

Differences in perceptions of organizational values of public managers in Portugal

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Empirical research in public administration have devoted little attention to the issue of values that guide management in the public sector, although much research on values has been developed both in the philosophical perspective and in the perspective of organizations and work studies. This article encircles the public values and reports the statistical analysis of perceptions about organizational values of Portuguese public managers. Contrary to the current notion about the effects of public administration reform, the results allow us to verify the existence of significant differences in perceptions about organizational values associated with the public sector compared to other organizational values, in particular, given the organizational values associated with the private sector. These results carry as implication the need to review the debate on the extent to which the Continental Europe paradigm is seen as subjugated to the common law paradigm.

Keywords: organizational values; public administration; organizational culture; public managers; Portugal.

Diferenças nas percepções dos valores organizacionais dos gestores públicos em Portugal

As pesquisas empíricas no âmbito da administração pública têm dedicado pouca atenção à problemática dos valores que orientam a gestão no setor público, embora muita pesquisa sobre os valores tenha sido desenvolvida quer na perspectiva filosófica, quer na perspectiva dos estudos das organizações e do trabalho. O presente artigo cinge-se aos valores públicos e reporta a análise estatística das percepções sobre valores organizacionais de gestores públicos portugueses. Contrariando a noção corrente acerca dos efeitos da reforma da administração pública, os resultados permitem verificar a existência de diferenças significativas nas percepções sobre valores organizacionais associados ao setor público face aos demais valores organizacionais, em particular, face aos valores organizacionais associados ao setor privado. Esses resultados acarretam como implicação a necessidade de rever o debate sobre a extensão em que o paradigma Europeu continental é tido como subjugado ao paradigma da *common law*.

Palavras-chave: valores organizacionais; administração pública; cultura organizacional; gestores públicos; Portugal.

Diferencias en la percepción de los valores organizacionales de los gestores públicos en Portugal

La investigación empírica en la administración pública ha prestado muy poca atención a la cuestión de los valores que guían la gestión en el sector público, aunque se han desarrollado muchas investigaciones sobre valores tanto en la perspectiva filosófica como en la perspectiva de las organizaciones y los estudios de trabajo. En este artículo se rodea a los valores públicos y reporta el análisis estadístico de las percepciones sobre valores organizacionales de los gestores públicos portugueses. Contrariamente a la idea actual sobre los efectos de la reforma de la administración pública, los resultados nos permiten comprobar la existencia de diferencias significativas en las percepciones acerca de los valores organizacionales asociados con el sector público en comparación con otros valores de la organización, en particular, teniendo en cuenta los valores organizacionales relacionados con el sector privado. Estos resultados llevan en el sentido de la necesidad de revisar el debate sobre el grado en que se ve el paradigma de Europa continental como subyugado al paradigma de la *common law*.

Palabras clave: valores de la organización; administración pública; cultura organizacional; gestores públicos; Portugal.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In literature, works like those by Allison (1980-2012), Bilhim (2001) and Araújo (2006) have proved significant in the study of public administration and politics and in particular, in terms of the emerging idea of discrepancies or conflicts between public and private administration; this bone of contention has been the source of debate over time. In this scope, this conflict, attributable to an outlook focussed on the rational utilisation of efficiency rather than political rationalisation, remains even when public administration assumes responsibility for public management as a sub-division. According to Bilhim (2014), the two contrasting arguments represent the basic overriding principle over the course of time concerning public administration as a science. Europe-wide, both at a continent and insular level, the strength of this field received strong support from public management, although this was more notable in Anglo-Saxon countries. Originating in the USA, a large part of this role can be traced back to a period of general management, dating back to the pioneering work of Woodrow Wilson (1887-1941), and by means of extension, the work of Dwight Waldo (1946-48) and Herbert Simon (1946, 1947-97), at the end of the Second World War. It was at this time that a new research strategy appeared with the publication of “Administrative State”, by Dwight Waldo and the article “The proverbs of administration”, by Herbert Simon, followed by the publication the following year of “Administrative behaviour”. This new approach addressed the inclusion of a political dimension in the context of public administration in the USA.

Reference literature on the topic currently places special emphasis on public management, both in terms of common law and Continental Europe, considered a sub-section of public administration. To this end, according to Rainey (1990:162), it stands out from research inspired by public policy and business management, despite its potential impact on public policy, as suggested by Lynn (1996:1). In terms of the resurgence of public management in the 1970s, authors like Hood (1991), Bozeman (1993) and Ranson and Stewart (1994) address a new movement querying certain principles, parameters and processes, in line with the concept of new public management. The overall concept of public management was affected by this turning point, with the fundamental aspects systematised by Hood (1994), namely, market values, business management spirit, theories and models, technical and instrumental rationality of efficiency and the use of public choice theory, transaction cost theory, agency theory and organizational theory.

Public management was first seen in Anglo-Saxon countries and gradually gained strength in countries in Continental Europe on account of a range of factors. For the most part, these factors seek to refute the traditional areas of the existing public administration, of public policies and of general management prevailing in the minds of the main ideologists involved in the birth of the US public administration (Rainey, 1990).

Intense academic work on the continuities and discontinuities between the public and private administration have made it possible to identify four outlooks. The first focuses on public administration, defining it as a series of principles and processes common to the administration, considered as a whole, i.e. constituting a part, specifically, a sub-part or specialisation within the administration; the second establishes an analogy between the public and private administration; the third proposes the reproduction of best private management practices by the public admin-

istration, incorporating solutions from that origin; finally, the fourth outlook sustains that public administration differs from private administration, overlapping in just a few irrelevant factors (Metcalf and Richards, 1993).

In this article, the authors favour the conceptual distinguish between public and private administration, accepting, nonetheless, the reciprocal effects between the respective activity sectors given their relationship in an apparently globalised world. Thus, it is to be expected that the organizational values governing the private and public sectors will differ in an empirically measurable manner. The purpose of this research therefore consists of establishing whether there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of organizational values amongst Portuguese public administrators, with a view to gauging, via surveys or questionnaires, the type of values (public, private or mixed) to which these public administrators attach most importance.

2. THE CONTEXT OF ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Values have served to understand and, for certain epistemological trends, explain shifts in society, institutions, organisations, groups and individuals (Porto and Tamayo, 2003). They have been the subject of research and are currently of interest in the field of philosophy (Rawls, 1993; Ricoeur, 1995) and for the study of organisations and work (Schwartz, 1994, 1999; Tamayo, 2007).

Values, as part of a non-rational universe, represent a perspective through which we face reality as being either positive or negative, beautiful or hideous, desirable or detestable, depending on the angle at which we view truth and error. Justice and liberty represent significant points of tension or conflicts in the modern world. That is why, in political terms, liberalism positions liberty as a priority value, whereas socialism claims this position for justice, with values such as tolerance, or ideals like democracy, progress and universal education carrying over from this tension (Almeida and Brás, 2012).

From a more diligent perspective, values are criteria, beliefs or basic assumptions that can be placed in an order and that go beyond specific situations, guiding the specific actions of individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and companies, contributing to their respective identity.

When values are linked together and constitute a system, their structure can take two different forms: a general structure that transcends specific circumstances (Rawls, 1993) and structures applicable to more specific circumstances, such as the values of a specific organisation (Schein, 1985), work (Porto and Tamayo, 2003) or public values (Wal et al., 2015).

This work shares the position of Schwartz (1994), to whom the study of values in specific contexts does not seek to discover individual values, but rather to clarify the differences between individuals and cultures and, in the case in hand, of administrative cultures when such values are expressed by the shaping of judgements and aimed at observable behaviours.

The specific circumstances or contexts in which values are studied as part of scientific literature, tend to be more occupation and organisation based rather than on the fields of politics and public institutions. In both cases, strong theoretical models that are able to offer theoretical support to the scales of measurement that have come about are still lacking.

This work, which is not a theoretical exercise that seeks to ponder this problem relating to the scientific paradigm for the study of values, plays an important role in the study of values applied to the specific context of administrative cultures.

Thus, the range of work produced in the past 30 years (see Zaina (1987), Pires and Macêdo (2006), Costa and partners (2010), Wal and partners (2008), Pinto and partners (2012), Wal and partners (2015) or Bilhim and Correia (2016) for examples) has a decisive contribution to make in terms of highlighting the relevance of theoretical and empirical studies based on organizational values and, in particular, public values that shape the behaviour of management teams in the public sector. They represent multidisciplinary studies that cover a wide range of scientific disciplines, such as public administration, law, environmental sciences, education, the economy, political sciences, public health, maths, sociology, private management and communication (Wal et al., 2015).

There appears to be a consensus in public administration literature that supports the idea that organizational values concerning the public sector have a different composition to those in the private sector. However, whether or not discrepancies exist should be founded on conclusions obtained from empirical research. Over the past decade, there has been intense debate surrounding two activity sectors focussing on the similarities and differences inherent to organizational values, namely, the frequently mentioned conflict between public and market values (Wal et al., 2008).

Some authors have underscored the significant impact of private administration from the 1970s onwards on public administration values, transforming this problem into a catalyst for public debate in scientific, ideological and professional spheres amongst public sector workers and researchers. Frederickson (1997) is an excellent example of the growing concern in terms of the weakness of public values or of their conversion into market values in the professional ethics of public administration leaders. Maesschalck (2004) argues that the excessive protagonism offered to private sector values has been to the detriment of the sole set of values required to serve the public interest. An alternative approach contrasts this vision, clearly supporting the existence of a series of public service values that are immune to reformist policies.

On the one hand, public administration has assumed a series of values that traditionally formed part of private administration ethics; however, on the other hand, although to a lesser extent, this activity reflects the reciprocal effect of the public administration via the assimilation of social responsibility practices and the principles of citizenship, sustainability, accountability and business integrity, as highlighted by Kaptein and Wempe (2002). Furthermore, in the public sector, the traditional private sector values introduced by the new public management include, generally speaking, efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, merit and quality (Lane, 1994; Bilhim, 2001; Rocha, 2001). Despite the differences, the reciprocity of values between the public and private sectors strengthens the general idea that comparative empirical studies on values in these two sectors are important.

The facts seem to give confidence to the fact that organizational values are elements shared by all organisations and activity sectors or professionals whose way of life, feelings and reactions are the same. Central to this policy is the definition of culture, construed as a specific series of

rules, values and beliefs of a specific community or a pattern of basic assumptions. Edgar Schein (1985:15) notes that several essential, irrefutable values and naturally debatable values form part of the make-up of culture.

Values supposedly allude to aspects that are of significant relevance to a specific person or organisation and are broader and more comprehensive than rules, which establish the appropriate behaviour in specific conditions. Values are defined as factors that clearly add value, considered as having great importance and offering significant benefits, and as such, represent the focal point around which our aspirations, ideas and concerns rotate. In this regard, values are subjective, depending exclusively on who assesses them and that an approach using good or bad as markers rather than true or false is employed. According to Almeida and Brás (2012), it is worth noting that the language adopted in terms of values is apparently associated with imperative and conjunctive verb forms, reflected in “must be” rather than “be”.

In terms of values, it must be assumed that they are genuinely linked to an external expression or manifestation and, in essence, alleged declarations, as can be seen below: the choice of a specific alternative in the decision-making process, possible preferences, a restricted quality or specific behavioural pattern. Against this backdrop, the concept of organisations as culture (Smircich, 1983) is feasible, as part of which, according to Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), individuals share a cognitive map.

The values that dominate current decision-making organizational practices represent the main focus of this study, attesting to the renewed interest in this field. The immediate goal of this research is to try to clarify that values and motivations are determining factors in terms of guiding the performance of Portuguese public administrators in the exercise of their duties, based on a series of four latent variables relating to values solely associated to either the private or public sector and values shared between both sectors in addition to other organizational values (Lopes et al., 1990; Wal et al., 2008; Bilhim and Correia, 2016).

The inconclusive variety of approaches and the disorder generally associated with organizational values are linked to the fact that they are controversial concepts, aggravated by the fact that many studies on organizational values fail to provide any clarification.

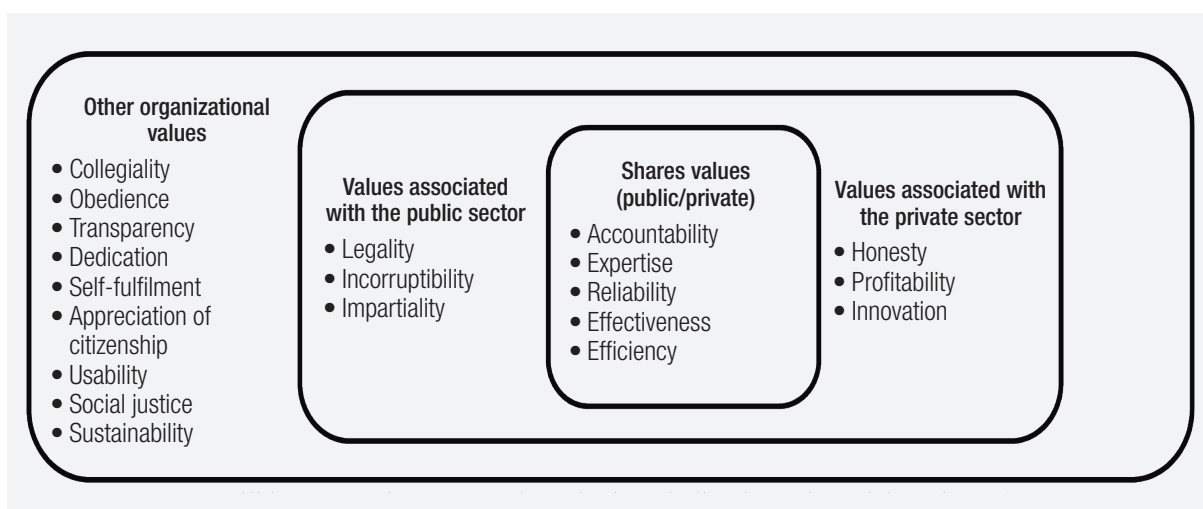
This lack of clarification can be attributed to the difficulty posed by the direct study of organizational values, the use of different instruments and the utilisation of concepts with little or no consistency, compromising the creation of a solid, coherent understanding in this field. Nonetheless, there seems to be some level of consensus in the approach to this line of research insofar as organizational values are studied using empirical surveys that focus on the real social circumstances to which these values apply. As a result, values can only be analysed based on their expression through the behaviours, attitudes, preferences, decisions taken and choices resulting from actions undertaken. This is because values cannot be seen directly, with the observer having to identify the forms through which organizational values are expressed in terms of perceptions, opinions, attitudes, preferences, fears and a series of other manifestations inherent to this context. In this regard, this research seeks to ascertain public administrators’ perceptions in terms of organizational values.

3. METHODOLOGY

Data gathering was based on a survey and a questionnaire including 35 questions: four questions to define the background of respondents, 11 questions to define their personal circumstances and 20 scaled questions focusing on the organizational values of public administrators.

The adaptation undertaken by Bilhim and Correia (2016) of the structure proposed by Wal and partners (2008) has been used as a reference for the questions asked in the survey on organizational values: shared values at the core, the conflict between public and private values and, finally, other organizational values (figure 1).

FIGURE 1 FRAMEWORK OF ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES WITH SHARED VALUES AT THE CORE, THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VALUES AND FINALLY OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES



Source: Bilhim and Correia (2016), adapting the work of Wal and partners (2008).

The detailed description of the 20 indicators (or variables) corresponding to the organizational values used is presented in chart 1. This chart features four main categories into which the 20 organizational values in question are divided, in addition to the 20 corresponding questions posed to public administrators.

The 20 indicators under the four proposed categories were measured following a 9-point Likert scale that varied from Very low (at the lower end) to Very high (at the upper end), along with the option to check *don't know/did not answer*.¹

¹ Consult Correia (2012:140-144) for further details on the methodology used.

CHART 1 **QUESTIONS ASKED AND ASSOCIATION WITH THE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES AND CATEGORIES**

Categories	Organizational values	Questions about organizational values: for a public service, it is essential to...
Organizational values associated with the public sector	Legality	Act in compliance with existing laws and regulations.
	Incorruptibility	Not appropriate public or shareholder powers for private means.
	Impartiality	Objectively consider all relevant interests in a decision-making context, maintaining impartiality and trust in said impartiality.
Organizational values associated with the private sector	Honesty	Act truthfully and fulfil promises.
	Profitability	Work to make gains (financial or otherwise).
	Innovation	Work with incentive and creativity (to produce or introduce new policies or products/services).
Shared organizational values (public/private)	Accountability	Be ready to justify and explain actions before interested parties, namely superiors, peers, shareholders, members of the governing board, suppliers, customers and to the public in general.
	<i>Expertise</i>	Act with competence, skill and knowledge.
	Reliability	Work in a reliable and consistent manner on behalf of the interested parties.
	Effectiveness	Work towards obtaining the desired results.
	Efficiency	Work towards obtaining the results with minimal resources.
Other organizational values	Collegiality	Work loyally and demonstrate solidarity with colleagues.
	Obedience	Demonstrate respect for instructions and policies (set out by superiors and the organisation)
	Transparency	Work in an open, visible yet controlled manner.
	Dedication	Act diligently, enthusiastically and persistently.
	Self-fulfilment	Stimulate the (professional) development and well-being of employees.
	Customer/public value	Consider the customer/public's preferences.
	Usability	Ensure work is useful to the public and customers.
	Social justice	Ensure equality in the context of a fair society.
Sustainability	Demonstrate a commitment to nature and the environment in addition to social responsibility.	

Source: adaptation of the work of Wal and partners (2008) to the circumstances in Portugal by Bilhim and Correia (2016) applied to the context of public administrators.

Aiming at increasing the comparability of the study, 11 variables were used to define personal circumstances, as previously used by Bilhim and Correia (2016), including gender, place of residence, age, highest level of education received, degree subject, subject of the highest level of education received, sector in which the respondent most recently worked, time of service within the public administration, work in management or leadership roles, highest position held and time of service in management or leadership roles. The four variables to define the background of public administrators include origin, mother's profession, father's profession and home environment variables. These four variables were also employed by Bilhim and Correia (2016).

Between 18 August and 15 September 2015, the questionnaire was sent via e-mail to all public administrators who had been subject to a mandatory, non-binding assessment run by the Recruitment and Selection Commission for the Public Administration (CReSAP). During the data collection period, 288 responses were received, 279 were considered valid, thus providing a response rate of 45.4% for the 614 public administrators targeted. In Portugal, Articles 12, 13 and 28 of the Public Administrator's Statute, established by Decree Law No. 39/2016, of 28 July (Portugal, 2016), amending Decree-Law No. 71/2007, of 27 March (Portugal, 2007), identifies the CReSAP as the entity responsible for performing a non-binding assessment, amongst other functions, on the CV and appropriateness of skills of those serving in public administrator roles. As such, since 2013 practically all public administrators in Portugal have been assessed by the CReSAP. The population size of 614 respondents corresponds to all public administrators that, between the roll-out of CReSAP responsibilities and 15 September 2015, had been assessed by the entity. The e-survey was sent to the entire target audience (census approach). As a result of this procedure, 288 responses were received, from which 279 were considered valid.

Based on a factor analysis on the 20 organizational value variables (corresponding to the questions posed), an individual score was allocated to each public administrator questioned in each of the four latent variables.² The results presented as part of this article and their analysis were obtained as part of a global, joint analysis of the scores assigned.

As the data gathered and the scores obtained did not reflect a Gaussian distribution, it was not possible to apply the Anova test to investigate similarity in the means returned between the four organizational value categories defined. As such, and as samples were paired, the decision was taken to apply the non-parametric Friedman test,³ which compares medians rather than means.

All statistical tests employed used a standard confidence level of 95% (0.9500).

² Consult Correia and partners (2017, in press), Guimarães and partners (2015), Correia and Garcia (2015), Correia and Bilhim (2014), Correia and partners (2013) or Correia (2013) for similar methodological approaches. Also consult Correia (2012:162-170) for a more detailed methodological debate.

³ In contrast to the Anova test, the non-parametric Friedman test does not apply prerequisites associated with the Gaussian distribution of data.

4. RESULTS

For the most part, public administrators who responded were males residing in the Lisbon, North and Centre districts and typically aged between 40 and 60, with a high level of qualification and most commonly in the fields of public administration, management or economics, with business experience, public administration experience and generally speaking, had occupied leadership or management roles. It is worth noting that the characteristics of the sample reflect those to be expected of public administrators in Portugal; thus it can be concluded that the results of the survey are robust and reliable.

The origin of public administrators continued to be, for the most part, the North, Centre and Lisbon districts, although this phenomenon was drastically lower compared to places of residence. The dominant trend observed in research data reveals that public administrators tend to be the offspring of parents working in technical or intellectual professions from urban environments. It is worth noting, as was the case with the variables used to define personal circumstances, the characteristics of the sample reflect those to be expected of public administrators in Portugal; thus it can be concluded once against that the results of the survey are robust and reliable.

The limitation posed by possible effects associated with variables causing confusion, described by Wal and partners (2008), is sustained by the fact that individuals contacted as part of the study are all public administrators who had been subject to a mandatory, non-binding assessment run by the CReSAP (therefore, the target audience is somewhat more uniform than the entire population of Portugal in general).

Having employed a factor analysis in the creation of the four latent variables that are central to the study described herein, the quality check was performed applying the standard measures. The one-dimensional nature of the four categories⁴ and the appropriateness of the indicators (questions posed directly to respondents)⁵ serve as a testament to the overall suitability of the questionnaire employed.

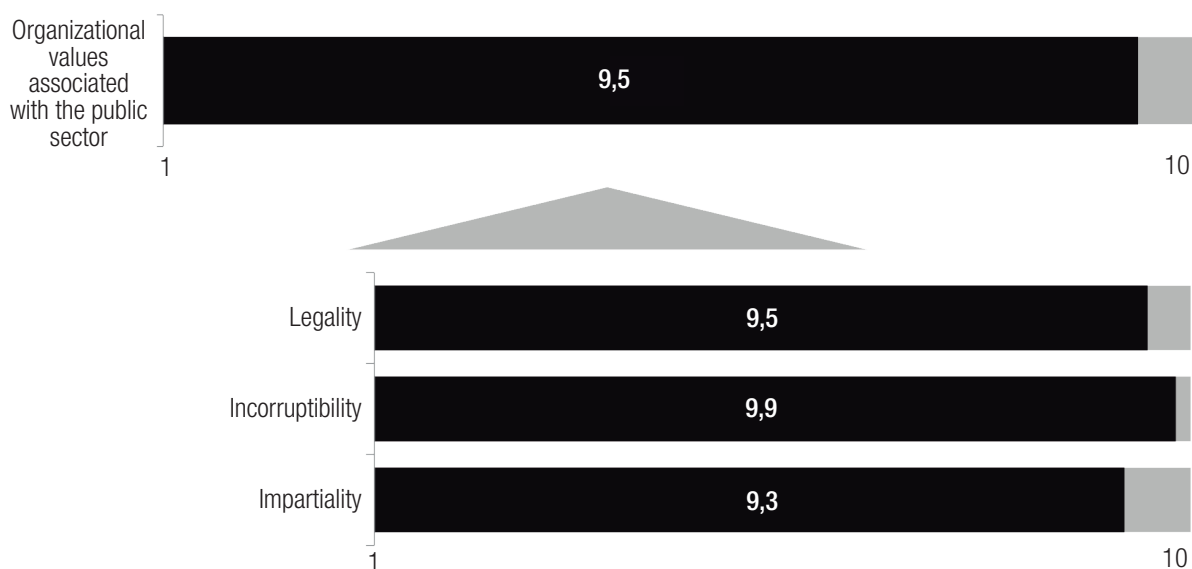
Considering the perceptions of public servants concerning the latent variable of public sector organizational values (graph 1), the mean corresponds to a “very high” value (9.5 points out of a possible 10).

In turn, considering the perceptions of public administrators concerning the latent variable of private sector organizational values (graph 2), the mean also corresponds to a “very high” value (9 points out of a possible 10), although not quite as high as the value returned for the public sector organizational values category.

⁴ Assessment of the one-dimensional nature of the latent variables using the *rho* defined by Dillon-Goldstein and the *alpha* defined by Cronbach. The latent variables of public sector organizational values, shared organizational values (public/private) and other organizational values return, respectively, *rhos* defined by Dillon-Goldstein of 0.8516; 0.8242; 0.8093; and 0.9141 and *alphas* defined by Cronbach of 0.6948; 0.6303; 0.6920; and 0.8918. Consult Correia (2012:166-168) for further details on the methodology used.

⁵ Based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measurement, the convergence and discrimination can be validated. The latent variables of public sector organizational value, shared organizational values (public/private) and other organizational values return, respectively, AVEs of 0.6231; 0.5705; 0.4653; and 0.56480. Consult Correia (2012:168-170) for further details on the methodology used.

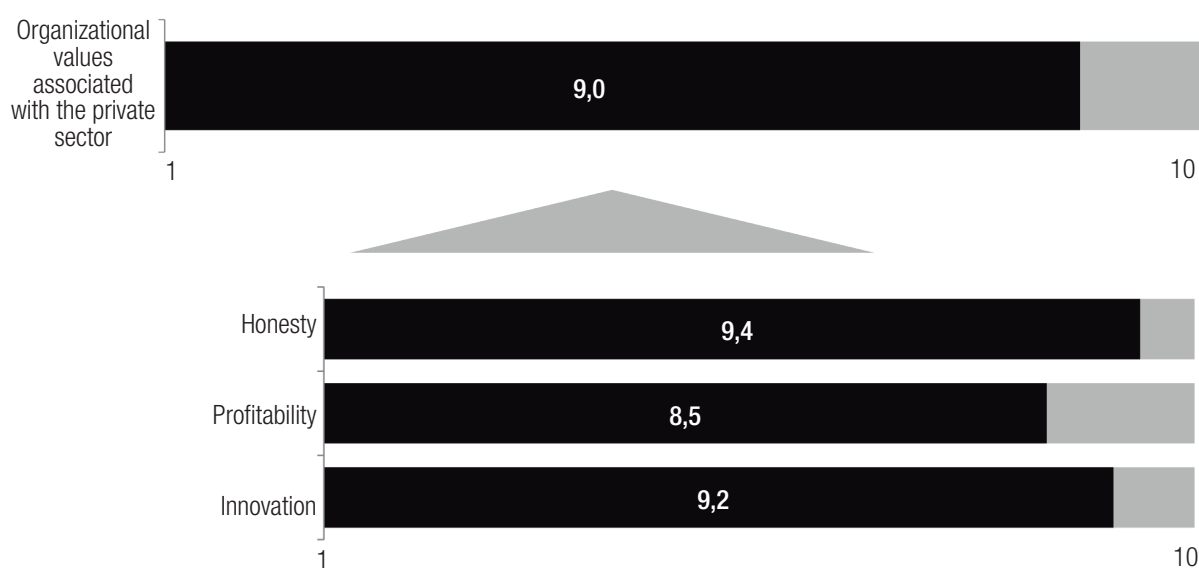
GRAPH 1 INDICATORS CORRESPONDING TO THE “ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR”



Importance within the category: Legality (47,8%); Incorruptibility (19,9%); Impartiality (32,4%).

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data gathered as part of the study.

GRAPH 2 INDICATORS CORRESPONDING TO THE “ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR”

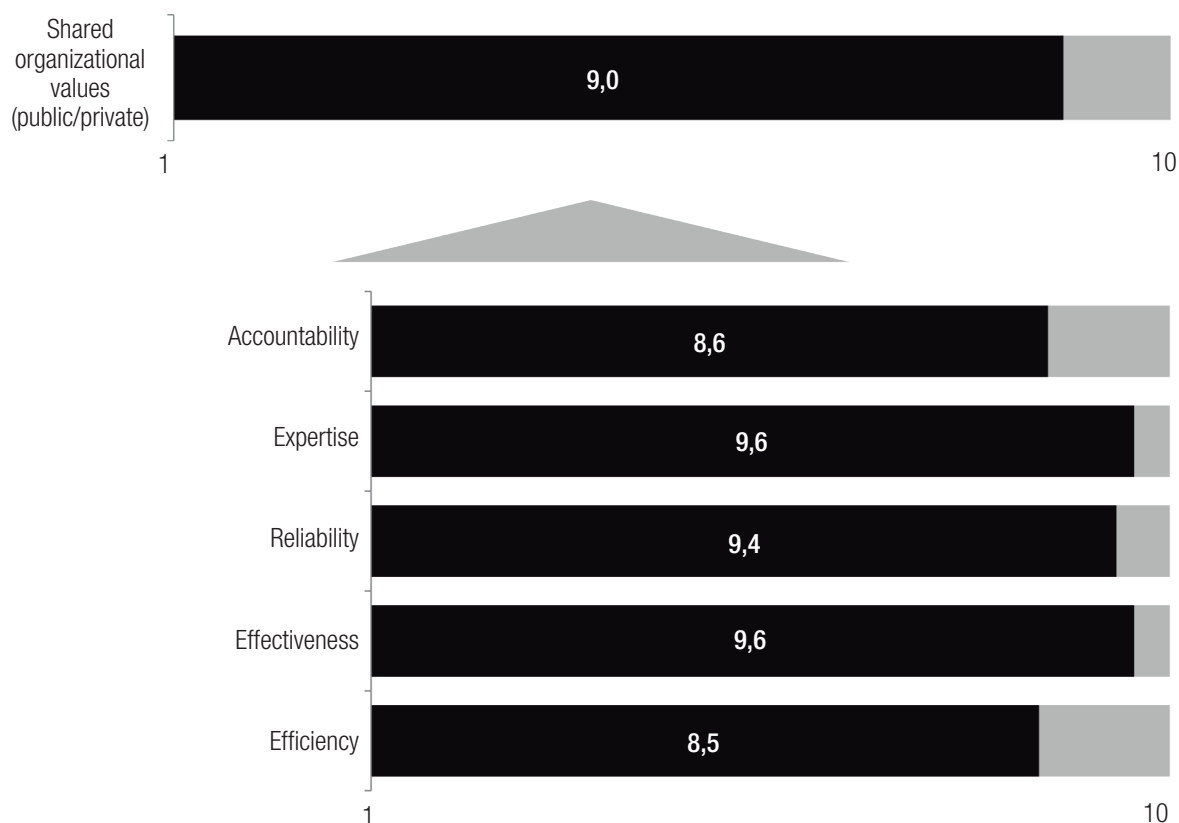


Importance within the category: Honesty (33,1%); Profitability (42,7%); Innovation (24,2%).

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data gathered as part of the study.

As seen above, considering the perceptions of public administrators concerning the latent variable of shared organizational values (public/private) (graph 3), the mean also corresponds to a “very high” value (9.0 points out of a possible 10).

GRAPH 3 INDICATORS CORRESPONDING TO THE “SHARED ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)”

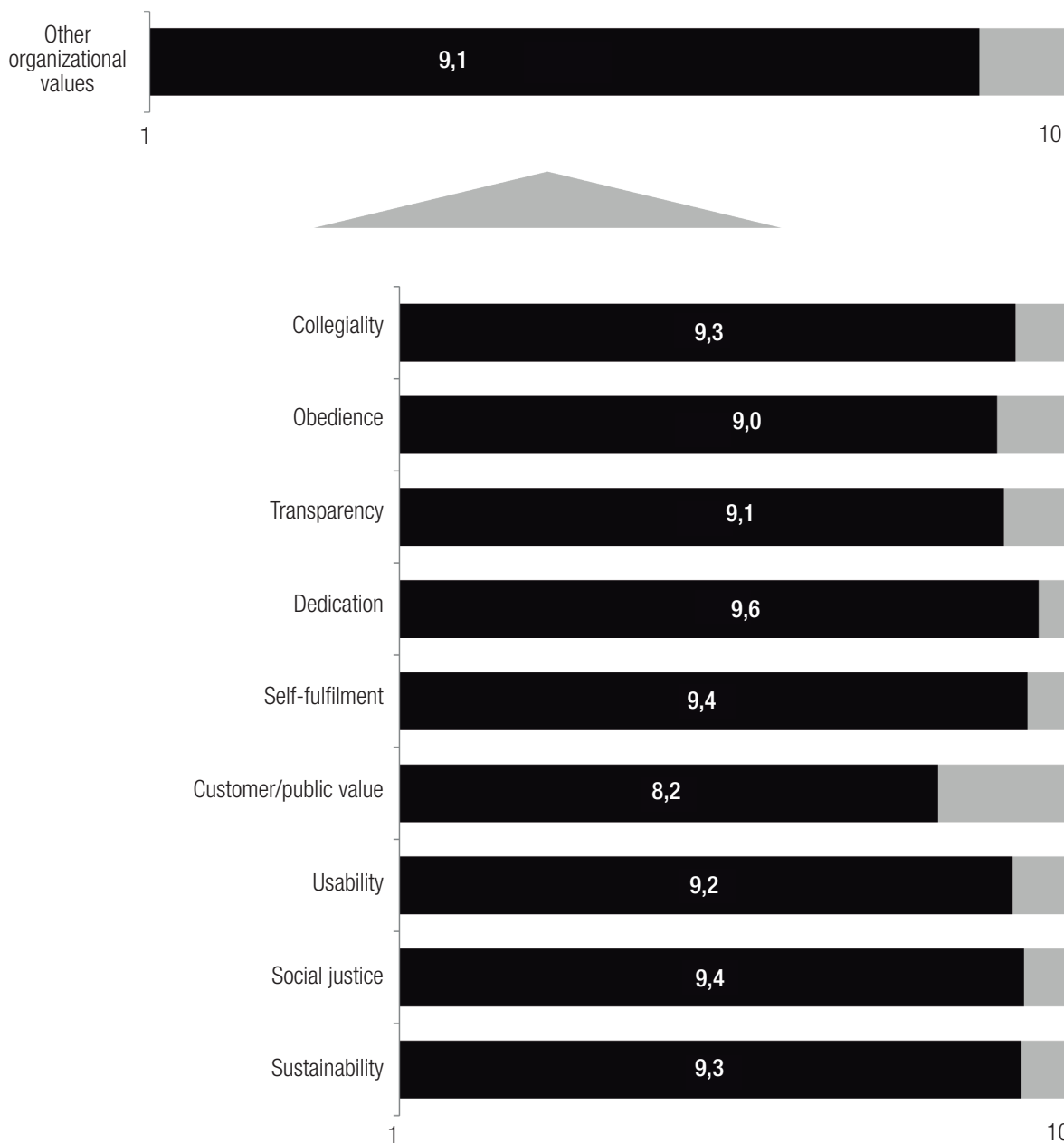


Importance within the category: Accountability (30.5%); Expertise (15%); Reliability (20.5%); Effectiveness (12.6%); Efficiency (21.4%).
Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data gathered as part of the study.

Finally, considering the perceptions of public administrators concerning the latent variable of other organizational values (graph 4), the mean also corresponds to a “very high” value (9.1 points out of a possible 10), which, although not quite as high as the value returned for the public sector organizational values category, is still quite close to the scores returned for the other two categories.

The results obtained for each of the four latent variables, when taken as a whole, highlight, on the one hand, the uniformity of scores obtained (the difference between the highest-ranked category and the lowest-ranked category is just 0.5) and, on the other hand, the fact that the scores are quite high (mean values between 9 and 9.5 out of a possible 10). It is important to establish whether the uniformity suffices for the differences to be considered statistically negligible. The implications of such an outcome should be subject to debate, examination and discussion.

GRAPH 4 INDICATORS CORRESPONDING TO THE “OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES”



Importance within the category: Collegiality (12.2%); Obedience (12.8%); Transparency (15.4%); Dedication (8.6%); Self-fulfilment (8.8%); Customer/public value (14.9%); Usability (11.4%); Social justice (8.2%); Sustainability (7.7%).

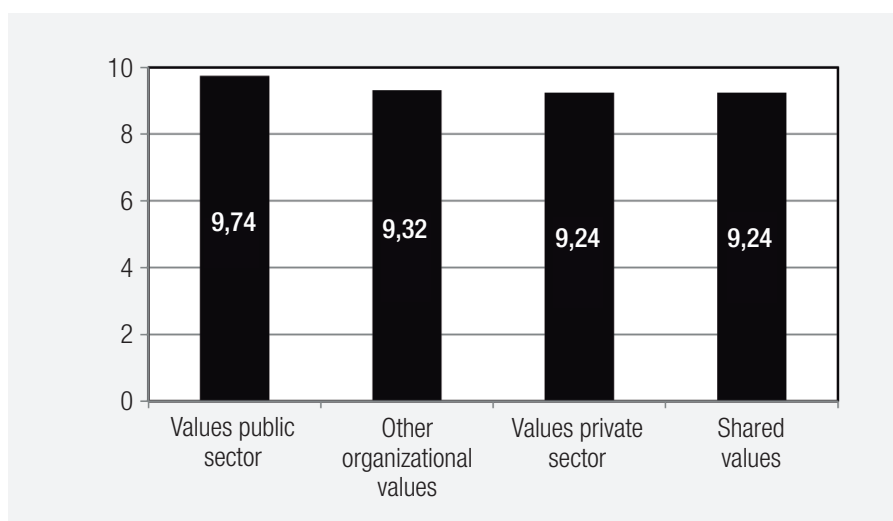
Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data gathered as part of the study.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn by analysing the results obtained using the Lilliefors normality test applied to each of the four latent variables: organizational values corresponding to the public

sector (p-value = 0.000), organizational values corresponding to the private sector (p-value = 0.000), organizational values shared by both sectors (p-value = 0.000) and other organizational values (p-value = 0.000), in all cases returning a p-value of less than 0.05. As the significance of 0.05, as established previously, is higher than all p-values, there is statistical evidence that contrasts the null hypothesis of the test; therefore, it is implausible that the values for each category show normal distributions. In this context, the medians take preference over the means in addressing the matter in hand; therefore, rather than using the Anova test to compare means, the non-parametric Friedman test should be used to compare the medians of the variables. Graph 5 shows the medians corresponding to each latent variable considered in the analysis.

GRAPH 5 MEDIAN VALUES OBTAINED FOR EACH CATEGORY ANALYSED



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data gathered as part of the study.

Proceeding with the analysis, the non-parametric Friedman test (p-value = 0.000; $\chi^2 = 163.66$) contains statistical evidence of differences in the medians of the latent variables. A more in-depth observation involving pairs of variables (stepwise step-down procedure, demonstrates that, in contrast to the claims of Bilhim and Correia (2016), for candidates for senior management roles in the Portuguese public administration, not all the medians differ, with the following relationship evident: the highest median in terms of public sector organizational values is 9.74, the only median highlighted during the Friedman test as part of the stepwise step-down procedure as being different from the rest. There is no statistical evidence to suggest that the medians of the other latent variables (other organizational values, private sector organizational values and shared organizational values) are different, and the differences seen can be attributed to mere statistical fluctuations (medians of 9.32, 9.24 and 9.24 respectively).

It must be noted that these results differ both quantitatively and qualitatively from those reported by Bilhim and Correia (2016) for candidates for senior management roles in the Portuguese public

administration, in that the medians for the four categories could all be considered as different (median of 9.76 for public sector organizational values, median of 9.2 for other organizational values, median of 9.07 for shared organizational values and median of 8.78 for private sector organizational values).

Another observation worth note is the difference between the medians of public sector organizational values and private sector organizational values, of 0.5. One explanation for this difference is that public administrators generally attribute a lower score to private sector organizational values than those attributed to public sector organizational values which, in this case, exceeds 5%. Bilhim and Correia (2016) report a similar although less acute phenomenon for candidates for senior management roles (a difference of 0.98 corresponding to a difference of more than 10%).

Now is the time to refocus on the main objective originally proposed as part of the following question: how do these results correlate with the prevailing dominant version of the common law paradigm to the detriment of the Continental European paradigm?

In reality, public management has a decisive contribution to make in terms of the consolidation of public administration science, although more so in terms of common law than in Continental Europe. Based on this outlook, even in Continental Europe, public management has actively contributed to the current convergence seen in public and private administration by means of an apparently innovative approach, the new form of public management, focussing on the technical rationality of efficiency, the need to captivate the catalysing spirit of business management and the strengthening of partnerships with private institutions to satisfy public needs.

Against this backdrop, it is also worth mentioning Wal and partners (2008), insofar as these authors suggest that the differences between public and private administration can be traced, for the most part, to the differences between the level of organizational values allocated between the corresponding managers and management teams; over the course of the past decade, this topic has been the subject of intense academic debate.

By studying the referred literature, and as pointed out in the body of this text, it is plausible that organizational values are inextricably linked to the culture of an organisation or activity sector, in addition to the culture of professionals who share the same way of life, feelings and reactions and, most importantly, origins. As part of this research, targeted at a sample exclusively made up of public administrators, it was to be expected that respondents would share a series of rules, values and beliefs typical of public sector culture. The analysis undertaken confirms and quantifies this phenomenon.

Thus, as has been demonstrated, the four main points, which can be systematised as follows, are the key insights of this article: (1) as stated by Bilhim and Correia (2016), the scale of organizational values introduced by Wal and partners (2008) can be appropriately translated to current conditions in Portugal; (2) the organizational values studied can be divided into four statistically solid one-dimensional categories; (3) there is a statistically significant difference in the perception of public sector organizational values compared to the other organizational values considered, in particular, compared to public sector organizational values (despite, on the whole, assessments attributed to all of the 20 organizational values being very high), countering the argument on the “commercialisation” of the State as a result of public administration reforms; and (4) the methodology employed by Bilhim and Correia (2016) to study the perceptions of organizational values amongst candidates for senior management roles in the public sector can be extended to public administrators.

In light of the foregoing in terms of the change in convergence between perceptions and in the sense defended by Bilhim and Correia (2016), it can be concluded that, despite the differences identified, they are not sufficiently expressive to suggest against there being a complete dominance of common-law associated organizational culture over Continental Europe associated organizational culture.

Future research on this topic may confirm and extend the comprehensiveness of the results obtained here; therefore, this study should be extended to other contexts in which there is tension between public and private sector values, both in Portugal and abroad, particularly in countries with close linguistic and cultural links, for example, Brazil.

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