

**Testing Bureaucrats' Blood:
Perceptions of civil servants with regard their power to
act in various institutional settings.**

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Abstract

Public Administrations in Southern Europe are usually identified with the French Napoleonic model, which is considered to be less innovative and open to change than the Nordic or Anglo-Saxon models. This conjecture contrasts with the observation of current administrative practice in Spain and conversations with Spanish civil servants. Parts of the Civil Service in Spain have adopted perspectives, working styles and language that are clearly influenced by international reform trends.

The paper posits that it is not possible to talk about one single administrative culture. In order to test this hypothesis, the paper analyzes data on power perceptions and values of high-rank civil servants in the Spanish central government. Sampled respondents' answers point to the coexistence of competing values and organizational cultures, to the respect for hierarchy and for superiors holding soft power sources, and to a strong sense of independence from both internal and external political entities. Variation of respondents' perceptions was both explained by the organizational settings civil servants work in and also by their personal characteristics.

1. Introduction

Civil servants need capacity to act and, at the same time, they are subject to political and normative constraints imposed upon their activity. Civil servants have to be entrepreneurial in pursuing effectiveness but they are not politically elected and, thus, their discretion is filtered by political actors and rules. High level public servants are responsible for the implementation of public policies but the success of their initiatives and projects depends on their capacity to mobilize subordinates (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1996) and the support of external entities with different interests. Additionally, civil servants normative considerations are usually constrained by organizational logics and identities that predefine what is appropriate and what is not (March and Olsen 1989, Friedland & Alford 1991) and their use of administrative discretion implies to balance competence and responsiveness values that are usually in conflict (Meier 1979, Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1981, Rainey 2004).

The study of power and values in public organizations was obviated for long time in the field of Public Administration. Both the Weberian bureaucratic paradigm and the Wisonian “Politics-Administration dichotomy” set the path in Europe and US for a long sustained assumption about the capacity of public servants to be neutral in their execution of law and public policy. In US, the myth of public servants’ neutrality and isolation from politics found its end in the 1940s along the writings of Robert Dalh, Herbert Simon and Dwight Waldo among other scholars. Since then, a series of theories and empirical works, both originally developed by public management scholars and imported from the organizational psychology field, have aimed to explain the role of power dynamics and values from the perspective of public servants and agencies (Frederickson and Smith 2008, Rainey 2004).

For the last twenty years, reforms in public management have put a lot of emphasis on the transformation of public administration on behalf of a new entrepreneurial model encompassing not only new theoretical assumptions and structures (Hood 1991, Deleon and Denhart 2000) but also new institutional logics (Horton 2006, Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006). According to the entrepreneurial logic, public servants should go

beyond the use of discretion to administer objectives and allocate resources. Public servants should be visionary and innovative, efficient and open minded with an intuitive appeal for policy making and political relations (Osborne and Gaebler 1993).

The popularity of the new entrepreneurial model across administrations and political discourses represent a new milestone in the recognition of civil servants capacity to act. However, this emphasis has not gone along a similar recognition of the political and normative nature of public administrators' activity (Hood 1991, Kaabolian 1998, Durant 2008, Moynihan 2008). The popularity of the new entrepreneurial model across administrations justifies the study of power dynamics and values that mediate public servant's discretion.

The Spanish public management policy can be seen as a case of stability over time. For more than 30 years there were various civil service reforms and modernization plans but not significant shifts in public management policy. Despite the failure of macro policy changes, institutional innovation occurred through fragmentation, decentralization and contracting out. The diffusion of new administrative practices at the individual level of ministries and semi-autonomous agencies is not homogeneous and therefore the perceptions of civil servants and other public employees may differ according to the institutional settings. This is probably quite close to what happened in other European countries but the Southern European cases have had less attention than English speaking and continental European countries when they can give interesting clues for public management reform in Eastern European and Latin American countries trying to rebuild their civil services.

This article aims to contribute to the analysis of power dynamics and values among civil servants in a context of changing normative values about their role by studying the perceptions of Spanish civil servants. We are interested in exploring whether the perceptions of civil servants on the Spanish central administration are homogeneous or whether they reflect a mixture of administrative cultures and values. Does any particular logic about appropriate public administration dominate in the Spanish civil service? Are

there groups within the Spanish civil service that feel closer to a more management oriented administration than to a more traditional view of public administration? Also, we would like to investigate whether the perceptions of civil servants vary with regard to their relationship to power and politics. How tolerant are they to power and political influence? Do Spanish civil servants generally see themselves as neutral technocrats across or are there groups within the civil service that accept that they can behave politically in their interactions with other agents?

2. Some Notes on Administrative Culture and Role Theory

Many studies on the role of values in public and private organizations build on cultural theory and role theory.

2.1 Administrative and Organizational Cultures

Public administration literature has tended to underline the historic and cultural differences between countries and the impact of the cultural frameworks on the concept of public service. Cultural theory points to the existence of differences between cultures in terms of social cohesion and existence of strong social institutions (Douglas 1982), individualism, respect for hierarchy, risk attitudes or gender parity (Hofstede 1980). The idea of “administrative culture” refers to the holistic and relatively permanent character of cognitive patterns in an organization and their effect on organizational practices (Hofstede 1990).

In the European context the standard classification of Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, Continental and Eastern European groups of countries has set the path of comparative studies on Public Administration reform. Scandinavian countries are seen as a mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Germanic state traditions (Loughlin, 1994). They were originally legalistic, they changed to a corporatist model, but they have progressively introduced “market” mechanisms in the management of their public sector. European Anglo-Saxon countries are the champions of “new public management”. Like their non European counterparts –

Australia, New Zealand and the United States – they are seen as “marketizers” following a tradition of minimal state (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2004). Continental countries follow a French - Napoleonic or German - organicist state tradition (Loughlin, 1994). They are seen as legalistic and traditional with different levels of intensity in their modernizing efforts. France, for example, is seen as relatively innovative with regard to budgeting practices while Germany is presented as the champion of European “traditional” public administration (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2004). Eastern European countries, on the other hand, have public administration systems that are seen as “in transition”.

Authors interested in the study of organizations have pointed to the relationship between culture and organizational logics. Hofstede (2001) pointed to differences between organizational cultures in terms of attention to results, personal relations, professionalism, social control and downward accountability. Fischer et al. (2005) showed that paternalistic relationships between supervisors and subordinates in organizations tend to dominate in hierarchical and collectivist cultures (Hofstede 1980).

Other authors have also used cultural theory (Douglas 1972) to develop typologies of organizational culture (Altman & Baruch 1998), bureaucratic control (Hood 1991), or work identities (Berg 2006). Recent efforts in developing organizational culture theory in the public sector have focused on the competing nature of public administration values. A reference in the field is Quinn and Kimberly’s (1984) typology of organizational cultures. These authors identified four types of organizational culture depending on the dominance of certain values over others. Group cultures are associated with a focus on people and employee cohesion rather than the organization or productivity. Developmental cultures are associated with a focus on the organization adaptive capacity, growth, and resource acquisition. Hierarchical cultures tend to focus on control and organizational stability. Finally, rational cultures are associated with an emphasis on planning, goal setting, and production.

2.2 Administrative Roles and Identities

The role perspective is well established in organizational studies (Biddle 1986). In the public sector, scholarship has notably advanced role theory through the development of typologies adapted to public organizations. By modeling different interests and values, Downs (1967) conceptualized one of the first typologies of administrative roles including “climbers”, “zealots”, “conservers”, “advocates” and “statesmen”. In the same vein, Considine and Lewis (1999) distinguished the bureaucratic, corporatist and managerial roles as involving different conceptions of the administrative practices, values, and degrees of control over subordinates and attention to clients.

In a recent attempt to further integrate role theory and distinctiveness of public organizations, Selden et al. (1999) detected five types of public administrators according to their different conceptions of administrative responsibility and values. According to Selden et al. (1999), the “stewards of the public interest” show interest in the definition of public policies that reach all citizens; the “business like utilitarians” value efficiency over other public sector values; the “guardians” are concerned with neutrality and administrative procedure; the “adapted realists” value social equity but have a concern for administrative procedure; finally, the “practical idealists” give priority to getting things done over influencing policy.

The idea about the internalization by public servants of cognitive and normative patterns of behavior is also at the base of the neo-institutional theory of organizations (Meyer and Rowan 1983, March and Olsen 1989). The concept of institutional logic can be used to explain the behavior of civil servants acting according to organizational beliefs and principles (Horton 2006). The idea of institutional logics and their evolution has been the object of a number of recent studies concerned with the extension of NPM (new public management) practices and the promotion of competition and efficiency in public administration. Many of these studies are concerned about the impact of NPM ideology on the identity of bureaucrats as servants of public interest (Milward 1996, Fountain, 2001). Thomas and Davis (2005) studied the reforms in the eighties and nineties in the

US and showed how civil servants resisted the change of administrative practices, just as Meyer and Hammerschmidt (2006) did in Australia. Some other authors have identified the existence of two identities in conflict, one characterized by a concern about human resources management, social equity, public interest, and the influence of politics on public administration; and the other interested in making public administration more efficient, eliminating the excess of regulations and administrative procedures and cooperating with the political actors to satisfy citizen needs (Rondeaux 2006, Boockel and Noordergraaf 2006).

3. Some Notes on Power and Political Behavior Theory

Power can be defined as the ability to “get things done” (Long 1949, Pfeffer 1992) or the ability to achieve desired objectives (Wilson 1995). As such, power is a capacity; however, power can also be understood in relational terms. An entity can both have power over other entity or entities and bear the power of other entity or entities (Clegg 1989).

According to Clegg (1996) there are two big approaches to power in social sciences. The first and older approach finds its roots in Marx and Weber’s works and understands power as a form of domination that solidifies in organizational structures. This approach is seminal in Political Science and Public Administration research, and has resulted in studies on bureaucratic politics and political control and resistance (Hardy & Clegg 1996). The second approach understands power as the relations of influence that emerge in organizations beyond formal structures of authority. This approach dominates in organizational psychology and behavior studies, and is inspired by a more functionalist conception of organizations (Clegg 1996).

3.1 Civil Servants and Politics

From the side of the critical approach to power in organizations, studies on bureaucratic control and bureaucratic politics are paramount (Frederickson and Smith 2008).

Bureaucratic politics theory treats administrative decision makers as political actors and focuses on the determinants of their political behavior (Frederickson and Smith 2008). Bureaucratic control theory assumes that politics and administration can be separated, and has traditionally examined the mechanisms used by various institutions to influence bureaucratic behavior. More recently, bureaucratic control studies have found in the principal - agent model and in public servant's perceptions a very productive analytical framework and source of data (Woods and Waterman 1993, Furlong 1998). In a path-breaking study, Waterman, Rouse and Wright (1998) showed that public employees do not perceive political entities separately but as pertaining to groups of actors with similar kinds of political influence ("venues of influence"). In their survey of public employees of EPA regional offices and New Mexico Environment Department, the authors found that bureaucratic agents drew a clear distinction between the influence exerted by "sponsors" (legislatures, executive offices, and courts) and "clients" (i.e. interest groups, media and public opinion). Bureaucrats also separated between actors who exert direct influence over their offices' enforcement of the law and those who exert more diffuse influence.

The recent trend in the study of bureaucratic control from the perspective public servants' perceptions is tangent to a number of works interested in identifying civil servants' political attitudes and behavior. Putnam (1973) established the distinction between "classic" bureaucrats, characterized by their impartiality and lack of confidence on politicians, and "political" bureaucrats, characterized by their concern the need of political influence and negotiation. Gregory (1991) applied the distinction between "classic", "political" and third category of "technocrat" bureaucrats to the study of public servants in two Australian city governments, and found that that "political" and "technocrat" bureaucrats were younger and showed more initiative and compromise with policy making than "classic" bureaucrats. In a inspiring study, Christensen (1991) explored Norwegians public servant's perceptions *vis à vis* political appointees' influence and professional norms, and reported that the former appear to have few problems in attending to and balancing both political and professional role norms. Looking at the Greek administration, Sotiropoulos (1994) pointed to differences in high level public

servants' perceptions on organizational conflict and patronage depending on their degree of affiliation with the political party in government. In US, Dolan (2002) use federal civil servants' perceptions to show that political appointees identified themselves with more political tasks than civil servants.

3.2 Power Relations within Public Organizations

Despite the attention paid by influential Public Administration scholars as Weber, Barnard, Waldo or Long to the importance of power in the public sector, much of the conceptual and empirical work on power dynamics has been developed with regard to private organizations.

One of the main veins of research on power in organizations focuses on the identification of power sources. French and Raven (1956) identified six sources of power: coercive power-threat of punishment; reward power-promise of monetary or non-monetary compensation; legitimate power-drawing on one's right to influence; expert power-relying on one's superior knowledge; and referent power-based on target's identification with influencing agent. This typology set the path for the development of an important number of studies on sources of personal power. Alternatively, scholars have pointed to the power dynamics emanating from organizational attributes such as the division of labor, rules, positions and social capital (Mechanic 1996, Friedkin 1993). Friedkin (1993), for example, reported that interpersonal power increases with the similarity of position and functions of members involved.

A second vein of research explains power dynamics in terms of resource dependence and control of uncertainty (Salancik and Pfeffer 1996, Haslam 2004). From this perspective, civil servants are both objects and subject of power. As illustrated by Kotter (1977), high civil servants can strengthen their power by changing the working conditions of their subordinates or making sure their units have the resources they need. Alternatively, as reported by Kanter (1979), high civil servants are more vulnerable than lower ranked

bureaucrats since the former depend more on the external provision of resources, information and support than the later.

4. Axes of analysis

The literature overview presented points to several axes of analysis that were selected to conduct the research on the values and power relations in the Spanish central administration.

- Administrative Values

The analysis follows the Denhardt and DeLeon (1995) typology including “managerial efficiency”, “political responsiveness”, “neutrality”, “pro-active administration” and “social equity” to model the competing expectations embedded in the idea of administrative responsibility. The value of “political responsiveness” goes along normative perceptions about the desirability of public servants to subordinate to and facilitate elected officials’ plans. “Managerial efficiency” represents concerns about the need to use expertise and professionalism on behalf of the highest efficiency. “Neutrality” goes along a will to follow superiors’ orders, procedures, and use law as a guide for decision making. “Pro-active administration” represents a predisposition for discretion, participation in public policy formulation and a willingness to use own criteria and values for decision making. “Social equity” represents a preference for fairness over efficiency and a concern about the welfare of less privileged portions of the population.

Denhardt and DeLeon’s (1995) model was subsequently operationalized by Selden, Brewer and Brudney (1999) through a 40-item instrument to be applied through the Q Methodology technique. Q methodology allows survey participants to consider and evaluate simultaneously different items (i.e. different statements about the five values). We replicated Selden et al.’s (1999) Q Methodology exercise including all 40 items. And we averaged each construct’s items into a single index as a first step to explore the distribution of the different values in our population and across groups of interest.

- Organizational Culture:

The construct of “organizational culture” was conceptualized following Quinn and Kimberly’s (1984) model of “rational”, “developmental”, “group” and “hierarchical” culture. To measure the different types of organizational culture we used Moynihan and Pandey’s (2007) items, which were based on Zammuto and Krakower’s (1991). Moynihan and Pandey’s (2007) ultimate organizational culture indicators were the result of averaging the corresponding items for each indicator. We followed the same procedure in our study.

- Sources of Power:

The ultimate reference for this series of constructs is well known French and Raven’s (1956) piece. Since French and Raven’s pioneering work numerous studies have developed measures to capture sources of interpersonal power. Among the most recent studies are Hinking and Schriesheim (1988) and Raven et al. (2006). In this study, survey items fulfilling “coercive”, “reward”, “expert”, “referent” and “legitimate” power are based on Hinking and Schriesheim (1988). French and Raven (2006) developed also measurements for “information” power and a series of new categories developing original ones along the lines of the use of personal relations. The analysis included two of those items to measure information and personal power. Additionally, we developed two versions of the entire set of survey items in order to capture public servant’s perceptions both as subjects and objects of power.

- Power Distance

Power distance can be defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed inequally” (Hofstede 1980, 28). To measure “power distance” were used original Hofstede’s (1980) items. These items were also used by House et al. (2004). Since the items treat participants as subjects of power, we also developed a second version of one

of the items to capture participants' perceptions as objects of power. Hofstede (1980) collapses items into single variables by averaging them and multiplying the results by a constant. We also used this rule in our study.

- Venues of Control and Influence

The items to measure venues of intra-organizational power dynamics were based on Waterman, Rouse and Wright (1998) and Pandey and Wright (2006) ideas and measurement. Three general venues seem to be common to both pieces of work: the "hierarchical/political" venue (i.e. represented by Congress, President, or political appointees); the "regulatory/legal" venue (i.e. represented mainly by courts); and the "non-governmental" venue (i.e. represented by interest groups, public opinion or client groups). The selection of the items used in this study builds on that observation and on the fact that some of the original items had to be adapted to the particular structure of Spain (i.e. the inclusion of item to cover the influence of the European Union). We then averaged the scores of the items to obtain three indicators of the "hierarchical", "regulatory" and "non-governmental" venues respectively.

- Tolerance to Politics

The "tolerance of politics" index (Gregory 1991) is based on the index of "Support for Pluralistic Politics" developed by Putnam (1973). We borrowed all Gregory's (1991) items. Similarly to Hofstede (1980), Gregory (1991) collapses items into single variables by averaging them and multiplying the results by 10. We used the same rule to replicate the index of "tolerance to politics" in our study.

The analysis explores the distributions of the constructs of interest both in terms of general percentages and in terms of variation across groups of interest. The analysis of variation across groups of interest is structured along the dichotomy between organizational vs. personal variables (Christiansen's 1991), which we found very useful as a first step to give some structure to the exploratory findings. On the one hand, we

explore means differences across age, gender, education, motives to work for the organization and years worked for the public sector. On the other hand, we compare means across types of public organizations, forms of access to present positions and rank level (See Table: Grouping Variables in Annex). Additionally, we compare public servant's perceptions as subjects and as objects of power (Clegg 1989) for some of the variables studied. Finally we contrast findings on public servant's fact-based and normative-based perceptions on power and political influence.

Almost every original author treats Likert-scale variables as interval variables by assuming that there exists an underlying continuity along the ranks. For reasons of coherence we decided to follow the same assumption. In this vein, we used t-test and ANOVA test to compare means across groups of interests. Given the exploratory nature of this study we used a general null hypothesis stating the inexistence of mean differences across groups of interest. We report in this paper the two-tail p-values along with the group means. Whenever it was possible, we also performed the analysis treating the variables as ordinal. Although not reported in this paper, the Wilcoxon-Mann Whiney and Kurskal Wallis tests to compare ranks across groups reported similar results than the t-test and the ANOVA tests. In the case of multi-item variables, we used a general averaging rule to collapse the items. We also rescaled resulting variables whenever the authors of reference did so (See Table: Variables and Measurement Items in Annex).

5. Measurement and data

The data for this study were collected as a part of a broader survey project on Spanish Public Servants' attitudes and opinions during the summer of 2009.

5.1 Measurement issues

The measurement items are based on public servants' perceptions. Perceptions can be used to capture participants' opinions and beliefs or to measure facts. The distinction has been used by students of organizations to contrast fact-based estimations and normative

considerations across different topics (Hofstede 1983, Jurkiewicz & Brown 1998). This survey converges with these scholars and other Public Management scholars (Gregory 1991, Ashford & Mael 1992) in using perceptions both based on facts and on beliefs.

The use of opinion based items entails the general difficulty of dealing with normative considerations. It is more difficult to control the participants' interpretation and reaction to questions when these are based on personal judgments (Podsakoff 1985). We attempted to minimize this issue by requesting the input of current practitioners during the elaboration of the instrument. Alternatively, the use of perceptions to measure both attitudes and facts has been criticized for not capturing participants' ultimate behavior. Although perceptions and attitudes and actual behavior may be very much correlated, the later can also be mediated by incentives and constraints (Podsakoff 1985). However, the intent of this study was not to diagnose organizational behavior but to obtain a picture of public servants' perceptions that can be used to explain or better interpret behavioral findings in further studies.

The use of other authors' survey questions responds to a deliberated effort to build on their previous work and findings. There are several benefits of doing this. First, concretizing the measurement of constructs such as "organizational culture" or "political loyalty" into survey questions entails complex decisions about the meaning of the constructs or the phrasing and measurement scales of the survey entries, as well as thorough interpretation of intermediate outputs (i.e. when using factor analysis). By using well tested instruments, we capitalize on the successful efforts of previous researchers to operationalize difficult constructs. Second, the use of factor analysis techniques to derive attitudinal constructs has shown to be particularly useful and popular in the field of Public Management. Typologies resulting from factor analysis techniques indicate survey questions used are somehow effective in capturing data and in identifying broad attitudinal cleavages in a particular population. Validating those typologies in different populations seems to be an important step if the typologies are to be used as independent variables for further analyses (Hofstede 1980).

There are also risks of using other people's measurement items. Others' items may have methodological flaws that we do not want to import into our data collection, i.e. we do not want to use measurements that are not discriminating enough among different attitudes. Also, by using other's instruments we are renouncing to the development of better measurement instruments and we are somehow constrained to the specific definitions of constructs used by the authors of reference. In an attempt to overcome these two issues, we gave preference to measurement items and constructs that have been replicated by multiple authors besides their original developers. The acceptance of those items by other members of academic community can be considered as a hint about the validity of the items. Additionally, we have attempted to improve the effectiveness of some measurement items by accommodating them to the idiosyncrasy of the Spanish political system while respecting the original meaning of the original authors' constructs.

5.2 The Survey

The survey was personally applied to a representative sample of 424 high civil servants from the Spanish central administration by a group of seven postgraduate students. The sample is stratified, non proportional and multistage.

Since the object of the study were the perceptions of civil servants and one issue was whether they differed according to the type of public organization, the study opted for a stratified non proportional sample with the same number of interviews with high civil servants from ministries and high civil servants from other public entities (autonomous organisms, social security, agencies and other entities). The actual numbers of employees are quite different since ministries account for 82.599 and other entities for 17.820.

The objective was to achieve 200 interviews of each strata to have a total number of 400 interviews with a sample error of 4,89% for the whole survey and a significance level of 95% with maximum indetermination $P=Q=50$. The real sample of 424 had a smaller proportion (44%) from the ministries, a slightly bigger proportion from other semi

autonomous agencies (53,7%) and a small percentage from public corporations (1,9%). In budgetary terms, according to the budget for 2008, ministries account for 48,1% and public corporations for 0,7% of the total public expense. Among the semi-autonomous agencies, social security accounts for 36,5%.

Not having access to an adequate list of all the individuals in the population, the sample design followed a multistage procedure. The first step consisted of sampling the primary organizational units for each strata (a total of 54 organizations) to eventually prepare a list of high civil servants with levels between 26, 28, 29 and 30 from each organization (eventually some 25 and 27 were included) controlling for level, sex and age.

In practice, the coordinators of the study arranged meetings with heads of the personnel office in each ministry and semi autonomous agency and elaborated the lists of the civil servants who were going to be interviewed. Interviewers had difficulties to access some of the offices and to set appointments with some interviewees. In order to control for their discretion about which civil servant they finally talked to, they were given instructions to call up to six times before they substituted the interviewee.

6. Results

6.1 Administrative Values and Organizational Culture

In the first place, there is the question of the general administrative culture of Spanish central administration civil servants. Do civil servants' perceptions correspond to the conventional view of a legalistic-traditional administration? Are those perceptions homogeneous across different types of public entities?

With regard to administrative values, the respondents showed a high level of consensus favoring "neutrality" and "equity" values. "Managerial efficiency" and "proactive administration" values are also well represented in our sample but still low when confronted with "equity" and "neutrality" values. On the other hand, respondents clearly show a lower affinity with the idea of "political responsiveness". They certainly see

themselves as less responsible for political official's will than for contributing to the welfare of the less privileged or for making sure the legislation is respected.

Table 1: Administrative values, descriptive statistics

	Managerial Efficiency	Political Responsiveness	Neutrality	Proactive Administration	Social Equity
N	403	406	402	405	406
Mean	4.5819	3.4147	4.6399	4.2787	4.4892
Median	4.6250	3.3750	4.7500	4.3750	4.5000

Breaking down the answers by groups, we found significant differences for both personal variables and organizational variables. Looking more closely at “political responsiveness” perceptions, we found higher rank respondents and those joining the public sector for reasons of job security and salary (extrinsic motives) or by chance to have lower levels of “political responsiveness” than lower rank respondents and those joining the public sector for reasons of public service duty, attraction to the job tasks or the prestige of the public service (intrinsic motives). Accordingly, the preference for “neutrality values” was higher for those following extrinsic motives and chance than for those reporting intrinsic motives. With regard to the distribution of “proactive administration” values across levels of education, respondents with higher educational levels appeared to be closer to this idea than those with lower levels of education.

These results suggest the potential existence of a cleavage in Spanish Public Administration along the lines of the political loyalty-neutrality continuum of values. A following-up hypothesis might state that bureaucrats' inherent traits, (i.e. education or motivation) and their position in the hierarchy can be driving beliefs about the suitability of political loyalty and discretion in Spanish public organizations.

Table 2: Administrative values across groups, means comparison

Dependent Variable	Group Variable	Groups	Means	2-tail p-value
Political Responsiveness	Organizational Level	High Ranked	3.3406	.002
		Low Ranked	3.5737	
	Motives to work for Public Sector	Intrinsic Motives	3.5683	.003
		Extrinsic Motives	3.3202	
		Chance	3.3049	
Proactive Administration	Education	PhD	4.5625	.014
		Masters	4.2957	
		Bachelors	4.2756	
		College	4.0976	
Neutrality	Motives to Work for Public Sector	Intrinsic Motives	4.5877	.003
		Extrinsic Motives	4.6490	
		Chance	4.8384	

In terms of organizational culture, results indicate that “rational culture” tends to dominate over “group” and “hierarchical” cultures and, particularly, over “developmental culture”. It seems that the promotion of results-based performance and effectiveness in our respondents’ organizations does not necessarily go along to a similar emphasis on the values of individual initiative and problem solving capacity.

Table 3: Organizational Culture, descriptive statistics

	Rational Culture	Development Culture	Hierarchical Culture	Group Culture
N	418	419	420	421
Mean	3.4107	2.8783	3.2548	3.3171
Minimum	1.67	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Although the answers were generally very homogeneous, we found small differences across groups. The most relevant differences were with regard to “hierarchical culture” and across type of organization. Respondents in ministries (executive departments)

reported more frequently the presence of “hierarchical culture” in their organizations than respondents in agencies and other hybrid organizations. In his regard, the relative smaller size and narrower mission of agencies can help to explain the abandonment of the traditional emphasis on procedural behavior and functional division of labor across public organizations. Looking at “developmental culture”, we also found differences in levels of “developmental culture” across organizational rank level and number of years worked for the public organization. The results would confirm that those having joined the administration more recently and occupying lower positions are closer to a “developmental culture”.

Table 4: Organizational culture across groups, means comparison

Dependent Variable	Group Variable	Groups	Means	2-tail p-value
Hierarchical Culture	Type of Organization	Executive Dept.	3.3804	.016
		Agency	3.1689	
Development Culture	Organizational Level	High Ranked	2.7938	.016
		Low Ranked	3.0103	
	Years Worked in Public Organization	From 0 to 12	3.3251	0.005
		From 13 to 25	3.4229	
		From 26 to 39	3.4136	
		From 40 to 52	3.6167	

6.2 Power and Politics

One of the central issues with regard to administrative culture is the acceptance of hierarchy. Following the items composing Hofstede (1980) index of power distance, four supervisors “models” were defined along a continuum from leaders who make discretionary decisions and expect subordinates to implement them to leaders who would meet and discuss important decisions with subordinates and try to reach consensus. One question asked about the desired style of supervisor and a second question asked about the actual style of supervisor. The scores for these two questions show a clear preference for more democratic supervisors and a general perception that the actual style of

supervisor is rather participatory. In comparative terms, however, there is a relative gap between respondents' perceptions and requirements about the style of their supervisors.

The comparison between the scores for the actual style of the respondents' supervisor and the scores of the respondents' own style as supervisor showed significant differences. Respondents' own style is seen as more democratic than the style of the respondents' supervisor. These results could be related to the gap between normative and fact-based perceptions mentioned above. But, these results also suggest that public servants in the sample have high expectations about their supervisors' behavior.

Table 5: General perceptions on type of supervisor

	Types of supervisor			
	"Executive"		"Democratic"	
Normative supervisor	12 2,8%	61 14,5 %	128 30,3%	221 52,4 %
Actual supervisor	87 20,9%	99 23,8 %	131 31,5 %	99 23,8 %
Own style as supervisor	7 1,7%	79 18,8%	139 33 %	196 46,6%

The third question of Hofstede's (1980) index of power distance marks a clear tendency to respect the hierarchy between supervisors and subordinates in the sample. The fact that respondents' perceive low levels of bottom-up contestation contrasts with their above commented normative considerations about the suitability of highly democratic leaders. At the same time, there is a clear convergence with the hypothesis about the higher expectations associated to higher ranks in Spanish public organizations.

Table 6: General Perceptions on respect of hierarchy and authority

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
"With what frequency lower level subordinates show disagreement with higher level civil servants in your unit?"	158* 37,4%	195 46,2%	50 11,8%	19 4,5 %

* Sum of "rarely" and "never"

Breaking down by groups, significant differences in the power distance index could be found across type of organization and number of years worked. Respondents working in ministries (executive departments) reported a higher acceptance of power distance than respondents working in agencies and other hybrid organizations. This is coherent with findings and interpretation on the "hierarchical" culture. Alternatively, there was not a trend for power distance across number of years worked.

Table 7: Power distance index across groups, means comparison

Dependent Variable	Group Variable	Groups	Means	2-tail p-value
Power Distance Index	Type of Organization	Executive Dept.	25.1366	.004
		Agency	23.7054	
	Years Worked in Public Organization	From 0 to 12 years worked	24.7737	.02
		From 13 to 25 years worked	23.3333	
		From 26 to 39 years worked	25.1852	
		From 40 to 52 years worked	25.5000	

With regard to sources of interpersonal power, respondents identified more frequently "personal", "information", "expert" and "referent" power than organizational sources of power such as "reward", "legitimate" or "coercive" power. These findings converge with the argument in the literature on the limited discretion of public managers over human resources management and procurement systems (Rainey 2004). In an attempt to

overcome the lack of control over reward or promotion systems, public managers would tend to use softer sources of power such as their privileged access to information or their initiative in developing personal relationships with their subordinates.

When comparing perceptions from the perspective of object and subject of power (own sources of power vs. sources of power of supervisor), means are higher when the respondent is the object of power than when the respondent is the subject of power.

Table 8: Sources of power of supervisor, descriptive statistics

	Reward Power	Legitimate Power	Coercive Power	Personal Power	Information Power	Expert Power	Reference Power
N	420	420	421	421	421	421	421
Mean	1.5845	1.9798	1.9074	3.2708	2.7601	3.3385	3.3361
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Table 9: Own sources of power, descriptive statistics

	Reward Power	Legitimate Power	Coercive Power	Personal Power	Information Power	Expert Power	Reference Power
N	413	413	412	412	413	413	413
Mean	1.4177	2.1441	1.7197	3.7694	2.9225	3.7603	3.8208
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

It is relevant to note the existence of significant differences in perceptions about superiors' reward power across types of organization and rank level. Respondents in ministries (executive departments) and in higher ranks show more perception of superiors' reward power than respondents in agencies and lower ranks respectively. These results are again related to the higher perceptions of hierarchical culture in ministries than in agencies and the fact that superiors of high ranked public servants have political roles holding a supposed leverage over the reward system.

Also, there are significant differences in perceptions about “information” and “expert” power across forms of access to the present position. That is, respondents holding temporal positions or positions marked as “political” assignments show higher appreciation for “information” and “expert” power than respondents having strictly professional positions.

Table 10: Power sources across groups, means comparison

Independent Variable	Group Variable	Groups	Means	2-tail p-value
Reward Power	Type of Organization	Executive Dept.	1.6432	.01
		Agency	1.5133	
	Organizational Level	High Ranked	1.6583	.019
		Low Ranked	1.4726	
Expert Power	Form of access to present position	Professional, career	3.1991	.021
		Temporal assignment	3.4479	
		“Political” assignment	3.5286	
Information Power	Form of access to present position	Professional, career	2.6335	.049
		Temporal assignment	2.8229	
		“Political” assignment	3.0286	

Respondents showed a quite radical stance with regard to being the object of control by external entities. Respondents’ views would have pleased the defenders of the Wilson / Weberian paradigm of strict separation between politics and administration on the basis of the experience and professional knowledge of the bureaucracy. The positions are extreme in the case of media, opposition groups in the Parliament, other administrations and pressure groups. They are less accentuated in the case of political appointees, courts and European institutions.

Table 11: Perceived sources of influence, descriptive statistics

	Political Appointees	Other Public Adms.	Media	Interest Groups	Parliament	Courts	EU
N	422	421	422	421	421	419	419
Mean	3.18	1.86	1.73	2.09	1.50	2.26	2.04
Median	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	4	5	5

Table 12: Accepted sources of influence, descriptive statistics

	Political Appointees	Other Public Adms.	Media	Interest Groups	Parliament	Courts	EU
N	421	421	421	421	421	420	420
Mean	2.57	1.69	1.41	1.89	1.52	2.20	2.14
Median	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

The results for the multi-item variables of “hierarchical venue”, “non-governmental venue” and “regulative venue” reflect the observations made for the disaggregated items: the “hierarchical” and “regulatory” venues (political appointees/elected officials, Courts and European Union) are perceived to be more recurrent than the “non-governmental” venue.

Table 13: Venues of influence, descriptive statistics

	Hierarchical Political Venue	Regulatory Legal Venue	Non Governmental Venue
N	421	418	421
Mean	2.1821	2.1531	1.9121
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.33	5.00	5.00

The “hierarchical”, “non-governmental” and “regulatory” venues significantly vary across groups but follow similar patterns. The means of all three venues are generally lower for respondents occupying a strictly professional position than for respondents occupying a “political” or temporal position. Similarly, the means of all three venues decrease as the number of years worked of respondents increase. This is coherent with previous results suggesting that civil servants’ receptiveness to external influence is higher among those having joined the administration more recently and occupying positions that are closer to the political level.

The above detected profile as a “technocratic bureaucracy” is coherent with the responses to a series of statements designed to test their level of tolerance with political interference. More specifically, respondents were given the opportunity to value the role of political appointees in relation to policy making, the content of their work as civil servants or the defense of public interests. Respondents showed a critical view about the influence of political parties and pressure groups in policy making and reported preference for expert knowledge and technical criteria. The index of “tolerance to politics” resulting from rescaling and averaging all the items reports similar information.

Table 14: General perceptions of political tolerance

	Levels of agreement				
	1 (disagreement)			5 (agreement)	
Statements expressing high political tolerance	181 21,5 %	246 29,2 %	266 31,6 %	112 13,3 %	38 4,5 %
Statements expressing low political tolerance	108 4,3%	275 10,9 %	606 24 %	821 32,6 %	711 28,2 %

Breaking down by groups, there are significant differences in “tolerance to politics”. Higher “tolerance to politics” of lower ranked and intrinsically motivated respondents would go along with those groups’ higher perceptions of political responsiveness. The higher level of “tolerance to politics” of senior respondents would be reflecting a hypothetical accommodation of initial expectations about bureaucratic ideals of public

service autonomy to more realistic views about the political aspects embedded in the administrative practice.

Table 15: Index of tolerance politics (ITP) across groups, means comparison

Dependent Variable	Group Variable	Groups	Means	2-tail p-value
Tolerance to Politics	Organizational Level	High Ranked	35.9423	.007
		Low Ranked	39.2241	
	Motives to Work for Public Organization	Intrinsic Motives	38.7946	.014
		Extrinsic Motives	35.6111	
		Chance	34.9716	
	Form of Recruitment	Professional, career	35.2614	.001
		Temporal assignment	41.2676	
		"Political" assignment	38.2105	
	Years Worked for Public Organization	From 0 to 12 years worked	35.6646	.000
		From 13 to 25 years worked	35.2247	
		From 26 to 39 years worked	39.7080	
		From 40 to 52 years worked	43.2143	

In sum, the relative preponderance of both “rational” and “group” organizational cultures together with the maintenance of support of the “hierarchical” is not based on organizational sources of power such as “legitimate”, “reward” or “coercive” power but on softer sources of influence such as “experience”, “information” and “identification”. This result is coherent with the moderately high scores of respondents on power distance given the dominance of the “group” organizational culture. Alternatively, respondents’ appreciation of “neutrality” and “equity” values seem to be related to their low perceptions and tolerance of political influence. This would be reinforced by the findings about the negative gap between perceptions of desired and actual influence from political appointees.

Both personal and structural variables seem to discriminate values and power perceptions in this study. Type of organization appeared to be discriminating of perceptions about hierarchy: respondents in agencies showing a slightly lower perception of vertical relationships. Respondents' position in the hierarchy and their motives to join the public sector were discriminating of values and perceptions related to the political nature of the administrative practice. Lower level respondents showed higher "political responsiveness" values, a lower appreciation of "reward power", and a higher "tolerance to politics". Intrinsically motivated respondents showed less appreciation of "neutrality", more appreciation of "political responsiveness", and more "tolerance to politics". Finally, number of years worked for the public organization seemed to discriminate the perceptions of those having worked for more years in the public sector. This group showed a higher appreciation of "developmental" culture and a higher "tolerance to politics".

7. Conclusions

In the background of Public Administration and Management research there is the issue of civil servants' values and power to act given the institutional constraints they face, particularly in a context of reforms and normative theories promoting an image of an innovative and politically astute public manager. The institutional constraints are similar for other bureaucratic organizations but, in the case central administrations, they are reinforced by the lack of proximity with citizens and the elusive visibility of public sector impact compared with other public sector organizations like, for example, local administrations.

Spanish high civil servants responding to a survey showed a preference for "neutrality" and "social equity" values. They also valued "managerial efficiency". But nor a managerial nor a bureaucratic logic dominates. Actually, a managerial logic would be secondary to a bureaucratic logic if compared in terms of values associated to each. Those values dominate over "political responsiveness" and "pro-active administration" values.

However, even if the managerial logic does not dominate, the respondents' perceptions are influenced by the managerial dimension of the work they do in their organizations. Most of them manage budgets and human resources, making sure their units achieve the objectives that the upper political structure has set for them. That may be the reason why there is an important presence of a "rational culture" at the organizational level in the sample. These results converge with previous studies in suggesting that institutional logics promoted along recent reforms may not be eroding but broadening the scope of values held by public administrators (Thomas and Davis 2006, Meyer and Hammersmid 2006, Rondeaux 2006, Poulsen 2007).

This is not the case with regard to the political dimension. In terms of the politics / administration dichotomy, respondents value their autonomy and show a considerable lack of confidence on politicians. While they are relatively aware of the political influence exerted by political appointees and some regulatory external organizations like the judicial or the European Union, they have a very low level of acceptance of any venues of political influence.

Finally, respondents recognize the existence of hierarchy but they do not necessarily find its legitimacy in the organization's structure of authority but in personal characteristics and resources of supervisors. Actually, respondents show a clear preference for "democratic" supervisors. They also and perceive their own current style as less authoritative than their supervisors'. This is coherent with the respondents' strong perception of a "group culture" and appreciation of their rather soft power sources such as personal relations, information and expertise.

8. References

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9. Annex

Table 16: Variables and measurement items

Original Construct	Reference works	New developments	Number of items used	Treatment of items
Sources of interpersonal power: - Legitimate power - Reward power - Coercive power - Referent power - Personal power - Information power - Expert power	Hinkin and Schriesheim (1988) Raven et al. (2006)	Two versions of the whole set of items: 1. Participants as objects of power. 2. Participants as subjects of power.	12 + 12 items	Average of items according to Hinkin and Schriesheim (1988) Raven et al. (2006)
Power Distance	Hofstede (1980) House et al. (2004)	Two versions of one of the items: 1. Participants as objects of power. 2. Participants as subjects of power.	3 + 1 items	Average and rescaling of three original items (Index of Power Distance). Separate treatment of new item (Hofstede 1980)
Venues of Control and Influence	Waterman, Rouse and Wright (1998) Pandey and Wrigth (2006)	Adaptation to EU's framework and to Spanish political system.	7 items	Aggregation according to theory (Waterman et al. 1998; Pandey and Wright 2006)
Tolerance to Politics	Putnam (1973) Aberbach et al. (1981) Gregory (1991)	--	9 items	Average and rescaling of three original items (Index of Tolerance to Politics; Gregory 1991)
Organizational culture: - Rational - Developmental - Group - Hierarchical	Zammuto and Krakower (1991) Moynihan and Pandey (2007)	--	10 items	Average of items according to Moynihan and Pandey (2007)
Administrative Values: - Managerial Efficiency - Political Responsiveness, - Neutrality - Pro-Active Administration - Social Equity	Brewer, Selden and Brudney (1999)	--	40 items	Average of items according to Brewer et al. (1999)

Table 17: Grouping variables

Variable	Personal variables			Structural variables				
	Age (years)	Gender	Education	Organization	Level	Form of access to present position	Years Worked	Motives to work for Organization
Groups	25-35	Male	PhD	Ministries (executive department)	>27	Professional, career	0-12	Intrinsic
	36-46	Female	Masters	Agency	< 27	Temporary Assignment	13-25	Extrinsic
	47-57		Bachelors			"Political" Assignment	26-39	Chance
	58-68		College				40-52	