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# Hierarchical Relationships in France, in 2004 Between archaism and modernism

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The opinions of 404 graduates - trainees or new hires – on their relationships with local managers and on how these Managers deal with their microsocial responsibilities.

## **Abstract**

This research is based on 404 graduates' accounts of their relationship with line managers. The relationship is viewed - positively or negatively - according to five defined categories of Management levels: "Chief, Boss, Supervisor, Head or N+1." The more archaic the definition is, i.e., embodied power (Chief, Boss), the more negatively the relationship is experienced. The more modern the definition is, i.e., disembodied power (Supervisor, Head, N+1), the more positively the relationship is experienced.

## **Contents**

### **1. RESEARCH PLAN**

- 1.1. Explanatory Information
- 1.2. Research Field Determination
- 1.3. The Questioning Process

### **2. THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF HIERARCHICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- 2.1. Chief: satisfaction rated at 5.2%
- 2.2. Boss: satisfaction rated at 38.8%
- 2.3. Supervisor: satisfaction rated at 54.2%
- 2.4. Head: satisfaction rated at 61.7%
- 2.5. N+1: satisfaction rated at 88.2%

### **3. RESULTS INTERPRETATION AND APPRECIATION**

- 3.1. Hierarchical Relationships and Motivation (Herzberg)
- 3.2. Hierarchical Relationships and Problem Resolution (Simon)
- 3.3. Hierarchical Relationships and Apprenticeship (Simon, Schön and Argyris)
- 3.4. Hierarchical Relationships and Hierarchy of needs Pyramid (Maslow)
- 3.5. Hierarchical Relationships and Arbitration between "Social Aspects" and "Achievements" following to Badaracco's Theory
- 3.6. Hierarchical Relationships, culture and changes expected

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The opinion of 404 graduates - trainees or new hires - on their relationships with the local manager and on how the latter deals with his microsocial responsibilities.

The following research, focused on the French organizational field, will analyze the situation of hierarchical relationships in 2004<sup>1</sup>, resulting from a continuous tension between social and economical aspects, between well-being and work achievements. The relationships on which we have shed light may appear very different from official statements and debates.

The first section of this article introduces the method used to collect the information on a continuous basis and details the method established to answer to the following question: *How do young graduates view their relationship with their managers?* The results of the research are presented in the second section. The theories applied to test the validity of the results, the different types of interpretation envisaged and our predictive approach are explained in the last section of this article.

## 1. THE RESEARCH PLAN

*“Whoever wishes to explain the world should begin by observing it”* Simon<sup>2</sup> .

Our ongoing observation method using life stories was set up in 1995 and since then we have collected 1035 life stories. For the past nine years, a number of managers who attended our Management School training have been asked to create an account of their professional life and experiences. Most of those managers interviewed had already been working for about five to ten years and wished to apply for higher job positions, the aim of their participation in our Management School trainings.

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<sup>1</sup> 341 out of the 404 experience accounts analyzed were written in 2004

<sup>2</sup> Film interview, recorded on CD-ROM, under Erhard Friedberg's supervision

Our observation method has been designed to collect hundreds or, it is hoped, thousands of “descriptive case studies” in relation to organizations, contributing “to develop a genuine organizational anthropology” (Wacheux 1996).

## **1.1. EXPLANATORY INFORMATION**

### **1.1.1. Population investigated**

The population we investigated between 1995 and 2003 was made up of those managers or future managers applying for a higher job position – from N to N+1 position. The life stories collected accounted for the initial five or ten years of professional experience. In 2004, we extended our research to a younger population - students ending their courses of study (Licence Pro, MSTCF, DESS) and attending training in a Company, or young managers with professional experience of about one year. The use of the Internet and e-mail has enabled us to collect life stories from all over the world, thus extending our knowledge of foreign professional practices – descriptions of broader professional experiences, of how to obtain a job in another country, of foreign job habits<sup>3</sup>, etc.

### **1.1.2. Database**

On December 11, 2004<sup>4</sup>, our database consisted of 1035<sup>5</sup> experience accounts, amongst which were 271 hand-written stories that were eliminated since paper documents require time-consuming manual processing. Another 162 stories were put aside as they concerned non-professional fields<sup>6</sup>, and 193 stories describing the transition from school environment to professional environment were also not taken into consideration.

Our current research is based on the remaining 409 life stories related to the professional field<sup>7</sup>. As soon as a life story is collected, it is read and receipt of it is acknowledged by mail if requested by the author. Then the situation described in the story is analyzed, clarified, etc. The story is eventually standardized<sup>8</sup>. Our requirements have been identical since 1995:

We would like you to write down and account on a recent or past professional situation you experienced or witnessed and which has been particularly important in your eyes and according to your own norms.

### **1.1.3. Accounts of Professional Experiences**

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<sup>3</sup> We have collected life stories from Africa, Germany, Benin, Guadeloupe, Italy, North Africa, Martinique, Mexico, New Caledonia. These have not been taken into consideration in the current research, which is based on the French professional environment.

<sup>4</sup> Life stories are collected each week.

<sup>5</sup> On the whole, there are 2660 pages containing 1,721,279 words and 8,530,063 characters (let alone the stories written down on paper).

<sup>6</sup> They have not been used in the current research, based on professional relationships.

<sup>7</sup> The 409 life stories are made up of 1460 pages including 898,597 words and 4,446,389 characters (spaces not included).

<sup>8</sup> The author’s name is erased, an alphanumeric code is given to the story, and all identifying elements are eliminated.

Three levels of narration have been identified. A number of accounts may be considered an unbiased factual observation. There is no personal involvement of the author, who places himself outside the related situation – this is the first narration level. On the second narration level, both the author and the situation are associated in the account, which describes the decisions and situations, attempts and mistakes in iterative processes. The author not only relates facts but also stresses the interactivity between the “actor and the “situation” – decisions taken and emotional perception of the situation. On the third narration level, the author recounts how a string of professional events modified his know-how and/or brought him new knowledge. This last type of written account constitutes a metawriting process – in addition to the situation and the interactivity process descriptions, the actor explains how his mental representations have actually been changed by the situation.

**1.2. RESEARCH FIELD DETERMINATION**

Unlike the organization environment, the information collected is heterogeneous. Our investigative approach has led us to the first task: identify the issue at hand requiring analysis. We will describe the selection process established to collect the necessary information. We would like to point out that the information selected does not refer to the managers’ experiences directly, but to the young graduates’ opinions on their managers. The practices of the managers’ are thus described from points of view of the young graduates. The Office N+1s, Presidents and General Managers’ practices have not been detailed in the current research since young graduates, on the whole, usually deal with First Level Managers.

Behaviour Actors	Opinions	Practice
Top Managers		
Middle Managers		
First Level Managers		Research subject: 1079 verbatims identified 393 analyzed

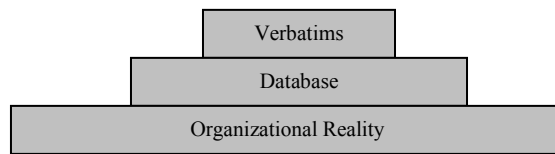
**Exhibit 1** The Research Field

Let us now try to answer to the following issue at hand: *Is it possible to get an idea of managers’ effective practice and social responsibility by analyzing graduates’ accounts of their professional relationships with managers?*

**1.3. THE QUESTIONING PROCESS**

The research process consists of three stages and a number of iterations. Initially we have focused on keywords, then we have identified the “trends” brought to light by the verbatims

and finally we have attempted to determine the common representation emerging from the aggregate of verbatims.



The keyword application enables identification of the verbatim. The verbatim is selected according to an upstream-downstream limit, one that is determined by punctuation. The accumulation of verbatims builds up a “collection”. If the collection corresponding to one keyword is made up of heterogeneous information, the hypothesis is invalidated. The process is then applied to a new keyword. If the corresponding collection contains homogeneous information, the hypothesis may be confirmed. A procedural rationality is applied until data saturation is reached.

In the current research, we have initially applied a direct<sup>9</sup> approach, i.e., based on words such as “relationship” or “social,” for example. The results showed that we had to choose another approach, focused on the words “Chief” and “Boss”. An identical approach has then been applied to the words “Supervisor, “Head” and “N+1”. Each situation identified by the keyword has been classified; information is eliminated if it is irrelevant to the research, but in the opposite case, what needs to be identified is whether the situation is positive or negative. The situations have been identified positively or negatively according to the young graduates’ accounts<sup>10</sup>. Such a classification results from the fact that an account is not a situation but the **situation definition**, as stated by Simon: *‘The situation definition components are not data, ... they are the result of psychological and sociological<sup>11</sup> processes.’* We observe, therefore, that keywords delineate results.

The research results are presented in the following section.

## II. THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF HIERARCHICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The main advantage of the method applied in this research is that there is no possible interviewee’s syndrome or intentionality, given that the actors may recount their experiences freely and according to their personal choice and that, in addition, the ongoing information collected is independent of the research subjects.

The following are the results based on 1079 identified occurrences amongst which 393 have been selected and analyzed:

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<sup>9</sup> Why have we not chosen a group of words, a sentence or a grammatical structure such as those provided by the various text-analysis software programs currently available? Simply because it was not necessary – The single word criterion provides results after about ten tries. The words are selected, then kept or put aside until satisfactory results are reached.

Which software was the research based on? We have used Word and the function Search, combining two options – Search – Replace and Cut – Paste.

<sup>10</sup> This has brought about two epistemological problems that will be presented in the last section of this article – does a situation negatively experienced necessarily mean that the Manager did not live up to his responsibilities? And why is an identical situation positively experienced by one young graduate negatively experienced by another?

<sup>11</sup> March and Simon p.137

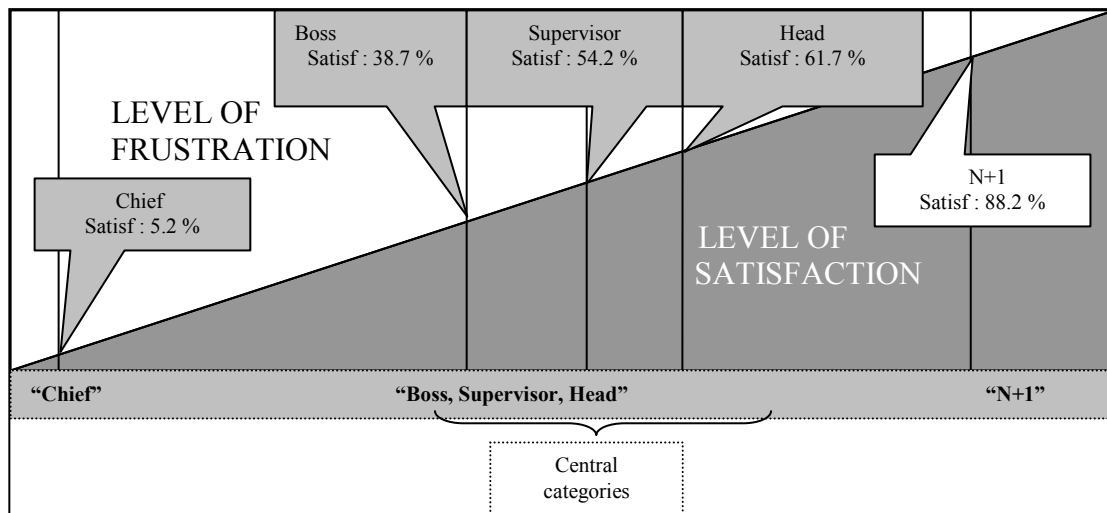
		Keywords representing types of Management					
		Chief	Boss	Supervisor	Head	N+1	Total
Total amount of words included in the database		631	193	393	202	53	1079
Verbatims describing situations bearing no relation to our research <sup>12</sup>		555	69	334	121	19	686
Selected situations	Verbatims describing hierarchical relationships	076	124	59	81	34	393
	Positive relationships (Absolute frequencies)	004	048	32	50	30	168
	Positive relationships : (relative frequencies)	5.2 %	38.7 %	54.2 %	61.7 %	88.2 %	42.7 %

## Exhibit 2 Quantitative information obtained by database querying

Two results can first be observed - a global result and a result per category. The global result shows that only 42.7% of the organizational relationships with managers are described positively by the graduates. To explain such a result, it is useful to recall the purpose of a hierarchy within an organization. An organizational hierarchy is based on the reality principle, and is generally opposed to the pleasure principle. Problem solving is the main issue. To be more specific, the line manager's assignment is to report on a number of issues to higher levels of hierarchy and to find alternative solutions regarding these issues. The issues tackled by first level managers have this in common: they have not been resolved by lower levels, and thus not brought together opposite interests. For example, if a manager systematically favours the employees without taking into account the company's clients, there is a high risk of failure. The difficulty indeed is to balance the decision between achievement values and social values in order to make the best possible choice.

The results are then classified according to the young graduates' increasing satisfaction about their relationships with the Management: 5.2% => 38.7% => 54.2% => 61.7% => 88.2%; we obtain a semantic classification of the key-words Chief => Boss => Supervisor=> Head => N+1. "Chief" is the definition of embodied power whereas N+1 represents mostly disembodied power. The different degrees of satisfaction have led us to define five types of Management practising – Chief, Boss, Supervisor, Head, N+1

<sup>12</sup> Why have we chosen to select only 393 verbatims over 1079 identified keywords? First, one keyword can be used a number of times within the same verbatim, which explains a first reduction. Then, the verbatims are sorted according to the information they contain – relevant or irrelevant to the research. The following examples well illustrate the information selection: In the sentences 'As I was the station **Chief**, I was in charge of about 30 persons' or 'I called up my **Chief** the next day to know what was going on,' the word chief has not been taken into consideration, because in these sentences, the word "Chief" does not provide any relevant information on the relationships between the Chief and his employees. The verbatims 'As a **Chief**, I could not accept or understand that I had to justify or argue my decisions! I was their **Chief**!' or 'I despise those little vicious **Chiefs**, Killers and hypocrites' have been selected as they illustrate the relationship between a chief and his subordinates.



**Exhibit 3** Graduates' satisfaction according to the type of Management practice

Each percentage can be placed on the diagonal of a Tannenbaum and Schimdt rectangle (1958<sup>13</sup>), where height is graduated from 0% to 100% (see Exhibit 3). This diagonal divides the rectangle into two right-angle triangles. The satisfying situations are counted below the diagonal, from 0 to X%, and the frustrating situations are counted above, from X% to 100% with  $X_i = (5.2 ; 38.7 ; 54.2 ; 61.7 ; 88.2)$ . The above exhibit shows unequal horizontal deviations between the five categories. The three central categories are grouped according to the percentage values, which are quite similar. Two categories are placed at the opposite extreme of each other: on the left extreme, the Chief represents the most archaic definition of power – embodied power, with a satisfaction rate of 5.2%. On the right extreme, the N+1 represents the most modern definition of power – disembodied power – with a satisfaction rate of 88.2%.

This leads us to the following global statement:

Embodied power is more negatively perceived than disembodied power

Indeed, embodied power may induce excessive freedom and arbitrary Management. Such practise may lead managers to evade regulations restricting their control and make them believe they can lay down the law. On the contrary, disembodied power favours compliance with rules and regulations and there is less risk of arbitrary Management.

Following is an explanation in detail of the five categories brought to light by our research.

### 2.1. Chief: employee's satisfaction rated at 5.2%

We have identified 712 verbatims indicating the designation of Chief. Value judgments on hierarchical relationships have been pointed out in 76 situations<sup>14</sup>. These relationships are positively viewed in only 5.2% of the cases. Overall, it seems that the Chief's legitimacy is generally put at stake. Not only are the Chief's statements or behaviour questioned, but also

<sup>13</sup> *Harvard Business Review*, March-April 1958

<sup>14</sup> We have put 636 verbatims aside because they were related to specific professional designations that had no particular interest for our research, such as, for example, "Station Chief", "Chief operator" or "Chief Instructor."

his ability to live up to his responsibilities is called into question. His sense of social responsibility is described as non-existent and he seems to exert his power for his own benefit much more than for that of the Organization. These negative items bring to the fore the imbalance between the Chief's rights – *"I am the Chief"* – and the responsibilities he is willing to assume. Only 4 items out of 76 are positive: *'He takes on a lot, I have noticed he was becoming nice and open-minded; I even saw him encourage a colleague who believed he had made a mistake....'*

Special emphasis is put on the notion of social responsibility in most of the negative items. The Chief is mostly described as an individual with little self-control.

## **2.2. Boss: employee's satisfaction rated at 38.7%**

We have identified 193 verbatims designating the superior as the N+1. Value judgments on professional relationships have been pointed out in 124 situations, amongst which 45 are negative and 48 are positive. The negative opinions are quite similar to the opinions on the "Chief" (see above), but in this case, with a stronger recognition of the legitimacy of the superior. Though his behaviour is called into question, his power is less contested and is, in most cases, described as being the result of an indisputable personal success, something that tends to be envied by a number of graduates. The 48 occurrences defining the relationship positively contain information and comments such as detailed herewith: *a number of graduates dream to become a Boss. They say they learn a lot by working with him, that the boss's job is to make money, that it is the indicator of his value, that the Boss stands by his values and that he is straightforward, that he defends his subordinates' ideas when he believes in their project, that he gives them the go-ahead and greater responsibilities when they provide good results. He is capable of congratulating productive employees; he is young, dynamic and enthusiastic. He develops a very gratifying pay policy according to good achievements. He first exerts his control over his subordinates but ends up by fully trusting them. He does not hire employees that might have personal connections with him to avoid ambiguous situations.*

The social dimension is quite developed in this category. It seems, throughout the accounts, that ill employees (sick-leave) or employees viewed as the weakest have social priority.

## **2.3. "Supervisor": employee's satisfaction rated at 54.2%**

We have identified 393 verbatims designating the superior as the Supervisor. Value judgments have been pointed out in 59 situations, amongst which 32 – 54.2% - are positive and 27 are negative. The Supervisor's legitimacy is not questioned directly. In most cases, the negative opinions are on the negotiation of working conditions. Regarding the positive opinions, the young graduates are generally very happy about their degree of integration, they relate that they were warmly welcomed into the Company, and that the Supervisor is understanding and supportive. The young graduates convey that they feel valued, enhanced, and regarded favourably by their supervisor. The latter is generally viewed as being a hearty, cheerful, pleasing, very qualified person. In this context, social responsibility is taken into consideration through the existing regulations. However, a number of archaic behaviours may coexist with regulatory aspects and, in some cases, cause these rules to deviate from their initial mission.

## **2.4. "Head": employee's satisfaction rated at 61.7%**



We have identified 81 verbatims out of 202 occurrences designating the superior as the “Head.” The relationship with the head is positively perceived in 61.7 % of the cases. The 50 positive opinions mention trust and information sharing; the Head is viewed as a completely involved and experienced individual who keeps his promises, who is capable of listening to others, who is patient, kind and available. The Head is very much respected. Conflicts are also documented, but they are related only to organizational aspects and have a lower overall effect on personal dimensions.

## **2.5. “N+1”: employee’s satisfaction rated at 88.2%**

In 34 verbatims out of 53 occurrences identified, the superior is viewed as “My N+1.” The relationship is positively perceived in 88.2% of the cases. The “N+1” is depicted as being always available to advise his employees and organizes frequent discussions. He is viewed as being prompt to solve problems, promoting productive employees and instilling a trustful work atmosphere. In this context, power is nearly completely disembodied.

### **III RESULTS INTERPRETATION AND APPRECIATION**

This exploratory and empirical-inductive research presents two major difficulties. In the first place, the information we have been collecting is not necessarily related to the research. Our approach is to search throughout the stories collected for some information that would be relevant for our investigation. This brings us to ask the following: *What have we really measured? What is the meaning of our results?*

Second, regarding the hypothesis, there is a problem in relation to the legitimacy of the human dimension against the performance dimension: our approach has focused on the subordinate’s level of satisfaction/frustration, but what about his performance level? This leads us to the following question: *What is the connection between the satisfaction experienced by the subordinate and his work results?*

We will first assess the results, then analyze the epistemological aspects of our research in depth, and, finally, suggest a predictive approach.

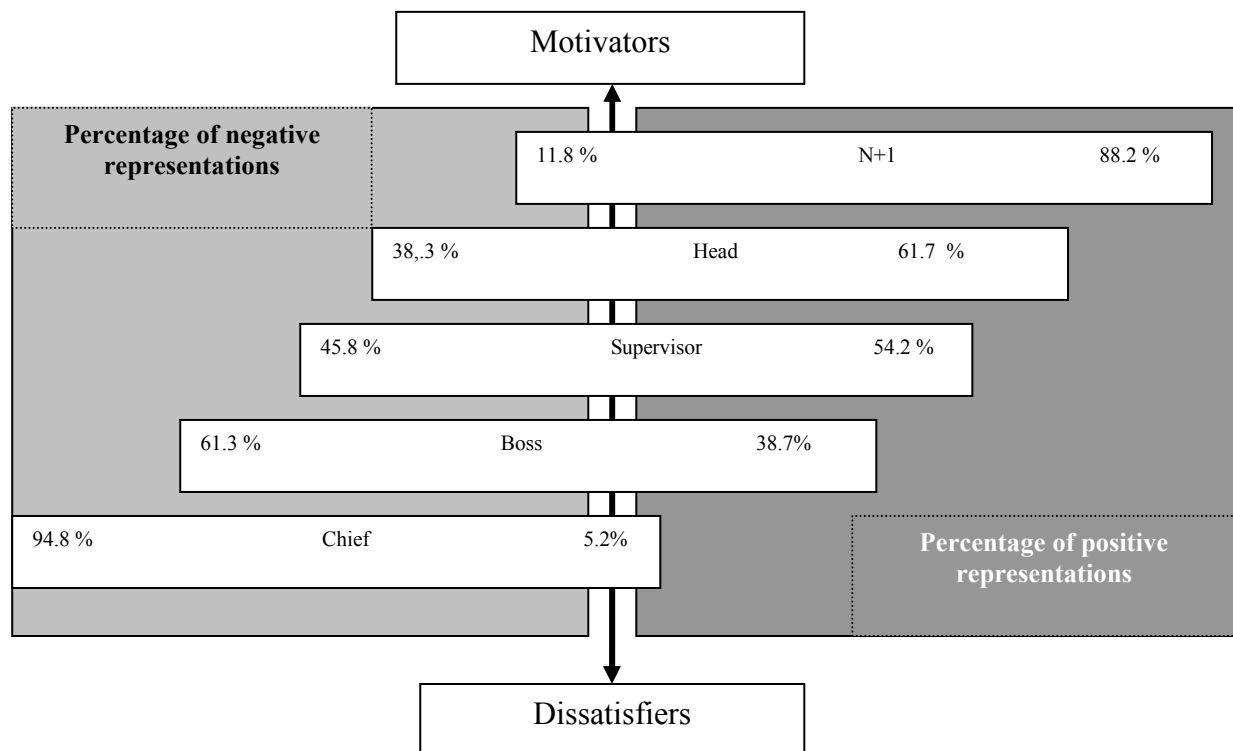
Our research shows that the positivity rate in relation to hierarchical relationships – all categories taken into account – is 42.7%. In order to validate this rate, a triangulation can be performed to recalculate the rate by means of a new enquiry, which is independent from the previous ones. Two categories of situations have been retained in our selection: the relationships with the superior and the relationships with other employees. Since collateral relationships are basically less fraught with conflict, this independent questioning should bring to the fore a positivity rate higher than 42.7%. We have noted that the occurrence “relationship” is used 711 times. 31 occurrences out of 38 are positive and 7 are negative. This means that in 81.5% of the cases, professional relationships are perceived satisfactorily, corroborating our hypothesis. Moreover, this result creates the inference that if relational problems were linked only with the graduate’s mental models, they would also impact on collateral relationships and the positivity rate would thereby decrease. This, as well, reinforces the validity of our results.

#### **3.1. Hierarchical relationships and Motivation (Herzberg)**

In the 1950s, an essential theoretical debate within the management sciences was launched to analyze and determine the connection between employees' satisfaction and Company results. In other words, does a high social quality (human and financial) management increase productivity? At the end of the 1950s, Simon, whose analysis was on the whole very prudent, argued that there was no connection between these aspects. Herzberg's work on motivation (1968 1987 1988) relativized Simon's statement - he introduced a two-factor theory based on dissatisfiers (working conditions, for example) and motivators (recognition, work content, responsibilities, etc.). He demonstrated that dissatisfiers, though necessary, had no real impact on satisfaction and motivation but that motivators highly influenced the workers' satisfaction, motivation and personal development. The "professional relationship" factor was analyzed in Herzberg's work, but it was sometimes included in the dissatisfiers and sometimes in the motivators, without Herzberg explicitly explaining why. That is the reason why it was not put into a category belonging to the two-factor theory. The present research specifies the conditions of why it should indeed belong.

The "professional relationship" factor is a "dissatisfier" when it is based on an emotional and embodied model. At the same time, it is a "motivator" when it is based on a cognitive and disembodied model.

Our research confirms the existence of two operational types of "Ruling" and also confirms that the "professional relationship" factor cannot be assigned permanently to one of Herzberg's two specific categories – the validity of Herzberg's two-factor theory will therefore be restricted to other factors – work and working conditions.



**Exhibit 4**

Young graduates' satisfaction rate, hierarchical relationships and effects on performance: there is a continuum between dissatisfiers and motivators regarding the "professional relationship with the superior."

Consequently, considering that Herzberg's work has not been called into question, we may state that since "Supervisor," "Head" and "N+1" are defined as being motivational categories, they therefore increase work performance.

### **3.2. Hierarchical Relationships and problem resolution (Simon)**

The issue at hand becomes the following: *Why is an initial difficult professional experience perceived as a failure for some people and as a tremendous learning experience for others?* Young graduates are confronted with training, a year break or a first job. They describe complex and diverse professional situations that can, however, be grouped within one cybernetic process: *a practical experience of relational and social problems resolution that requires much energy but that produces, in return, information, knowledge and learning* (Costa de Beauregrad 1963). Graduates find themselves in situations requiring resolution activity (March Simon 1958 1969). These situations give rise to emotions, pleasure or distress, on which experiential<sup>15</sup> meaning will be based. Faced with such situations, the graduates may adopt a defensive attitude, leading to failure; they also may overcome their negative emotions and assimilate the message, leading to success. Their accounts describe, on one hand, the frustration coming from the need to be recognized, which may be expressed by a negative representation according to the young graduate's level of mental block and defensive attitude. On the other hand, they also describe their wish to learn and progress, which is expressed by a positive representation, all the more so since the situation has given rise to much information and double-loop learning. In order to produce positive representations, it is essential to have a strong level of resistance to obstruction (Warden 1926<sup>16</sup>): the young graduate must not abandon or resign as soon as he is faced with a problem. But resistance to obstruction is not sufficient: positive representations also depend on the graduate's *attention allocation*<sup>17</sup> - if his attention is allocated to his emotions, he may state: *'this situation was unbearable...I went to the Human Resource Manager's office and handed him my resignation'*. If his attention is allocated to the cognitive meaning of his emotions, he may then state: *'It was a very difficult experience but I have learnt so much'* or *'It was the most productive experience of my life'*. Actually, this all depends on the young graduate's learning process.

### **3.3. Hierarchical practices and guidance (Simon, Schön and Argyris)**

Learning depends on actions undertaken in unknown situations, with, as a result, a kind of global assessment of the situation – the level of involvement requested, from an emotional point of view (amongst others), and the resulting cognitive learning. Actors do not all react in the same way to such global assessment.

#### **3.3.1 Guidance by means of emotional norms**

Single-loop learning or adaptation is guided by the actor's emotional perceptions. The actor's experience is memorized and defined as being "positive and pleasing" or "negative and

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<sup>15</sup> The Emotional Logic

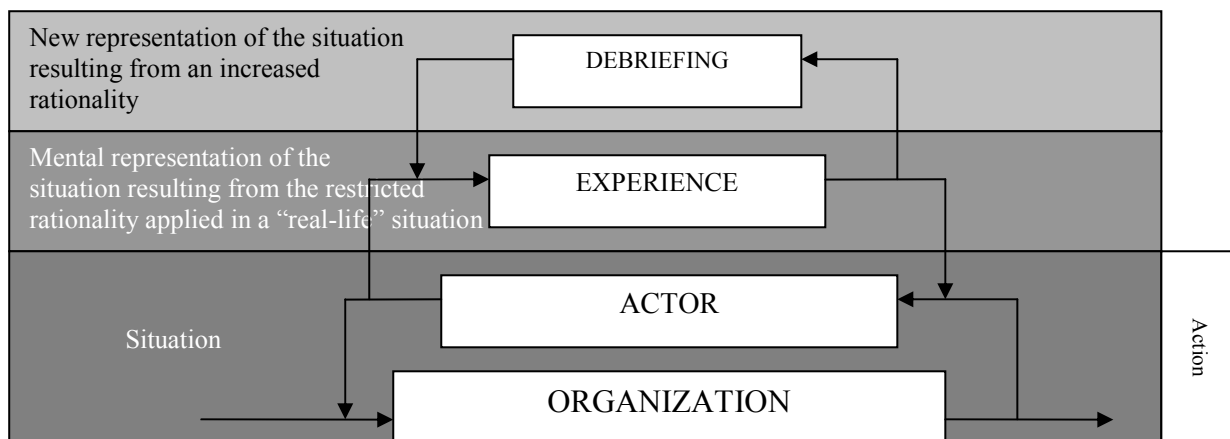
<sup>16</sup> Cited by Sillamy 1989

<sup>17</sup> Simon's terms, recorded just before he died, during a filmed interview supervised by Erhard Friedberg.

unpleasant.” The actor adapts himself according to the following information: what works and what does not, what he likes or dislikes, what pleases him or displeases him and what he fears or does not. His value judgments depend on his emotions. This can be considered as a learning opportunity by means of trial and error. The actor modifies deviations of norms. The learning efficiency depends on the norm appositeness. If the actor positively perceives situations leading to performance and if he negatively perceives situations causing failure, we may then argue that the apprenticeship will favour his personal development. In the contrary case, we may say that “emotional guidance” might bring about organizational failure. As soon as the norm is no longer apposite, it must be called into question. A new norm acquisition involves another process, described in the section below.

### 3.3.2 Guidance by means of cognitive norms

This second process requests the actor to transcend, after the fact, emotional aspects for a deeper understanding of failure. This “debriefing” involves a new rationality, unavailable during the course itself of the action. It brings unsuited norms to the fore to be changed. The actors who summon up this double-loop learning mental process (see exhibit 5) become capable of raising a *rationality of thought*, which improves the *rationality of action*, generally restricted by newness and urgency. This favours a new way of looking at situations and dealing with them, even in case of failure. Actors can therefore arbitrate according to what makes them progress and not what pleases them. Thus, the cognitive representation is placed at the heart of this double-loop learning process. Actors acquire knowledge through the understanding of the experience, which is analyzed by means of conceptual explanations, modifying their synaptic architecture, thus favouring the assimilation of new norms (Camusso<sup>18</sup> 1996). These loops, adjusting to one another, slowly form an “intelligent” synaptic architecture of the actor’s mental models. They give an apposite trajectory to the actor’s mission through a double apprenticeship: adjusting norm deviations and fitting norms to the Organization requirements.



**Exhibit 5** piloting loop and double-loop learning

As a result of this double-loop learning process, a situation that is experienced negatively from an emotional point of view may be transcended into a situation with a positive cognitive meaning, leading to a final positive representation of a negative professional experience. This type of positive knowledge acquired through a negative situation seems to be part of

<sup>18</sup> Camusso (D.), *Développement cognitif et entreprise*, l’Harmattan, 1996, p 24.

“knowing what not to do,” “knowing how to improve a situation,” amongst others. In some cases, the graduate is led to deal with highly complex situations and relationships, which would seem difficult even for a seasoned professional.

		ACTUAL EXPERIENCE	
		Negative experience : failure (-)	Positive experience : success (+)
LEARNING	Action on Norms	Cognitive guidance “It was tough and unfair but I’ve learnt so much”	Cognitive guidance “It works, but I can still improve things”
	Action on behaviour	Emotional guidance “It was tough and unfair and I resigned”	Emotional guidance “It works, just leave it this way”

### 3.4. Hierarchical Relationships and the Pyramid of Needs (Maslow)

The questioning we analyze in this section is the following: *This research aims at evaluating professional relationships by means of satisfaction rates, but for a manager, taking on responsibilities does not lead directly to employee satisfaction. It even tends to produce the contrary.*

This is indeed true, but what we are assessing actually in our research is the “coaching” or “mentoring” function. Young graduates are very much in need of being coached; they express a “social” demand and do not complain about constraints or criticism. They wish to learn. In the young graduates’ eyes, the mental representation of a situation is viewed positively or negatively according to the degree of involvement they are given within the Organization: the more they are viewed as a resource<sup>19</sup> – no matter who does the work – the more they perceive their situation as being “rotten”<sup>20</sup>. On the contrary, the more young graduates are considered being future active partners of the organization, the more positive their perception. This quite illustrates quite well the type of professional relationship being touched upon.

As far as the trainee’s position is concerned, an additional comment must be made. Trainees are viewed as being in transit, so to speak, and the organization members do not have the same type of relationship with them as they would with an employee on an open-ended contract – the risk-taking is not identical.

Throughout the various accounts we have collected, we have noted the more young graduates’ social needs are frustrated, the more they need to be recognized, appreciated, protected and supported and the less they are capable of gaining a positive experience from critical situations. Let us take the case of a young graduate who happens to be a dependent person, needing a great deal of support and encouragement. If, at the same time, his “manager-coach” is overwhelmed with work and not available, the young graduate may, as a result, either experience a painful disapprenticeship and grieving – *to work no longer for others but for oneself* – either relating an account of distress or one of revenge - ‘*Those superiors did not*

<sup>19</sup> The status of “resource” assigned by an individual to another individual, either in the couple, the family or in the Organization, is a mental representation that may bring about all kinds of inequalities, such as alienation and exploitation.

<sup>20</sup> A number of questions have been raised concerning this type of representation. From the conceptual point of view: *‘Is such a type of training positive or negative?’*

*show any interest in me, they did not help me and kept on making unpleasant comments; they robbed me of my ideas, criticized, judged and undervalued me*. The individuals who are less dependent, more egocentric, hardened and who have transcended Maslow's social needs suffer much less from such a situation.

Let us now analyze the relationship between the superior and the young graduate from the angle of their respective personal development level. The superior's type of management depends on "who" he is and not on "who he has not yet become." According to Ashby's "variety principle," we may state that an N+1 who has reached the highest development level is capable of adapting himself to the young graduate, whatever his development level is. The following exhibit clearly illustrates this statement:

THE SUPERIOR 'N+1'		THE GRADUATE 'N'					
		Physiological needs	Needs of protection	Social needs	Egocentric needs	Self-actualization needs	
The superior's needs	Type of Management						
Physiological needs	Chief	5.7%	Negative mental representations				
Needs of protection	Boss	38.7% of positive MR					
Social needs	Supervisor	54.2% of positive MR					
Egocentric needs	Head	61.7% of positive MR					
Self-actualization needs	N+1	88.2% of positive MR					

**Exhibit 6**

The different stages of local management – pyramid of needs theory and positive mental representations

### 3.5. Hierarchical Relationships and arbitration between "social" and "performance," according to Badaracco

Let us now envisage the following issue at hand: *Young graduates become superiors and future managers as well; will they take on their social responsibilities when the time comes?* Conflict choice between right and right was studied by Badaracco (1997). We have analyzed this internal conflict by means of the verbatims including the term "social," a term that appeared 158 times. It was used 122 times as a denominative presenting no particular issue of interest relevant to our research. The 36 occurrences we have retained show that the term "social" is devoted to conflicts emerging during the transition from the individual stage to the collective stage. After family and school, work is described as the next major socialization medium. Any issue related to the "social" domain is described as a test for individuality, favouring the young graduate's progressive socialisation. Conflict is characterized by 8 assertions at the individual level: The young graduate must get integrated into society. He needs to learn about socialization. Society encourages him to learn to live with other individuals. His behaviour – opened or not opened to others – will indicate that he is described as either not social, socially narrow minded or very opened and social. His professional activity and the way he deals with his profession are characterized by 4 assertions. Dealing with "social issues" does not fit with "making money": *I used to deal*

*more with social than with commercial issues, which proved to be not very professional, actually*. *My second training in an old people's home convinced me not to work in the social domain.* 5 assertions concern classical types of conflict opposing the employees' well-being and the Organization, unable to face the additional cost generated by the employees' social demands. To avoid unnecessary though legitimate conflicts, rules are established: *To avoid unrealistic promises* and, above all, *To be fair with each employee, to be present and available, to establish a social vigilance, to avoid quick and unconsidered decisions*. The Company Manager's function is characterized by 5 assertions emphasizing the importance of an adequate balance between the economic and the social dimensions. This illustrates two opposite trends. At one end of the continuum, is the "social" trend, stemming mostly from the public sector: *The manager's responsibility does not amount to economical results only; the manager's responsibility is to take into consideration and favour social aspects as well*. The opposite trend stems mostly from private SMFs: *I worked for a manager who required me to make money prior to developing social aspects within the Company.* 11 assertions are related to the job itself and to the internal "right-right" conflict: conflict between the personal field and the organizational field. This type of conflict occurs when there is a lack of synergy, when the individual feels overburdened by the Organization, and when his situation is financially advantageous but negatively perceived from an emotional angle. This type of situation brings the young graduate to resign and change his priorities – increased responsibilities, independence and interest, fewer financial advantages. The young graduate may experience a very violent internal conflict as well when he first experiences conflict between the social and the collective, leading to the eventual destruction of the Organization by unions. Another typical related conflict situation is the young graduate who feels "trapped" by the emotional ties he has with these colleagues he now has to supervise: *I realized that close relationships with subordinates had negative effects in a professional context*.

### **3.6. Hierarchical relationships, organizational culture and changes expected**

Identified as a key factor in the success of many companies, the "organizational culture" effect was studied and analyzed in France in the 1990s but then came to an abrupt end, the reason being that organizational culture was subjected to managerial and media exploitation.

Furthermore, it was observed that transition phases and progress were actually crippled by organizational culture, as the Club Med case<sup>21</sup> clearly illustrates.

However, the analysis of the five Management categories we have identified has shown that the more relationships were mentioned in the accounts, the more the satisfaction rate decreased, bringing to the fore a type of relation known as a Relation of Indifference. The existence of many indifference curves induces the existence of a hidden factor that defines each curve per level. To integrate this effect, we have represented the percentages according to the frequency rates and we have designed the graphic to correspond to the previous data.

The graphic shows that the "*absolute frequency - percentage*" relation grows along two indifference curves. The upper curve links the most modern Management terms: "Supervisor Head, N+1". The lower curve links the most archaic terms "Chief, Boss." We may therefore put forward the hypothesis of a dual subjacent managerial culture.

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<sup>21</sup> The Sandwich Manager – Management Exempt from Power.

### **3.6.1 Two managerial cultures and five Management practices**

The two managerial cultures we have brought to light underline two opposite concepts of the manager's social and relational responsibility. The archaic managerial culture, as we call it, includes two types of management practise – Chief and Boss – defined by a more emotional type of relationship, based on power, obedience, submission, dependence, etc. The superior's legitimacy depends on his achievements. The “Chief” has little legitimacy. The “Boss's” success is based on his results. The modern managerial culture, as we name it, includes three types of management practising – Supervisor, Head, N+1 – defined by a less emotional relationship, based on results, projects, innovations, skills, independence, delegation and, above all, problem solving. Legitimacy depends on the level of diplomas and qualifications.

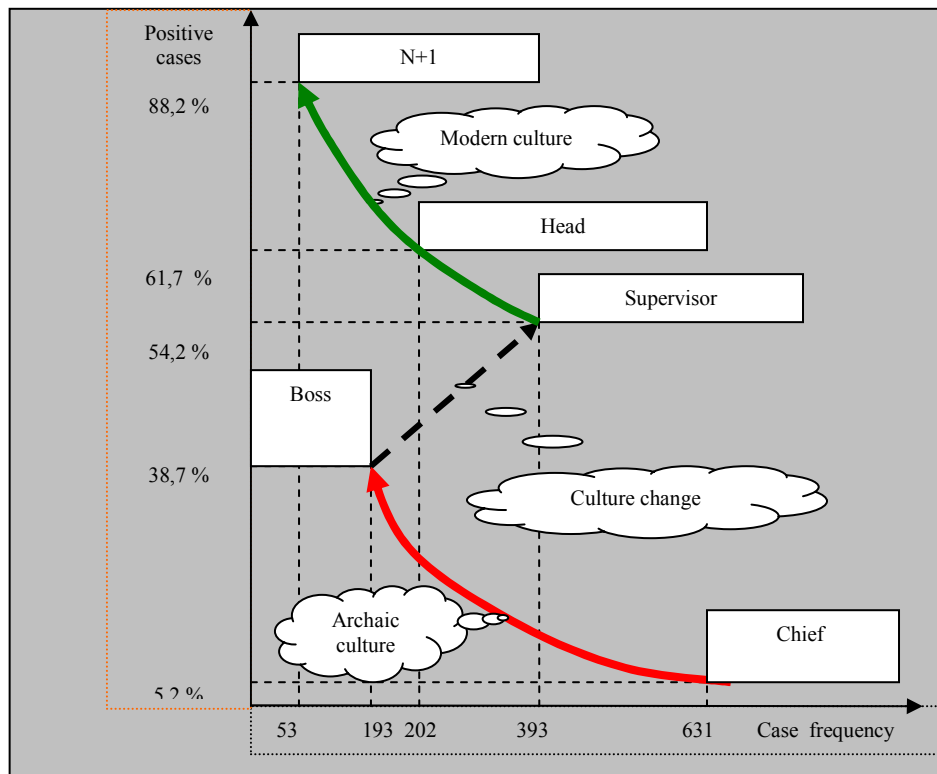
### **3.6.2 The split between the two managerial cultures**

We have attempted to find out where the organizational split between the two cultures stands and we have checked whether it was possible to identify that split by means of the accounts we have collected.

We can argue that the split is internal if, for example, the designations Boss or Chief are more frequently used at the lowest level of the hierarchy and that Supervisor, Head or N+1 are more frequently used at the highest level of the hierarchy. The split can also be sector-based, if we can determine, for example, that Chief and Boss are more often used in the private sector and that the three other designations are used more often in the public sector. We may also refer to the Organization's size, if we find out that Boss and Chief are more frequently used in SMFs and that the other designations are more often used in large Organizations. Actually, our analysis has put forward that the word “Chief” is more frequently used in the public sector and that the designation “Boss” is more frequently used in SMFs. Our research has not enabled us to perform a more specific discrimination - the other designations seem to be equally used within the private and public sectors.

### **3.6.2 Expected transitional phases**





**Exhibit 7** The transitional phases between archaic managerial culture and modern managerial culture

Along the first indifference curve and within the archaic culture, a transitional phase stands out, shown by the decreasing frequency in the use of the word “Chief” and the increasing frequency in the use of the word “Boss”. The situations experienced positively grow from 5% to 39%, which represents an important social upturn. To go further, the organization needs to switch from archaic culture to modern culture, thus changing its indifference curve. This leap can be identified through the dying out of the word “Boss” and its being replaced by “Supervisor.” In the modern managerial culture, the improvement of managerial practices is shown by the decreasing frequency of the use of the word “Supervisor” to the benefit of the word “Head,” followed by the decreasing frequency of the use of “Head” to the benefit of “N+1.” In modern culture, the situations experienced positively grow from 52% to 88%.

#### IV CONCLUSION

The young graduate has been trained to take on organizational responsibilities. As he joins the business world, he experiences a new life transition phase. He is faced with a major gap between his personal knowledge and experience and his future professional activity. During this transition phase, his mental models and his norms, resulting from his personal, family and school experiences are confronted with a new and unknown social reality. This confrontation summons up his socialization process, which had begun within the family context and at school. This process sheds light on a gap to be closed. What part does the superior play in that process? Must he ensure a coaching or teaching function to help the young graduate fill in the

gap? We would answer in the affirmative. In any case, the superior's behaviour must not increase the gap. If the level of discrepancies is too high, confrontation does not remain a source of professionalization.

These social practices of responsibility – archaic or modern practices – have been brought to the fore by analyzing 404 experience accounts. The research results can be summarized as follows: *beyond organizational job definitions, we may say that the notion of hierarchical responsibility within the organization is defined by individuals – these persons taking on responsibilities. Our research has established and described five categories and five practices of Management: Chief, Boss, Supervisor, Head and N+1. We have shown that the young graduates' satisfaction rate and the internal performance levels both increased as power became less embodied.* We have then confronted our results with a number of models: the organizational culture model, Herzberg's model on motivation, Badaracco's model on right-right conflict and Schön and Argyris' model on apprenticeship.

From these experience accounts, Management sciences can observe the dual reality of Organizations. This **integrated approach** favours a simultaneous observation of the external dimension of situations (problem solving) and the cognitive resolution processes, thoughts, feelings, emotions and apprenticeship processes – the actors' representations interacting with their mental models (Senge 1992). Such an approach favours the development of a knowledge corpus both in the field of *organizational behaviour*, the English-speaking world's preferred subject<sup>22</sup>, and in the field of *Local Management*, a branch of Management sciences developed in France.

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<sup>22</sup> There is no review on Organizational Behaviour in France whereas there are many across the Atlantic, amongst which a number are awarded many stars by the CNRS (the equivalent of the US National Science Foundation).

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