



Public Sector Reform in Spain: Views and Experiences from Senior Executives

Country Report as part of the COCOPS Research Project

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Coordination for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future (COCOPS): www.cocops.eu

About COCOPS

The COCOPS project (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) seeks to comparatively and quantitatively assess the impact of New Public Management-style reforms in European countries, drawing on a team of European public administration scholars from 11 universities in 10 countries. It analyses the impact of reforms in public management and public services that address citizens' service needs and social cohesion in Europe. Evaluating the extent and consequences of NPM's alleged fragmenting tendencies and the resulting need for coordination is a key part of assessing these impacts. It is funded under the European Union's 7th Framework Programme as a Small or Medium-Scale Focused Research Project (2011-2014).

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1. Introduction¹

Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future (COCOPS), as one of the largest comparative public management research projects in Europe, intends to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges facing the public sector in European countries and to systematically explore the impact of New Public Management (NPM)-style reforms in Europe. The project brings together public administration scholars from eleven universities in ten countries² and is funded as part of the European Union's 7th Framework Programme between January 2011 and June 2014.³ The research is comparative and evidence-based, drawing on both existing data and innovative new quantitative and qualitative data collection, at both national and policy sector levels. A cornerstone of the project is the *COCOPS Executive Survey on Public Sector Reform in Europe*: an original, large-scale survey of public sector top executives in ten European countries, exploring executives' opinions and experiences with regards to public sector reforms in general government, as well as more particularly in the health and employment policy sectors.

Scholars within the public administration discipline have long underlined the need for more quantitative and rigorous comparative research, going beyond single-country and single-organization approaches (see Derlien 1992; Fitzpatrick et al 2011; Pollitt 2011; Raadschelders and Lee 2011). Moreover, few research initiatives have explored in depth the transformation of public administrations as triggered by NPM reform discourses in a systematic comparative form (Van de Walle and Hammerschmid 2011). Responding to such concerns, this survey offers systematic evidence regarding the dynamics of public administration reform in Europe, with the goal to create an encompassing and systematic picture of public administration after more than two decades of NPM reforms.

From a theoretical perspective the survey builds on the perception of three major reform paradigms (New Public Management, Public Governance and the Neo-Weberian State) as described by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011). Focusing on top executives, it follows pioneering elite studies such as those of Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman (see Putnam 1976, Aberbach et al. 1981, and Aberbach and Rockman 2006), which lay the foundation for many other both national and cross-national executive surveys (e.g. Mayntz and Derlien 1988; Christensen and Laegreid 2007; Bertelli et al. 2007; Trondal 2010; Bauer et al. 2009; COBRA survey; UDITE survey).

Methodologically it also draws inspiration from cross-national population surveys such as the European Social Science Survey, European Values Survey, the International Social Survey Program; as well as from experiences with cross-national surveys such as those of the Survey Research Centre at the University of Michigan (2010).

As set out by the project's terms of reference the goal of this large-scale survey is to analyse national administrations (both ministries and agencies) in the participating countries and also to take a closer look at the policy fields employment and health. The survey aims to explore public sector executives' perceptions, experiences and opinions with regards to their work context and administrative

¹ This introduction is based on Hammeschmid, Görnitz, Oprisor and Stimac (2013), and appears in the same form in all WP3 COCOPS country reports.

² Erasmus University Rotterdam, Hertie School of Governance Berlin, University of Bergen, Bocconi University, University of Cantabria, Cardiff University, CNRS Paris, Corvinus University Budapest, University of Exeter, KU Leuven, Tallinn University of Technology

³ More information on the project is available at www.cocops.eu

reforms, but also on other factors such as values and identities and the impact of the fiscal crisis. The core survey implemented in all participating countries consists of 31 questions structured in four parts (I) General information; (II) Management and Work Practice of Your Organization; (III) Public Sector Reform and the Fiscal Crisis; (IV) Attitudes, Preferences and Personal Information. The survey is a result of the joint work of all the national research teams within the COCOPS project and under the leadership of a team of researchers at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. In addition, further universities from other European countries were included as strategic partners to replicate the survey in these countries.⁴

Three essential challenges connected to the design of the questionnaire and the survey methodology had to be handled by the research team: a sample design that would allow systematic comparative analyses; an access strategy to produce (statistically sufficient) high response rates; and a questionnaire design and translation that would assure conceptual equivalence between all countries. As a general principle, the survey team opted for a balanced and pragmatic approach with a view on a maximum of quality and comparability, while still allowing for sufficient flexibility within each country's context. A core questionnaire developed by the survey team in English was translated into country-specific versions by the respective national research teams and – if assumed helpful – optional questions were added. With regards to the population definition, the research team targeted a group with relevant experience to assess overall developments and trends both on an organizational and policy field level. In general, top executives are viewed as such informants regarding the state of administration, given their privileged vantage point (Walker and Enticott 2004), but also, with the blurring of the classical boundaries between politicians and civil servants (Aberbach et al. 1981), due to their own role in policy-making and their influence on the choice and implementation of reforms (Christensen and Lægreid 1999; Ridder et al. 2006). A major critique raised against elite surveys however (see in particular Enticott et al. 2008) is that they usually focus on a limited selection of individuals at the top of the organization. As these individuals are relatively disconnected from processes at lower levels in the organizations, and also due to issues of desirability, such an approach is bound to provide a biased image of the respective organization(s). These are important points to take into consideration when interpreting the results.

In order to avoid random sampling and issues of representativeness, the COCOPS executive survey is based on a full census of all central government ministries and agencies. It covers all high level public sector executives who in their respective positions can be expected to be involved in public administration reform processes. A core set of binding sample principles, based on a detailed mapping of national administrative structures, was followed by all teams in all central government areas and especially in the case of employment and health. Deviations were only allowed if precise equivalence could not be established due to the specificity of administrative structures. Local government and service delivery levels were excluded for the purpose of this survey. Generally, within all central government ministries and subordinated agencies the two top-administrative levels were addressed; in some cases invitations were also sent to executives on the third level if, due to their policy relevance, this was deemed appropriate. State-owned enterprises and audit courts were not included due to their different task repertoire. In the fields of employment and health, as special

⁴ The Vienna University of Economics and Business for Austria, the Kaunas University of Technology for Lithuania, the Technical University of Lisbon for Portugal, Copenhagen Business School, the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence for Serbia and the University of Bern for Switzerland

focus areas, regional and state government ministries and agencies were also included if relevant – without addressing however direct service delivery levels (e.g. hospitals, job centers).

Moreover, the survey explicitly covers different units of analysis (see Pollitt 2011: 121, on units of analysis in comparative public administration research) to allow for multi-level analyses: policy field, organization and individual experiences of the respondent. These are explored through the (self)perceptions of public sector executives, acknowledged in research as the closest channel into objective processes and developments within public organizations and, at least in the absence of stringent limitations, as reliable predictors of administrative behaviour (see Aberbach et al. 1981; Bauer et al. 2009).

The survey was implemented online, with standardized webpages being built in the national language(s) for each country. Flexibility was allowed, and even recommended, in the data collection strategies used by national teams, due to major differences in administrative cultures between the countries. A major emphasis was put on a thorough data cleaning and harmonization at the end of the survey, to make sure that final results were comparable across countries and that any deviations allowed during the implementation process were explained and controlled.⁵

The survey was launched in May 2012 and implemented in two rounds (May-July 2012, and September-November 2012). In these two rounds combined, the survey was sent out to over 20.000 high ranking civil servants in the ten participating countries via post and email (using either a personalized access link or an anonymous one), depending on each country's predefined access strategy. Invitations were followed by reminders and, in cases where response rates were low, teams took additional measures, such as phone or postal reminders, to increase the number of survey participants. In the beginning of November 2012, all surveys were closed, and all datasets were cleaned, checked and harmonized according to a standardised procedure for all countries.

Table 1. Number of invitations and response rates of the COCOPS survey (by end of December 2012)

Country	Invitations Sent*	Survey completions	Response rate %
Austria	1745	637	36.50
Estonia	913	321	35.16
France	5297	1193	22.52
Germany	2295	566	24.66
Hungary	1200	351	29.25
Italy	1703	343	20.14
Netherlands	977	293	29.99
Norway	1299	436	33.56
Spain	1778	321	18.05
UK	3100	353	11.39
Total	20307	4814	23.71

*The invitations sent represent the final number of invitations that has reached respondents, after the exclusion of any failure deliveries, wrong addresses etc.

⁵ The details of the survey design and implementation process can be found in the survey Research Report (see Hammerschmid, Oprisor, Stimac, 2013).

By the end of 2012 there were 4814 valid answers available from ten participating countries and an overall response rate of 23.7% (for details see Table 1). These answers are the basis for the respective country reports. The data in both the national and the integrated datasets are subject to strict anonymity regulations, to protect individual respondents, whereas aggregate data will be published according to a set of rules commonly agreed upon by the research teams involved.

The current country report summarizes the findings for Spain, along with some comparisons with the results from all the surveys carried out in Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the UK.

2. Context and Status Quo of Public Administration Reform in Spain

Throughout the period covering the transition to democracy to the present, the Spanish public sector has undergone major changes and reforms, in some cases resulting from the aim to change the *Francoist* public administration model and, in other cases, with the main goal of public administration modernization (Prats, 2010). For the following brief summary of the Spanish public sector reforms, we rely mainly on Alba and Navarro (2011), Sevilla *et al* (2010), Ongaro (2009) and Parrado (2008).

In the past 30 years, Spain has undergone a deep process of public administration reforms. The first period corresponds to the late 1970s, when Spain began a series of reforms with the aim of changing the highly bureaucratized public administration and, in order to build a new relationship with its citizens, trying to change the traditional inaccessibility of centralized national bureaucracies. At this time, an important process of reform of the administrative red tape was introduced, focusing on the reform of the organization of ministerial and administrative bodies, a legacy of the *Francoism*. In general, and with slight changes, the current governance structure is virtually identical to that established at this stage of the transition to democracy.

In the 1980s and mid 1990s, the main measures of administrative reform focused on the decentralization process with the creation and operation of regional governments and the establishment of the basic regulation of local governments. Surprisingly, the traditional Napoleonic model was reproduced by the new regions, as well as developing its own bureaucratic system. At the same time, a profound reform of the legislation relating to public servants took place, to give answer to the new demands of a democratic administration and to eliminate some perceived pathologies of a closed model with roots in the Francoist administration.

In the 1990s the concept of “reform” changed to the concept of “modernization”, whose focus would be to improve administration-citizen relations. The 1988 Spanish edition of the OECD document *The administration as service: The public as client*, served as a starting point — to some extent — for new lines of public sector reform. A new vision of “managing” staff began, in line with what had already happened in other European countries, based on the idea that citizens were increasingly treated as consumers, or users of the services of the Administration, in line with the NPM concept.

In 1989, the Ministry of Public Administration began a process of internal debate about public management modernization through the elaboration of the "Delphi Study on modernization of operating procedures in public administration." As a result of this process in 1992 the Plan for Modernization of the Central Government was approved.

With these reforms the government intended that concepts such as efficiency, quality and effectiveness were to become priority values of administrative action. This reform process tried to improve and simplify administrative procedures, the use of ICTs and the concern about the recruitment and training of public managers, among other issues. From a practical standpoint, this modernization process provided some necessary elements to address posterior administrative reform actions and had — to some extent — a clear political impulse and leadership.

However, the implementation of the Plan for Modernization of the Spanish public administration did not respond to the high expectations of change, because of, at least partially, the resistance from the public servants elites to confront the profound changes of the organizational model, through the adoption of NPM-related mechanisms, such as management by objectives, management autonomy, results orientation, etc.

At a later stage⁶ and, with the consolidation of the autonomous communities — with transfers in education and health and the promotion of the Local Agreement (the so-called "second decentralization") — the actions in the reform and modernization have focused on five strategies: (1) To set up a flexible, agile and efficient organizational structure; (2) To reform the administrative courts; (3) To establish a new regulatory framework for human resources; (4) To promote efficiency and quality in service delivery; and (5) To incorporate new technologies inside public administration.

In addition to these specific measures, a Committee of Experts was constituted in April 2003, constituted of professors and senior officials, to advance public sector modernization. Finally, in 2005 the Spanish government approved the National Reform Program based on the Lisbon Strategy, including measures that, even if they were economic policies in its broadest sense, has been the basis for many administrative reforms in the last 7 years as, for example, the development of the Law of State Agencies, which was considered one of the key element in the attempt to modernize the Spanish Public Administration. Following Alba and Navarro (2011), the new law of State Agencies has the following focus: (1) transparency of public services; (2) to implement NPM-related policies such

⁶ Since 1996

as managing by results; (3) to improve policy design within agencies; (4) to favor cooperation and collaboration among different bodies; and (5) to promote the evaluation of public services.

From 2008 onwards — as a result of the ongoing financial and economic crises — reforms were mainly driven by budgetary pressures. The main reform actions taken by the Spanish Government over the past years were mainly austerity measures in order to cope with the concurrent problems of lower revenues and higher public debt.

Table 2. Spanish key administrative reforms

Period	Reform focus	Mechanism
1977-1984	Organizational reforms Civil service reorganization	Legal reforms
1990-1995	New relationship with citizenship Changes in organizational management (budgeting, human resources, etc.)	White paper Legal reforms Modernizing plans
1997-2004	PA organization Evaluation of public services	Legal reforms White paper
2004-2008	PA organization Civil service Service provision E-government	Legal reforms Development of new ICTs
2008-2012	Cutback measures	Legal reforms Budgetary constraints

Based on Alba and Navarro (2011)

3. Data and Method

3.1 Sampling and Access Strategy and Survey Implementation

The Spanish COCOPS survey was conducted by a team of researchers at the Department of Economics, University of Cantabria. In keeping with the survey's general sampling principles and population definition, the Spanish sample represents almost the full census, with the exception of Health services because of lack of contact data.

In line with the sampling strategy the survey invitations were sent to the first three — and in some cases four — levels of public sector executives in all regional government ministries, the Central Government and agencies directly subordinated to central government ministries.

As regards central government, firstly we addressed the mentioned three hierarchical levels in ministries and agencies; State Secretaries⁷, General Secretaries and General Directorates (departmental heads) of each ministry. However, due to the lack of responses we addressed the second round of the survey to the next hierarchical level, that is, general sub-directorates, which are in charge of policy implementing and should be free of political interference. For the employment sector, we addressed the aforementioned three hierarchical levels of the Central Ministry of Labor and regional ministries of labor, plus directors of the 50 provincial SEPE⁸ offices, and directors of the 17 regional employment services. Similarly, for the health sector we addressed three hierarchical levels of the Central Ministry of health and regional ministries, including 13 of the 17 regional health services. The main issue with regional health services was we did not get contact data for 4 of them.

With regards to access, for Spain an e-mail distribution seemed the best option to achieve high response rates. However, because of the difficulty of getting personal email addresses of many of the components of the sample, we decided to complement the distribution via e-mail with postal letters in cases where the e-mail distribution was not possible. The invitations were therefore sent by e-mail and regular post, including a link to the survey webpage and instructions on how to fill in the answers: either directly online –using the Spanish webpage –or by returning the filled in questionnaire received via post, fax or email. A PDF version of the questionnaire was also available on the survey webpage for download.

The Spanish survey was kept quite close to the core questionnaire, with only three optional questions added. These questions were added to get additional information about the cutback measures addressed by the Spanish Government and, to assess the influence of international and supranational organizations — such as the IMF, the OECD or the EU — on the reform process.

The first round of email and postal invitations for the Spanish survey were distributed to respondents 4-5 June 2012, with the deadline of 29th June. Email reminders were sent 19th June before the deadline on 29th June. Initial invitations were sent to 451 contacts from the three sectors analyzed, due to lack of contact data. Three months before launching the survey the whole government in Spain was changed and most of the contact details from practitioners were removed from the websites as the government underwent reorganization. Though new staff was recruited, unfortunately the new policy of the incoming PP government was to not list the emails of most

⁷ States Secretaries were only included in the case of financial, employment and health services due to their relevance for the survey.

⁸ *Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal* (State Public Employment Service).

government representatives online. Fortunately, through an update of a top public servants database, we got access to the names and postal addresses of almost all the target population. Thanks to this database and through phone calls and contacts with different public administration departments we increased the sample in 1327 people, to which the survey was sent in a second round on September 12th, with the deadline of 10th October. Again, email reminders were sent 24th September to the second subsample, summing up a total of 1778 invitations after the two rounds.

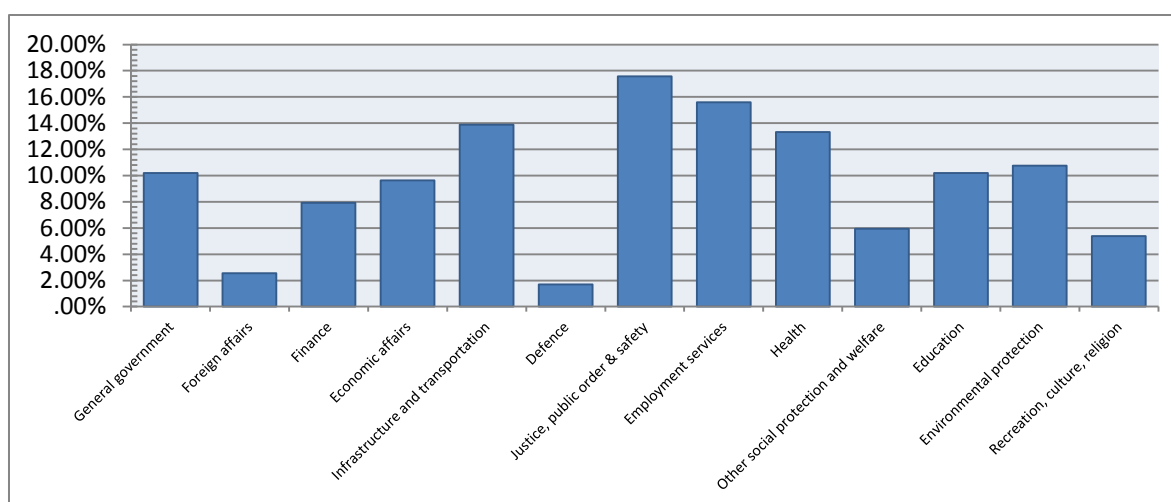
Overall, a total of 1778 invitations were sent out: 1282 to central government executives, 201 to health sector executives, and 295 to executives in the employment sector. In total the survey received 321 partially or fully filled out answers, which leads to an overall response rate of around 18.1%, as shown in Table 2 below. Total response rates in the Spanish case, as well as those at central government level are relatively lower than those from the overall COCOPS survey (18.1% Spain vs. 23.7% in overall COCOPS sample). For the health sector the Spanish response rate is again relatively lower (23.4% vs. 30.7%) like for the employment sector (18.6% vs. 26.9%).

Table 3. Sample size and response rates

	Central Government	Health Sector	Employment Sector	Spain Total	Total COCOPS sample
Invitations sent	1282	201	295	1778	20307
Completed surveys	222	47	55	321	4814
Response rate	17.32%	23.38%	18.64%	18.1%	23.7%
(Total COCOS)	(21.38%)	(30.68%)	(26.97%)		

Looking at the survey results and their distribution across policy fields (see Figure 1 – please note that respondents were allowed to select more than one option), we can see how a considerable share of responses comes from the areas of justice, public order and safety (17.6%), employment services (15.6%), infrastructure and transportation (13.9%) and health (13.3%). The lowest response rates are found in the fields of defense (1.7%) and foreign affairs (2.5%), indicating a somewhat more closed administrative culture in these two areas.

Figure 1. Policy field sample shares



Unless otherwise indicated, the following categories are used to interpret the results: if a scale ranging from 1 to 7 is used, 1 meaning ‘Strongly disagree’ and 7 meaning ‘Strongly agree’, the percentage shares for scale numbers 1 and 2 (vs. 6 and 7) are added and interpreted as ‘disagree’ (vs. ‘agree’).

3.2 Organizational Context of Respondents

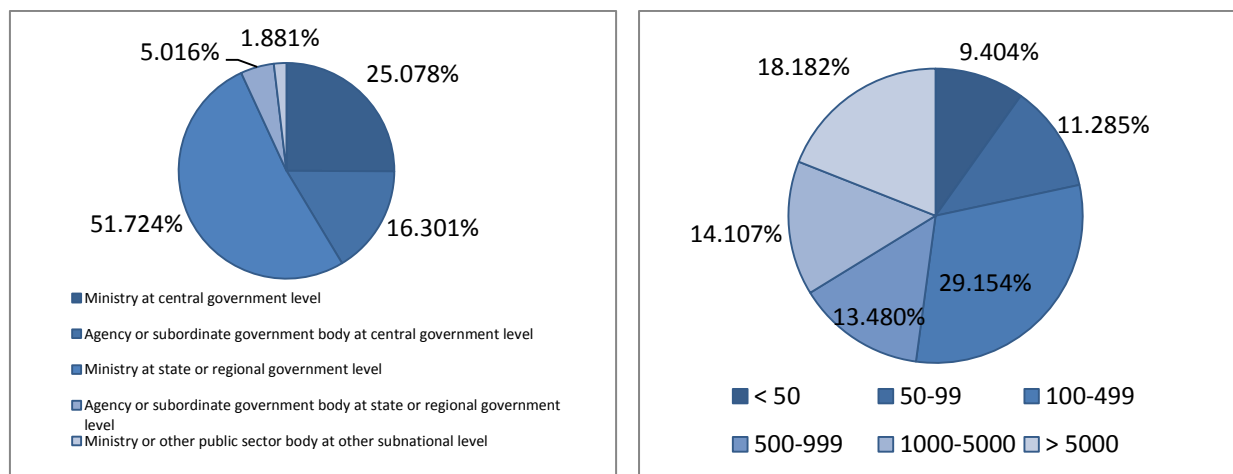
Before exploring respondents' opinions and attitudes towards their role and work in public administration, here we establish some of the key contextual features that set the organizational and personal background of the respondents as described in chapters 4 to 8.

Organization type (see Figure 2). Among the respondents, the greatest share (51.72%) come from ministries at the regional level (*Comunidad Autónoma*); this in line with the relative share of invitations sent to regional level executives (62.77%) and with the overall population since, in Spain, almost 80% of public servants work for sub-central government levels (OECD, 2011). 25.08 % of respondents work at the central ministry level, while only a 16.3% work for agencies or subordinate government body at the central government level (vs. 32.4% for the overall COCOPS sample), which may be explained by the relatively small number of agencies existing in Spain. The share of answers coming from executives at the state level agencies is even lower (5.02%) and from levels beyond state government the response share was only a small 1.88% of total responses.

Organization size (see Figure 2). Almost 50% of respondents work in organizations with up to 500 employees, similar to the overall COCOPS sample (where 50.9% come from such organizations). Another 27.6% work in larger organizations of 500-5000 employees (vs. 32.2% in the overall COCOPS

sample). Finally, around 18.8% of respondents come from organizations with over 5000 employees (vs. 16.9% in the overall COCOPS sample).

Figure 2. Organization type and size shares



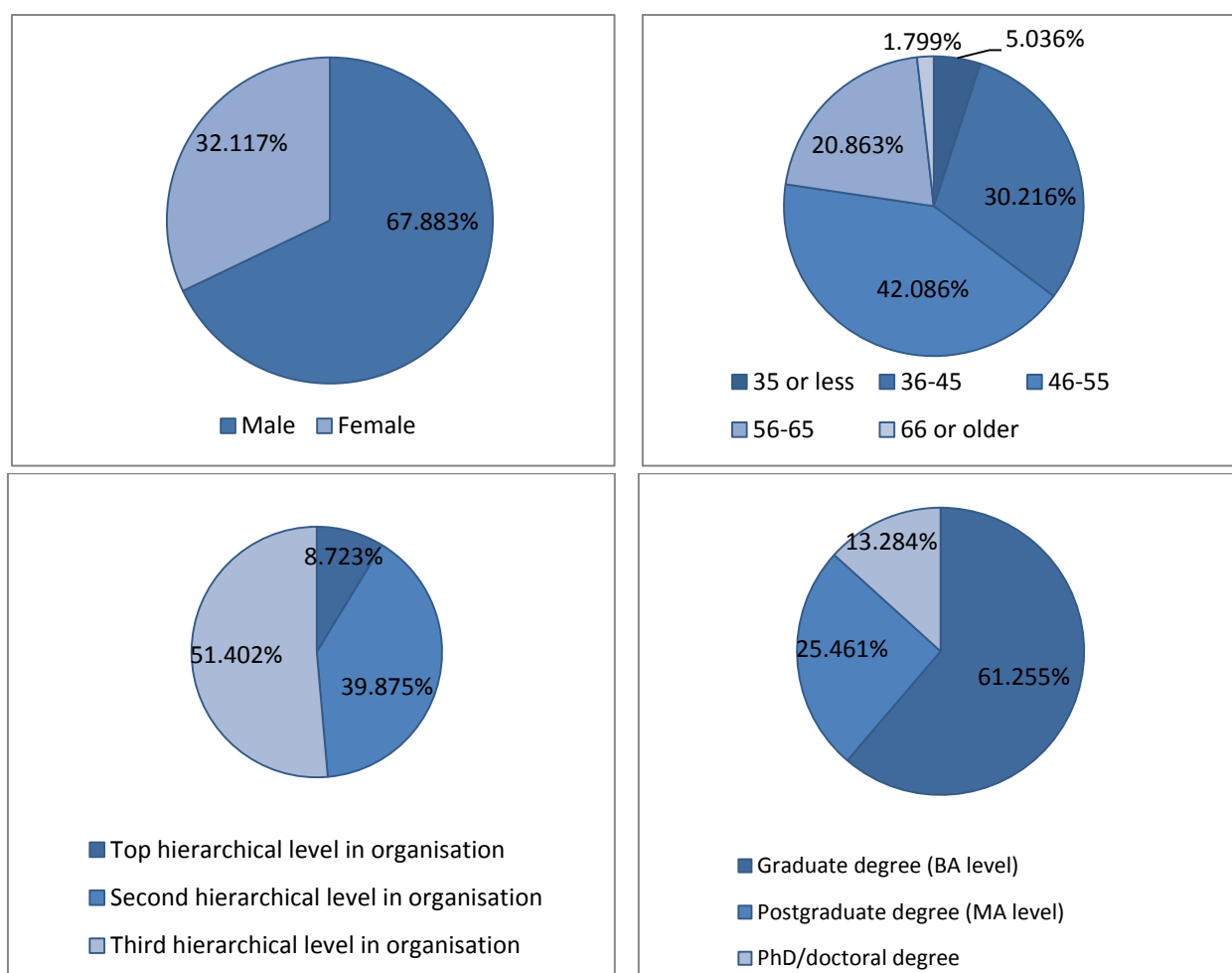
3.2 Socio-demographic Background of Respondents

Gender (see Figure 3). Over two thirds of respondents are men (67.88%), and only 32.12% are women, a share which shows how, despite the efforts of the former socialist government to promote gender equality, there is still a long way to go to promote gender equality in the Spanish Public Administration. By comparison, Spain is in line with the overall COCOPS sample, in which over a third (32.1%) of the respondents are women.

Age (see Figure 3). 72.31% of respondents are of an age between 36-55 years (vs. 61.6% in the overall COCOPS sample), with another 20.86% being aged between 56-65 years. 5% of the Spanish respondents are under 35, in line with the 5.8% in the overall COCOPS sample.

Hierarchical level (see Figure 3). With regard to their position in the hierarchy most respondents (51.4%) are executives at the third hierarchical level (General directorates and sub-directorates or similar). Over a third of the respondents (39.88.1%) are at the second level, and the remaining 8.72% are at the top hierarchical level. The overall COCOPS sample has a higher share of respondents from the first level (24.2%), more or less the same answers from the second level (40.4%) and considerably lower from other hierarchical levels (35.4%).

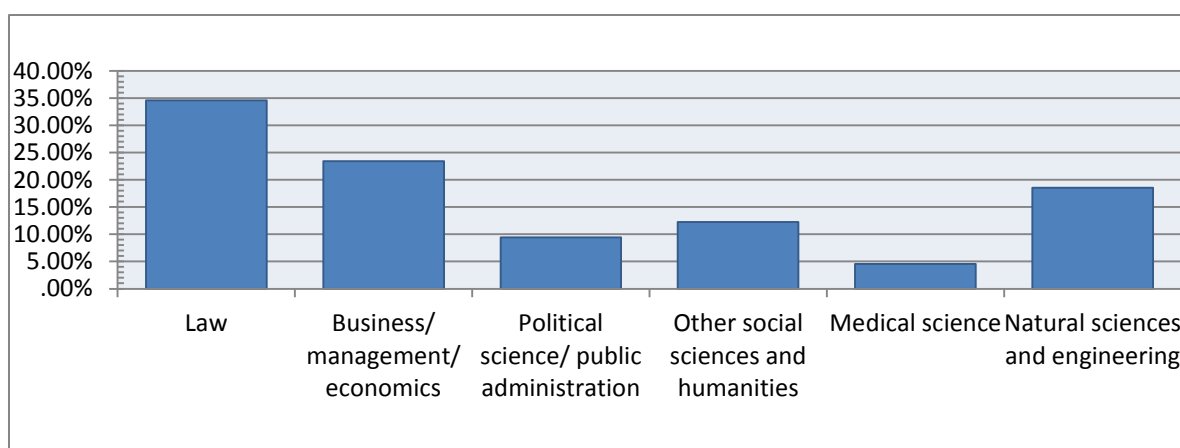
Figure 3. Socio-demographic shares (f.l.t.r.) Gender, Age, Hierarchy in organization, Educational background



Education (see Figure 3). Almost two thirds of all respondents (61.25%) have a university degree only at Bachelor level. The shares of top executives with university degrees at Master (25.46%) or PhD level (13.28%) are considerably lower than the COCOPS sample (68.8% and 15.5%), which may reflect a below average education level of Spanish public sector executives.

As to the **disciplinary field of education** (see Figure 4), the highest percentage of respondents still comes from the field of law (34.6%), which may reflect the legalistic tradition of the Spanish Napoleonic administrative culture. In the late 1980s the Spanish Government attempted to break with the long legalistic tradition by introducing new management practices (Alba and Navarro, 2011), which may be reflected by the fact that the second education field from respondents was business, management and economics (23.4%). However, despite the changes made in the Spanish public administration towards its modernization, the legal profession is still the majority among top public executives. Other fields represented in the Spanish sample were natural sciences and engineering (18.5%), other social sciences and humanities (12.2%), political science and public administration (9.4%), or medical science (4.5%).

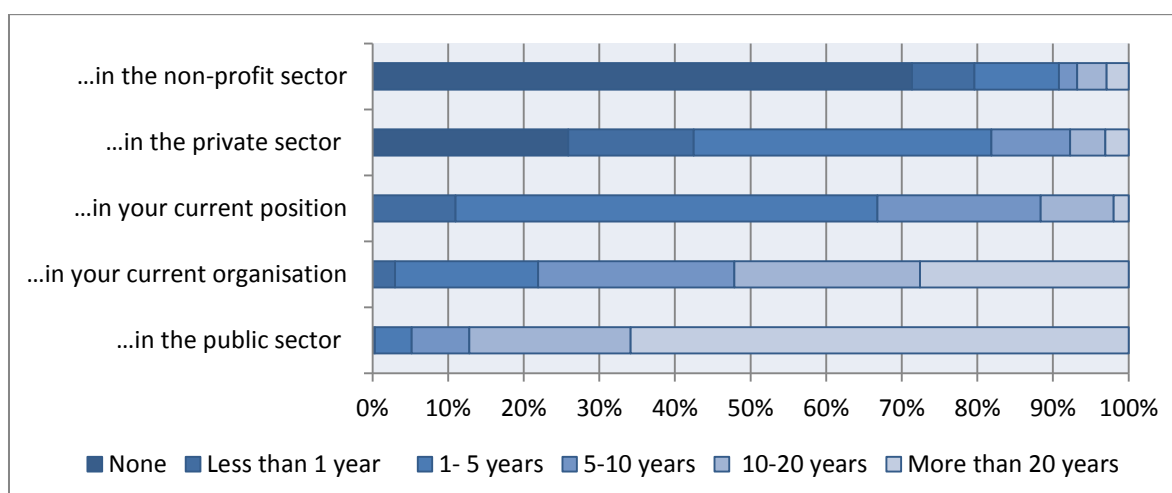
Figure 4. Educational fields (respondents could check more than one field)



Tenure (see Figure 5). The results related to the respondents' tenure and sector experiences show many characteristics of the Spanish public administration, such as life-long careers in the civil service and lack of experience on the private sector. A share of 65.9% of the respondents has worked in the public sector for more than twenty years (vs. 58.2% in the overall COCOPS sample, and only 4.9% have a public sector experience of less than five years (vs. 13.8% in the overall COCOPS sample). A share of 52.2% of respondents have been working in the current organization for more than 10 years, but only a 11.6% declared to work in the same position for more than 10 years (vs. a 16.0% for the COCOPS sample), which may indicate a rather low mobility within the sector but, a higher degree of mobility within positions.

When looking at the respondents' experience outside the public sector, we see that over a quarter of public sector executives have little private sector experience, with 25.9% of the respondents having no previous private sector experience and a 56% with less than five years experience. Previous experience in the non-profit sector is not common in Spain, with 71.4% of respondents declaring no experience in the non-profit sector (considerably higher to 55.9% in the overall COCOPS sample).

Figure 5. Tenure of respondents

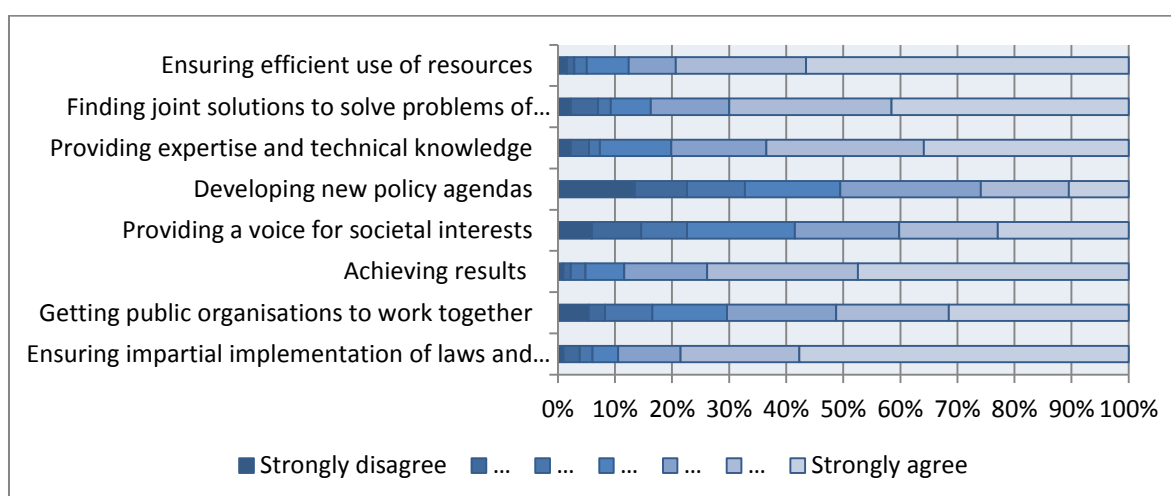


4. Values and Attitudes of Public Sector Executives

After describing the respondents with regard to their organizational and socio-demographic background, the following section will present some data on how public sector executives in Spain perceive their role as executives, their motivation and social values and preferences.

Identity and role perception as executive (see Figure 6). When asked about their self-understanding as public sector executives, a majority of the respondents confirms ensuring an efficient use of resources (79.4%), ensuring impartial implementation of law and rules (78.5%) and achieving results (73.9%), finding joint solutions to solve problems of public concern (70%) and providing expertise and technical knowledge (63.5%) as central for their role. Other aspects such as getting public organizations to work together (51.3%) and providing a voice for societal interests (40.2%) are also strongly anchored but to a much lesser degree. Interestingly, only a 25.9% agree on developing new public agendas as part of their role as executives, which may indicate the low degree of autonomy of Spanish executives.

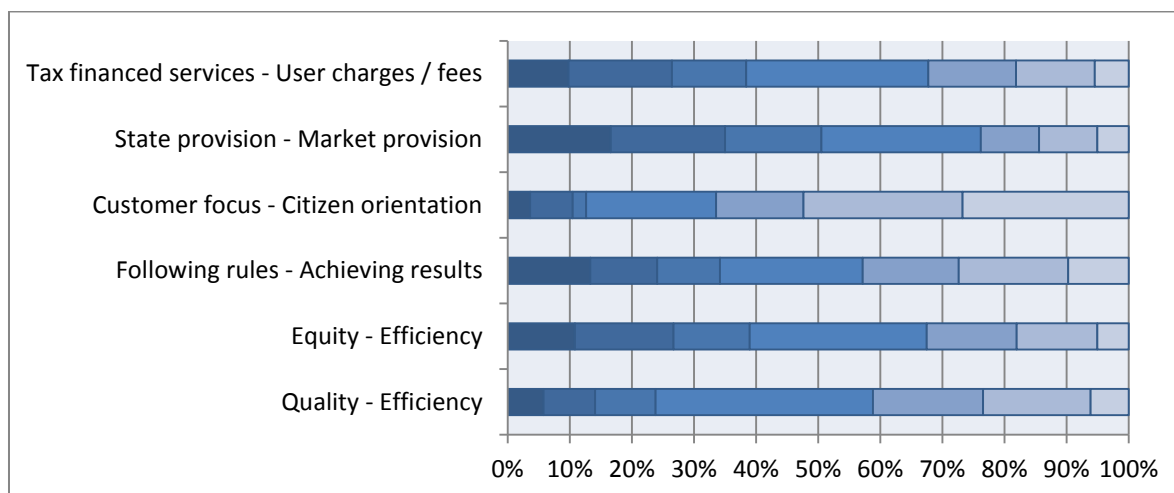
Figure 6. Identity and self-understanding (Q: I mainly understand my role as public executive as)



Value preferences for public sector priorities (see Figure 7). In another question the survey asked for more general preferences with regard to public sector priorities based on polarizing options. With regard to values, we do not find clear preferences between traditional civil service and new managerial views. However, we see values such as citizen orientation over customer orientation (agreement 52.3% vs. 10.5% disagreement), state provision of public services over market provision (35.5% agrees with state provision vs. a 14.4% which prefers market provision), equity over efficiency (26.7% vs. 18.1%) and tax financed services over user fees (26.4% vs. 18.1%), which may indicate some degree of preference for traditional public service delivery. On the other side a substantial

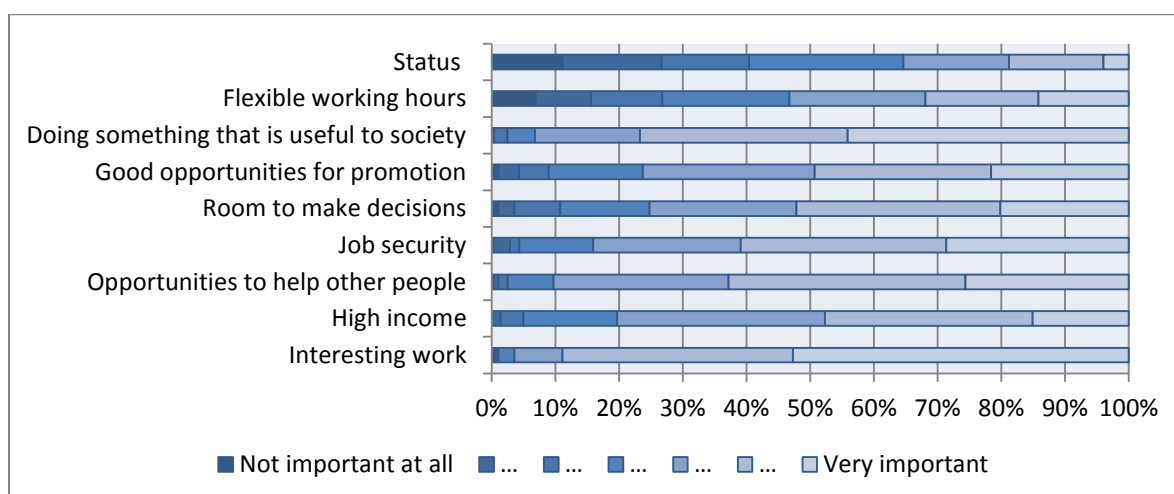
share of respondents shows a positive assessment of efficiency (23.5%) vs. quality (14.1%) of public service delivery, which seems a bit contradictory with other responses.

Figure 7. Priorities as public servants (Q: Public services often need to balance different priorities. Where would you place your own position?)



Motivation (see Figure 8). As regards public sector motivation and, following the common distinction of extrinsic, altruistic and intrinsic motivation, our results confirm a clear prevalence of intrinsic and altruistic motivations among Spanish public sector executives. The greatest importance is given to interesting work (88.9% agreement vs. 0.7% disagreement) followed by doing something useful for society (76.7% vs. 0.4%) and opportunities to help other people (62.8% vs. 1.1%). However, there is also one extrinsic factor such as job security (60.9%) of special relevance for Spanish public servants. Other extrinsic factors do not seem as relevant as those mentioned, such as good opportunities for promotion (49.3%), high income (47.7%), flexible working hours (31.9%) and social status (18.8%).

Figure 8. Motivation (Q: How important do you personally think it is in a job to have)



5. Characteristics of the Work Context in Public Administration

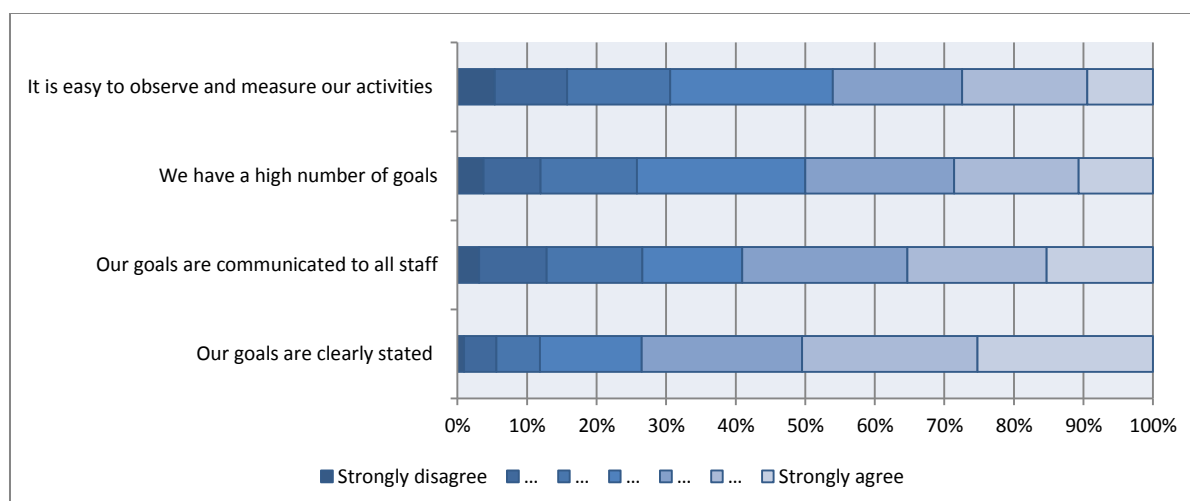
The success of introducing management practices like performance management to the public sector depends on the extent to which the specific work context in public administration resonates with the logic behind the NPM paradigm. This chapter analyses how Spanish top civil servants perceive their work context and evaluates to what extent the results indicate that management practices can be transferred successfully to Public Administration.

Performance management and result-orientation is difficult to implement if goals are perceived to be ambiguous and activities are less measurable and easy to observe (Rainey and Jung 2010). To reliably measure performance, goals would have to be limited, clearly stated and communicated, and activities would have to be easily observed and monitored. When asked about these characteristics of their work context (see Figure 9), there appears to be a high degree of discrepancy among Spanish public sector executives about the possibility of observing and measuring their organization's activities: 27.4% of respondents agree that their activities can be observed and measured easily, while 25.2% disagree. Similarly, a 28.6% of the respondents agree that their organization has a high number of goals, while a 22.0% perceive their number of goals to be rather limited.

It seems that respondents agree that organization goals are clearly stated (50.5%), while only 10.9% disagree with that statement. However, transparency does not seem to be one of the “strong” points in Spanish Public Administration; 35.3% of the respondents report that their goals are clearly communicated to all staff, while a relatively high 23.4% believe that this is not the case.

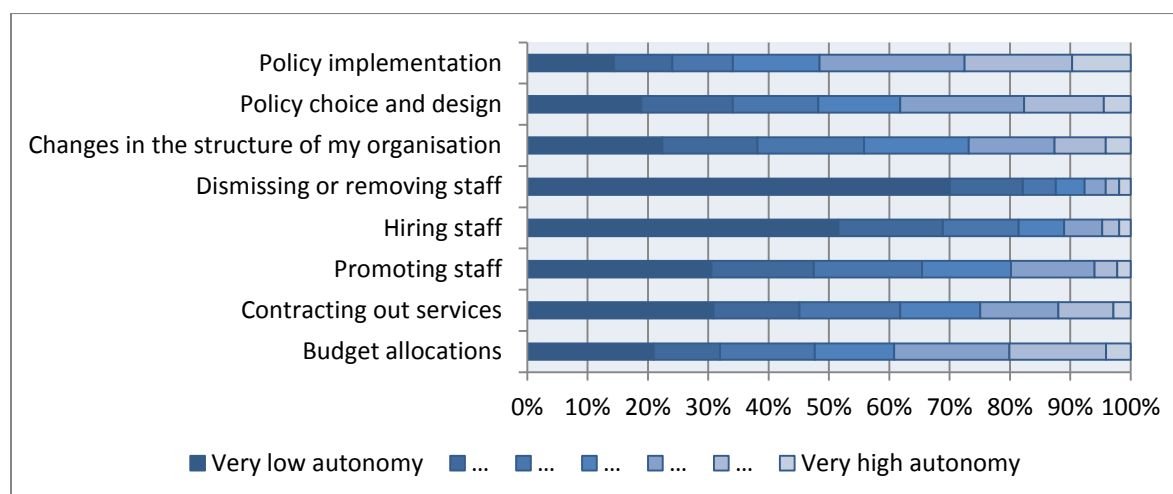
Public executives from the overall COCOPS sample are more positive about the clear statement (77.6%) and, particularly about the clear communication of goals (73 % for the COCOPS sample vs. 35.3% for Spain)

Figure 9. Goal ambiguity (Q: To what extent do the following statements apply to your organization?)



Management autonomy is a further variable influencing the transferability of management practices to the public sector. The less autonomy top executives enjoy in managing their organization, the less they can be made accountable for successes or failures. The results (see Figure 10) show that, in general, Spanish executives perceive they enjoy a very low degree of autonomy. Only a 17.7% of the respondents perceive a rather high degree of autonomy in choosing and designing policies which is a very low value compared with the overall COCOPS sample (40% of respondents perceived a rather high degree of autonomy), and a 27.5% concerning the implementation of policies (61.7 % internationally). Managerial autonomy is also lower as regards changes in the structure of their organization (12.6% think they have a lot of autonomy) and contracting out services (12.0% think they have a lot of autonomy). Autonomy in Human Resource decisions is extremely low in Spanish Public Administration, and the share of respondents who believe they have a high degree of autonomy, as regards promoting, hiring or removing personnel, is only between 4% and 6%. Finally, autonomy in allocating budget is also relatively low (only a 20.1% of respondents believe they have high autonomy about budget allocation).

Figure 10. Degree of management autonomy (Q: In my position, I have the following degree of autonomy with regard to)

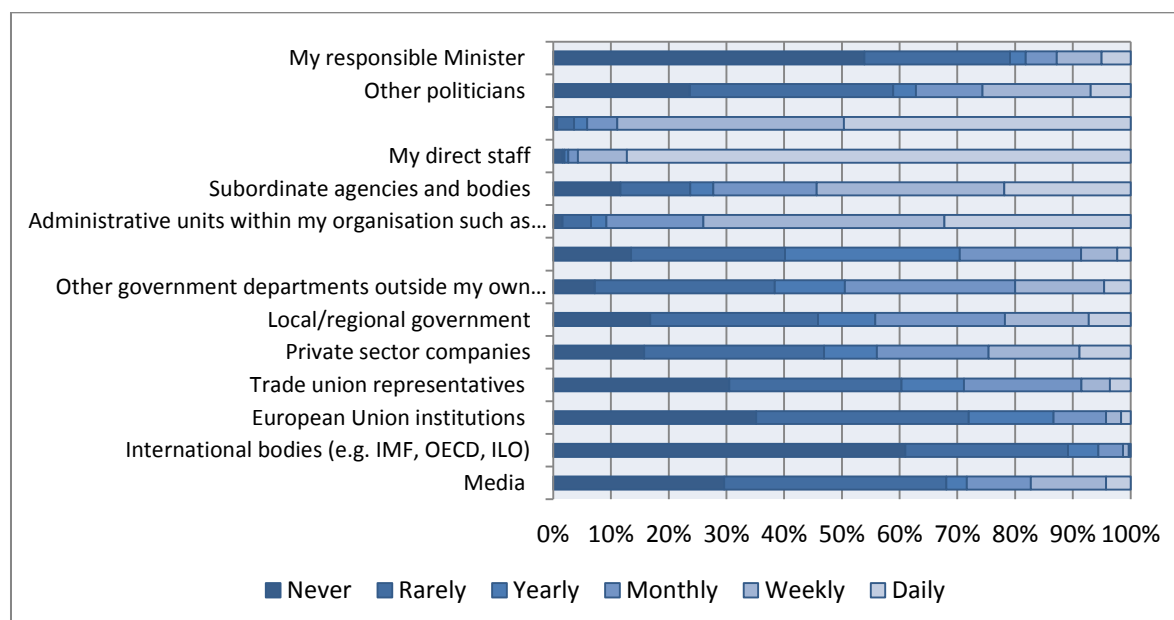


Interaction frequency is a way to measure the coordination intensity of public sector executives and also could be seen as an indicator for fragmentation challenges. If the different organizations that are relevant to provide public goods tend to work in a relatively isolated atmosphere and do not regularly work together, the public sector is characterized by a 'silo culture'. The Spanish public sector — due to the decentralization process implemented over the last few decades — would be expected to be rather fragmented and our results tend to support this diagnosis (see Figure 11): not surprisingly, Spanish public sector executives interact most often with the actors within their own

organization – 87.2% interact daily with their direct staff, 88.9% interact at least weekly with their administrative superiors and higher administrative levels and 74.0% interact weakly or daily with administrative units within their organizations. Interaction with subordinate agencies and bodies does not occur as often (only 54.4% have at least weekly contact) and interaction with their responsible minister is rather rare (18.2 have at least monthly contact). Among the outside actors, such as other government bodies, private sector, other government tiers and audit organizations, low levels of interaction take place in all the areas surveyed. Low levels of interaction take place also with international bodies, trade union representatives and European Union institutions.

A comparative perspective reveals significant lower degrees of Spanish top executives' interaction with their minister, international bodies and European Union institutions.

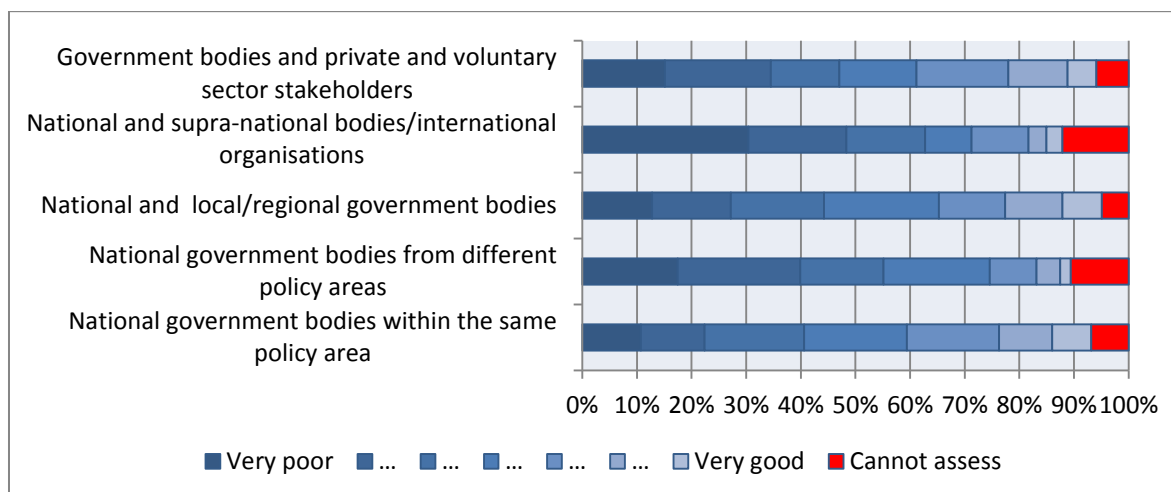
Figure 11. Interaction frequency (Q: Please indicate how frequently you typically interact with the following actors or bodies)



In contrast to interaction frequency, **coordination quality** is a more qualitative than quantitative measure of fragmentation in public administration. Among those who answered (see Figure 12), only 16.1% perceive the collaboration between government bodies, private and voluntary sector stakeholders as good. Similar shares praise the collaboration between national and local/regional government bodies (17.7%) and between national government bodies within the same policy area (16.9%). Considerably lower shares are observed between national and supranational bodies or international organizations (6.2%) and between national government bodies from different policy areas (6.3%). It is of interest that other countries' executives evaluate coordination quality much more favourably in all cases, particularly as regards collaboration between government bodies.

In summary, and inline r with previous question results, public sector executives perceptions may indicate that in Spain there is a big coordination deficit and fragmentation is a major concern in Spanish public administration.

Figure 12. Coordination quality (Q: How would you characterize collaboration in your own policy field between)



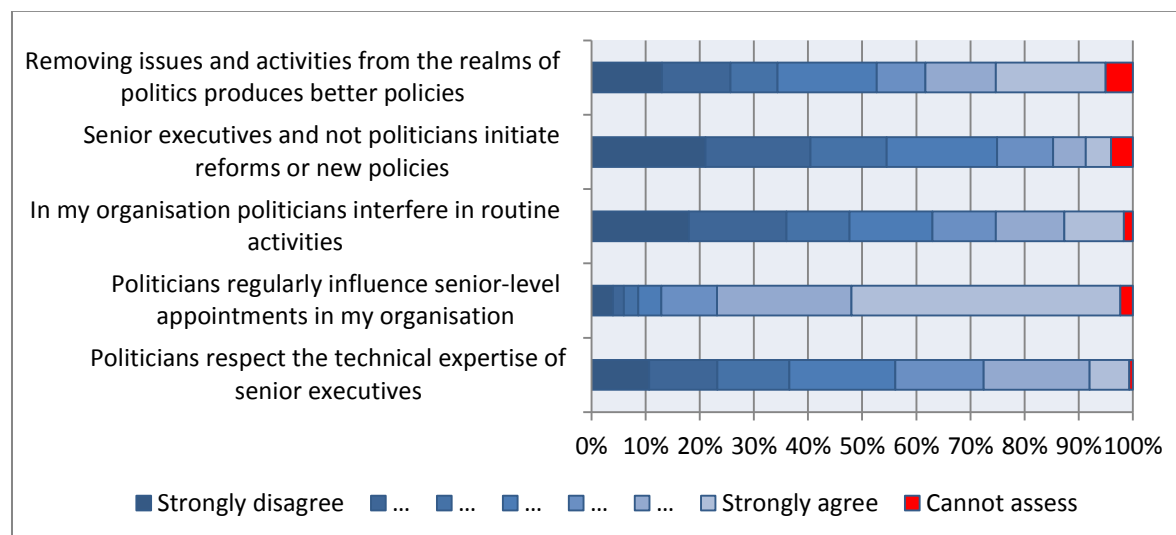
The degree of politicization indicates to what extent public sector institutions can make decisions on technical criteria or are subject to being influenced by political processes. In the Spanish sample, politicization does not seem to be present in routine activities; only 24.1% agree that politicians interfere in these (see Figure 13). However, only 27.1% of the senior executives feel that politicians respect their technical expertise and, interestingly, 76.3% of respondents agree that politicians regularly influence senior-level appointments, and reforms are more likely to be initiated by politicians than by senior executives (only 11.1% think that senior executives and not politicians initiate reforms or new policies). In addition, 35.1% of respondents agree that removing issues and activities from the realms of politics produces better policies (vs. 27.0% disagreeing).

A comparative perspective reveals the relatively high degree of politicization of the Spanish public administration. For example, 53.9 % of European respondents feel that politicians respect their technical expertise in comparison with 27.1% for the Spanish case. Also, the perception that politician regularly influence senior-level appointments is much higher in Spain than in the overall COCOPS sample.

These results take into account the perceived extensive politicization of Spanish public organizations. As described by Nieto (1996), the 1980s reforms generated a "spoil system" model, where the political party winning the election holds a leadership position in the public sector. As a result, it is common that leading political party members replace — or displace — experts and/or top-qualified public servants in the upper levels of the public administration. Due to the characteristics of the

Spanish university system, professorial posts can be “frozen” when scholars pass to politics. Thus it is common that Ministers are former university professors, and vice versa. This has perverse effects on the university as a department becomes heavily represented by Socialists when the conservative PP are in power, and vice versa!

Figure 13. Degree of politicization (Q: What is your view on the following statements)



In sum, coordination deficits and fragmentation are clearly observable in the respondents’ answers and seem to be a major challenge, whereas lack of autonomy and politicization seem to be even a bigger concern for the Spanish respondents.

6. Relevance of NPM and post NPM Reforms

This chapter provides information on public sector executives’ perception of the implementation of NPM and post NPM reforms which are characterized by a stronger emphasis on coordination and networked forms of governance. The respondents have been asked to assess the type and character of reform trends in their policy field (6.1.), their organization (6.2.) and in their own work (6.3.).

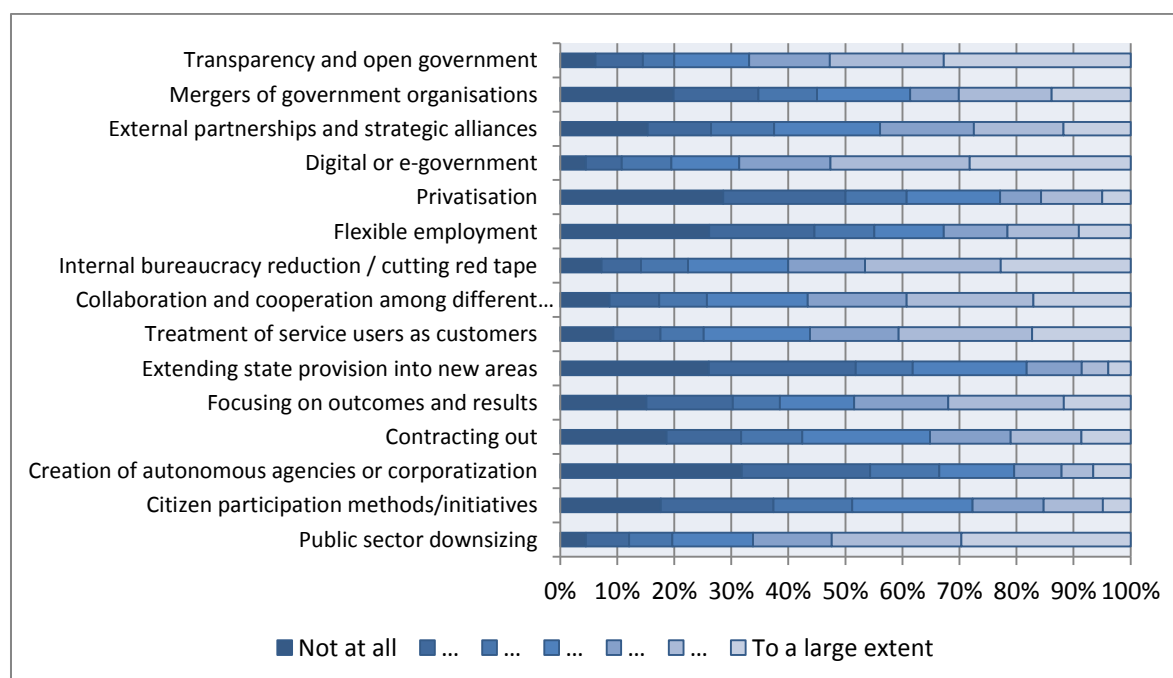
6.1. Policy field level

Public sector **reform trends** can have very different characteristics. While classical NPM reforms include measures like performance management, contracting out, privatization or flexible employment, other reforms aim at enhancing transparency, citizen participation or reducing bureaucracy. With regard to the reform trends at the policy field level (see Figure 14) we see how some of NPM types of reform, such as privatization or *agentification* are of only limited relevance in Spain; 50% of the respondents state that privatization occurs rarely (vs. 15.7% who think that important privatization policies have been carried out), and 54.3% of respondents think that

agentification occurs rarely (vs. 12.1% thinking the opposite). A third clearly NPM-related policy, such as the use of contracting out, seems to have been carried out in Spain in a more systematic way; only a 31.7% of respondents state that contracting out policies occur rarely. These perceptions make sense because privatization is associated with the sale of public utilities and industrial firms, whilst outsourcing is a form of privatization more prevalent in the Public Administration sector. In addition, it seems that state provision is also not extended into new areas; only 8.6% of the respondents state that this happens to a large extent (percentage share for scale numbers 6 and 7). Moreover, the public sector is clearly subject to considerable downsizing; 52.4% of the respondents state that this occurs to a large extent making this the most prominent reform trend in Spain (together with digital e-government and transparency and open government). Other reform trends which have a moderately high prominence in Spain are cutting red tape (46.6%) and customer orientation (40.7%).

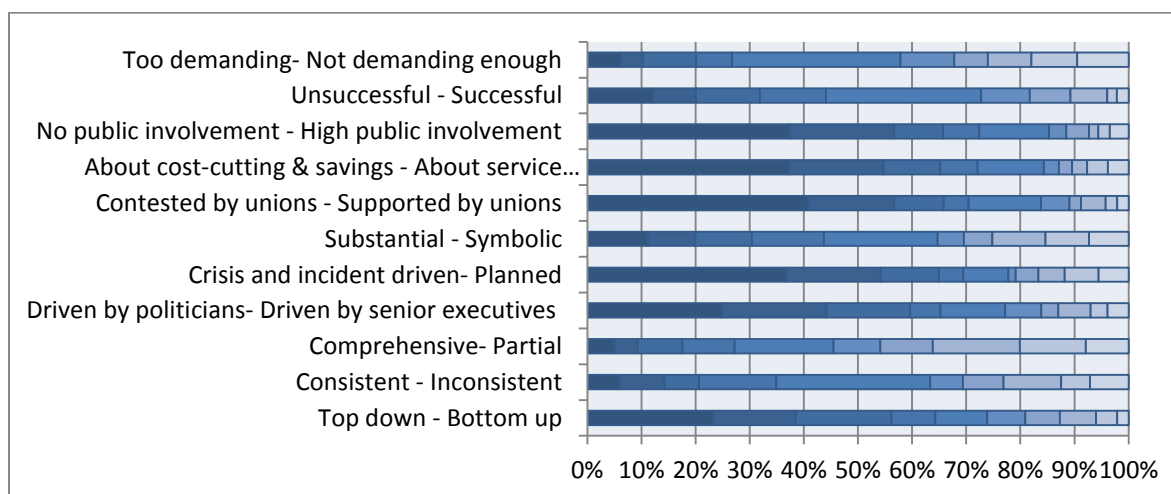
From an international comparative perspective, public sector executives from other countries perceived, in general, a much more frequent implementation of, particularly, flexible employment, agentification, customer orientation and citizens' participation. While reform trend such as public sector downsizing and e-government initiatives seem to be in line with the overall COCOPS sample. Overall, the results may suggest the latecomer position of the Spanish public administration as regards public sector reforms.

Figure 14. Importance of reform trends (Q: How important are the following reform trends in your policy area?)



When asking for the **dynamics of public sector reform** (see Figure 15), we are interested in finding out how public sector executives evaluate the reforms that have been implemented. With regard to the overall assessment of the success of public administration reforms in Spain the overall picture is clear: 31.9% of the respondents perceive the reforms as not successful (scales 1-3), while only 10.8% of respondents is of the opinion that the reforms were successful (scales 8-10). As regards the consistency of the reforms, the results are rather mixed and equal. The same is true for the categories substantial vs. symbolic and demanding vs. not demanding enough. Turning now to the drivers and dynamics of the reforms the picture is again clear. Public sector reform in Spain seems to be implemented predominantly without public involvement (65.7% agreement), top-down (56.2%), driven by politicians (59.6%) and for the crisis (64.9%), and clearly contested by the unions (65.8%). In addition, reforms seem to be more about cost-cutting and savings (65.2% agreement) than about service improvement (10.5% agreement).

Figure 15. Dynamics of public sector reform (Q: Public sector reforms in my policy area tend to be)



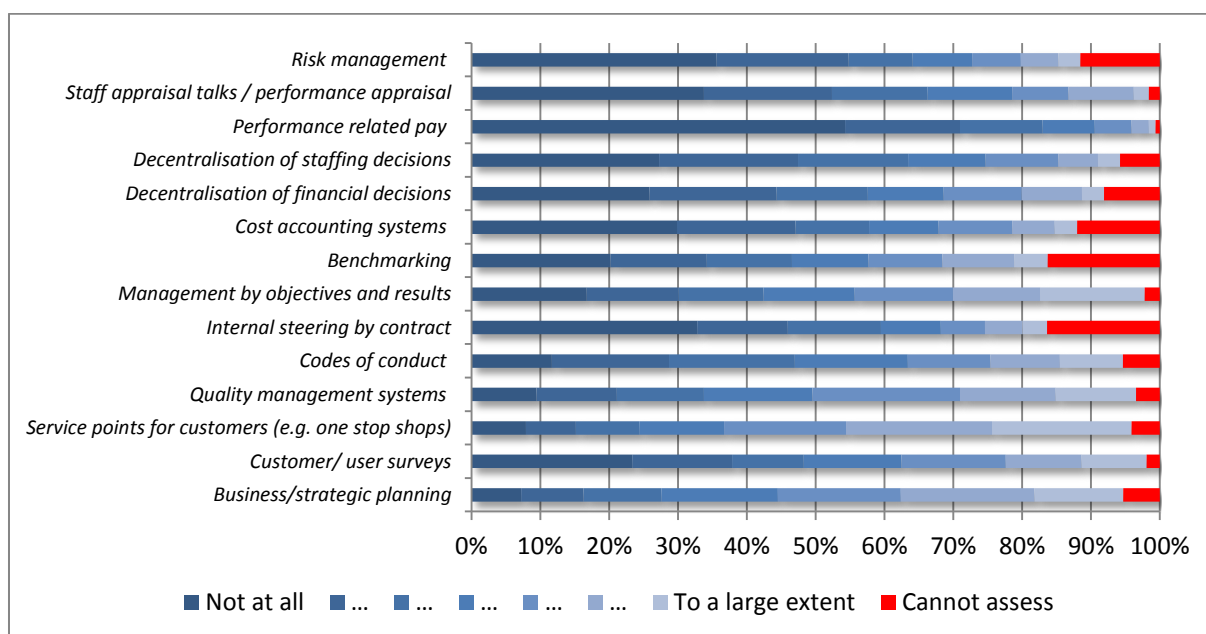
6.2. Organizational level

From the survey results we see how **management instruments** have only a rather low relevance at the level of organizations. There is not any concept systematically implemented and used in the Spanish public administration (see Figure 16). The only instrument used by a relatively high share of the respondents is the use of service points to customers (43.2% of respondents agree). Extremely infrequent are performance related pay and risk management (71.4% and 60.0% of the Spanish respondents state that they do not use these kind of instruments). Instruments fostering management autonomy such as the decentralization of staffing decisions or financial decisions are uncommon as well (50.3% and 48.2% of respondents do not use them respectively). Other

managerial tools such as cost accounting systems and benchmarking do not seem to be used much, with 53.5% and 40.9% of respondents stating they do not rather use these instruments. With regard to codes of conduct and quality management systems, no clear patterns are observable here even their implementation and usage also seem to be limited.

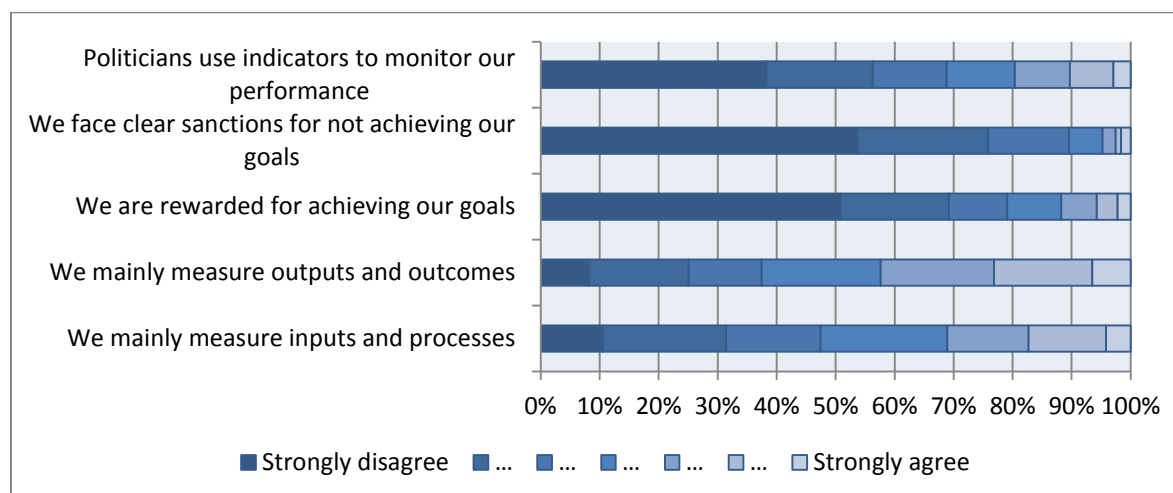
Public sector executives in the overall COCOPS sample use these instruments to a much greater extent than Spanish executives, particularly as regards the use of performance appraisals, business/strategic planning, management by objectives, performance related pay and benchmarking. This clearly confirms our previous results about the low degree of implementation of managerial reforms in the Spanish public administration.

Figure 16. Relevance of different management instruments (Q: To what extent are the following instruments used in your organization?)



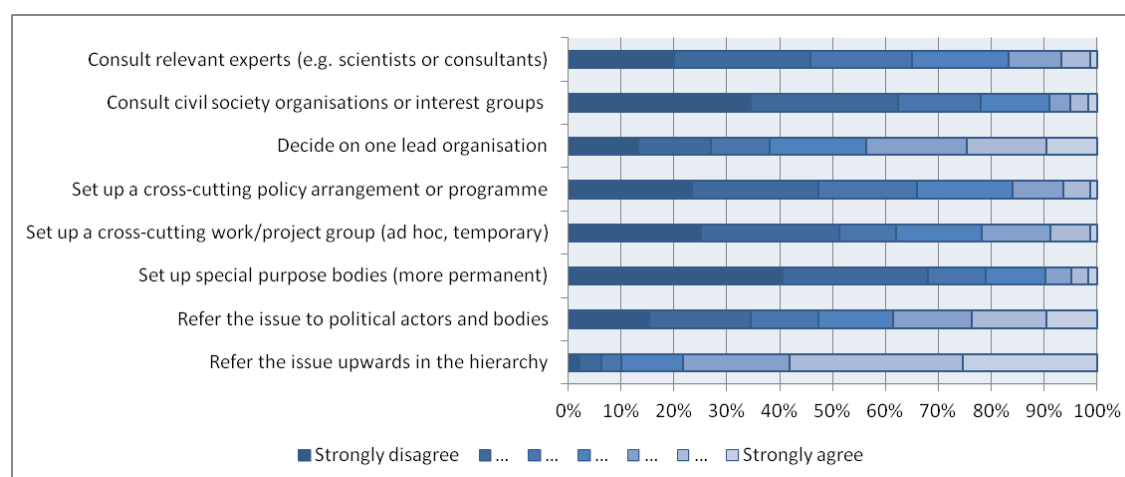
Regarding the use of **performance management tools** – with measurement and goals/targets as core elements – our results are shown in Figure 17. Neither goal achievements are rewarded nor non-achievement sanctioned. Politicians do not use indicators to monitor performance and only outcome orientation seems to be used to a certain —but relatively low — extent (23.1% of respondents agree about this, which is the highest share of the five items analyzed).

Figure 17. Relevance of performance management (Q: To what extent do the following statements apply to your organization?)



A question on the use of different **coordination solutions** (see Figure 18) tries to capture to what extent post NPM reforms in the form of new coordination mechanisms and measures to counter fragmentation have been implemented. As already observed in chapter 5, fragmentation and a hierarchical work culture are apparent in Spain. This is also supported by the current data. In the case of coordination problems, the most common action is to refer the issue upwards in the hierarchy (58.3% do this often) and only 24.7% of the respondents would decide on one lead organization. The other more post-NPM led proposals are quite unpopular among the Spanish executives; they would not set up a permanent special purpose body (68.0%), consult civil society organizations (62.3%), set up a cross-cutting working group (51.2%), set up a cross-cutting policy arrangement (47.3%) or consult relevant experts (45.7%).

Figure 18. Coordination solutions (Q: To resolve coordination problems when working with other organizations, we typically)

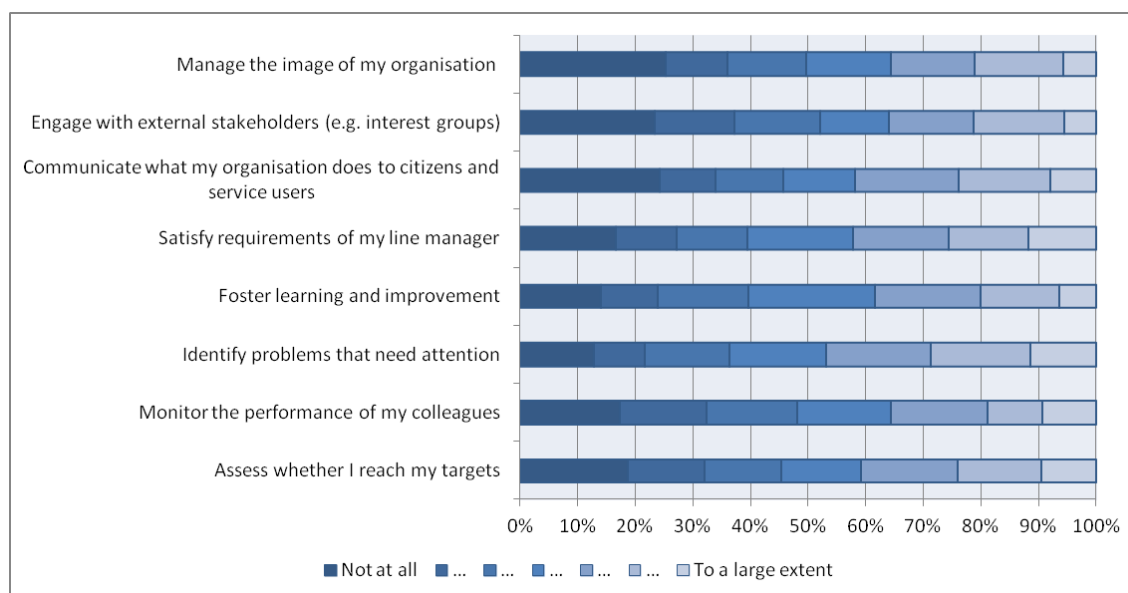


Thus, at the organizational and policy field level, we can say that Spanish executives do not perceive many public sector reform trends have been implemented in their policy field, and classical performance management reforms are weekly institutionalized on the organizational level. The next sub-chapter provides information on the use of performance indicators at the level of individual senior executives

6.3. Individual level

Enquiring on the **use of performance indicators** (see Figure 19) is to identify the fields of application where public sector executives are most likely to use performance indicators. We already know that these do not seem to be used extensively in Spanish public administration. This observation is not as clear for the individual level of public sector executives; the response rates are widely dispersed among the different response options (that is, between not at all and to a large extent), making it difficult to establish a clear pattern, so we cannot get clear conclusions about the use of performance indicators at an individual level.

Figure 19. Use of performance indicators (Q: In my work I use performance indicators to)



7. Impact of the Fiscal Crisis on Public Administration

After a relatively long period of economic growth, with growth rates above the average of the EU economies, the first symptoms of the international financial crisis began to be visible in Spain in 2008, and at the same time the first effects of the crisis began to hit the Spanish economy, as a result of high financial exposure to the housing sector. The ongoing economic crisis resulted in a reduction of financial and economic activity, with a significant drop in GDP *per capita*, a significant increase in public debt and deficits, and a marked increase in the unemployment rate.

This significant worsening of socio-economic conditions was caused, to a great extent, by the outbreak of the international financial crisis in 2008, but also because of the intrinsic characteristics of the Spanish growth model, whose main pillars were the housing sector and an increasing domestic demand, combined with the high sensitivity of the Spanish economy to foreign demand. The current weakness of the Spanish economy made it especially vulnerable to the intensification of the sovereign debt crisis in August 2011 and its extension to several countries in the Euro area. Moreover, intensification of fiscal adjustment plans developed by the Government to meet the deficit target assumed by Spain in the Stability Programme, is having a clear contractive impact on investment and spending, both public and private.

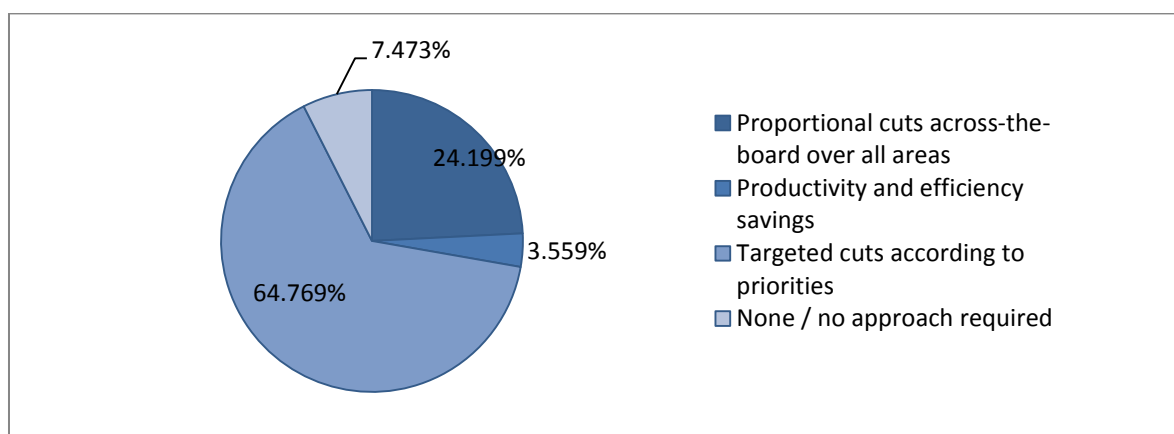
As a result, the GDP per capita (in real terms) has fallen about 5% between 2008 and 2011, the unemployment rate has risen from 8.3% in 2007 to 21.7% in 2011, and 26.6% in November, 2012, being one of the highest unemployment rates in the EU (together with Greece). The Government deficit went from 1.9% surplus in 2007 to 8.5% deficit in 2011, with a maximum peak of 11.2% in 2009.

Given this situation — and following EU recommendations — the Spanish Government adopted a series of cutback measures to contain public debt and government deficit, which included freezing or reducing public employee wages and public employment offer, 20% reduction of organic structures of the General State Administration, plus Regional and Local Governments, cutting unemployment benefits, cuts in public investment in infrastructure and foreign aid, cutting expenditures in medicines, cuts in provision of basic public services, such as libraries and health clinics, among other cutback measures.

Given the drastic and largely non-consensual, cutback program conducted by the Spanish government in the last three years, it is not surprising that the COCOPS survey responses by Spanish executives assert as a general finding that most of the respondents have observed some kind of

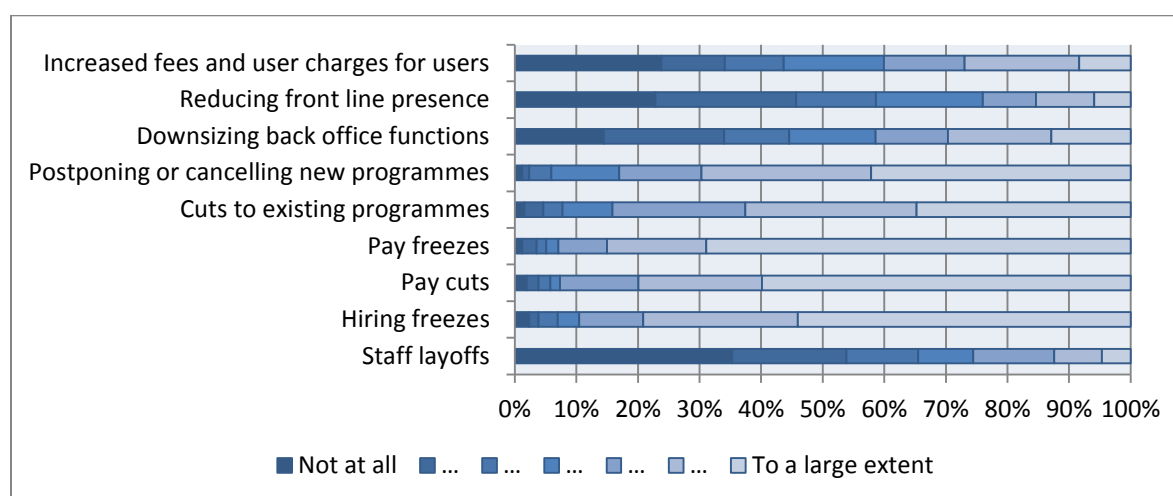
cutbacks (see Figure 20). Over two thirds of respondents (64.77%) perceive that the Government performed targeted cuts according to priorities rather than across-the-board savings (24.2%). Interestingly, a very small percentage of respondents consider that saving strategies were focused on improving efficiency and productivity, which shows the low prevalence of managerial ideas within the Spanish public administration and, gives an idea of the short-term, reactive, nature of Spanish policy-makers.

Figure 20. Overall saving strategy (Q: In response to the fiscal crisis how would you describe the broader approach to realizing savings in your policy area?)



With regard to the more specific approaches to implementing cutbacks (see Figure 21) the survey clearly confirms that the leading cost-cutting measures have been the following: hiring freezes (79.2% agree), wage freezes (85.0%) and pay cuts (79.9%) — including bonuses —, cutbacks in existing programs (62.5%) and postponing or cancelling new programs (69.7%). In relation to offices reduction and increased user fees, we see how there is a large answer dispersion, which may suggest that the measures have not been implemented equally in all public administration areas. Finally, it seems that staff layoffs were not one of the major cost-cutting measures undertaken by the Government, mainly due to the special legal status of most of the public servants. Just over half of the survey participants (53.88%) stated that in their area this measure has not been taken at all (associated values 1 or 2), values mean being equal to 2.8, indicating the low incidence of this measure.

Figure 21. Cutback measures at organizational level (Q: In response to the fiscal crisis, to what extent has your organization applied the following cutback measures?)



8. Outcomes of Public Administration Performance

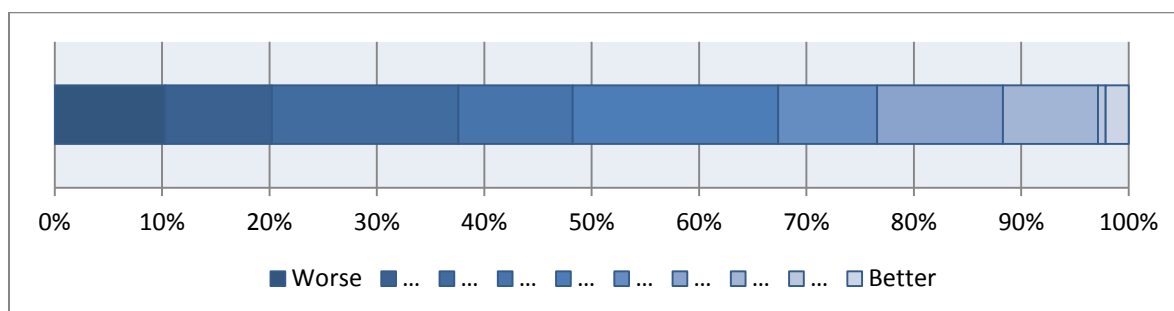
One main goal of the present study is to obtain systematic information on how public sector executives assess the impact of the various managerial reforms at organizational level but also other public sector reforms on a policy level. In this chapter, we present the results of such evaluative questions.

8.1 Overall

As concerns an **overall assessment of public administration** (see Figure 22), a relatively low share of respondents state that the way public administration is run in Spain has clearly improved (only 11.7% marked 8-10 on a 10 digit scale) over the last 5 years. 50.7% respondents rather assess it as more or less the same (marked 4-7), whereas a relatively high share of respondents observes a clear deterioration of public administration in Spain over the last 5 years (37.6% marked 1-3), which may be directly linked with the cutback program conducted by the Spanish government on the past two or three years.

Interestingly, the Spanish case is the only one in the whole COCOPS sample in which a greater number of respondents feel that the public administration performance has worsened in the last five years in relation to those who believe that the public administration performance has improved.

Figure 22. Overall PA assessment (Q: Compared with five years ago, how would you say things have developed when it comes to the way public administration runs in your country?)



8.2 Policy Field

It may be misleading, however, to measure outcomes of public administration in such a one-dimensional way. We therefore provided the respondents with a more nuanced question addressing a spectrum of **different performance dimensions** as found in public management literature (see figure 23).

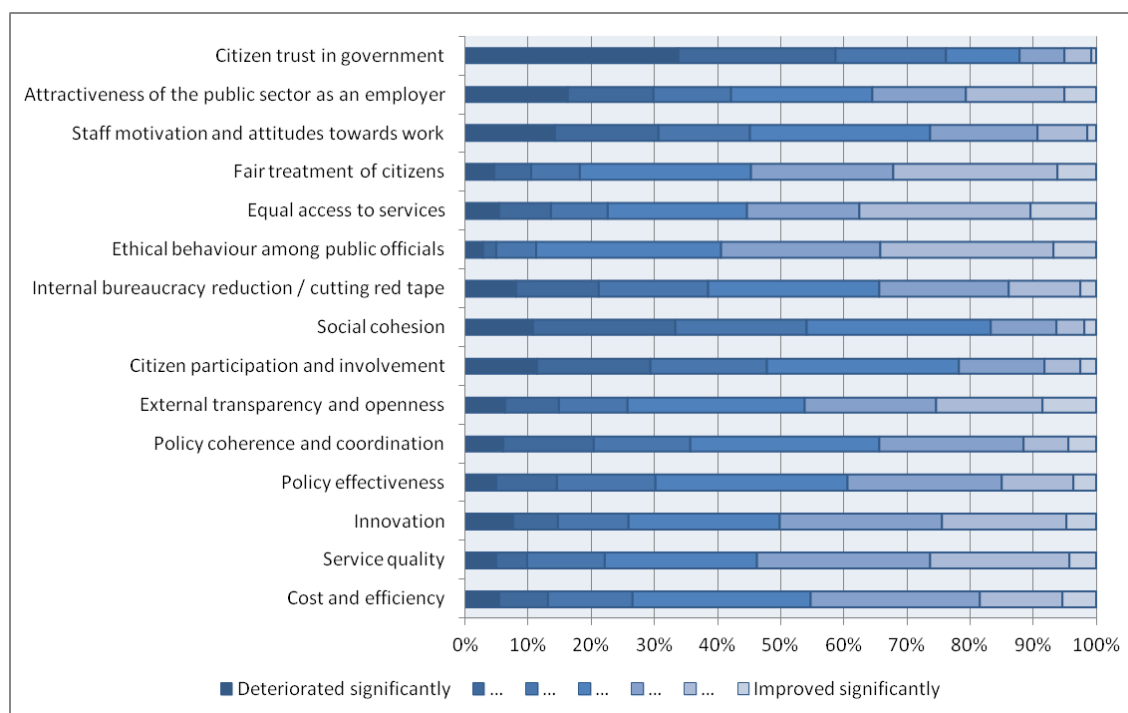
The most positive results can be found for ethical behavior among public servants, equal access to services and fair treatment of citizens (34.2%/37.5%/32.1% of respondents think that these dimensions improved), which is of great interest since equity should be a key performance dimension. Relatively positive results can be observed for service quality, transparency and openness, and innovation (26.3%/25.4%/24.4%).

However, we cannot observe such positive results for other key dimensions; one concern is that 58.7% of respondents state that citizens' trust in Government has deteriorated (vs. only a 5% which state that trust improved). In addition, 30.6% of respondents believe that the public servants motivation towards work has deteriorated, and the same applies for attractiveness of the public sector as employer (29.8). A second — and major — concern is the vision that public executives have on the evolution of relevant dimensions such as social cohesion and citizen participation. A 33.3% believe that social cohesion has deteriorated, while 29.3% considered the same for the case of citizen participation. With regard to the other aspects such as cost and efficiency, policy effectiveness or cutting red tape, the assessments are rather diverse with similar shares of respondents observing improvements and deteriorations.

Again, the results for the overall COCOPS sample are remarkably different. Most of the different performance dimensions are perceived more positively in the overall sample, particularly as regards service quality, cost and efficiency, staff motivation and policy effectiveness. An exception of interest

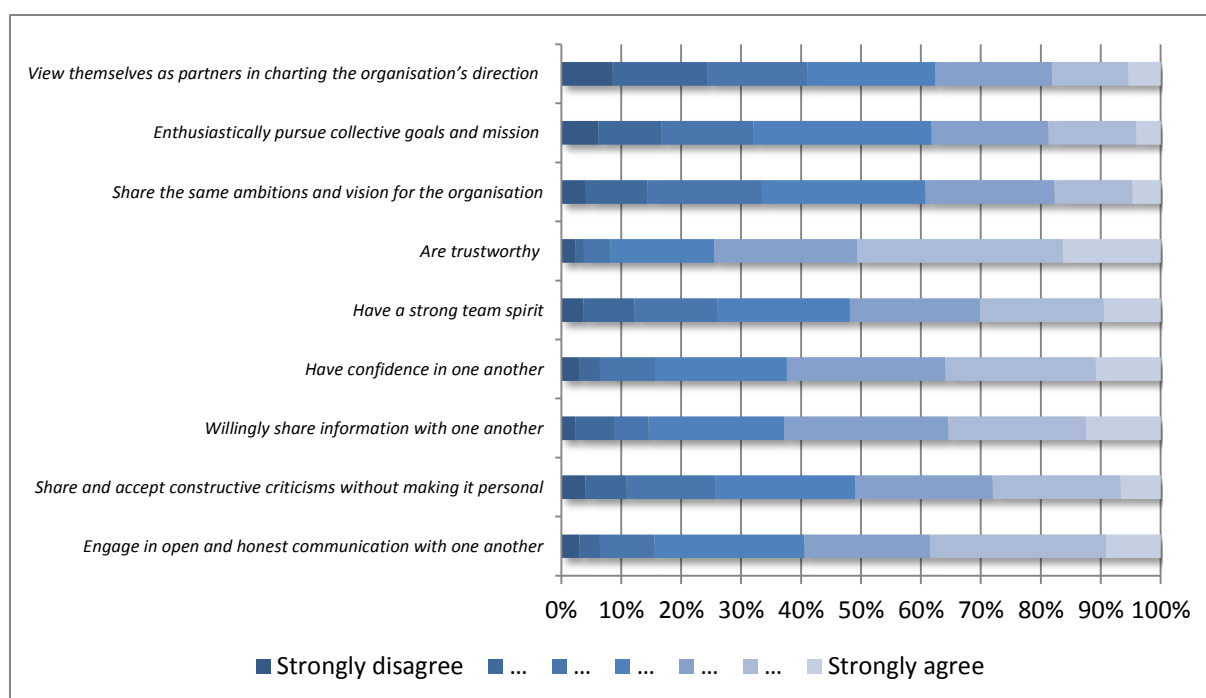
is the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, which is perceived slightly more positively than the overall COCOPS sample. This fact may be explained by the different legal status of public servants in terms of labour relationships.

Figure 23. Different performance dimensions (Q: Thinking about your policy area over the last five years how would you rate the way public administration has performed on the following dimensions?)



As regards social capital and trust, Spanish executives assess nearly all aspects of social capital and trust as positive (See Figure 24). This is especially the case for their assessment of trustworthiness of their colleagues (50.7% assess this as positive) and open and honest communication (38.5%). Also overall positive, albeit to a lesser degree, is the assessment of all other dimensions (sharing same ambitions and vision, team spirit, mutual confidence, information sharing, constructive criticisms) with only three exceptions: a rather low share of respondents (17.7%) state that personnel on their organization share the same ambitions and vision for the organization; only 18.2% view themselves as partners in charting the organization's direction (vs. 24.3% disagreeing), and 18.7% agree that they enthusiastically pursue collective goals and mission.

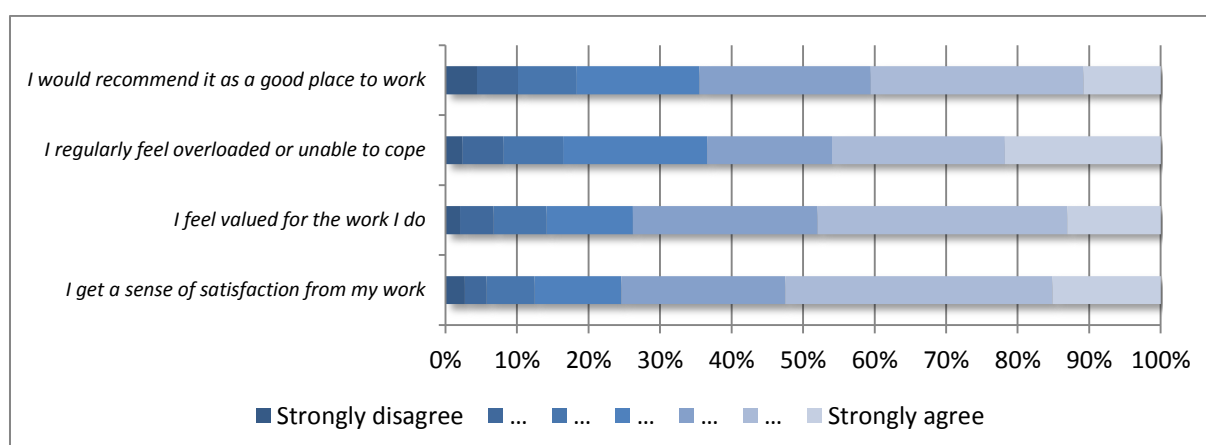
Figure 24. Social capital and trust (Q: People in my organization)



8.3 Individual Level

Similarly interesting is whether public administration reforms have a positive or negative impact on **job satisfaction** at the individual level. The results confirm a relatively high level of job satisfaction among Spanish executives (see Figure 25): 50.2% agree that they get a sense of satisfaction from their work (vs. 5.7% disagreeing). Also a relatively high share of 48.0% feels valued for the work they do, and interestingly, the lower positive share was observed when recommending their organization as a good place to work (40.5% agree vs. 10.1% disagree).

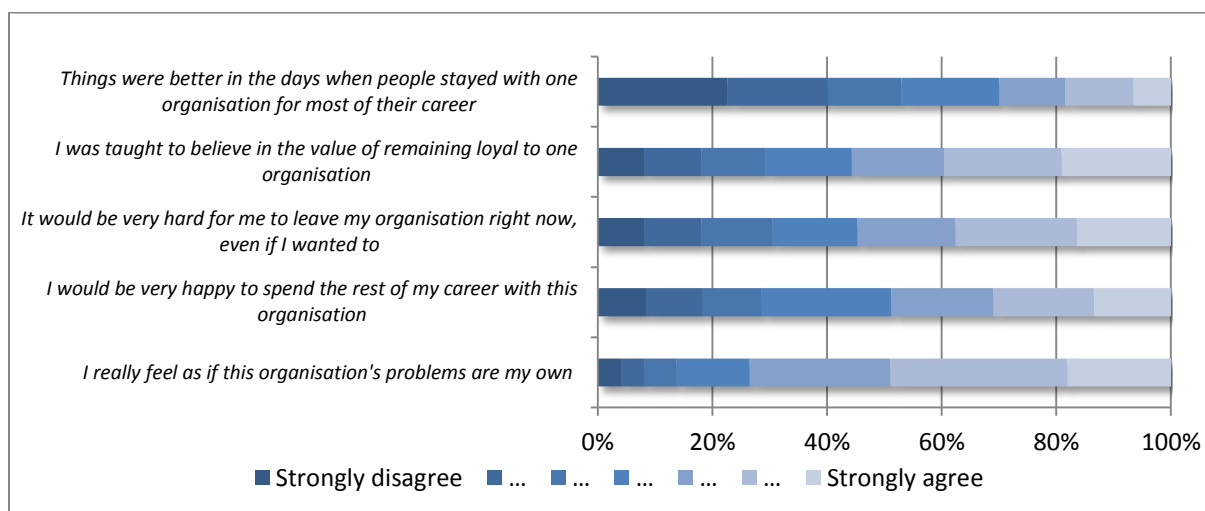
Figure 25. Job satisfaction (Q: When thinking about my work and the organization I work for)



A further related question aims to assess the executives' **organizational commitment** (see Figure 26) a concept commonly used in public management research. For Spain we find a relatively high degree of commitment as regards executives feeling the organization problems as their own problems (49.0% agree), while lower levels of organizational commitment are observed as regards the other questions: only 31% of respondents agree that they would be happy to spend the rest of their careers in the same organization, and a relatively low share of respondents (37.6%) state that it would be hard for them to leave their organization right now. Interestingly — considering the lack of career mobility observed in Spain — a relatively high share of respondents (40.1%) do not think that things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their career.

In overall organizational commitment, Spain does not appear to be very strong, which is a bit surprising, due to the lack of mobility in Spanish Public Administrations, as observed in Figure 5.

Figure 26. Organizational commitment (Q: When thinking about my work and the organization I work for)



9. Findings from the Employment and Health sector

9.1 Employment Sector

The analysis for the employment sector – albeit based on a rather small sample of 55 answers – yields the following results.

Values and attitudes

Executives working in the employment sector have a very similar self-understanding and similar identity patterns as their colleagues in other policy fields; the main differences are that executives in the employment sector consider that giving voice to citizens interests is slightly more relevant for them (from a scale ranging from 1 to 7, the mean value for the employment sector is 5 compared to 4.7 overall). Concerning their view about different priorities as public servants the main difference between the employment sector and the overall sample is their view about financing public service delivery; from the results it seems that employment executives prefer tax financed services over user fees (mean value of 3.3 compared to 3.8 overall). It seems also that they slightly prefer state provision of public services instead of market provision (mean value of 3.1 compared to 3.45 overall).

Work context

As regards the work context, we observe some differences regarding the perceived autonomy between executives working in the employment sector and the overall sample. It seems that those working in the employment sector perceive — in general — less autonomy than the overall sample, particularly as regards budget allocations (3.1 vs. 3.62), contracting out services (2.26 vs. 3.01), promoting and hiring staff (2.5 vs. 2.84 and 1.7 vs. 2.15, respectively), policy choice and design (3 vs. 3.6) and policy implementation (3.43 vs. 4.16).

As regards organization objectives and goals, employment executives have a better perception about goals communication to the staff (mean value is 5.2 compared to 4.6 of the overall sample). They also consider having a higher number of goals than the overall sample (5.01 vs. 4.47). Interestingly there is a higher perception of being rewarded for achieving objectives (3.29 vs. 2.2) and state a higher extend of the use of performance indicators (3.3 vs. 2.7).

In general terms, employment executives perceive a lower degree of interaction frequency than the overall sample, except the interaction with trade unions, which is considerably higher than the overall sample (3.2 vs. 2.5).

Relevance of NPM reforms

Almost all NPM reform trends are equally relevant in the employment sector if compared to the overall sample, with the exception of citizens' participation methods, creation of agencies and intra-sectoral cooperation, in which employment sector executives perceive slightly less relevance (mean values of 3.08 vs. 3.41, 2.58 vs. 2.86 and, 4.27 vs. 4.81, respectively).

Management instruments are used to a greater extent in the Spanish employment sector than in the overall sample. This is especially the case for the use of customer surveys (mean value of 4.03 compared to 3.5 of the overall sample), service points (5.6 vs. 4.7), management by objectives (4.79 vs. 3.95), decentralization of financial and staffing decisions (3.44 vs. 3.02 and 3.29 vs. 2.87, respectively), performance related pay (2.46 vs. 2.03) and performance appraisals (3.03 vs. 2.79), even considering that mean values for the last two instruments are rather low.

An interesting point in the Spanish context is the perception of employment executives about cutback management measures in their sector. In general they feel lower impact of cutback measures compared with the overall sample, particularly as regards staff layoffs (mean value of 2.02 vs. 2.87), reducing front line presence (2.44 vs. 3.18) and increasing user fees (2.20 vs. 3.73), which is consistent with our previous findings about targeted cuts in function of the area. This could be connected to the fact that the crisis is producing high volumes of unemployed people, creating new work for this sector.

Impact of public administration reform

As concerns the overall assessment of the public administration reform, it seems that employment sector executives have a slightly more optimistic view of the reform effects compared to the overall sample, the mean value being 4.8 over 10 compared with a 4.56 of the overall sample.

9.2 Health Sector

The analysis for the employment sector – again based on a rather small sample of 47 answers – yields the following results. Here, we observe more differences than in the employment sector case.

Values and attitudes

As regards health sector executives' self-understanding, there are some interesting differences. Firstly, getting public organizations to work together seems less relevant for them (mean value of 4.8 compared to 5.2 overall). Also they seem to focus less on achieving results (5.6 vs. 6.01) and developing new policy agendas (3.8 vs. 4.2). On the contrary, health sector executive consider that providing expertise and technical knowledge is slightly more relevant than for the overall sample (5.9 vs. 5.6). Concerning their view about different priorities as public servants the main difference

between the health sector and the overall sample is their view about the trade-off between following rules and achieving results; it seems that employment health executives are less concerned about following rules than the overall sample (mean value of 4.5 compared to 4.08 overall).

Work context

As regards the work context, we observe again some differences regarding the perceived autonomy between executives working in health sector and the overall sample, but the overall picture is the opposite as in the employment sector case. It seems that those working in the health sector perceive — in general — more autonomy degree than the overall sample, particularly as regards staff promotion (3.43 vs. 2.84) and policy implementation (4.65 vs. 4.16). This could be explained by the high level of decentralization in the health sector in Spain.

Executives working in the health sector perceive their objectives as even more difficult to observe and measure; asked whether they agree with the statement that their activities are easy to observe and measure, the mean value was 3.9, compared to an already low value of 4.31 for the overall sample. In addition, they state that their objectives are not as clearly stated as for the overall sample (4.9 vs. 5.3).

We observe differences as regards interaction frequency too. Whilst — in general — executives working in the health sector perceive a similar or lower degree of interaction with other actors compared to the overall sample, they clearly state a higher interaction frequency with administrative superiors (5.61 vs. 5.28), subordinate agencies (4.61 vs. 4.13) and media (2.86 vs. 2.5), even the former value is still rather low.

Relevance of NPM reforms

The picture about NPM reform trends is slightly different in the health sector if compared to the overall sample. While it appears that some policies have been implemented to a greater extent in the health sector compared to the overall sample, others seem to be less relevant. Policies such as corporatization, contracting out and privatization seem to have been more predominant than in the overall sample. Particularly the mean values for contracting out and privatization are considerably higher (4.4 vs. 3.7 and 3.6 vs. 3, respectively). This largely reflects the privatization process that is occurring now in the Spanish health sector in many regions, notably Madrid, Valencia and beyond. Interestingly, policies such as intra-sectoral cooperation, strategic alliances and, transparency and e-government, seem to be less relevant compared with the overall sample. Particularly lower relative values are observed as regards intra-sectoral cooperation (3.97 vs. 4.61) and transparency (4.75 vs. 5.11).

As in the employment sector case, management instruments are used to a greater extent in the Spanish health sector than in the overall sample. This is especially the case for the use of customer surveys (mean value of 4.82 compared to 3.5 of the overall sample), internal steering by contract (4 vs. 2.68), benchmarking (4.12 vs. 3.34), decentralization of financial decisions (3.56 vs. 3.02) and risk management (3.54 vs. 2.56).

Again, an interesting point in the Spanish context is the perception of health sector executives about cutback management measures. In general they feel the same impact of cutback measures as the overall sample. However — and interestingly — it seems that cutback measures such as postponing new programs and increasing user fees have been implemented to a greater extent than in other sectors (6.07 vs. 5.85, and 4 vs. 3.7, respectively). This last point is of particular interest, since an increase in user fees could complicate access to health care services to low-income citizens. On the contrary health sector executives perceive a much lower implementation of downsizing back office functions (2.78 vs. 3.9).

Impact of public administration reform

As concerns the overall assessment of the public administration reform, it seems that employment sector executives have the same view of the reforms' effects compared to the over sample, the mean value being 4.53 over 10 compared with a 4.56 of the overall sample.

10. Conclusion

Spain has been characterized as having inherited a Napoleonic public administration. The transition to democracy period in Spain was accompanied by important efforts to reform the Francoist public administration model whilst other reforms were driven by more general moves to modernize the public administration system (Prats, 2010). From the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, most reforms were legalistic, whilst during the 1990s, NPM-style reforms became more influential, especially by focusing public administrators on re-building their relationship with the citizen. From the 2000s, NPM-style reforms continued, striving to modernize, by improving public service evaluation, civil service organization and incorporate ICTs. We noted partial resistance to these reforms on the part of civil servants themselves. The most recent round of reforms is connected to deep crisis in the EU: in Spain cut backs and budgetary constraints are severely affecting the public sector.

The results of this COCOPS executive survey confirm such characterizations to a certain extent, and overall show more continuity than change in the Spanish public administration sector. However, there are some signs of change, albeit uneven, towards NPM, as we will show.

The results for the Spanish sample confirm that public administration retains some of its traditional elements, which generally indicate a prevalence of a classic hierarchical type of public administration: legal studies overwhelmingly dominate the educational backgrounds of the respondents, respondents were overwhelmingly male, and the executives are comparatively older than those in the overall COCOPS sample. Despite their older average age, there is a slimmer top level of hierarchy in Spain than in the average COCOPS sample, so age does not necessarily reflect the seniority principle, as in the German case.

As regards job mobility, the COCOPS survey shows how executives may move around different positions in the sector, but have little experience in other sectors, including the private sector. Around two thirds of executives have worked in the public sector for over twenty years. Over 70% do not have any experience in the non-profit sector, suggesting the narrowness of the Spanish public administrator.

As regards the self-perception of their roles as executives we see that Weberian values are still more important overall than managerial values. As regards motivation, in Spain, intrinsic and altruistic motivation comes out as most important. However, in addition, one extrinsic motivation, job security, stands out as very important in Spain. Other extrinsic factors do not seem to be particularly relevant, such as flexible hours, promotion or high income.

A key part of this report is executives' perception of their work context. Here we find a large discrepancy in the Spanish case. Respondents largely agree that their organizational goals are clearly stated. But on questions related to transparency, whether organizational goals are clearly communicated to staff, and the number of goals their organization has, responses are contradictory.

Interestingly, Spanish executives state they do not feel very autonomous in their work. Autonomy in Human Resources in particular is extremely low in the Spanish case, whilst budget allocation autonomy is also quite low. Questions on interaction frequency confirm the "silo culture" dominates the public sector in Spain, with little interaction with people outside the immediate work environment. On coordination, we saw how Spain continues to have a serious coordination deficit, and fragmentation remains a major concern. Moreover, the Spanish public sector remains quite highly politicised as regards appointment practices, continuing the traditional "spoils system" described by Nieto (1996).

Spain embarked on a deep privatization movement, slowly under the Socialists in the 1980s but then dramatically under the PP in the 1990s. However, privatization affected industry and utilities in particular. Executives did not perceive privatization and agentification to have been very relevant in their sectors. More perceived that outsourcing was important, which makes sense, because this policy has been more prevalent in the sectors under study here. It is generally thought that public sector reform in Spain has been driven without public involvement, from the top-down. Only 10% thought reform has been successful, and nearly 32%, unsuccessful.

One key goal of the present study is to obtain systematic information on how public sector executives assess the impact of the various public sector reforms on an organizational but also policy level. At the organizational level, managerial instruments are not highly relevant in the Spanish case. The main exception is the use of service points for customers. Infrequently used are performance related pay, risk management, decentralization of staffing decisions and so forth. This confirms the resistance of managerial reforms in the Spanish case. Neither are performance management tools perceived as being of great importance in Spain. When asked whether individuals use performance indicators when working, responses are so diverse it is difficult to obtain a clear picture on this question.

Apart from central government, the survey also targeted more specifically the health and employment sectors. With regards to employment, results do not differ substantially from the rest of the Spanish sample. The major difference here is that executives in the employment sector consider giving voice to citizens as more important than the average Spanish perception. Regarding autonomy, employment executives feel they have even less than the already low levels perceived in

Spain, but they do state more strongly they feel rewarded for their achievements and that they use performance indicators more commonly.

As regards the health sector, greater differences can be observed than in the employment sector with the average COCOPS results for Spain. Health executives feel that their provision of expertise and technical knowledge is more relevant than the overall sample, whilst they feel it is less relevant to focus on achieving results and getting public organizations to work together. This is logical given the different tasks of the employment and health sectors. Health executives perceive they have higher levels of autonomy than their peers in employment – again, this could be explained by the decentralization of health in Spain. It is perceived that corporatization, privatization and outsourcing are more prevalent in this sector than in the average survey results for Spain. Finally, management instruments such as customer surveys, internal steering by contract, benchmarking, decentralization of financial decisions and risk management are perceived to be more important in health than the average COCOPS responses.

Overall, after several decades of NPM and privatization reforms around Europe, the results from Spanish executives suggest there is more continuity than change in the Spanish Public Administration system. Clearly, there are areas of exceptions: we saw how some NPM-style reforms in health are perceived as more relevant than in the rest of the public administration sector. We also saw how NPM reforms around the consumer seem to be perceived as more relevant than other reforms, such as performance related pay and so on. But as regards lack of mobility, inward looking ness, low levels of autonomy and so forth, we can say that tradition still reigns in the Spanish public administration sector.

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