etymological derivation (ED), semantics (SEM), frequency (FREQ), suggested synonyms (S.SYN)

English items	ED	SEM	FREQ	S.SYN

Italian items	ED	SEM	FREQ	S.SYN

impossible to use. The first 'Crystal Clear Day' was held in Manchester, and nine people were selected as 'Plain English Champions'. In 2002 Lord Justice Auld declared that 'plain English should be the norm' in the criminal courts. Plain English Campaign became the first plain language group to be invited to Russia, to speak at a major linguistics and journalism conference in Moscow. The campaign celebrated its 25th year for crystal-clear communication in 2004. Plain English Campaign representatives were invited to appear in front of the Parliamentary Select Committee on open government. In 2005 our staff visited Ireland, South Africa and Jerusalem. **The Grundtvig Project - a network which links different plain language organisations from around Europe** - started coming together. See website: [www. Plain English Campaign](http://www.PlainEnglishCampaign.com), consulted May 31 2010.

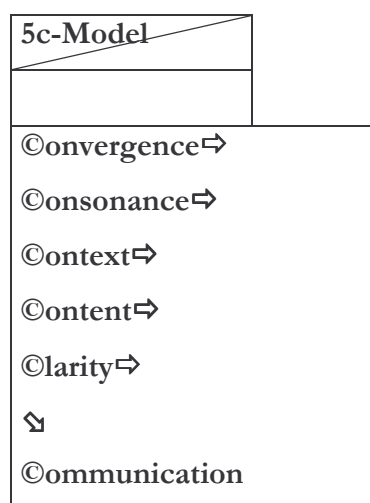
The suggested synonyms are then cross-referenced for appropriateness in terms of **convergence, consonance, context, content and clarity** and the **5c- model** devised. See the following figure.

Items in English

Convergence	Consonance	Context	Content	Clarity

Items in Italian

Convergence	Consonance	Context	Content	Clarity



Communication is a complex phenomenon and as such needs to be dealt with viably in a sustainable and systemic way. Context is all important; from an overview of samples of institutional communication: memoranda, administrative laws etc., it was found that in the United Kingdom for instance, many contemporary lexical items (neologisms) or of Greek or Latin derivation, were felt to be inappropriate for use (and even black-listed as such) on the part of the Public Administration when communicating with citizens. On the other hand, in the Italian scenario, given the

tradition for rich and elaborate linguistic expression and given the abhorrence existing for clear concise language (considered at best elementary and at worst, banal) the more complex the lexicon used the more it finds favour with Public Administration Italian bureaucrats. Conversely, in the UK, a citizen-centric approach and clarity in communicating information addressed to end users and relative/consequent customer satisfaction, is considered an essential part of the service the Public Administration should deliver to its citizens. Furthermore, despite legislation being introduced in Italy, nearly two decades ago to simplify bureaucratic procedures and to cut red tape and a decade ago (Law 150/2000 - the first National law dedicated exclusively to institutional communication) aimed at putting citizen-centric clear communication in place, there is still no underlying convergence or system in terms of current accepted practices of citizen-centric simplified communication.

In conclusion, although it is a commonplace that communication is considered a fundamental element for changing relations between the Public Administration and the citizens and for transforming the self-referential and bureaucratic approach of public sector institutions to a market-oriented organization, more tuned in to the needs of its end users, the Public Administration has yet to find or devise a suitable model of communication which is at the same time viable, systemic and convergent with the specific Italian context which has for so long, been subject to a barrage of institutional ‘gobbledygook’⁹⁷ that it appears an almost impossible task to extricate itself from the tangles of bureaucratese and jargon. This study aims to contribute towards providing an alternative model.

Using both an empirical and descriptive approach, suggests various implications for further research. In particular the study envisages opportunities for devising synergic strategies to achieve systemic consonance in all Public or Institutional communication and ultimately, for the compiling of a prescriptive “grammar” to underpin Public or institutional communication. In a second stage, an updated Handbook could be compiled of appropriate and clear communication for use in citizen communication on the part of the Public Administration. In the health Sector for instance, Health literacy is an important issue today. It involves a person being

⁹⁷ See Appendix - David Crystal for a definition of ‘gobbledygook’

able to understand basic health information whether they receive it in writing, in person or over the phone. It also involves a person having the knowledge to understand their options and make informed decisions about their own health. People working in the healthcare sector play an important part in improving health literacy by communicating more clearly and making information and services more accessible to patients. According to the International Adult Literacy Survey, conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1997⁹⁸, over 50% of Irish adults for example, are affected in some way by literacy difficulties. Many people have problems dealing with the increasing demands on their literacy skills from materials they come across in work and everyday life. Research shows, for example, that people find it difficult to read and understand health-related information such as signage, health information leaflets, directions on medicine packs, consent forms, prescriptions and medical advice⁹⁹.

⁹⁸ The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was a seven-country initiative conducted in 1994. Its goal: to create comparable literacy profiles across national, linguistic and cultural boundaries. The survey also offers the world's only source of comparative data on participation in adult education and training. The results, published in the report "Literacy, economy and society: Results of the first International Adult Literacy Survey" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Statistics Canada, 1995), demonstrated a strong plausible link between literacy and a country's economic potential. Since then, a second and a third round of data collection of IALS were conducted in an additional 16 countries in 1996 (See "Literacy skills for the knowledge society: Further results of the International Adult Literacy Survey" (OECD and Human Resources Development Canada, 1997)) and in 1998 (See "Literacy in the information age: Final report of the International Adult Literacy Survey" (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000)). Several thematic reports and international comparative reports were published following these second and third waves of data collection. In total, IALS includes literacy data pertaining to 23 countries or regions around the world. See website:www.ials.....consulted 31 May 2010.

⁹⁹This issue is cutting edge as testified by Inez Bailey, Director of NALA, on the occasion of the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards, April, 2010, she maintains "we can all relate to the increasing demands being put on our literacy skills when dealing with the array of information we come across in work and everyday life". Ms Bailey underlines the particular difficulty people have in terms of understanding any specialist topic. She goes on to say: "it is important to understand that literacy difficulties are not confined to a particular topic. Anyone of us can have difficulties understanding related to topics such as health, finance, or technology and the Crystal Clear Awards help raise awareness of the importance of community health information more clearly". Website: www.nala.ie consulted May 31 2010.

4.7. The need for more research into language and language skills for enhancing communication

On the other hand Holmqvist in his studies on the relevance of language in the service industry (specifically in our case, in the Public Administration), although basically addressed to bilingual contexts, Holmqvist seeks to understand the role that language and language skills can play in service scenarios with regard to how consumers behave and perceive these contexts. In particular, Holmqvist and others report that experience from hospitals have already called attention to the effect of language competence in health care. (Morales et al.,1999; John-Baptiste et al., 2004; and Fernandez et al., 2004). Holmqvist stresses furthermore, how these findings carry potentially wide-ranging implications and although he pinpoints the need both for more research into language and language skill aspects characterized by communication and language, in the context of this study his findings could stimulate research and be utilized for devising a meta-language for services of communication on the part of public administrations.

Chapter 5

Performance Measurement and Benchmarking in Italian Universities – The need for transparency and reform

- 5.1. Peculiarities of the University Educational System and the need for transparency and reform
- 5.2. Performance Measurement and Benchmarking in Italian universities
- 5.3. The CRUI Excellence Quality Model
- 5.4. International, European and national excellence models for “Services Quality Certification”
- 5.5. A Case Study - Distra’s Quality Management System: the ISO 9001:2000 benchmark
- 5.6. DISTRA’s Quality Management System: advantages and margins for enhancing performance
- 5.7. Conclusions

5.1. Peculiarities of the University Education and the need for transparency and reform

Shifting from a more general perspective to a more specific segment of the Public Administration i.e. the State Education System in Italy broadly speaking and the University Education system in particular, pursuant to the Gelmini Reform, recently approved in Parliament¹⁰⁰, the system is at present in the throes of a process of a controversial wide-scale reform. Central government (in office now for nearly three years) has cut funding drastically; recruitment procedures are being put under severe scrutiny (with the risk that younger generation Researchers will find access if not barred, at least highly problematic) and the reform framework of undergraduate

¹⁰⁰ Law dated January 2011.

courses (better known as the 3+2 model¹⁰¹, the outcome of which has been the proliferation of thousands of ‘made to measure’ syllabus modules and consequent recruitment expansion mechanisms) is (yet again!) under review.

In any event, the Reform albeit still to emanate explicatory guidelines, is however firmly in place and all the stakeholders concerned need to analyse in depth its potentially positive elements in order to appraise exactly where it is leading.

Convictions have long been (and most people would agree, that great changes need to be made in the Italian system of State University Education. A study¹⁰², published in 2002, analyses a mix of suggestions and stimulus to adopt in organizational models which enable the Universities to optimise the degree of efficiency and efficacy in processes of productivity, service delivery and relations with clients and firms. At the same time, these tools should stimulate teachers and administrators to abandon individualist goals of an academic and bureaucratic nature in favour of improving the functioning and quality of the services delivered by their Organisations. At this point in time and seeing as in industrial relations and in the economic-social and productive systems of industrialized countries, complex changes are taking place, the shift in emphasis from a hierarchical top down functional model of governance to that of a professional network model (planned to utilise all the professional, managerial and micro-entrepreneurial competence available on the part of all the subjects involved, the network model “while on the one hand, affects workers negatively in terms of rendering their position weaker (they are easier to substitute with flexible contractual forms of employment, i.e. atypical contracts, part-time, job-sharing, flexible working hours) compared to the past, at the same time, the model functions as a regulated market designed tool to enable workers to express their full potential, both as free lance professionals obliging them at the same time, to express such potential within a framework of well defined rules which indicate aims/objectives/goals to achieve and guideline values to follow on every work

¹⁰¹ This reform , i.e. the 3+2 system was introduced in 2006 by Luigi Berlinguer, a former Italian Minister of Education in an attempt to ‘catch up’ with Italy’s European counterparts in turning out fully fledged graduates in the space of 3 years and post graduates with a Master Degree in 5. It was hoped with this Reform that the alarmingly high number of ‘drop-outs’ from the University system or of undergraduates taking up to ten years or more to obtain a degree, would cease.

¹⁰² Emanuele Invernizzi, Director of the Economics and Marketing Institute of the ULM University, Milan, intro Mazzei, A, La Comunicazione per il Marketing dell’Università, Franco Angeli, (Milan 2002).

occasion, in particular as regards internal co-operation and external relations” Invernizzi in Mazzei, A., *La Comunicazione per il Marketing dell’Università*, (Milan 2002, Page 7). In other words, on the basis of this model, workers will no longer have to carry out set duties in terms of content, but rather will have to know HOW to cover roles that are more similar to those envisaged for free-lance professional work including that of cooperating and conducting personal relations inside and outside the Organisation. Obviously, the consequences of this are manifold as not only the professional –technical and relational competences required of workers when they commence work are enhanced, but also because the latter will have to radically change the way they consider their job. They need, in other terms, to develop a proactive attitude towards the opportunities that present themselves and at the same time, be flexible and ready for change should specific circumstances require it. Furthermore, the opportunities offered to people to carry out professional activities will be more considerable and as a consequence, their future will not be tied to the destiny of a firm of which they are merely pro-tempore employees. The development of the professional sector also means, opportunities for the growth and enhancing of professional competences.

The question is: what does this radical change depend on?

At present, a deep organizational restructuring is underway and is matched by a social evolution which is just as relevant. This is expressed in what could be termed personal expectations, especially those of younger people and in their way of dealing with the employment issue. This evolution consists in the widespread desire to do an interesting job and in the willingness, and in many case, in the request to activate job/work relations that are different compared to the past. In other words, fewer and fewer job-seekers for permanent positions and more and more developing professionals whose individual choice is tied to different and articulated life styles. In this context, the changes in act in Italian State Universities, the evolution of their organizational models and productive processes, not to mention modalities for creating relations with customers and interlocutors inside and outside the structure (Mazzei, A., 2002 p.) are creating the foundation for a European type system where best practice and benchmarking standards apply¹⁰³. An overview of the conceptual

¹⁰³ See for example the CRUI Model

and empirical contributions present in the latest literature is a useful platform from which to discuss the use Universities can make of Marketing and in particular Relational Marketing, to identify an approach which is not addressed to customers merely in terms of sales of services but rather at developing the potential for long term success connected with the building and maintaining of relations based on *reciprocal trust*. Communication, as is well known, is of crucial importance for the functioning and success of complex Organisations. In particular, the analysis and in-depth study on the use of communication for attracting funds, resources necessary for the development of the University system, (today we could say for its survival!) to improve services, quality assurance, to increase customer satisfaction, to increase the transparency and visibility of the University system so as to define its identity for the stakeholders and to enhance its reputation, is the first step necessary in any communication plan.

5.2. Performance Measurement and Benchmarking in Italian Universities

Of the different organizational models that have followed one another in the past, the model defining the university as a Professional network is decidedly of great interest with its relevant characteristics and advantages compared to previous models (Mazzei, A., 2002). Given the deep changes underway in the university, the role that universities or better, the stakeholders in the process of development will have to play in this complex scenario of change in the productive system/work relations, has to be carefully considered. Specific initiatives that the universities themselves can activate in order to contribute or indeed, guide the process of development could also be evaluated. The Legislative Decree no. 150, dated 27 October, 2009 – Enactment of the Law dated 4th March, 2009, pinpoints the importance of the measurement and evaluation of organizational and individual performance in conformity with the said Legislative Decree. To this aim, legislation proposed the Common Assessment Framework¹⁰⁴ for the University. In conformity with the

¹⁰⁴ the CAF Model

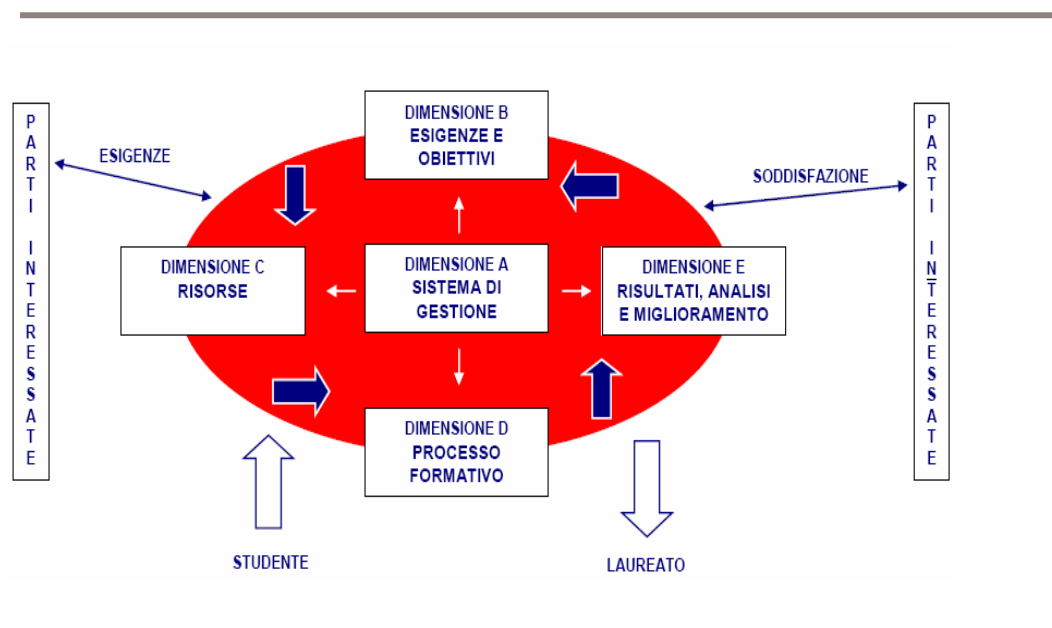
principal legislative references and the CIVIT¹⁰⁵ Resolutions, the CAF framework model of Excellence for quality was aimed at optimizing productivity in the Public Sector, in particular, the efficiency and transparency of Public Administrations. The content of the Legislative Decree concerns mainly: the cycle of performance management (organizational and individual), incentives and amendments to the Legislative Decree no.165/2001 – Regulatory Legislation for Public Sector employees. The Decree defines performance as “the contribution that a party (organizational unit, team, individual) brings to the common weal through actions (performance) to attain set goals and to satisfy the needs for which the organization was created.

5.3. The CRUI Excellence Quality Model

As concerns State-run universities in Italy, spotlighted on the world scene as lacking in international appeal and finding themselves obliged to rethink their performance from a more strictly market-based perspective, they have now been faced with the remit of communicating to end users (potential students and businesses) the series of attraction factors that distinguish them from others on a European or non-European scale. In part to redress this shortfall, the CRUI (the Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities) has devised the so-called CRUI Model – see figure 1 - to measure, quantify and disseminate the results of university performance by means of a qualitative-quantitative research study on university education in Italy, starting from the state of the art as regards teaching, ratio of teachers to students, research impact, drop-out rates, facilities and infrastructure, number of Degrees awarded in proportion to years of study etc., culminating in the measure of customer satisfaction reported.

¹⁰⁵ (Commission for the Evaluation of Transparency and Integrity of Public Administrations)

Fig. 1 – The CRUI Model



Source - Università degli Studi di Salerno - Centro per la Qualità di Ateneo
www.cqa.unisa.it, Fisciano, 15 febbraio 2011

The 2005 CRUI model explicitly imposed fundamental requisites:

Presence of staff with responsibility for management of didactics¹⁰⁶;

ICT Licence and attested language skills;

In service training;

Evaluation of the quality of the Course of Studies. Crucial factors of the model include sequential issues and process interaction:

- _ documents applied in the management of the Course of Studies;
- _ modalities and periodical relations with the Public Administration;
- _ Public Administration requirements;
- _ Coherence of learning objectives with general objectives;
- _ Monitoring of the learning/training process;
- _ Information and data , methods of collecting and processing the same

¹⁰⁶ The Didactic Manager's duties included coordination of Courses and other structures of the Faculty and the University; appraisal of customer satisfaction, relations with external organizations for job placements. Personal relations.

- _ Method of management of processes of analysis and improvement measures put in place;
- _ Efficacy of the same.

The innovative element of the model lies in the original practice of disseminating in a transparent way, information relative to the effective state of the art in the present Italian university scenario, driven clearly, it goes without saying, by the need to emerge in competitive terms, in line with other European or worldwide higher education systems. Pursuant to the financial downturn in 2008, several Countries (excluding mainly most oil-based economies) have been obliged to tighten their belts with regard to investments for Higher Education, Research and Development –Italy particularly so with the Gelmini Reform of 2011. The CRUI Model is the first step in the field of Italian Higher Education towards communicating to the world the national university system, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It should be pointed out however, that for some years now, the system has relied on a few self-assessment initiatives to measure performance i.e. questionnaires submitted to students (who remain anonymous) relative to the quality of the Course, the teaching materials used, teaching aids, the technology implemented, tutoring, punctuality, facilities offered etc. The effective impartiality of such questionnaires obviously, leave a lot to be desired seeing as responses often depend on personal sympathy for the teacher concerned not to mention other spurious motivations that have little to do with the objective performance of a university, its impact factor, its teaching and research staff and the results in terms of excellence, it attains. However, with the decision on the part of the CRUI to tackle the issue of performance measurement, quality standards and excellence in University education, one element clearly emerges: the shift from teacher-centred to a more student-centred perspective. This trend has been predominant for many years now in Further Education (State Secondary Schools) thanks to the Berlinguer Reform in

Another element impeding the attainment of a reputation for excellence in University Education might also depend on the focus on the élite teaching force and the lack of a link between methodology and approach between Secondary and University Education which has led to many dysfunctions in the system, not least, the

potentially high drop-out rate of students from the University scene. The latter, reared in velvet glove student-centred contexts have found themselves unprepared and/or unable to adapt to the leap from their cushioned environments to the hard reality of Higher Education where “if you can’t keep up, you are left behind by the wayside”.

In the context of Performance Assessment, the CRUI Model for Excellence¹⁰⁷ evaluates performance, quality and best practices on the basis of objective testing and measurement.

A recent CRUI study¹⁰⁸ found that as concerns the quality of teaching in Italian State-run universities, the latter are gradually beginning to implement systematic assessment procedures in every operative sector: Teaching and Learning, Research and Administration. The National Agency for the Assessment of the University and Research (ANVUR) has noted on the other hand, greater attention addressed to the issue of quality and excellence in University Education. This is confirmed by other organizations mapping and outlining University assessment in Italy. For instance: The National Committee for the Assessment of the University System (CNSVU)¹⁰⁹; the Specific Research Guidelines Organisation (CIVR); Assessment Agencies and Delegates for assessing performance in individual universities, not to mention CRUI which over the years, has experimented various assessment methodologies and accreditation systems relative to Excellence in Teaching. As concerns the quality of individual Courses, the CRUI envisages accreditation of the SGQ ISO 9001; 2008 standard. Courses eligible comprise Undergraduate, Post Graduate, Masters and Specialist Education Courses. Monitoring and feedback from evaluation imply enhancing performance relative to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, based on a SWOT analysis.

Self assessment, inspections (peer review) etc., underpin procedures for improvement (strengths) and the correction and prevention of weak points (areas for improvement). On the basis of assessment, CRUI defines intervention. Accreditation

¹⁰⁷ The CRUI Model was devised by the Conference of Italian Rectors to evaluate didactic performance and research in Italian Universities along the lines of the Common Assessment Framework.

¹⁰⁸ Findings were presented at a series of Seminars at the University of Salerno in February and March, 2011, in the context of “I Martedì di Qualità – Evaluation in Italy”

¹⁰⁹ The CNSVU is the official Ministerial Agency which promotes assessment methods and systems and puts in place external programmes of evaluation of the University or of Teaching Structures.

also hinges on pre-defined criteria of quality and aims that conform to Public Administration prerequisites and that the Course is provided with a Management system capable of reaching established goals and promoting improvement. In short, the CRUI model is envisaged as a Managerial Model attesting the quality of a University Course and where training is envisaged in conformity to the needs and requirements of the parties concerned. The model furthermore, is structured on the basis of the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) cycle logics.

It goes without saying that the theme of “Quality” evidences extremely peculiar characteristics and features in the field of education systems and requires, “an innovative analysis approach”¹¹⁰; stripped of its meaning of feature of a given entity¹¹¹, the concept of quality attains the *status* of relational attribute: “semantically therefore, the *standard* concept of quality is intended as a set of acknowledged quality factors at the threshold level of minimum values in terms of the functional attainment of the aims of the service/product”¹¹². The stress laid on the relation, of a dyadic kind¹¹³ – though referred to three entities – as an essential condition of the qualitative process evidences – according to the Authors¹¹⁴ - why the “*University firms*” themselves, as poles destined to face the requirements of the general community, are required more and more to have a socially relevant presence¹¹⁵ (fig. 2).

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ In accordance with the International Organization for Standardization, – ISO 9000:2000 – Quality Management Systems – Fundamentals and Vocabulary – Quality is the degree in which intrinsic (essential) characteristics satisfy requirements; however, economic and social changes have made a contribution to the extension of the quality concept, which has passed from an evaluation of conformity and reliability of the output to its ecological and social compatibility. See PROTO M., MALANDRINO O., SUPINO S., *I sistemi di gestione per la qualità*, in ANTONELLI V., D’ALESSIO R. (edited by), *Casi di controllo di gestione*, IPSOA, Milan, 2004, p. 41.

¹¹² See PINNELLI S., *Formazione a Distanza e Qualità: tra misurazione, management e identità*, Edizioni Pensa Multimedia, Lecce, 2002, p. 10.

¹¹³ The dyadic value of the relationship refers to the adequacy of the terms of the relational exchange in conformity with the history between firm and customer; it highlights the justness of the interactions, by overcoming the perspective of only one actor (monad). See COSTABILE M., RAIMONDO M. A., MICELI G., “Un modello dinamico di *customer loyalty*: evidenze empiriche da un’analisi intergruppo con modelli di equazioni strutturali”, in *Finanza, Marketing e Produzione*, 2004, pp. 48-50. As regards customer satisfaction, as a base of relationships, particularly when overcoming the economic perspective, see METALLO G., CUOMO M. T., “La *customer satisfaction* come strumento relazionale e di ascolto per una nuova pubblica amministrazione”, in *Micro & Macro Marketing*, no. 1/2000.

¹¹⁴ Tortora et al, 2006.

¹¹⁵ Of course, the dyadic value of the relationship is a focal input to increase country competitiveness and to generate virtuous spirals, (Tortora et al, 2006).

Thus on the one hand, Tortora et al., state “University organizations take upon themselves features and attitudes typical of business relational forms, shifting towards customer centrality¹¹⁶: in the wake of a process of business-like transformation, that has long been affecting state institutions. The University system has started to get acquainted with competitive procedures, paying attention to present and potential customers’ needs, and by means of economic approaches, in terms of optimum use of resources with reference to objectives set (effectiveness/efficiency)¹¹⁷; on the other hand Universities appear as organizations providing educational services, having institutional aims”.

Fig. 2 – Relationship between demand and offering in educational services



Source – CASTOLDI M., *Valutare la qualità dell’insegnamento: problemi concettuali*, in COGGI C., (eds), *Per migliorare la didattica universitaria*, p. 76

Furthermore, according to Tortora et al., the intangibility of the product, i.e. the didactic event, requires the participation of the user – as a real *prosumer*¹¹⁸ – in running the cultural process. This requires, however, negotiations with the other actors involved, customers/ applicants etc.¹¹⁹. In this respect, the Authors maintain “in

¹¹⁶ See POGGESI S., “I servizi pubblici locali italiani alla luce del network management”, in *Impresa Progetto*, Online Journal edited by DITEA, no. 2/2005, www.impresaprogetto.it.

¹¹⁷ The vision is not contrary to criteria of sociability and fairness informing the distribution of public services, together with economic principles and performances. See MARINO V., “Le caratteristiche di struttura e di sistema del settore pubblico”, in *Esperienze d’impresa*, Special Issue, S/3, pp. 129-130.

This is part of the Total Quality Management perspective and aimed at satisfying stakeholders by the joint or individual control of relevant factors, aimed at continuous improvement in performance. See FERRARIO M., *L’autovalutazione verso un modello di eccellenza*, Etas, Milan, 1999.

¹¹⁸ On company servuction, see NORMANN R., *Ridisegnare l’impresa. Quando la mappa cambia il paesaggio*, Etas, Milan, 2002, p. 150.

¹¹⁹ Within university services, the “customer system” refers to many stakeholders: students, as users of the services and their families who pay for them; furthermore, companies and organizations can also be considered stakeholders of the university system, since they are the potential users of students’

effect, if the value of the exchange relation, or of the quality attributed emerges as the capacity to preserve the public interest, this does not mean increasing the schooling level of the community, but rather, in terms of qualified education, aimed at the production of knowledge¹²⁰ and consequently, at the operative placement of the users through a preferential pathway, in the management of national and international organizations”¹²¹.

From this point of view the above mentioned reform of University didactic regulations¹²² – of a unitary two-tier kind “3 – 2” – aims with the basic degree (3 year Undergraduate Course) at training people capable of using innovation; with the specialist/magisterial degree (2 year Post Graduate Course) people capable of managing innovation; with the PhD Course human resources able to produce innovation. Thus, the main aim of the basic University Undergraduate Course is not to provide graduates with ready working capacity, but to ensure them the preparation necessary to recognise and use innovative paths proposed by others in the field of work. Direct experience will – according to the Authors - provide the right instruments for the potential management and production of knowledge and innovation¹²³. Moreover such paths can be combined in different ways – they refer - with University masters of I and II level, aimed at building specific advanced professionals, as well as with specialization courses, aimed at defining professions regulated by the Law¹²⁴.

capabilities and competence. Last but not least, the whole community, that by virtue of political representation and the public management system, assigns to universities an educational task, while assuming the related costs. See CASTOLDI M., *Valutare la qualità dell'insegnamento: problemi concettuali*, in COGGI C., (edited by), *Per migliorare la didattica universitaria*, Edizioni Pensa Multimedia, Lecce, 2005, p. 73.

In particular, the dual nature of the social community, i.e. on the one hand, buyer for a public service, used by its members, and, on the other part of the customer system, with reference both to companies wanting to employ trained graduates and to citizens, as users of the educational services.

¹²⁰ In this sense, the outcome of the university system, both public and private, has a public utility, and so it must safeguard collective interests See Tortora et al, 2006.

¹²¹ Ibidem

¹²² Ibidem. In 2006, as stated a new law in Italy was passed introducing a double – “Y type”– channel for new degrees, providing a year of studies in common and then forking into two years for professional and four years for specialized studies. The law was subsequently reviewed with respect to outcomes of quality standards in education. However, despite the Gelmini Reform of the University, approved in 2010, the “3+2” reform has been screened to assess its efficacy and left in place with the necessary changes made to conform to the Bologna process.

¹²³ See BALLIO G., “Università e imprese alleate nella formazione”, in *Impresa e Stato*, no. 66/2004.

¹²⁴ Moreover, from an educational point of view, the university reform has taken place from a system of “denominations” and “*curricula*”: it recognizes university self-government, albeit respecting national standards. The educational process is based on trying to achieve certain outcomes in terms of

Consequently, it emerges that “considering the quality of University teaching is connected to recognizing the necessity of permanent education i.e. long life learning”; these needs are linked to the idea of a didactic-educational role, having as its main remit the promotion of *knowing, doing, being*, but also of *being able to live together with the others*¹²⁵. The concept of *lifelong learning*, in any event, lays the stress more on a concept of quality in terms of reliability in supplying the service and capacity of reaching the objects defined and outlined for the users, than on a commitment to ensuring the creation of value intrinsic to the educational product. This scenario marks an almost epochal shift Tortora et al., maintain, in the conceptual representation typical of the University didactic system as “an organization with loose connections¹²⁶ in which a distinctive factor is certainly a very high degree of self-reference¹²⁷. On the contrary, the tendency towards assessment as a voluntary practice aimed at accounting for the quality of the work done, is no longer sufficient and has no place in the current scenario of objectives¹²⁸ (fig. 3).

individual student learning. Thus, having decided which key competences and qualities students have to study and develop, the structure or curricula should be designed to achieve those aims. See QAYOUMI M. D., “What is outcome based learning?”, Quality in Higher Education, Conference 2005, Dubai (UAE).

¹²⁵ See CASTOLDI M., 2005, p. 101.

University education has to pursue the primary objective of developing persons able to “learn at learning”, who can make use of the instruments in a creative way, in order to produce an autonomous interpretation of the reality and a constant update of their own competences. See BACCARANI C., “What does quality mean in higher education teaching?”, *Total Quality Management for University*, University of Toulon-Var, September 3-4, 1998.

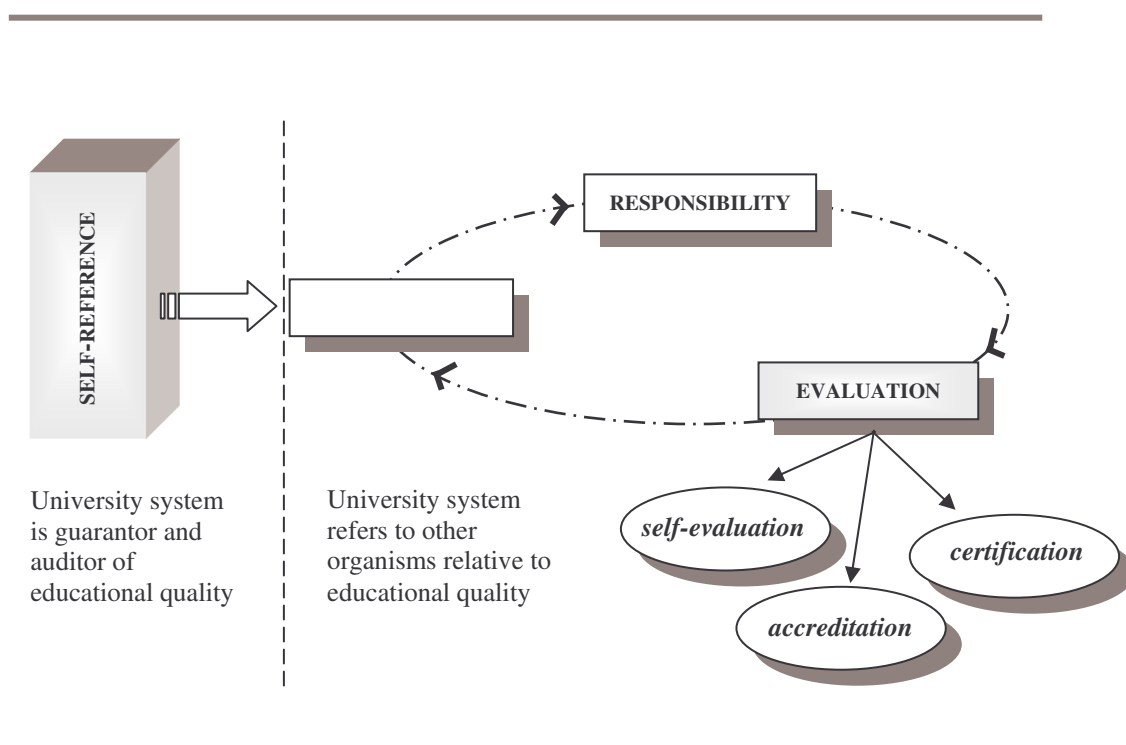
¹²⁶ Carl Weick envisages some organizations and communities, and among them the educational ones, as subjects characterized by loose connections among the elements, with margins of a discretionary power among the organizational actors, even though in presence of a common sensemaking. See BUTERA F., *Teorie, analisi e progettazione delle organizzazioni*, Lecture notes, University of Milan, 2005, p. 53. In this way, teacher and student will “negotiate” the educational service.

¹²⁷ Tortora et al., 2006. The “self-reference” concept, differing evidently from that of university autonomy, regards the ability of the system to refer to internal elements or operations (according to Luhmann, definition from De Mauro, Dictionary of the Italian Language, www.demauroparavia.it). This concept produces inevitably, the effect of privileging a vision of internal elements and of academic interests, upon which it is possible to intervene only by giving “voice” to stakeholders and by encouraging relationships with the market. See DE MAIO A., “Formazione universitaria ed esigenze dell’impresa”, in *Impresa & Stato*, no. 66/2004.

¹²⁸ In Italy, university regulations acknowledge to “educational firms” governance both in didactic and research areas; the systemic purpose is achieved by the creation of consonant relationships with upper systems, able to influence the survival perspectives, through the imposition of norms and the sharing of regulations. Therefore, at “L+1” level the Ministry of University and Research, coordinates and directs the Italian university system; in execution of its functions, the Ministry is aided consultant bodies: the National University Council – CUN; the Conference of the Italian University Chancellors – CRUI, an independent and private legal body; the National Council of University Students – CNSU; the National Committee for the evaluation of the University System – CNVSU; the orientation committee for evaluation and research – CIVR; not to mention, the Regional Committees of

“The assessment process emerges from a consideration of the organization from the inside, collecting information which is reliable, complete and relevant to the educational service to be analysed, through explicit, clear and reproducible procedures. On the basis of such information, a consistent and plausible interpretation and final judgement will be put in place”¹²⁹.

Fig. 3 – Changes in the university system



Source: Tortora et al., 2006

The innovative paradigm of University reform, it can be concurred with the Authors, and in certain respects its testing ground, can be argued as capacity for outlining assessment and quality guarantee systems as concerns the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational processes¹³⁰, monitoring the objects attained compared to the

coordination. On the viable systems approach see GOLINELLI G. M., *L'approccio sistemico al governo dell'impresa. L'impresa sistema vitale*, Cedam, Padua, Vol. II, 2010.

¹²⁹ Tortora et al., 2006. On evaluation see BEZZI C., “La valutazione nei servizi alla persona”, *www.valutazione.it*, 3rd ed., 2003, p. 6.

¹³⁰ The assessment of teaching is required by law (Art. 10 Law no. 382/80) while the right to independence in teaching, but also the relative duties are stipulated in (Art no. 13 Law no. 341/90). In

resources used, so as to generate a virtuous spiral of autonomy, responsibility, evaluation¹³¹.

The new University organisation, in the Italian scenario, meant to respect the pact of faith with the customer, is thus set in a general project of convergence as an open system oriented towards a culture of listening, within a “European Space of Higher Education”¹³². Comparable and easy to read degrees, a similar system of credits¹³³, greater transparency of the knowledge acquired and recognized in other European countries together with a more European evaluation of quality¹³⁴ guaranteed by an external credit system, imply the commitment to a diversified and competitive system. In other words, the Authors argue, a “more European” University, i.e. *autonomous*, with spaces of self-government, *responsible*, i.e. engaged in transparent processes of self-assessment and assessment, *entrepreneurial*, using models of *governance* typical of complex organizations, *competitive*, able to welcome and pursue the

1993, the financial act established commissions of evaluation, whose role is in any case linked to the allocation of resources. Many faculties and many athenaeums tried to create a system of indexes, while producing in many cases interesting pieces of information, but not always able to convert a quality control in a quality promotion. However universities are moving towards a qualitative process analysis, in order to improve global results. See BINETTI P., MICHELINI M., “Cosa valutare”, Position papers, <http://www.unisi.it/ammin/valutazione/atti/6-gruppi/position-papers.htm>, consulted by Tortora et al on June 20, 2006.

¹³¹ Tortora et al, point out that in a perspective of continuous improvement, evaluation can be implemented at different levels, it works to improve quality in delivery, contributing to increasing autonomy in areas of the universities. In this respect, they maintain, generally speaking it is possible to put in place:

- certification processes, based on verification by a third party organization, coherence between objectives and procedures;
- accreditation processes, addressed to evaluating the correspondence of the educational service to requirements;
- self-evaluation processes on the basis of a comparison between the educational organization and a model, in order to know, compare, improve;
- some approaches that are defined as evaluation processes (in a more operative sense) qualify independent comparison and demonstration, in order to obtain acknowledgments or rating.

¹³² In 1998 France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy signed the Sorbonne Joint Declaration, by launching a series of initiatives aiming to achieve by 2010 a European space for higher education; then, the process was extended to the whole of Europe with the Bologna Declaration in 1999 to facilitate inter-University cooperation and exchange, professor and student mobility and the recognition of qualifications, external accreditations, quality evaluation and self-evaluation and the right of employment in the European labour market not to mention integration among European citizens.

See ASSOCIAZIONE TREELLE., *Università italiana, università europea? Dati, proposte e questioni aperte*, Synthesis of the Notebook, no. 3, September 2003, p. 17.

¹³³ The European Credit Transfer System – *ECTS* – has been introduced to measure and to standardise students’ work (calculated by hours of study) for each subject. ECTs are acquired through examinations.

¹³⁴ The European Network for Quality Assurance is a network for the European evaluation of quality in universities. Furthermore, it is important to consider the presence of national agencies as well as new standards. *Ibidem*, pp. 17-18.

challenge of differentiation, through exploiting the genetic heritage of know-how/competence to transform into resources for territory development¹³⁵.

As mentioned previously, the Legislative Decree no.150, dated 27 October 2009 – Enactment of the Law dated 4 March 2009, pinpoints the importance of the measurement and evaluation of organizational and individual performance in conformity with the said Legislative Decree no.150/2009. In this context, an extremely interesting study was presented by two Researchers¹³⁶ at the Department for Business Studies and Research (DISTRA) at the University of Salerno, relative to Quality¹³⁷ in Higher Education, at the University of Paisley in 2006 for the 9th Toulon-Verona Conference “Excellence in Services”.

Given that the present age undoubtedly roots its fundamental values in the society of knowledge¹³⁸; seemingly be confirmed by the present productive and cultural system and even more by the expectations of the general community, both on a national and international scale¹³⁹, a bursting effect can be evinced, in

terms of pervasiveness and increase of scientific knowledge as the creator or at least co-creator, of the changes at the basis of a really complex socio-economic set-up¹⁴⁰.

If it is true to say as Tortora et al., point out that economic progress and the development of the knowledge society depend mainly on the synergic use of “four

¹³⁵ Tortora et al., 2006

¹³⁶ Debora Tortora and Anna Robustelli of the Faculty of Economics, University of Salerno.

¹³⁷ Debora Tortora currently a Research Fellow at the Department for Business Studies and Research (DISTRA) at the University of Salerno together with Daniela Sica, Research Fellow, devised a system of Total Quality Management for the Department in 2010.

¹³⁸ The state of the art would imply that both public and private sector activity seems to be based on the vocation to *produce knowledge by knowledge*.

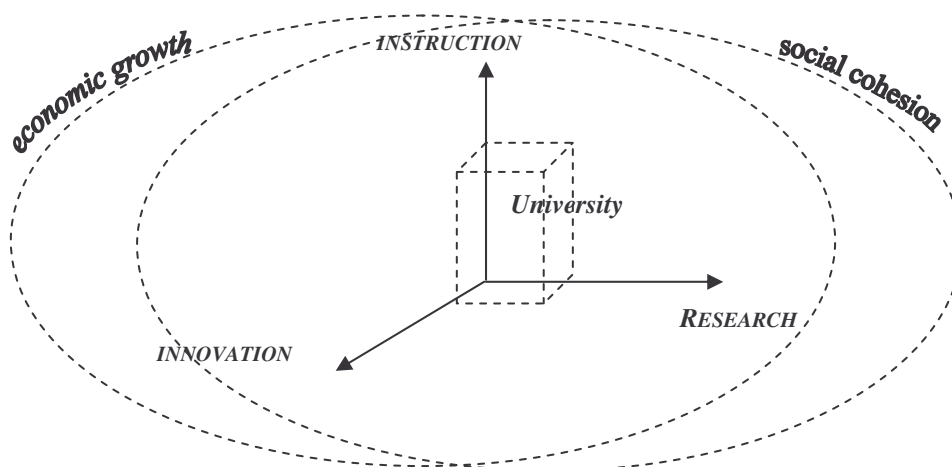
¹³⁹ Reference is to a *knowledge economy* on which to found the development of the national and European economy. See VASSELLI D., “Affrontare la sfida: la strategia di Lisbona a favore dell’occupazione e dello sviluppo in Europa”, in *Il Caos Management*, no. 15, June 2005, www.caosmanagement.it; and RULLANI E., *Economia della conoscenza*, Carocci, Rome, 2004.

¹⁴⁰ The creation of explicit and long term competitive advantages, is based on production, management and communication of *knowledge*, by assuring to enterprises systemic survival. See NONAKA I., TOYAMA R., “L’impresa che crea conoscenza”, in *Sviluppo & Organizzazione*, no. 197, May/June 2003; and CAPALDO A., “Accesso alla conoscenza dei partner, trasferimento e coproduzione di conoscenza: la collaborazione tra imprese in una prospettiva *knowledge-based*”, in *Finanza, Marketing e Produzione*, no. 1/2004.

In particular, Enzo Rullani identifies six changes in the *knowledge economy*: a new system of ownership of the firms; an active function of the territories in the increase of knowledge for economic development; a new role for people, in productive processes as well as in consumption activities; a new conception and role for space and time; the importance of widespread processes of knowledge, not to mention, considerable levels of complexity. See DELFINO M., “Il ruolo della conoscenza nell’evoluzione delle strategie competitive. Un’analisi delle principali determinanti del cambiamento”, in *Impresa Progetto, Online Journal edited by DITEA*, no. 3/2005, www.impresaprogetto.it, p. 8.

interdependent elements i.e. the production of new knowledge, its transmission through schooling and education, its spreading through information and communication technologies and its use through industrial processes and new types of services, then European universities are certainly the real protagonists of such new process”¹⁴¹; economic growth and social cohesion are consequently, the priority requirements¹⁴² relative to which the traditional places of production and diffusion of knowledge are asked to commit themselves in an ever more explicit and direct way¹⁴³ (fig. 4).

Fig. 4 – *University and Knowledge system*



Source: Tortora et al., 2006

¹⁴¹ See COMMISSIONE EUROPEA, “Il ruolo delle università nell’Europa della Conoscenza”, COM (2003) 58 def.; and COMMISSIONE EUROPEA, “Riforma delle università nel quadro della strategia di Lisbona”, COM (2005) 152 def.

¹⁴² The strategic objective of the European Cabinet in Lisbon (2000) is to develop the most competitive and dynamic *knowledge economy* in the world inside the European Union. See ROBUSTELLI A., “L’Economia della Conoscenza”, in *Ambiente, Risorse e Salute*, no. 105, September/October 2005, p. 15.

¹⁴³ “The world of Universities and higher education institutions is, more or less rapidly, changing in all European countries. The change aims at finding a proper balance between efficiency and effectiveness in education performance”. Source: BACCARANI C., WEILL M., Foreword, “TQM for Higher Education Institutions II”, Conference Proceedings, Verona, August 30-31, 1999, in *Sinergie, Rapporti di ricerca*, no. 9, 2000.

As the Authors point out, the educational system has no intention of avoiding such demands for change seeing that at the same time, it is itself going through a period of deep transformation, due to internal debates but not least to pressures, exerted by the outside. In the context of the present national University system, the stakeholders involved in relations with educational bodies cannot be considered on the one hand, as mere users of a didactic service and on the other, as single business units, organizations or, more in general, companies and institutions (the latter as applicants/customers) who intend to utilize later on the knowledge and skills acquired from the former. On the contrary, nowadays, relations takes place within a territorial based system, fully involving the above mentioned subjects finding its strategic resources precisely in academic education. As a result, it becomes necessary to underwrite a new “pact of faith”, first of all with the *customer system*, defining priorities as the “defence of quality, with no derogation, of didactics...”¹⁴⁴, in order to preserve, through social consensus, the legitimization to act and to enable the system to *increase* and *release* value. This is a new theme to pursue, seeing that the quality of the offer or of the results attained in terms of didactic *standards* – emerging in the Authors’ study – represent a pre-requisite in the development of guide-lines to underpin education processes; moreover it has to be said assessment is by now universally considered as a decisive instrument for the *governance* of the University system, which is called upon to take part in retrieving and enhancing a “thinking Country” alongside the economic and productive system. A common direction needs to be identified, Tortora et al maintain, giving education a crucial role in the task of supporting businesses and organizations in the face of the challenges of competitiveness coming from global markets; in other words, as the Authors stress, “it is the road to certification”¹⁴⁵, where precise *standards*, recognized on a European

¹⁴⁴ See CONTI T., DE RISI P., (eds), *Manuale della Qualità*, Il Sole 24 Ore, Milano, 2001, p. 833.

CRUI (in Italian, is the acronym for Chancellors’ Conference of Italian Universities) a guideline document of rights and duties, disciplining the relationship between universities – citizens – institutions, in which besides duties related to research activities and personnel recruitment envisages “the ongoing and thorough evaluation of objectives in accordance with the mission of universities” in order to recognise and ensure quality. *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁵ The responsibilities relative to knowledge management require universities to rethink the link between means used and policy applied and purpose. It goes without saying that this criterion is both rational and ethical. See PANIZZI G., “Qualità: un ponte tra scuola e società”, in *Il Caos Management*, no. 7, October 2004, www.caosmanagement.it.

and wider international level, encounter a *customer applicant* with specific requirements, interested in having their competence/skills accredited”¹⁴⁶.

On the basis of these views, the Business Studies and Research Department (DISTR) as a *bridging institution* between University and society, the Authors state has identified in didactic activity – and in its *output* a “complex educational product” – a moment and at the same time, an instrument of interaction with the territory, placed at the centre of the concept/ process of “Quality”. A more effective and efficient focus on the management of processes and the principles of competitiveness and customer satisfaction, they point out,

“led DISTR to become a University Department certified in conformity with the UNI EN 9001:2000 standard – right from 19th March 2003 - specifically relating to “Supplying University education courses”¹⁴⁷. Up to now the experience confirmed in the field and the desire to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Quality Management System have led to the computerizing of various processes, while at the same time, the changes occurring within University regulations relative to the organization of education activities implies the consequent reformulation of Objectives and the Quality Policy in order to meet and satisfy in a new way, the expectations of demand.

5.4. International, European and national excellence models for “Services Quality Certification”¹⁴⁸

The origin of quality awards¹⁴⁹ in the West is linked to the search for attraction factors aimed at competitiveness. Starting in the early 80s as a follow up to the widespread introduction of new competitive paradigms by Japanese businesses based on the quality of processes and the productive system which resulted in lower costs

¹⁴⁶ See DE STEFANO R., “La formazione sulla via della certificazione”, in *Notiziario Gemini Europa*, April 2001, www.geminieuropa.com.

¹⁴⁷ See Tortora et al., 2006.

¹⁴⁸ Tortora et al., illustrate in great detail, the vast panorama (background and state of the art) of quality systems and accreditation both on an international and European scale.

¹⁴⁹ The reason for the introduction of the quality awards was to revamp the competitiveness of the relevant economic system. Creating national role models was considered very important to stimulate emulation and spread the use of TQM. See CONTI T., DE RISI P., 2001, p. 153.

and higher qualitative levels of the processes/ products. The first prize for quality in Japan (denominated the *Deming Application Prize*, DAP¹⁵⁰) – was established in 1951 by the *Japanese Union Of Scientists and Engineers*¹⁵¹ (JUSE) to distinguish the best Japanese firms capable of devising a synergic control system of total quality¹⁵². The award contributed to spreading a culture of quality, intended by the DAP as “conformity” to and characterized by attention to constant improvement (*Kaizen*¹⁵³) and the extension of this culture to the entire organization (*Company-Wide Quality Control* or *Total Quality Control*¹⁵⁴). The structure of the DAP model¹⁵⁵ is based on the

¹⁵⁰ “The Deming Application Prize is an annual award presented to a company that has achieved distinctive performance improvements through the application of TQM. Regardless of the types of industries, any organization can apply for the Prize, be it public or private, large or small, or domestic or overseas”. See JUSE, “The Guide for The Deming Application Prize 2006”, in http://www.juse.or.jp/e/deming/pdf/03_demingGuide2006.pdf, 2006/1.

¹⁵¹ It was established in May 1946 and authorized as the foundation of a juridical body by the Science and Technology Agency of Japanese Government. The objective of JUSE is to promote systematic studies needed for the advancement of science and technology, whereupon to contribute to the development of culture and industry.

¹⁵² See ANDREINI P., *Qualità Certificazione Competitività*, Hoepli, Milano, 2004, p. 81.

¹⁵³ Kaizen literally means chain (kai) to become good (zen) beginning in 1985 based on the work of Imai Masaaki, it has become in the Japanese context, a widespread managerial philosophy. In fact, the Kaizen method of continuous incremental improvement is a concept for incremental (gradual, continuous) changes (improvement).

The Kaizen differently from Western trends that envisage improvement by innovation i.e. structures and equipment, implements step by step logics and sensibility towards the limitless potential of change focused on persons and their peculiarities. The philosophy, stimulating management, values human resources and encourages participation and creates a favorable climate and involvement in which everyone is responsible for the positive outcome of the system. See PINNELLI S., *Formazione a Distanza e Qualità: tra misurazione, management e identità*, Edizioni Pensa Multimedia, Lecce, 2002, p.18.

¹⁵⁴ Tortora et al., 2006. Total Quality Control (TQC) developed in Japan, was re-imported to the United States in the 1980s. While the term TQC had been used in Japan, it was changed to TQM in Western nations. To follow the internationally-accepted practice, Japan changed the denomination TQC to TQM.

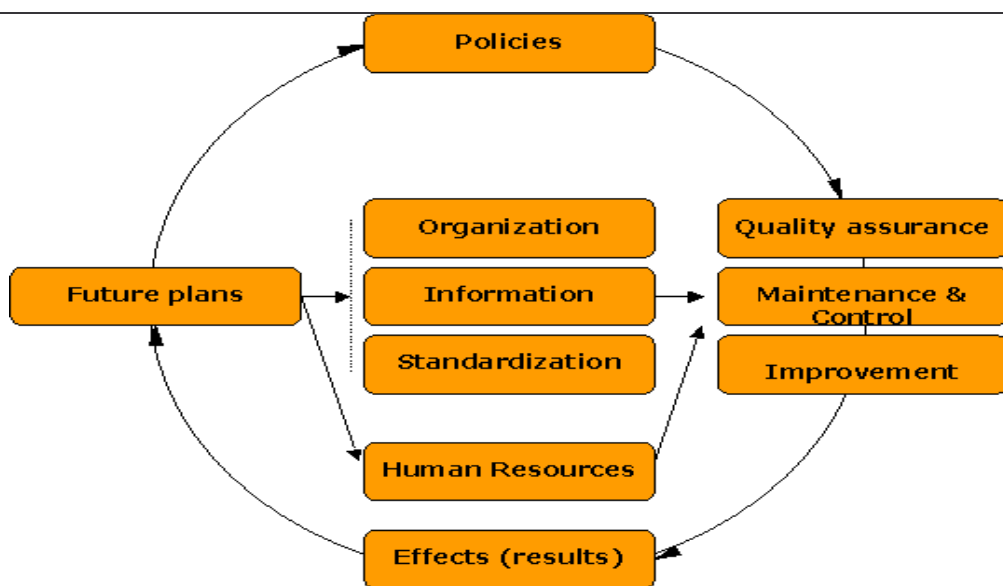
See JUSE, in <http://www.juse.or.jp/e/deming/02.html>, , *download* June 20, 2006/2.

¹⁵⁵ The categories of the Deming Prize are: 1) the Deming Prize for Individuals, is an annual award given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the study – either for statistical methods used or have made4 exceptional contributions to the dissemination - of TQM; 2) the Deming Application Prize, is an annual award presented to a company that has achieved distinctive improvements in performance through the application of TQM. Regardless of the types of industries, any organization can apply for the Prize, be it public or private, large or small, or domestic or overseas. Provided that a division of a company manages its business autonomously, the division may apply for the Prize separately from the company. There is no limit to the number of potential recipients of the Prize each year. All organizations that score the passing points or higher upon examination will be awarded the Deming Application Prize;

The Quality Control Award for Operations Business Units, is given to operations business units of a company that have achieved distinctive performance improvement through the application of quality control/management in the pursuit of TQM in a designated year. While the Deming Application Prize is directed toward an entire company or a division of a company, the Quality Control Award for Operations Business Units envisages an individual business unit, which is not eligible for the Deming Application Prize challenge. To be eligible for the Quality Control Award for Operations Business Units, the head of the business unit must possess management responsibilities for the budget. In

implementation of principles and techniques – such as process analysis, statistic methods and quality cycles – but does not imply references to criteria – for example human resource management, customer satisfaction, impact on society and operative results¹⁵⁶ – which, instead, characterize European models. The model is structured in ten assessment areas – for which only recently a scoring system, in line with the European models, was introduced – and a checklist¹⁵⁷ devised (fig. 5).

Fig. 5 – Deming Application Prize



Source - Conti T., De Risi P., 2001, p. 14

addition, the unit must have clearly established responsibilities and authorities for quality management within the business unit, with a clearly defined relationship with the head office or other related departments. The unit does not have to possess all functions related to quality management and quality assurance. See JUSE, in www.juse.or.jp/e/deming/03.html, download June 20, 2006/3.

¹⁵⁶ See VERNERO S., “Il modello dell’European Foundation for Quality Management”, in www.siquas.it, download June 20, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ The examination for the Deming Application Prize focuses on the following key points: a) Based on the management philosophy of the company, challenging and customer-oriented business objectives and strategies, that are suited to the business environment, have been formulated under the leadership of top management, taking into consideration the type of business, business structure and conditions, and the scale of business. b) TQM has been implemented properly to achieve business objectives and strategies as mentioned Item a) above. c) As an outcome of Item b), outstanding results were obtained for business objectives and strategies as stated in Item a).

Each category has evaluation criteria, and each criterion contains “items” and “points” which serve as provisional standards. At the time of examination, the Subcommittee may change them in consideration of the applicant company’s business type. See JUSE, 2006/1.

The Congress of the United States established the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award*¹⁵⁸ (MBNQA) in 1987 with the main intent of promoting the culture of quality, knowledge and excellence and placing emphasis on customer satisfaction in order to improve competitiveness. In this context, *leadership* is paramount (personnel management, policy and strategy, process management and resource management) aiming at excellence. Results have to be quantifiable, measurable and comparable on the basis of criteria of customer satisfaction¹⁵⁹. The model has represented a fundamental moment in the growth of the culture of quality in the West. In fact, for the first time a structured TQM¹⁶⁰ model was proposed, resulting from the convergence of the opinions on the part of a large number of experts, apart from the analysis of the DAP model (up to that moment unknown in the West, as the Authors maintain, the first translation only dates back to 1989). The *Malcolm Baldrige Prize* – thanks to self-assessment of the “results” – introduced the concept of effectiveness as an assessment criterion, thus representing a real discontinuity with the past (characterized by a static view of quality)¹⁶¹. In order to interpret the model correctly,

¹⁵⁸ The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was created by Public Law 100-107, and enacted on August 20, 1987. The Award Program, responsive to the purposes of Public Law 100-107, led to the creation of a new public/private sector partnership. Principal support for the program comes from the Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, established in 1988. The Award is named after Malcolm Baldrige, who served as Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until 1987. His managerial excellence contributed to long-term improvement in efficiency and effectiveness of government. See THE FOUNDATION FOR THE MBNQA, “About The Baldrige Award”, in <http://www.baldrigefoundation.org/baldrige/bdrgaward.html>, 2006.

¹⁵⁹ See La Customer Satisfaction, MT. Cuomo, 2000

¹⁶⁰ Total Quality Management consists in many specific organizational approaches and technical tools addressing specific areas such as continuous improvement, customer centred strategies and so on. In fact, according to the JUSE the TQM is “a set of systematic activities carried out by the entire organization to effectively and efficiently achieve company objectives so as to provide products and services with a level of quality that satisfies customers, at the appropriate time and price.” See JUSE, 2006/1.

¹⁶¹ The Criteria for Performance Excellence have evolved significantly over time to help organizations address a dynamic environment, focus on strategy-driven performance, and, most recently, address concerns about governance, ethics, and organizational sustainability. The Criteria have continually progressed toward a comprehensive, integrated systems perspective of overall organizational performance management. Each year, the decision whether to revise the Criteria balances two important considerations. On one hand, there is a need for Criteria that are at the cutting edge of validated management practice to help users address the increasingly complex challenges they face; on the other hand, there is a desire for Criteria that are stable to allow users continuity in their performance assessments. In 2005, the Baldrige Criteria were significantly revised to address the focused demands on senior leaders, the need for long-term (as well as short-term) organizational sustainability, the great challenges of innovating organizations (not just technology), the difficulty of *executing* new processes and strategic plans, and the benefits of improved alignment of all aspects of management systems with results measurements. Recognizing the challenges for organizations to address these opportunities, the decision was made to make no substantive revisions to the Criteria for 2006. The most significant changes in the Criteria booklet for 2006 are summarized as follows:

the key is a “ from a left to right perspective” i.e. starting from the “enablers” to get to the “results”¹⁶².

The scoring of responses to Criteria Items (Items) and Award applicant feedback are based on two evaluation dimensions: Process¹⁶³ and Results¹⁶⁴. Criteria users need to furnish information relating to these dimensions. The Criteria are designed to help organizations use an integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in: delivery of ever-improving value to customers and stakeholders, contributing to organizational sustainability, improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities and organizational and personal learning. The Criteria

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- The language throughout the Criteria booklet has been adjusted to better address non profit organizations, as well as for-profit businesses;
 - Item Notes have been added that specifically address non profit organizations;
 - Each Criteria Item title now includes a simple question that encompasses the central concept of the Item;
 - “Employee” has been added to the Glossary of Key Terms. Minor wording improvements have been made throughout the Criteria booklet. See MBNQA, Criteria for Performance Excellence, in http://www.quality.nist.gov/PDF_files/2006_Business_Criteria.pdf, 2006/1.

¹⁶² The expression “ learn to read from right on the left” was coined at Olivetti in the middle of the 1980s, in the midst of the season of the Quality Total [...]. The focus of business was on the customer and on the processes and the expression became a slogan in terms of a new vision of quality that demanded a change in mentality. The slogan acquired more meaning when in 1989, the method was given to what it turned out to be the first self-assessment model Europe and the first diagnostic self-assessment method in the world (because addressed to classifying business weaknesses and their causes, rather than to obtain scores, like the American Malcolm Baldrige Award. “To read from right to left” evokes an overturn, therefore effective in itself; seeing as TQM models (or excellence) because on the contrary, these are designed to place the organization (its systematic factors and the processes) on the left, the customers and the interested parties (the respective objectives and outcomes) on the right. See CONTI T., *Qualità: un'occasione perduta?*, Etas, Milano, 2004, p. 98.

¹⁶³ “Process” refers to the methods used by the organization. The four factors used to evaluate process are Approach, Deployment, Learning, and Integration (A-D-L-I). Specifically, “Approach” refers to: the methods used to accomplish the process; the appropriateness of the methods to the Item requirements; from the effectiveness of the used method; the degree to which the approach is repeatable and based on reliable data and information. “Deployment”, instead, refers to the *extent* to which: the approach applied is in addressing Item requirements relevant and important from the organization; the approach is applied consistently; the approach is used by all appropriate work units. “Learning” refers to refining the approach used through cycles of evaluation and improvement; encouraging breakthrough change to the approach used through innovation; sharing refinements and innovations with other relevant work units and processes in the organization. At last, “Integration” refers to the *extent* to which: the approach used is aligned with the organizational needs identified in other Criteria Item requirements; the measures, information, and improvement systems are complementary across processes and work units; the plans, processes, results, analyses, learning, and actions are harmonized across processes and work units to support organization-wide goals. See MBNQA, 2006/1.

¹⁶⁴ “Results” refers from the organization’s outputs and outcomes in achieving the requirements of the Items. The four factors used to evaluate results are: the current level of performance of the organizations; rate and breadth of the performance of improvements; the performance improvements of the relative to appropriate comparisons and/or benchmarks; linkage of the results measures (often through segmentation) to important customer, product and service, market, process, and action plan performance requirements identified in own Organizational Profile and in Process Items. See MBNQA, 2006/1.

focus on the key areas of organizational performance given below: product and service outcomes; customer-focused outcomes; financial and market outcomes; human resource outcomes; organizational effectiveness outcomes, including key internal operational performance measures; leadership and social responsibility outcomes. The use of this set of measures is intended to ensure that strategies are balanced so that the Authors say, they do not inappropriately trade off among important stakeholders, objectives, or short- and longer-term goals¹⁶⁵.

In 1999, categories for education and health care were added to the original three categories: manufacturing, service, and small business.

In particular, as regards the education field – *Baldrige National Quality Program*¹⁶⁶ – whose structure is organized in seven criteria (fig. 6).

The Core Values and Concepts are embodied in seven Categories, as follows:

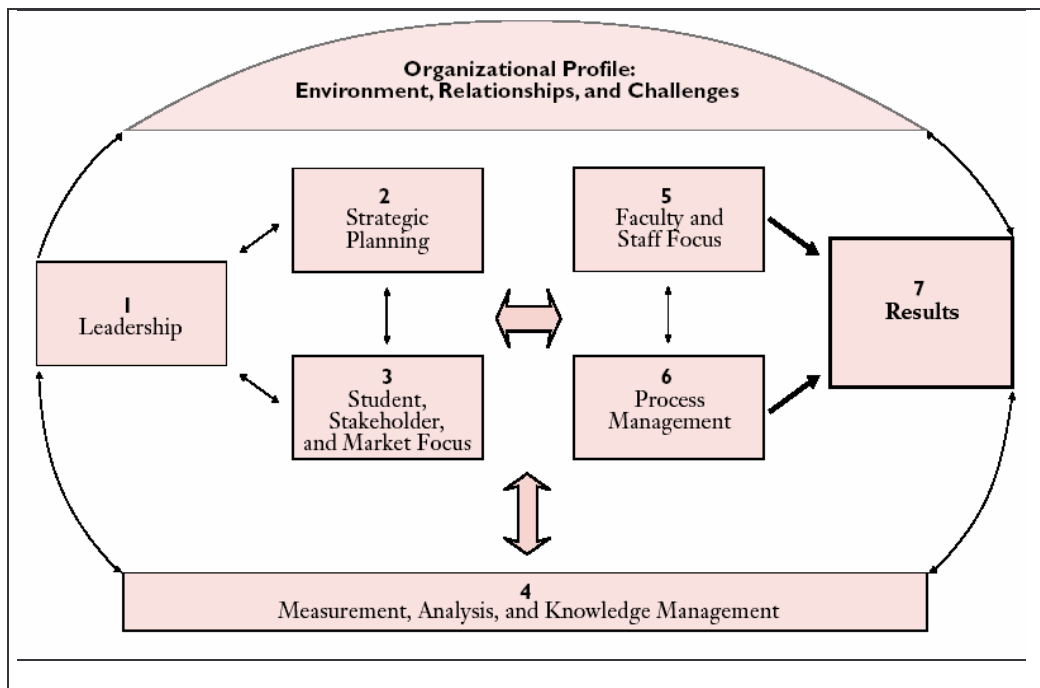
1. Leadership
2. Strategic Planning
3. Student, Stakeholder, and Market Focus
4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management
5. Faculty and Staff Focus
6. Process Management
7. Results

Leadership (Category 1), Strategic Planning (Category 2), and Student, Stakeholder, and Market Focus (Category 3) represent the leadership triad. These Categories are placed together to emphasize the importance of a leadership focus on strategy and on students and stakeholders. Faculty and Staff Focus (Category 5), Process Management (Category 6), and Results (Category 7) represent the results triad. All actions point toward Results a composite of student, stakeholder, market, budgetary, financial, and operational performance results, including faculty and staff, governance, and social responsibility results.

¹⁶⁵ See MBNQA, 2006/1

¹⁶⁶ The Education Criteria for Performance Excellence have evolved significantly like The Criteria for Performance Excellence. In the 2006, the most significant changes in the Education Criteria booklet were summarized as follows: each Criteria Item title now includes a simple question that encompasses the central concept of the Item and “Faculty and staff” has been added to the Glossary of Key Terms. See MBNQA, “BALDRIGE in Education: Performance Excellence Delivers World-Class Results”, in http://www.quality.nist.gov/PDF_files/Issue_Sheet_ED_Excellence.pdf, 2006/2.

**Fig. 6 - Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence Framework:
A Systems Perspective**



Source - MBNQA, 2006/2

The horizontal arrow in the centre of the framework links the leadership triad to the results triad, a linkage critical to organizational success. Furthermore, the arrow indicates the central relationship between Leadership (Category 1) and Results (Category 7). The two-headed arrows indicate the importance of feedback in an effective performance management system. The seven Criteria Categories shown in the figure are subdivided into 19 Items - each focusing on a major requirement - and Areas to Address (Organizations should address their responses to the specific requirements of these Areas).

Baldrige Award recipients have proven to be high performing organizations that measure outcomes in all their key areas of performance and know where they stand on each relative to the outcomes of competitors and education industry leaders¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁷ See MBNQA, 2006/2.

The Baldrige Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence¹⁶⁸, instead, are designed to help organizations use an integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in: delivery of ever-improving value to patients, other customers, and stakeholders, contributing to improved health care quality and organizational sustainability; improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities as a health care provider; organizational and personal learning¹⁶⁹. The use of this composite of measures is intended to ensure that strategies are balanced that they do not inappropriately trade off among important stakeholders, objectives, or short- and longer-term goals.

The American example of the *Malcolm Baldrige* was followed by other countries. In Europe the *European Foundation for Quality Management*¹⁷⁰ (EFQM) took as its aim the creation of the European Quality Award (EQA), that established the EFQM model for excellence in 1991.

The EFQM model have evolved significantly over time and the key milestones is presented in diagram form below:

In 1999, in order to make the path to excellence easier, through the creation of simple and practical instruments, the Efqm promoted a European Recognition Scheme¹⁷¹, denominated EFQM *Excellence Model*, the result of the revised earlier

¹⁶⁸ The Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence have evolved significantly like The Education Criteria for Performance Excellence and like The Criteria for Performance Excellence. In the 2006, the most significant changes in the Health Care Criteria booklet are summarized as follows: Item Notes have been added that specifically address non profit health care organizations and each Criteria Item title now includes a simple question that encompasses the central concept of the Item. See MBNQA, 2006/3.

¹⁶⁹ See MBNQA, "Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence", in http://www.quality.nist.gov/PDF_files/2006_HealthCare_Criteria.pdf, 2006/3.

¹⁷⁰ EFQM is the creator of the prestigious European Quality Award which recognises the very top companies each year. Based in Brussels, EFQM brings together over 700 member organisations and valued partners situated in every geographical region across the globe. EFQM is also the guardian of the EFQM Excellence Model which provides organisations with a guideline to achieve and measure their success. EFQM is a not-for-profit membership foundation focused on serving its members' information and networking needs. See EFQM, "Introducing Excellence", in *www.efqm.org*, 2006/4.

¹⁷¹ The European Recognition Scheme was created in response to the needs of EFQM members. Some were asking for simple, practical ways to begin their journey to Excellence. Conversely, mature organisations wanted more sophisticated products and services to enhance their efforts to achieve ever-higher levels of excellence. The Scheme was designed as an integrated assessment hierarchy tailored to the varying experiences of organisations in their use of the EFQM Model. Organisations may apply to whichever strand they think is most appropriate for their level of maturity. The main objectives of the scheme are to:

- Extend recognition to organisations beyond those currently recognised as top achievers;
- Maximise the number of organisations who are able to apply the principles of the EFQM Excellence Model for organisational improvement;

model – EFQM EFQM *Excellence Award*¹⁷². A non prescriptive system, it envisages various approaches to reach *performance* excellence. The structure is based on nine criteria, distinguished in “enablers” and “results”; the latter being attained through the former ¹⁷³ (fig. 7).

Table 1 - Key milestones of EFQM Excellence Model

EFQM Excellence Model launched	in 1991
First European Quality Award in Madrid in the presence of King of Spain	in 1992
Creation of Benchmarking Services Portfolio	in 1995
Creation of a Public Sector Award in 1996with EC support & Creation of SME Awards in co-operation with national organisations of EOQ and EC support	in 1997
Fundamental revision of the EFQM Excellence Model	in 1999
Creation of a Network of 19 National Partner Organisations	in 1999
Launch of Excellence One and Levels of Excellence	in 2001

Source - Adapted by DE DOMMARTIN A., “EFQM Presentation ”, *The Share Best Practices Conference*, Dubai, 2003

The Model, which recognises there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance, is based on the premise that: **Excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy, that is delivered through People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes.**

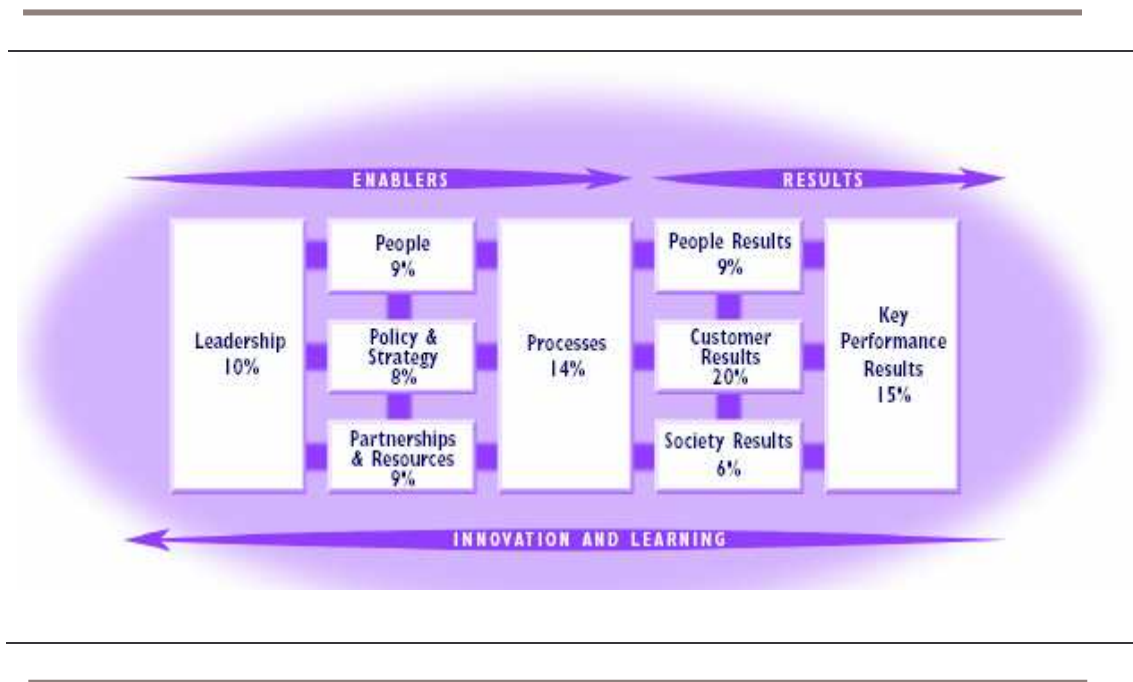
-
- Provide practical products and services that help organisations achieve improved levels of excellence.

¹⁷² For the 15th award cycle we changed the name of the Award from “European Quality Award” (EQA) to “the EFQM Excellence Award” (EEA) for aligning with the new strategic direction of EFQM. The new name also reflects that the successful organisations demonstrate sustainable excellence in all aspects of the EFQM Excellence Model. The first fact is that key representatives of all stakeholders expressed their concern that the name EQA was creating a wrong perception the Award focuses on the quality of products and services only, while successful organizations clearly demonstrate a lot more than that. Besides this over the years EFQM has become a strong brand name, using it in the name helps to position the Award as a unique recognition scheme in Europe. The new name also reflects that the successful organisations demonstrate sustainable excellence in all aspect of the EFQM Excellence model, and this on a European level. In summary, the “name of the game” now reflects better what it is all about, and how it is different from any other award in Europe. See EFQM, 2006/1.

¹⁷³ See EFQM, 2006/3.

The logical process underlying the model is the R.A.D.A.R.¹⁷⁴ logic (Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment, Review), reflecting the philosophy of constant development – PDCA – of the Deming Cycle¹⁷⁵.

Fig. 7 - The EFQM Excellence Model



Source – EFQM, “The Baldrige Program: self-assessment for continuous improvement”, in http://www.quality.nist.gov/PDF_files/PrincipalMarApr06Baldrige.pdf, 2006/5

¹⁷⁴ R.A.D.A.R. consists of four elements: **R**esults, **A**pproach, **D**eployment, **A**ssessment and **R**eview. This logic states that an organisation needs to:

- Determine the **R**esults it is aiming for as part of its policy and strategy making process. These results cover the performance of the organisation, both financially and operationally, and the perceptions of its stakeholders.
- Plan and develop an integrated set of sound **A**pproaches to deliver the required results both now and in the future.
- Deploy the approaches in a systematic way to ensure full implementation.

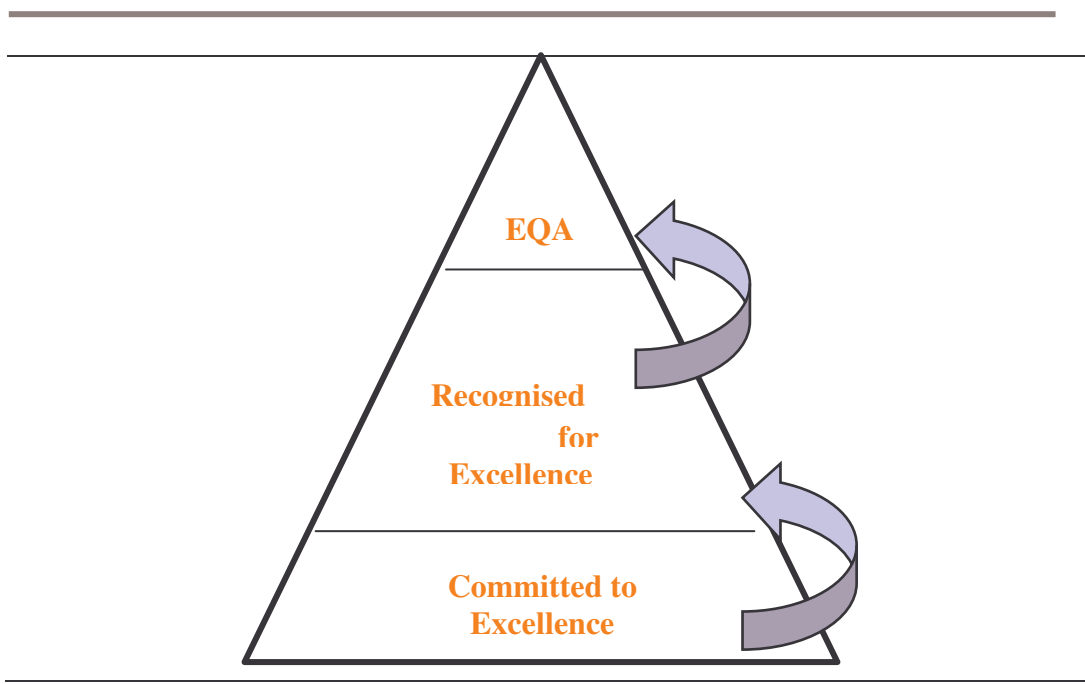
Assess and **R**eview the approaches followed based on monitoring and analysis of the results achieved and ongoing learning activities and, based on this, identify, prioritise, plan and implement improvements where needed. See EFQM, “EFQM Levels of Excellence Committed to Excellence Information Pack”, in <http://www.efqm.org/uploads/home/documents/C2E%20Information%20Brochure%202005%20V1.2%20EN.pdf>, 2005.

¹⁷⁵ See PROTO M., *Il Sistema Qualità. Profili tecnici e percorsi evolutivi*, Giappichelli, Torino, 1999.

The EFQM “Excellence Levels” Recognition Scheme, established in 2001, outlines a gradual path of organizational growth in the commitment to TQM (fig. 8).

In 2001 the EFQM launched EFQM Levels of Excellence, a recognition scheme for delivering consistent European-wide standards applicable to organizations or organizational units regardless of size, sector or maturity. EFQM Levels of Excellence have been devised pursuant to popular demand for the pressing need for a pathway to Excellence. The Levels of Excellence symbol, a distinctive structured pyramid, may be used in its various forms by participating-organizations or organizational units who reach the appropriate levels.

Fig. 8 – The EFQM Levels of Excellence



Source - DE DOMMARTIN A., 2003

THE EFQM EUROPEAN RECOGNITION SCHEME HAS THREE STRANDS:

1. European Quality Award (EQA). Recognition by means of a prestigious award remains a key stimulator of Excellence. Organizations who are

achieving world class quality standards remain the target group and are consequently the potential applicants for the European Quality Award (EQA). Nevertheless, it remains open to members and non-members regardless of their size, industry and maturity.

2. Recognition of Achievement in Excellence. This strand is also available to both EFQM members and non-members. It is based on the full EFQM Excellence Model, which offers applicants the benefits of a structured approach to identify organizational strengths and areas for improvement, and recognizes successful efforts to implement excellence and good practice. It requires a shorter application document and a modified assessment process when compared to the EQA. The program recognizes applicants whose score is confirmed at 400 or more points. Applicants who achieve this level can be considered well managed organizations and they will be able to use the recognition in their commercial and promotional efforts.
3. Recognition of Commitment to Excellence. Recognition of Commitment is designed for organizations at the beginning of their journey to Excellence. The emphasis will be on helping organizations understand their current level of performance and to establish improvement priorities.

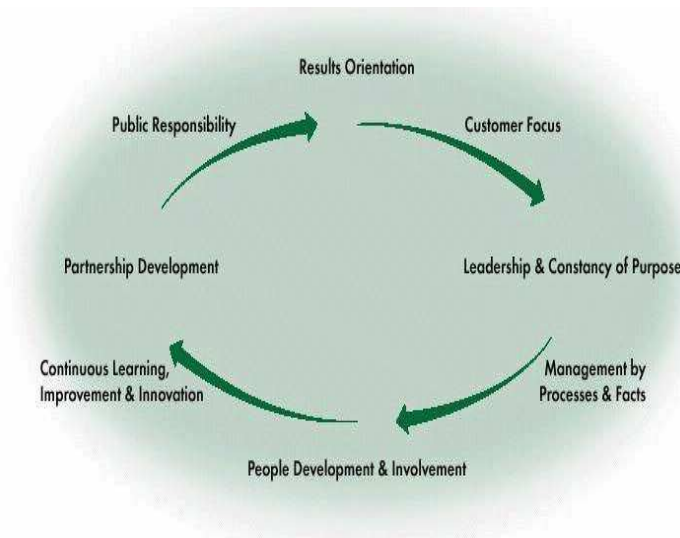
This Scheme is based on a two-stage process. The first stage involves applicants going through a process of self-assessment at a high level, using the 9 criteria of the Excellence Model. This will provide a broad overview of performance against an established framework used by role model organizations. The output of this assessment will result in the applicant identifying a limited number of improvement areas relevant to their organization. The second stage calls for organizations to demonstrate that improvement actions have been deployed. Organizations that demonstrate their Commitment will be able to use the recognition in their commercial and promotional efforts.

Such model has also inspired the conceptual set-up of the Italy Quality Award¹⁷⁶, developed according to a C.A.F. logic (*Common Assessment Framework*¹⁷⁷).

¹⁷⁶ The APQI has been constituted from all the entrepreneurial associations. The APQI – nonprofit organization - has been constituted in 1996 on initiative of General Confederation of Italian Industry, the University Consortium in Engineering for the Quality and the Innovation and of the Italian

The Fundamental Concepts of C.A.F. - adopted by Public Sector - is presented in diagram form below (fig. 9).

Fig. 9 - Fundamental Concepts of C.A.F.



Source - DE DOMMARTIN A., 2003

In particular the national model is characterized by three distinct awards:

- **Businesses Italy Quality Award.** All businesses belonging to the manufacturing and services field (except the exclusively commercial ones) can take part in it.

The structure of the organizations taking part in the Award must be applied all the criteria of the Prize reference model in an integrated way.

Association Culture Quality (AICQ), to which other entrepreneurial, territorial and sector Organizations have joined later on. See, APQI, in www.apqi.it, consulted June 20, 2006

¹⁷⁷ The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a result of the cooperation among the EU Ministers responsible for Public Administration. The Directors General of this field are proud to present the new version of the CAF at the 2nd Quality Conference. The CAF is offered as a tool to assist public sector organisations across Europe to use quality management techniques in public administration. CAF provides a simple, easy-to-use framework, which is suitable for a self-assessment of public sector organisations. See EIPA,), "The Common Assessment Framework Improving an organisation through self self-assessment2, in http://www.eipa.nl/CAF/Brochure/CAF2002_Eng.pdf, 2002.

- Schools Italy Quality Award. State and certificated private schools of I and II cycle (primary, secondary and high schools) can take part in it.
- PP. AA. Quality Award¹⁷⁸. Addressed to Italian public administration, it is aimed at spreading and supporting a new managing culture oriented to quality and efficiency, fostering the use of CAF as an instrument of self assessment and a model of *Total Quality Management* for organizational improvement¹⁷⁹.

From the analysis of the models examined it clearly emerges that organizational systems must be characterized by a dynamic approach to quality, conceptually based on the organizations' capacity for differentiating and striving for constant improvement of their *performance*. From this point of view, Total Quality Management models, or excellence models, are by their nature dynamic, subject to evolving and improving, thus forcing organizations to constantly review their critical variables of organizational success.

5.5. A Case Study - DISTRA's Quality Management System: the ISO 9001:2000 benchmark¹⁸⁰

Aiming at proactively managing the period of deep transformation characterizing the University system, The Business Studies and Research Department – DISTRA – has assimilated the E.U.'s directions as to planning, controlling and assessing implemented educational processes; with this intent it has aimed at giving added value to the supplied activities, thus starting a path headed to quality management in didactics. In this task it has been a University Department certified in conformity with the UNI EN 9001:2000 norm since 19th March 2003.

¹⁷⁸ The Award was created by the Department of the Public Function and FORMEZ, in collaboration with the General Confederation of Italian Industry, National Council Consumers and Customers and Association Awards Italy Quality.

¹⁷⁹ The Award is destined to the following categories of organizations: Administrations (central and peripheral) of the State; Health care structures, State hospitals and other administrations operating in the Healthcare sector; Communes, Communities etc; Scholastic institutions; Metropolitan regions, Districts and Cities; Universities; Non economic public agencies and Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts.

¹⁸⁰ Debora Tortora and Daniela Sica, Research Fellows at DISTRA, devised a Total Quality Management Accreditation System for the Department which was put in place throughout the Department in 2010.

The choice of certification can be led on the one side to the will of using objective parameters, with international value, in implementing a quality management system, though defining precise responsibilities of the human resources involved in the processes; on the other hand meeting the requisites impacted only on the accomplishing modalities of the educational services, thus making their *performance* more effective/ efficient, though preserving the fundamental autonomy of the didactic contents and perfectly integrating itself with the other management systems of DISTRA.

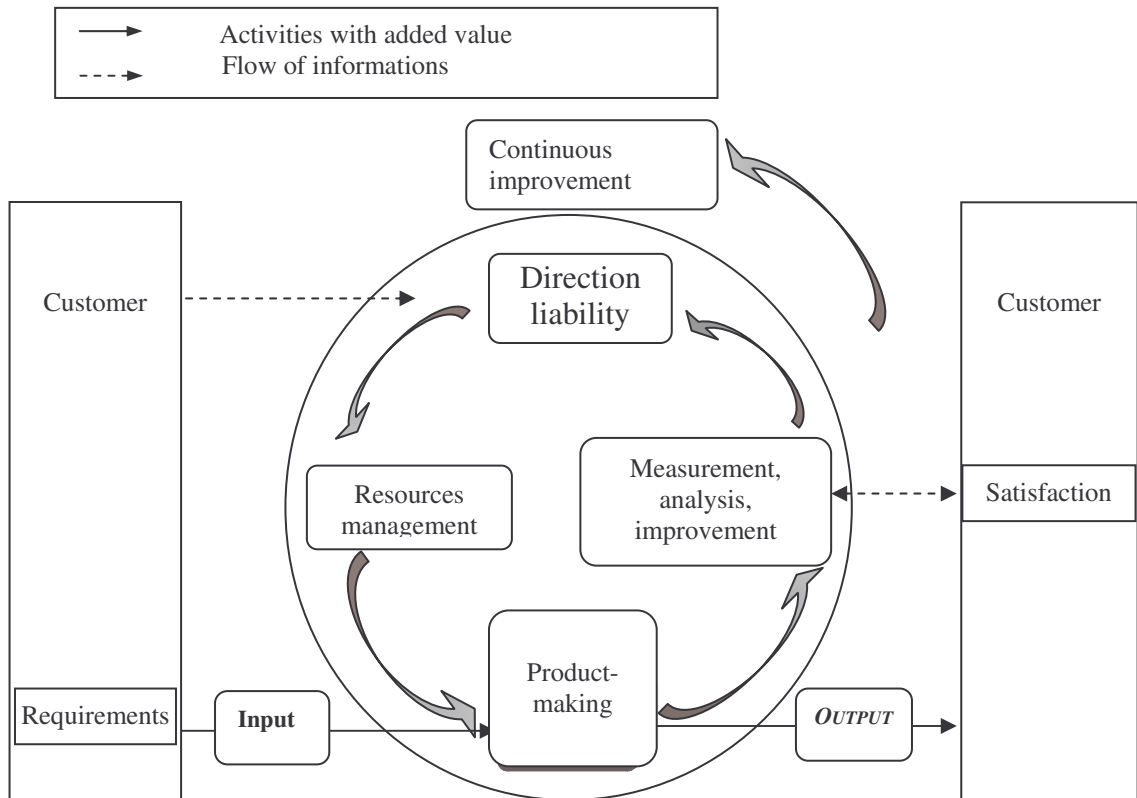
In short, the Authors specify, the ISO 9001:2000 norm, “Quality Management Systems – Requisites”, replacing the previous ones ISO 9001, 9002 and 9003 of 1994, represents the only reference norm to assess and certificate the conformity of Business Quality Management Systems, by defining the requisites of a Quality Management System as the suitable answer for the satisfaction of not only material and economical needs, but above all social ones. The 2000 edition of the ISO 9000-series norms, updated in December 2005, allowed to concretize the passage from conformity assessment of business management system to a new paradigm based on the effectiveness of the actions carried out, as well as on the adequacy of the results attained, also fostering organizational competitiveness¹⁸¹ (fig. 10).

The Quality Management System (SGQ) is an organizational-managerial instrument focused on monitoring/ controlling of the processes that have a direct impact on the product/ service quality, on a clear definition of responsibilities and on the set-up of adequate resources, in order to prevent critic points and ensure customer satisfaction. Adopting SGQ Tortora et al maintain, implies:

- focusing on processes management and the principles of competitiveness and customer satisfaction;
- developing and exploiting inner professional expertise;
- constant heading towards organizational innovation;
- methodological innovation (project, supply and assessment methodologies);
- developing innovative *know-how* and the capacity to predict customer needs.

¹⁸¹ PROTO M., 2006, p. 20.

Fig. 10 - *Quality Management System Model based on processes*



Source – UNI EN ISO 9001:2000 STANDARD, p. 6

In this respect, the customer, seen as a bearer of needs to satisfy, becomes a complex and articulated “customer-system”. Moreover, the diverse needs coming from different categories of customers are not necessarily convergent, though globally coexisting, characterized by different scales of importance within educational service development. With reference to the customer-system, the Authors underline the role of DISTRA’s potential applicants (e.g. institutional and territorial bodies, the community etc.); such bodies, they say, represent only the *liason*, acting as go-between

connecting those who express their needs and educational requirements and those who are potential users of the service planned and supplied by DISTRA¹⁸².

Though aware of the complexity and articulated nature of the customer-system, DISTRA guarantees, in a quality logic, satisfaction of the recipients of the educational services, in particular:

- participants/ students;
- subjects who are direct users of the educational results attained by participants/ students (e.g. business officers/ business operative functions).

Educational products also become more complex, as they evolve from traditional course activities to “educational paths”, to “learning situations”, where more and more educational professional roles intervene, different as to their profile and competence.

5.6 DISTRA’s Quality Management System¹⁸³: advantages and margins for enhancing *performance*

DISTRA¹⁸⁴ as the Authors point out, is positioned within the academic context as one of the excellence settings for economy and business management research, as well as a *bridging institution* between University and society. In fact, together with a rich interdisciplinary network inside the Department, made up of research groups, a similar rich network of relations with other Universities and research centres in Italy and Europe is in place that is addressed to a perspective of internationalization. The

¹⁸² Tortora et al., 2006

¹⁸³ Debora Tortora and Daniela Sica, Research Fellows at DISTRA, devised a Total Quality Management Accreditation System for the Department in 2010.

¹⁸⁴ In the Italian University system, the departments represent independent structures with governance capability from the research point of view; the systemic aim of these organizations is achieved through the creation of consonance relationships with the upper systems (University and Faculty at L +1 level, Ministry of University and Research at L +2 level), that are able to influence the survival perspectives, through the constraints enforcement and the guidelines sharing (rules and regulations). The DISTRA identifies the University of Salerno and the Faculty of Economics as preferred interlocutors; from the University it takes to the regulations to govern the Higher Education activities and the Faculty with its regulations governs the functioning of teaching activities in the academic courses, promotes the Higher Education activities, manages the recruitment of human resources (professors, researchers). The MIUR establishes the general rules for the DISTRA functioning and the recruitment of human resources.

organizational structure as a network facilitates pursuing Department strategies, consisting of a large quantity of production and diffusion of knowledge. The distinctive competences of the Department's scientific research consists in interpreting and planning lines of development for Economic institutions, predicting potential behaviour economic operators, proposing innovative models of analysis and decision, representing concrete points of reference for businesses and other institutions, for the *policy maker* and the world of research. In other words teaching and didactics become both a part and at the same time an instrument of interaction with the territory. It offers a meeting point for economic and social players through a dual channel of communication: in-going, collecting the needs and requirements they bear, and out-going through the supplying of services of education, analysis and advice and problem solving paths. This is the reason why the Authors affirm that DISTRA's SGQ has as its application field "Supplying University education courses".

The document pyramid of DISTRA's SGQ is structured on three hierarchic levels:

- Quality Handbook (MdQ);
- Management Procedures;
- Quality Record Documents (DRQ).

Moreover, just starting from the definition of effectiveness according to the ISO 9000:2000 norm as "grade of realization of planned activities", and from that of efficiency, this being simply the ratio between effectiveness level attained and resources used to reach it, the phases of the processes characterizing DISTRA's SGQ have been analysed by the Authors. After wide and articulated comparisons, considerations and economic assessment of possible added value compared to the pre-existent documentation management, and in the view of constant development, on the occasion of the Department's certificate renewal, obtained in March 2006, the document and procedure management disciplining SGQ was totally computerized¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁵ The automation process of the SGQ has not only involved the change of the paper modules into electronic ones; in fact, to free a bundle is not exactly the added value that the automation of a SGQ inside an organization can and must give. The main objective of the automated SGQ DISTRA has been that of removing or limiting as much as possible the inefficiencies tied to the timelines for processing data (customer satisfaction, final balance of performance), in order to assure a timely

The main goal of DISTRA's SGQ¹⁸⁶ was:

- Guaranteeing effective operation and efficient control of identified and implemented processes;
- Guaranteeing timely availability of the necessary information for the operation and monitoring of identified processes;
- Guaranteeing timely *feedback*, allowing to re-modulate didactic activities according to the needs coming from the customer-system;
- Outlining and implementing necessary actions to reach quality goals, through constant processes development.

In particular, the fundamental processes identified within DISTRA's SGQ concern:

- Planning and supplying institutional educational activities¹⁸⁷;
- Analysing and assessing customer satisfaction;
- Communicating and relevant monitoring.

These fundamental processes include :

- Document managing;
- Direction review;
- Inspection.

feedback, in a position to allow the remodelling of teaching activities, putting them online on the basis of requirements coming from the customer system.

¹⁸⁶ The automated SGQ is available at the www.labeconomia.unisa.it/sgqdistra website. It consists of seven sections:

- "SGQ", that is the area dedicated to the date of entry of the necessary information for the management of the activities disciplined by the several procedures;
- "Supply", containing the files for supplies of materials to be bought;
- "Teaching activities", that is the section containing useful documents relative to the supply of teaching activities;
- "Direction Review", containing the annual report of Department Governance - the output of the SGQ re-examination activity;
- "SGQ's check", for managing files useful for control activity relative to the SGQ and;
- "Data analysis", for the management of customer satisfaction procedures;
- "Communication", the section dedicated to the communication activities with the customer and the users of the SGQ.

Didactic Areas of the Faculty of Economics: draft the Programme of Studies, establish the scheduling of modules scheduling, define potential foundation Courses; fix the credits; organize the teaching, tutoring and students orientation activities; assign the didactic timetable to the professors and the researchers, according to the rules in force; assign tutoring tasks. The Didactic Areas define the teaching activities, the credits awarded and the number of tutors.

The Faculty Council (however with the Gelmini Reform, Departments are to have more responsibility) approve proposal; the Presidency of Faculty defines the didactic calendar and the Allocation of lecture halls. Subsequently, each professor defines the teaching workload according to the procedures in force.

Processes are defined, documented, realized and updated according to the UNI EN ISO 9001:2000 norm. In fact DISTRA's *mission* comes out as creation, development and transfer of economic-managerial knowledge, capable of satisfying the expectations of outside stakeholders (economic and social) in a process of constant and progressive evolution. Flexibility and the capacity to question set ideas, together with the constant monitoring of the territory in order to perceive its requirements, become behavioural rules, to which SGQ applies strategic codification, proposing DISTRA as the main centre of excellence in the University of Salerno. Furthermore, DISTRA's *mission* is accomplished through a constructive dialogue with its customers, the monitoring of their expectations in relation to the educational offer supplied and measuring their satisfaction. On the occasion of the yearly review, quality objectives are re-defined, in terms of application of the policy and aims adopted by DISTRA, and the adequate modalities for their control are identified. In relation to the processes, both for transversal and specific objectives, measurement and constant monitoring is fundamental. This is possible through a documented index system. Quality Planning, as a definition of the actions allowing the achievement of defined objectives of quality becomes fundamentally important for SGQ's functional and effective working. The logics of "processes approach", outlines criteria, sequences and interaction.

Such processes have been acquired and documented in managerial practices and procedures for SGQ; thus they represent an intrinsic part of SGQ's documentary pyramid.

- **Control of the documents and Quality Recording PRG** defines the pattern according to which the Quality Documentation Management System is documented, maintained and updated.
- **Direction Review PRG** defines the procedure through which the Direction reviews annually DISTRA's SGQ, in order to control its adequacy with reference to the objectives and the Quality Policy and to ensure its effectiveness, identifying and assessing potential areas for development.
- **Educational Activities Supply PRG** aims at defining operative modalities and responsibilities as to the realization and supply of educational activities of

the Institutional Areas disciplined by the Didactic Regulations of Salerno University.

- **Customer Satisfaction and Claims Management PRG** defines modalities through which DISTRA monitors information concerning the customer perception as to the educational activities supply and intervention of support in order to verify whether the organization satisfies their requisites. DISTRA uses such information to assess and measure SGQ's performances.
- **SGQ's Check PRG** defines the checking process. The inspection activity is a managerial instrument supporting the quality policy in order to control and verify its realization.
- **Data Analysis PRG** concerns all the *operations* carried out within DISTRA, directly or indirectly connected to didactic activities supply. DISTRA notes, collects, processes and analyses DISTRA data to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the SGQ in place and to identify potential areas for development.

DISTRA is a *customer oriented* organization; within a view of constant development and total satisfaction of all its *stakeholders*, it has identified priority intervention areas, planning and implementing consistent strategies to bridge *gaps*, checking the relative results.

Finally, building up an internal communication system represents an important aspect for an organization, as sharing the largest quantity of information and data enables DISTRA to reach fixed objectives more effectively and increases the sense of belonging to the structure, with a positive effect on internal atmosphere and organizational wellbeing.

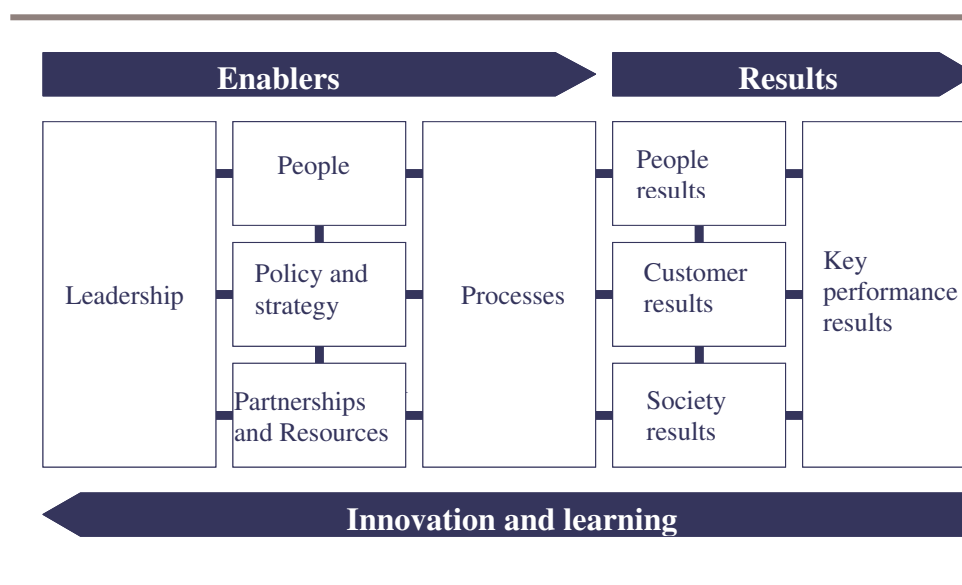
Currently, there is the intention to collect copies of all incoming and outgoing documents – together with a set of information, news and documentation – that can be used to the benefit of all the *stakeholders* in order to give a significant contribution to the level of scientific debate at a local scale, so that the intuition of a limited number of people may effectively become the heritage of the entire scientific and economical-social community.

The certification obtained, the Authors say, represents an intermediate phase towards adopting quality models based on the European Acknowledgment Scheme. Thus, by accepting the indications of a European assessment of educational services quality, DISTRA is directing its management system towards excellence models.

In particular the criteria which the organization has taken as a reference to define an objective and diagnosis measure as to its *performance* are typical of the CAF model (fig. 11).

In accordance with this trend, the “results” of the *performance*, on the basis of which “certifying factors” have been identified within the organizational system, shows the organizational desire not to be limited to *standard* quality models, but on the contrary, testifies DISTRA’s evident leaning towards differentiation and *benchmarking* with other Public Administrations.

Fig. 11 – *The Model of Common Assessment Framework*



Source – FORMEZ, “Il modello CAF e l’autovalutazione”, Proceedings of the Conference, Rome, September 27/28, 2005

5.7 Conclusions

The Business Studies and Research Department has for some time now (since 2001) started a path towards quality. On the occasion of its certification renewal, in a perspective of constant development it has substituted documentary paper and procedural management with a new more efficient and effective totally computerized system.

In fact, certification of its own SGQ represents the first *step* towards the adopting of models that imply a path of constant development tending to excellence, through diagnostic self-assessment and *benchmarking*.

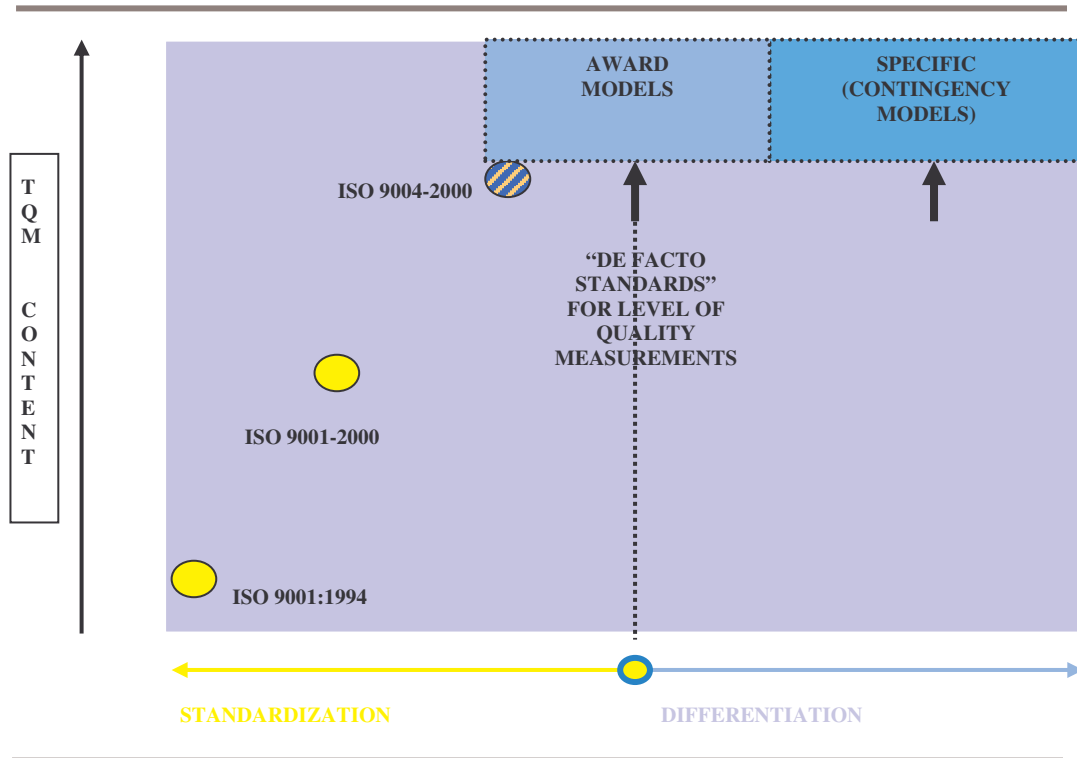
A correct approach to Quality has the ISO 9001:2000 certification as an intermediate passage, an unavoidable step towards a more articulated and complex path, leading to the subsequent building up of TQM personalized models. In fact, if correctly interpreted, they provide adequate indications as to standardization or differentiation of organizational systems. In fig. 11 positioning areas of quality models are drawn; the left quadrant shows the standardization area (ISO 9001 represents the reference quality model); the right quadrant, instead, is characterized by constant research of differentiation through TQM personalized models or “*contingency models*”.

In fact, TQM models should always be adapted to the organizational specificities (*contingency view of organization*). In the central-right part present quality awards are positioned; they can be used both as reference *standards*, to have a measure of one’s own quality level, and as *performance of excellence* models.

Every organization has to find a correct balance between the two needs – standardization and differentiation – in relation to their own reality, specific goals and competitive positioning.

In the illustrated paradigm DISTRA is positioned in the central-right part of the quadrant, as SGQ implementation, together with the relevant certification, have represented the intermediate passage towards the adoption - through the experience developed of taking part in the Quality Award for Public Administrations – of specific TQM models, within a *Plan Do Check Act* cycle.

Fig. 12 – Positioning quality models in relation to their TQM content (vertical axis) and to the purpose (standardisation or differentiation)



Source – CONTI T., “How to conceptually harmonise ISO 9000 certification , level of excellence recognition and real improvement”, *Proceedings 8th TQM World Congress*, Dubai, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, 2003

Conclusions

Although much has been done to align Italy with other European Countries in terms of standards and quality benchmarks, we are still in the initial phase of systemizing the process. A start has been made with the CAF and the CRUI models and the right direction has been undertaken. What is needed above all however, is a change in mentality. Objective analyses not tempered by subjective misconceptions, feelings, creative interpretations etc., in other words, transparent, inclusive procedures that indicate clearly what should be on the public agenda are an integral part of the process. Furthermore, much research needs to be done on the public sector in terms of customer satisfaction and the means and tools available or to be devised, for attaining this milestone. More efficiency, more efficacy, more transparency, more equity, add up to total quality management and customer satisfaction, no mean achievement for any democratic Country on the European scenario today.

Public Sector innovation is a key contributor to national growth and the welfare of individual citizens. Yet as Paul Windrum¹⁸⁸ points out: “precious little research has been conducted on public sector innovation”. Windrum attributes this to the “legacy of the old view that held manufacturing as the ‘sole’ source of productivity, growth and economic wealth, while services are unproductive and technology backward”. Naturally, the opposite is true in the private sector where abundant research has been carried out and which has had far reaching consequences for the public sector. Currently, research on the public sector provides only partial understanding of the Drivers, Dynamics and Impacts of services and does not address the role of public sector organizations within the innovation process or factors that stimulate and shape new service innovations. Windrum maintains furthermore, that public sector entrepreneurship has been under discussion since the 1960s and 1970s and that it is a “common (mis)conception in many developed countries that the public sector is not

¹⁸⁸ Paul Windrum is Editor of the volume *Innovation in the Public Sector, Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Management*, Windrum et al, (eds) (2008) and one of the investigators for the 5th Framework Study.

entrepreneurial and does not innovate” Windrum et al., (2008). Public sector institutions are considered furthermore, conservative, bureaucratic and slow moving and it is supposed that given the presumed superior innovative potential, characteristic of the private sector, policy should focus on the following considerations:

- a) whether public services innovate
- b) under what conditions
- c) the form innovation takes
- d) the role of entrepreneurship and management reform in the innovation process
- e) how the evolving policy context influences innovation
- f) the link between public sector innovation and private sector innovation

For Windrum, the objective of innovation studies “is to understand the processes that drive innovation and the link between innovation and social and economic change”. By neglecting public sector innovation he adds, “the innovation literature has omitted important dimensions of the innovation process and has failed to address the impact of public sector innovation on productivity, growth and employment. Windrum in his taxonomy of Public Sector Innovation (Windrum, 2008) has placed the emphasis on:

1. service innovation
2. service delivery innovation
3. administrative and organizational innovation (the subject of the present study)
4. conceptual innovation
5. policy innovation
6. systemic innovation.

The field is vast and requires in depth research from these 6 perspectives. The present study has attempted to examine one of the indicators in the taxonomy i.e. administrative and organizational innovation from the point of view of transparent and insightful *communication* to fully involve the citizenship in the search for high quality standards and excellence on the part of the Public Administration.

Naturally, this is only a first step; a long journey waits ahead but if the first steps aren't taken, then it goes without saying, the destination will never ever be reached.

Appendix

Customer Service Excellence

How does it work and what are the benefits?: website consulted 15th March, 2010)

Customer Service Excellence is designed to operate on three distinct levels:

- 1. As a driver of continuous improvement.** By allowing organisations to self assess their capability, using an [online self-assessment tool](#), in relation to customer focused service delivery, identifying areas and methods for improvement;
- 2. As a skills development tool.** By allowing individuals and teams within the organisation to explore and acquire new skills in the area of customer focus and customer engagement, thus building their capacity for delivering improved services;
- 3. As an independent validation of achievement.** By allowing organisations to seek formal accreditation to the [Customer Service Excellence standard](#), demonstrate their competence, identify key areas for improvement and celebrate their success.

The need for services to be customer-focused is driven by rising customer expectations and the varied needs of a diverse society. A service which is designed to meet customer needs is likely to be efficient for Government and save time and effort for the customer. The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have produced the publication [Insight: Understanding Your Citizens, Customers and Communities](#) aimed at helping councils and their partners put in place and make use of customer insight. **Customer insight** is a key element of the Customer Service Excellence standard and this publication provides a number of tools and ideas that will be of use to

anyone looking to improve and develop their customer insight. For the latest information about good practice in local government, consult the [IDeA knowledge website](#) (Consulted 24th March, 2010). Relative to the Plain English initiative in place in Administrations in the UK: its main remit is based on the premise that Plain English is essential to ensure local government communication is clear and easy to understand. This resource looks at writing plain English in local government. It offers:

- advice on how to write and edit
- advice on how to manage your colleagues' writing
- features and case studies on developing plain English personally and in your organisation
- tips on how to deal with tricky grammar and syntax and avoid common mistakes
- tests to gauge your plain English ability
- a crash course in the plain English basics to improve your writing
- useful resources on this and other websites.

Interestingly, the idea underpinning Plain English is the banning of all commonly used or (over-used) words in the Public Administration/Local Government Association (LGA). LGA in actual fact for the last three years has issued an annual list of words that it believes the public sector should not use in communication with the general public. The Association enquires: 'But have the nature and quality of public sector language changed since the LGA started highlighting this issue? Have you noticed a change in the way your council communicates with the public?' They ask the general public for their views and to let them know what they think of the list by using the comment box at the bottom of the page.

Table of Words that the public sector should avoid when communicating with the general public – List for 2010

across the piece	actioned	Advocate
Agenzie	ambassador	Apportionment
area-based	area-focused	Autonomous
Baseline	beacon	Benchmarking
best practice	blue sky thinking	bottom-up
brain dump	can-do culture	Capabilities
Capacity	capacity building	Capturing
Cascading	cashable	Catalysts
cautiously welcome	centricity	Challenge
Champion	citizen empowerment	citizen touchpoints
Client	clienting	cohesive communities
Cohesiveness	collaboration	Commissionino
community engagement	compact	Compendium
comprehensive area assessment	conditionality	Connectedness
Consensual	contestability	Contextual
core developments	core message	core principles
core value	coterminosity	Coterminous
cross-cutting	cross-fertilisation	cross-sectoral
Customer	customer insight	customer journey
deep dive	delivery chain	democratic legitimacy
democratic mandate	dialogue	direction of travel
Disbenefits	distorts spending priorities	double devolution
Downstream	early win	Econometric
edge-fit	embedded	Empowerment
Enabler	engagement	engaging users
Enhance	evidence base	Exemplar
Extensible	external challenge	Externalities
face time	facilitate	fast-track
Flex	flexibilities and freedoms	Frame work
Fulcrum	functionality	funding streams
future of place	future proofing	gateway review
going forward	gold plating	goldfish bowl facilitated conversation

good practice	governance	Guidelines
headroom for change	hereditament	Holistic
holistic governance	horizon scanning	improvement levers
Incentivising	income streams	Indicators
Informatics	initiative	innovative capacity
Inspectorates	interactivity	Interdepartmental
Interdependencies	interface	Iteration
joined up	key asks	knowledge bite
knowledge hub	learning outcome	level playing field
Lever	leverage	lifetime neighbourhood
local area agreements	local strategic partnerships	Localities
low-hanging fruit	lowlights	Mainstreaming
management capacity	meaningful consultation	meaningful dialogue
meaningful reusable interactivity	mechanisms	menu of options
multi-area agreements	multi-agency	multi-disciplinary
Municipalities	network model	Normalising
Outcomes	output	Outsourced
Overarching	paradigm	Parameter
Participatory	partnership working	Partnerships
Pathfinder	peer	performance network
place shaping	pooled budgets	pooled resources
pooled risk	populace	Potentialities
Practitioners	predictors of beaconicity	preventative services
Prioritisation	priority	Proactive
process driven	procure	Procurement
Promulgate	proportionality	Protocol
provider vehicles	public sphere	pump priming
Quantum	quick hit	quick win
Rationalisation	reablement	Rebaselining
Reconfigured	resource allocation	resource efficient
revenue streams	re-weaving	risk based
robust	safeguarding	scaled-back
Scoping	sector wise	Seedbed
self-aggrandisement	service users	shared priority
shell developments	signpost	single conversations
single point of contact	situational	Slippage

social contracts	social exclusion	Spatial
Stakeholder	step change	Strategic
strategic priorities	streamlined	sub-regional
Subsidiarity	sustainable	sustainable communities
Symposium	synergies	Systematics
Taxonomy	tested for soundness	Thematic
thinking outside the box	third sector	thought shower
Tonality	toolkit	top-down
Trajectory	tranche	Transactional
Transformational	transparency	Triologue
under-capacitated	uplifting	Upstream
upward trend	utilise	value-added
Vision	visionary	wash-up session
Webinar	wellbeing	Wellderly
who blinks first	wicked issues	Worklessness
world cafe		

Transcript of Interview with Professor David Crystal - The state of the language

David Crystal, Honorary Professor of Linguistics at Bangor University in an interview relative to the issue of the ‘Use and abuse of official language’¹⁸⁹, last July gave evidence to the Public Administration Committee on issue. Subsequently, he was interviewed on the history, the future and the present challenges of using plain English. A transcript of the interview is set out below:

When you gave evidence to the Public Administration Committee, you pointed out that there were debates of this kind going on in the 18th and 19th centuries. Please could you tell us a little more about them?

They were part of the arguments surrounding the development of dictionaries, grammars, pronunciation guides and manuals of usage which took off in the middle

¹⁸⁹ [Bad Language: The use and abuse of official language](#) – on the website of the Houses of Parliament
[Minutes of evidence on official language to Public Administration Committee](#) – on the website of the Houses of Parliament
[David Crystal's website](#):
Page published January 2010.

decades of the 18th century. Famous names include Dr Johnson, Bishop Lowth, John Walker and Lindley Murray.

Writing in an era where notions of politeness and manners were paramount, they developed a doctrine of correctness of usage, which at its best promoted uncontentious ideals of clarity and precision in speech and writing, but at its worst introduced artificial rules which everyone was supposed to follow – such as avoiding split infinitives or never ending sentences with a preposition.

The notion of clarity became obscured, as a result. And several writers of the time condemned the prescriptive approach, pointing out that it was a distraction from the real issues. Unfortunately, the prescriptive approach dominated English teaching for some 200 years, and its attitudes are still present in the minds of senior managers who had that system instilled into them in school.

We have had two generations of people in the UK who were never taught systematically about language in school. And many of them are in senior government positions now.

How do you think local government compares with central government when it comes to communicating in plain English?

My impression is that local government is somewhat better – but then its task is easier. Local authorities can receive local feedback more directly, and can react to criticisms more quickly. There's also the point that language devised to meet local needs tends to be more intelligible because the writers share an awareness of the local context with the readers.

Communications from central government are either context-neutral, and thus very general in their use of language, or context-sensitive, which leads to many qualifying statements. Either way, there is a likelihood of greater distance or complexity being introduced into the communication.

To what extent do you think central government policy and legislation forces gobbledygook on local government?

'Gobbledygook' is an emotive media expression which begs all kinds of questions. The main problem with it is that it assumes the writer is always to blame, when communication fails, whereas sometimes it is the reader who is at fault. There is a responsibility on everyone to read things carefully. If you don't look both ways

before crossing the road, and you get knocked down, whose fault is it? People can be very lazy or careless in the way they read – or listen – and one of the aims of a good language education in school is to train kids to be better listeners and readers.

The next point is to recognise that there's nothing wrong with technical or specialised vocabulary, per se. The problem is when people use this vocabulary to an audience that doesn't share their background. That is when the words are criticised as 'jargon', and rightly so. What is needed is a 'translation' exercise, with people rephrasing their material to suit the perceived audience need.

So, to get to your question, I've no idea what happens, in relation to the notion of 'forcing'. All I can say is that it should be routine practice for local government to think carefully about whether central directives need to be given a local 'translation'. It isn't easy, as language simplification or rephrasing can lead to a loss of legal precision, but people need to be aware that the problem is there, and requires solution.

The Public Administration Committee discussed Orwell's essay, 'Politics and the English Language', and the connection between the way people communicate and the way they think. What do you think comes first: the muddled thinking or the opaque language?

Orwell's essay has done a great deal of harm to the plain English movement because of its oversimplified recommendations. He didn't even follow his own recommendations himself. 'Never use the passive' he says at one point, but the very opening sentence of his essay contains one! The issues are better debated without reference to that essay.

The answer is: both. If I am unclear in what I want to say, then my language is going to be unclear. On the other hand, many people find that it is only by writing their thoughts down in the first place that they can see whether they are clear or not.

I certainly find this. Most of the sentences you are reading now are the result of reworking. This takes motivation, time, expertise, and awareness of audience – attributes which are essential if communication is to be clear.

The expertise comes in knowing the strengths and weaknesses of language. A great deal of poor communication arises out of people not realising that a particular usage

is ambiguous, vague, offensive or whatever. They are so used to a particular way of speaking or writing that they forget that others might have difficulty with it.

This can be an institutional disease, of course, with an entire hierarchy within an organisation accepting each other's speech or writing without criticism, forgetting that outsiders might be flummoxed by it.

The solution, once again, is to make use of outsiders as part of the exercise, and keep one's linguistic habits always under review.

The current generation of school children are now taught grammar. How do you think this might influence the future of business clichés, corporate-speak and the appetite for unnecessary jargon that currently exists?

One of the big themes in language education these days is the focus on appropriateness in language use. The importance of audience is a part of this, and that, as I've already mentioned, is crucial.

Having talked to many schools and in-service teacher courses over the past decade, I've seen at first-hand the way notions – such as clichés, jargon, and all the other issues of language effectiveness – are being put under the microscope as part of the curriculum. How far this experience will influence society as a whole, it's impossible to say.

One problem is that this kind of awareness is not widely present in, for example, schools in the USA, so that international corporations which have a base in the USA will doubtless continue with their present linguistic practices. But the situation is slowly changing there too.

How do you think the internet will influence the way we use language in our working lives in the future?

It's bound to have a major effect. It already has, after all – for example, in the use of email and online form filling. Once again, the issue is how to manage it. The properties of each medium – web, chat, blog, texting, instant messaging, and so on – need to be explored, so that the linguistic consequences can be evaluated.

To take a single example, in relation to the theme of this interview: what is the optimal width of line or length of paragraph to foster easy reading on screen? We only have to see a badly laid-out screen, with the lines too long and the paragraphs

too dense, to know that there is both good and bad practice here. Here, as with other areas touched on in this exchange, there needs to be research and training.

Are you optimistic about the future of language in the public sector?

I think the fact that people are beginning to discuss these issues at a high level – as illustrated by the Select Committee report in 2009 – is a ground for optimism. I would be more optimistic if the different kinds of problem were more clearly differentiated. For example, the issues that are raised in relation to politicians' statements are totally different from those affecting civil service documentation.

And I would be really optimistic if practical measures were implemented which would enable progress to be made. Clear communication saves immense amounts of time and money. It isn't just common or political sense, it is also economic sense for governments and companies to invest in ensuring that their language is understood by the people to whom they are speaking and writing. I find it reassuring that some organisations are already aware of the issues and are beginning to do something about them. And the fact that conversations like this one are now taking place is definitely a good sign!

Customer focused leadership: Learning resources

The Public Services Leadership Consortium has produced a suite of learning resources for customer focused leadership, based around the leadership framework.

The learning resources have been developed specifically for those public service managers or learning and development professionals who are seeking to incorporate customer-focused leadership into their public service leadership development provision.

All of the material in the pack is intended for use with, and to be of value to, Chief Executives and top teams in all types of organisations across the public sector. The pack contains a range of materials that can be tailored to integrate with both service-specific and cross-service leadership development provision.

Learning resources: Content

1. Introduction to customer focused leadership and the learning framework .
 - Explains the importance of customer focused leadership as a key driver of public service reform;
 - Explains the purpose of the learning materials contained in the pack and how the different elements come together in a three-stage learning framework.
2. The distinctive behaviours and qualities for customer focused leadership:
 - Outlines the findings of research undertaken
3. The seven learning areas for customer focused leadership: description and learning outcomes.
 - Describes the seven areas of distinctive learning required to develop customer focused leadership qualities, and the desired learning outcomes associated with each one.
4. Guidelines on organisational raid approach:
 - Explains how to use organisational raids to enable learners to get active experience of organisations in other parts of the public sector and to glean learning points on the seven curriculum areas associated with customer-focused leadership.
5. Guidelines on historical case studies:
 - Explains how these can be used to enable learners to gain insight into how other public sector organisations have incorporated user focused principles.
6. Six historical case studies:
 - These focus on the contributions and activities of key leaders in public sector organisations introducing strategic customer focus initiatives, and are structured to elicit key learning points in each of the seven areas associated with customer focused leadership.
7. Additional activities:
 - These are designed to encourage learners to develop their expertise in each of the seven customer focused leadership learning areas. They

can either be used as part of a broader programme incorporating the organisational raid and historical case study approaches, or applied independently.

8. Core presentation material
 - o To be used and adapted by trainers.

Learning resources: Access

A prototype pack of learning resources was launched by Cabinet Office Minister Jim Murphy at the Public Services Leadership Consortium's inaugural conference in 2006.

documents available for download and use. are

[Covering letter from Paul Britton](#) [PDF, 40KB]

[Overview](#) [PDF, 33KB]

[Introduction](#) [PDF, 48KB]

[Key research findings](#) [PDF, 888KB]

[Learning areas description outcomes](#) [PDF, 37KB]

[Case study outline](#) [PDF, 40KB]

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