



## Becoming a Public Manager: The Human Side of the Bureaucrat

Public Service- Development and Evolutions

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Administrative reforms borrowing from the private sector's methods and values raise questions about the specificity of the public sector as a field of human action. Dealing with both issues of continuity and rupture, public administration research describes and analyzes a hybrid neo-Weberian conception of public institutions and organizations, presented as a mix of traditional bureaucratic values with New Public Management concerns for efficiency and competitiveness. These affect identity dynamics, by which the public manager is to become something of an entrepreneur, concerned with results and, freed from bureaucratic constraints, able to generate and inspire change. As a result, public managers often experience tensions stemming from the paradoxical expectations of a changing managerial environment. Revisiting the Weberian notion of the bureaucratic world order and contrasting the bureaucrat's personae with that of the entrepreneur, the present research attempts to define the specificity of public sector managers' reality using the concept of public sector ethos as a dynamic social and relational process. Adopting the Ricœurian hermeneutic phenomenological perspective and its central concept of narrative identity, we analyze biographical accounts of federal ( ) and provincial ( ) managers in Canada\Québec with a view to understanding the complex process of becoming a public manager. As they reflexively articulate their understanding of the specificity of public action and try to contribute to its enactment or transformation, public managers highlight the structuring effect of social interactions as central to the way they envision the meaningful and purposeful environment that constitute the public-sector ethos today.