

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN THE POLICE: AN OUTLINE BASED ON INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

CULTURA ORGANIZACIONAL EM CORPORAÇÕES POLICIAIS: UM DELINEAMENTO ORIENTADO PELOS VALORES INSTITUCIONAIS

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Abstract

Institutional values are an essential part of organizational culture, and is especially important in police organizations, which are characterised by conservatism, traditionalism, isolationism, etc. This article aims to provide an outline of an international Police culture based on the institutional values of the corporations analysed here. The study topic is the organisational values of the Police, and specifically, of “beat police” forces, that is, the police officers that have a visible role in preserving public order. The study used a qualitative exploratory research strategy and a literature review to collect the data. Inductive reasoning was the method chosen to analyse the institutional values of 12 corporations from 11 countries. The study aimed to answer the research question: What are the institutional values that currently represent the culture of police organisations in different parts of the world? The findings showed that organisational culture in the Police is rooted in basic institutional values such as commitment, loyalty, honour, respect, discipline, sacrifice and courage, and on adjacent values such as professionalism, respect for human rights, quality, transparency, humanity, impartiality and fairness.

Keywords: organisational culture; institutional values; police organisations; beat police; management

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Resumo

Os valores institucionais integram a essencialidade da cultura organizacional, em especial nas organizações policiais, em face de suas especificidades, como o conservadorismo, o tradicionalismo, o insulamento, etc. Diante desse contexto, o objetivo geral do presente artigo foi delinear a cultura internacional da Polícia, a partir de cada um dos valores institucionais das corporações investigadas. Demarcou-se como objeto de estudo os valores organizacionais da Polícia, limitando-se às “polícias de rua”, ou seja, aquelas que exercem o caráter ostensivo de preservação da ordem pública. A pesquisa teve natureza exploratória, de cunho qualitativo, baseada em análise bibliográfica e documental. Seguiu-se um raciocínio indutivo com análise dos valores institucionais de 12 corporações selecionadas em 11 países. O desafio posto foi responder à questão central - quais valores institucionais atuais são representativos da cultura nas organizações policiais em todo o mundo? Os principais resultados evidenciaram que a cultura organizacional é constituída por valores institucionais essenciais, como comprometimento, lealdade, honra, respeito, disciplina, espírito de sacrifício e coragem, tanto quanto por valores adjacentes como profissionalismo, respeito aos direitos humanos, qualidade, transparência, humanidade, imparcialidade e justiça.

Palavras-chave: cultura organizacional; valores institucionais; organizações policiais; polícia de rua; gestão

1. Introduction

Organisational culture became a relevant topic in management for western countries about 45 years ago, when Japan became famous for its quality control practices. According to Mintzberg et al (2000), culture represents the mind of an organisation, influencing decisions, strategies, attitudes and the way resources are used. Culture can be manifested through beliefs and assumptions, values, myths, language and symbols, formal rituals and celebrations, taboos, procedures and rules, heroes and leadership attitudes (Schein, 1984). This study seeks to provide an outline the international culture of the Police, based on the institutional values of the corporations analysed here.

This study will analyse one of these cultural manifestations, the values of police organisations. In these institutions, culture is highly externalised because their principles and beliefs are typical, traditional and conservative. While there are stronger and more stable values in police organisations, police culture should be scrutinised to avoid misalignments with the changes taking place in the world. Their survival in the long term will depend on their alignment with external forces (Johann, 2013). An organization’s culture cannot be effectively managed, renewed and updated without knowing and diagnosing that culture.

This study is relevant because organisational culture is seen as a critical factor in successful management (Lisboa et al., 2013). When its values are positive, culture drives organisational development (Fernandes, 2023) and affects the effectiveness and efficiency of companies (Rodríguez & Alcover, 2003). Therefore, diagnosing it is essential since it is one of

the most important tools in management and change (Albino et al., 2022; Akta et al., 2011). The academic and scientific relevance of the study also stems from the fact that few studies have addressed the institutional values that characterise the international culture of the Police today. This work bridges a gap in two areas of knowledge: Management and Police Sciences, a more recent area of study.

There are many types of police institutions. Their core businesses include: scientific police, border police, finance police, maritime police, port police, immigration police, criminal police, legislative police and morality police, among others. Therefore, it was necessary to define which type of police organisation would be analysed in the study. The analysis will address “beat police” forces, that is, police corporations whose duties include preventing crime, maintaining order and combat disorder in public spaces, that is, visibility, proximity and emergency policing (Gonçalves, 2007). This type of policing was chosen because they are the most familiar to the general public thanks to their accessibility, constant presence and ability to take immediate action.

Briefly, “beat policing”, as it is known today, dates back to the 19th century (more specifically, to England, in 1829). It was a milestone that marked the transition from archaic systems of occasional policing by night watchmen, private citizens, etc., and public policing (Batitucci, 2010). Beat policing became the professional, civilian, hierarchical, preventive, full time activity that would become a symbol of modern policing (Gonçalves, 2017).

After defining the type of policing that would be analysed in the study, a research question was formulated: What are the institutional values that currently represent the culture of police organisations in different parts of the world? Specific objectives were set for the study are: 1. identifying the concepts, levels and forms of manifestation of organisational culture; 2. portraying the culture of police organisations through characteristics that are common to all police corporations; 3. categorising values in terms of concepts, importance and typology; 4. establishing relations and comparisons between the institutional values of 12 police corporations from different countries.

The study methodology is an exploratory qualitative research strategy based on a literature review, which was used to collect the data. The logical procedure chosen for this study was inductive reasoning and the technique was a comparative data analysis. First, the authors selected the countries and police forces that would be analysed, after which they identified, compared and analysed the statements of values of each force and created a picture of the organisational culture of the police based on those values.

The study was divided into five chapters that will provide an answer to the research question. The first is this introduction; the second contains the literature review and discusses organisational culture, culture in police organisations and institutional values. The third chapter describes the methodology used to achieve the objectives; the fourth presents the data and discusses the findings. The fifth and final chapter contains the study’s conclusions.

This article complies with the spelling agreement for the Portuguese language currently in force in Brazil.

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

2.1. Organisational culture

Organisational culture is a multidisciplinary topic. It has been addressed from the perspective of various areas of knowledge, including sociology, anthropology, psychology and, especially, management (which is the case of this study). Hofstede (1994) said that organisational culture is the result of an organisation's relationship with its external environment. To understand it, one must know the nuances of its relationship with society and especially with the target audiences with whom it has institutional relations. According to Schein (1984), culture in organisations refers to the relevant premises a group creates or adapts when faced with complex external and internal situations. When they are successful, they are integrated into the culture and passed on to new members as a form of collective knowledge of what to do in such situations. These premises can be decoded or interpreted using elements known as indicators or signposts. They consist of convictions, rules, uniforms, symbols, layout, logos, slogans, rituals, etc. Collectively, these signposts provide a point of reference that is integrated over time and that rejuvenates the culture. This evolution can be seen by looking at the institution's history.

Fleury and Fleury (1995, p.27) assert that culture has the ability to "order, assign meanings and build organisational identity". Edgar Schein analysed culture within organisations and defined it as a:

[...] pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2001, p. 9).

Culture also helps to socialise new members by transmitting values that align organisational and individual interests (Sousa, 2009). Schein (2004) divides culture in organisations into three levels, according to their depth (figure 1): artifacts, which are visible and external symbols such as the layout, the logo, informal behaviours, etc.; values, which are represented by beliefs and convictions that shape procedures, behaviours and the organisation's identity; assumptions, the deepest level of culture, which are less open to interpretation, such as taboos (Silva, 2017; Sousa, 2009).

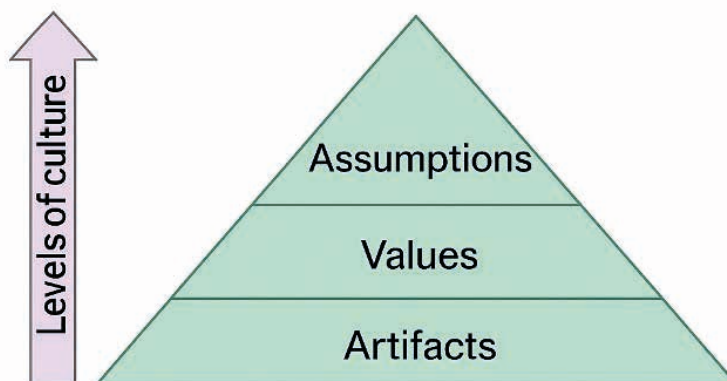


Figure 1 – Levels of organisational culture

Source: adapted from Schein (2001)

Some variables can be used as indicators (see table 1), to measure organisational culture: beliefs and assumptions, institutional values, myths, language and symbols, formal rituals and celebrations, taboos, procedures and rules, heroes and leadership behaviours (Schein, 1984).

Table 1 – Organisational culture indicators

Indicadores	Explicação
Beliefs and assumptions	Perceptions that are usually implicit. They consist of truths that guide behaviour, but are not necessarily formal rules of the organisation.
Institutional values	A formal statement of the organisation's beliefs (what is declared might not be the same as what is practised).
Myths/legends	The stories that are told about the organisation's history, which are usually based on interpreted narratives (which might not be entirely truthful).
Language and symbols	Elements that portray an image of the organisation, such as heraldic colours, logos, vehicles, buildings, uniforms, furniture, etc.
Formal rituals and celebrations	Formal events and functions which are repeated and which serve to strengthen the organisation's culture, making it more explicit, highlighting values and enhancing myths, assumptions and beliefs.
Tabus	Behaviours and attitudes that are not tolerated within the organisation. They can be written or unwritten and include beliefs about what is considered unacceptable.
Procedures and rules	Written rules of behaviour, attitudes, etc. There are usually sanctions for non compliance with the rules and inappropriate behaviour.
Heroes/legends	People who have played an important role in the history of the organisation and embody the organisation's values and culture.
Leadership behaviour	Leaders' attitudes, which refer to what they do, rather than to what they say or declare. That is, a leader's posture, rather than their words.

Source: Adapted from Schein (1984)

Among the cultural manifestations listed by Gonçalves and Campos (2012), organisational values are especially relevant to this investigation. As such, they were chosen as the study topic. Values are an integral and fundamental part of organisational identity, or "a structured set of

cultural attributes that are related to each other and express how the organisation presents itself to its internal and external audiences” (Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais, 2020, p. 12). Fascioni (2010, p.26) defines organisational identity as the attributes that “make a company unique: its essence, principles, beliefs, quirks, flaws, qualities, aspirations, dreams and limitations”. The concept can be inferred from two important premises about organisational identity: a strong culture formalised by the organisation’s leaders.

2.2. Culture in police organisations

Police corporations are influenced by their culture, which provides an informal way to control, predict and standardise behaviours, practices and attitudes. It includes “certain beliefs and attitudes shared by police organisations around the world” (Oliveira Junior, 2007, p. 165). Reiner (2004) points out that police culture is guided by premises, such as a sense of mission, suspiciousness, external isolation and internal solidarity. Oliveira Júnior (2011) agrees that solidarity and social isolation are core elements of police culture.

Management styles, the policies decided by leaders, and the strategies themselves are manifestations of the organisation’s culture, which can also be represented by the procedures and processes through which that culture is shared (Fernandes, 2017). According to Silva (2017, p. 76), “the military police have a strong, deep-rooted organisational culture, which should be integrated in all its processes, otherwise they will not be successful”; and Silva Neto (1997) notes that the PMMG’s culture has an impact on the product or service it provides.

It determines how decisions are made, how resources are used and allocated, and how the organisation reacts to the environment in which it produces goods or provides services. (p. 14)

There are at least three aspects that highlight the importance of organisational culture in law enforcement. The first is that any changes require an understanding and knowledge of the culture and its nuances (Silva, 2017). The second is that culture largely explains how the police think and act (Sousa, 2009). The third is that culture has a powerful influence on the organisation’s performance (Mintzberg et al. 2000; Schein, 2001; Silva Neto, 1997). In the police, the values that shape culture are present in its formal rituals and celebrations, rules, operational procedures and its training and education processes, especially the process through which new members are integrated and socialised (Silva Neto, 1997, Sousa, 2009).

While there are universally-recognised values that are encouraged in organisations (and in general), such as moral character, integrity, decorum, etc., the values that are fundamental to the practice of police duties should be explicitly recognised and shared as a vital part of its identity. Police culture is characterised by specific features that include esprit de corps, discernment, suspiciousness and traditionalism (Silva Neto, 1997). Insularity is also a feature of police corporations. As Skolnick & Fyfe (1993) note, this is clear by these organisation’s resistance to external intervention.

In police organisations, work processes and routines are rooted in convictions, principles and behaviours which are largely shared by their members, who see themselves as different from members of other organisations (Fernandes, 2017). Rico and Salas (1992) explain that

the culture that shapes values in police forces from these organisations' characteristics, which include a paramilitary structure, internal solidarity, acculturation of new members and a rigid work routine.

Police organisations have a strong cultural identity rooted in a complex set of principles and values that are shared through institutional activities. There are significant barriers to implementing significant and timely changes due to their nature, which is conservative, bureaucratic, corporatist and centralising. They also have aspects in common with military organisations: unity, esprit de corps, solidarity, traditionalism and ritual, among others.

The ritualistic military aesthetics of police corporations encourage other principles that are essential to police activities which aim to preserve public order, such as "respect and compliance with the rules, so that its members are seen as reputable professionals committed to serve and protect the citizens" (Fernandes, 2023, p.149). Polices forces can be mobilised quickly, are in constant readiness, are trained, armed and often interconnected, and obey the principle of prompt obedience. This means that military aesthetics play a relevant role in how the police is used and controlled (Fernandes, 2023).

The internal structure of police organisations already imparts certain values and, consequently, cultural traits, such as a rigid hierarchy, ritualised behaviour, standardised training, formal rules and doctrines (Oliveira Júnior, 2011). Police organisations are influenced by military ethos. Bittner (1970, p. 52) presents a conception of the police as a "quasi-military" institution. Camargo (1997) emphasises military aesthetics and rituals:

military aesthetics should not be confused with war culture; military aesthetics are necessary because they impart the values of discipline and hierarchy; and military aesthetics in police institutions is one of the factors that ensures respect for citizens' rights. (p. 4)

For Monjardet (2002), the core values of police organisations, police work is substantially more complex than any other profession:

the work of an engineer, technician or factory worker can be explained (until proven otherwise) without referring to a personal value system or the collective value system of a given group [...]. Police work cannot be understood at first glance (Monjardet, 2002, p. 162-163).

Skolnick (1994) asserts that police officers build reciprocal relationships of authority with citizens, and that they possess cultural traits that transcend national borders, shaping a global professional identity of what it is to "be a police officer". Wood et al. (2004) found that certain assumptions are disseminated by most police officers, creating a standardised model that is at the root of police identity and that is emulated by other subcultures. According to Oliveira Júnior (2007, p. 103), "there is a shared element in the police experience or activity that fosters a unique way of thinking about their work, their relationship with society and the criminal population". Police values transcend national geographical boundaries, shaping a universal professional identity that can be transposed to any region or civilisation.

2.3. Institutional values

Institutional values guide the day-to-day of organisations and the behaviour of their members at all levels of the hierarchy (Paz & Tamayo, 2004). They are a set of convictions and principles of behaviour; that is, what is believed and practised, and what is at the heart of the organization's culture. They are desirable virtues or positive attributes that one should aim to preserve, acquire and/or encourage. Institutional values are a part of the organisation's identity and help define what it is and how it perceives itself, making it possible to predict how it operates and the behaviour of its members, which is why they are so important for organisational identity (Sousa, 2009). Values and other cultural manifestations, such as rituals and rules, provide a common orientation for all those who share the same corporate environment (Sousa, 2009).

Values are an interdisciplinary topic of study that has been analysed in several works in various fields of knowledge, including philosophy, administration, psychology, sociology and law (Fernandes, 2023). They are expressed in a statement from the organisation's leadership and describe, or should describe, their declared beliefs. This means that there might not be a direct correspondence between what is declared and what is practised (Gonçalves & Campos, 2012). In the case of the Police, doctrine is an important source when elaborating the statement of institutional values.

The AC2ID model of corporate identity explains the gap that can occur between what is real and what is shared. According to Balmer and Greyser (2002), there are five identities in any organisation (AC2ID): Actual, Communicated, Conceived, Ideal and Desired. If there is a manifest, deliberate incompatibility between what is real and what is shared as true, the corporation is dealing with what can be described as a true piece of fiction (Fascioni, 2010).

Other aspects can highlight the importance of institutional values. The first is stakeholder management. According to Freeman and McVea (2001), an organization should look outwards to identify and invest in relationships that make its success possible in the long term and that stakeholders can only cooperate if, despite their differences, they share the same values. For this relationship to be successful, it must be based on common values (Freeman & McVea, 2001). The second aspect is that values orient and guide how strategies are conceived and implemented. The organisation needs to know who it is before it can decide what to do (Stimpert et al., 1998). Tavares (2010) notes that strategy must align with institutional values.

Several authors have identified a typology of values and published studies proposing ways to categorise them. This typology is summarised in table 2. Schwartz (1992) proposed a categorisation based on objectives, with four axes that describe a bipolar relationship in which, at one end, independent thinking and action are encouraged and change is promoted, and, at the other end, obedience and self restriction are cultivated and traditional practices and personal stability are protected. Gondim and Tamayo (1996) proposed a model with four dimensions: cognitive, motivational, hierarchical and functional. Paz and Tamayo (2004) identified eight types of values: achievement, conformity, expertise, employee well-being, tradition, prestige, autonomy and concern for community. Finally, Johann (2013) identified two types of values that are distinguished by their endurance: core ideology and adjacent values.

Table 2 – Types of organisational values

Author/ Categorisation	Type	Description
Schwartz (1992) Objectives	Openness to change	Bipolar relationship between openness to change and the values that facilitate maintaining the status quo
	Conservation	
	Self enhancement	Openness to change versus conservation; self enhancement versus self transcendence
	Self transcendence	
Gondim and Tamayo (1996) Dimensions	Cognitive	Beliefs, principles, convictions, etc.
	Motivational	Goals, targets, challenges, interests and preferences
	Hierarchical	Distinction between what is essential and what is secondary
	Functional	Behaviour-oriented. What is ethical and what is unethical
Paz and Tamayo (2004) Values	Achievement	Values performance/meritocracy
	Compliance	Values respect for rules and good behaviour
	Expertise	Values results
	Employee well-being	Values a good work environment
	Tradition	Values tradition and routine
	Prestige	Values external image
	Autonomy	Values creativity and innovation
	Concern with group	Values justice and fairness
Johann (2013) Endurance	Core ideology	Resistant, strong, authentic, noble and enduring
	Adjacent	Evolve with the environment

Source: adapted from Gondim and Tamayo (1996), Johann (2013), Paz and Tamayo (2004) and Schwartz (1992)

Gondim and Tamayo (1996) divide organisational values into those considered important or as a priority and those that are seen as non essential. Similarly, Johann (2013) divides values into core ideology and adjacent values. Core ideology consists of the strongest, most authentic, noble, enduring and perennial values, which transcend time. They shape the personality of the organisation, have a rich historical and cultural context and are common in centenarian, traditional and conservative institutions such as the Church, militaries and police organisations. They constitute “a stable, immutable layer of identity” (Johann, 2013, p.148).

The values that comprise an organization’s core ideology change very little, even if the environment changes. They must be shared internally because they do not depend on context. Adjacent values are acquired as the organisation evolves and adapts to external changes, allowing it to “reposition itself strategically and culturally in the face of new situations and challenges” (Johann, 2013, p.162).

This study uses the typologies proposed by Gondim and Tamayo (1996) and Johann (2013) to compare and interpret the institutional values identified in police organisations and identify basic and adjacent values.

3. Methodology

This study analyses the organisational culture of police corporations by identifying their institutional values, based on the assumption that police values transcend all national borders and shape an international professional identity of what policing is (Oliveira Júnior, 2007; Skolnick, 1996; Wood et al., 2004). The next section describes the research methods and techniques.

3.1. Methods and techniques

The study used an inductive approach because, as Lakatos and Marconi (2003, p.86) explain, “induction is a mental process in which one infers a general or universal truth from a set of verifiable data, which is not contained in the parts examined separately”. The purpose of inductive arguments is to reach conclusions that are more general than the premises on which they are based. The institutional values identified in the corporations analysed in the study can be generalised to others. This will achieve the general objective and answer the research question. As this is a qualitative exploratory research work that aims to achieve a set of objectives, data were collected through a literature review.

The technique chosen for the study was a comparative analysis of the statements of values of police organisations in 11 countries. When no statements were found, the values were extracted and interpreted from the mission or vision statement. This heterogeneous sample of countries and police corporations allowed the authors of this cross sectional study to outline the international organisational culture of the Police by comparing the institutional values of the police corporations analysed here.

Based on this combination of methods and techniques, the authors proposed a brief analytical framework (figure 2), which they used as a methodological tool to search for a solution to the problem that was formulated and achieve the general objective.

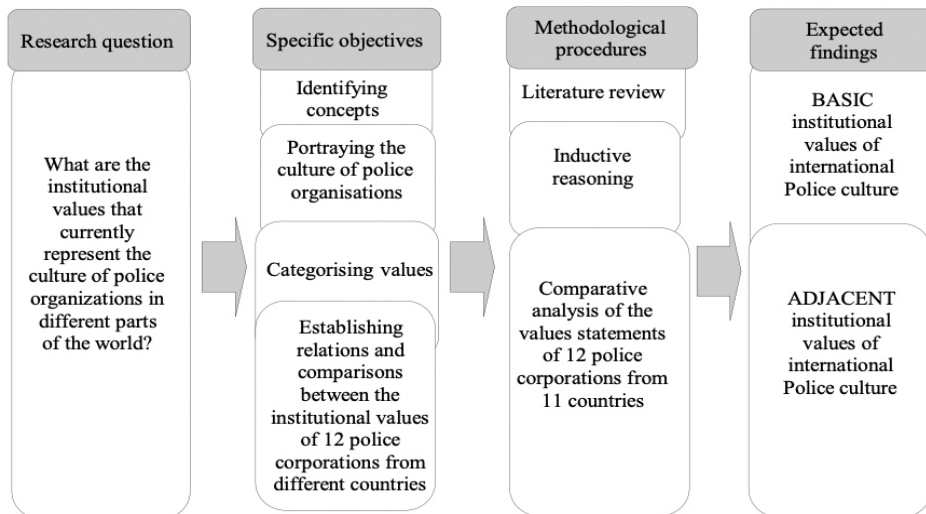


Figure 2 – Analytical framework

A set of criteria was defined to determine which countries and police organisations would be analysed.

3.2. Selection criteria by country

A heterogeneous sample of 11 countries was selected based on the institutional design of their political systems (presidential, parliamentary and semi-presidential) and type of state (unitary, federal and confederate). The other selection criteria were geographical location by continent (North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia), area (large, medium and small) and civilisation.

Regarding civilisations, Huntington (1996) states that global politics can be interpreted in terms of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic differences: Western, Sino-Confucian, Islamic, Hindu, Latin American, Slavic-Orthodox, Japanese, African, Buddhist and insular. The sample included countries from five continents, representing three systems of government, two forms of state, three area sizes and five civilisations (see table below).

Table 3 – Selected countries

Country	Continent	System of Government	Type of State	Area	Civilisation
England	Europe	parliamentary	unitary	medium	Western
Portugal	Europe	semi-presidential	unitary	small	Western
Spain	Europe	parliamentary	unitary	medium	Western
South Africa	Africa	parliamentary	unitary	large	African
United States	North America	presidential	federal	large	Western
Brazil	South America	presidential	federal	large	Latin American
Chile	South America	presidential	unitary	medium	Latin American
Germany	Europe	semi-presidential	federal	medium	Western
India	Asia	parliamentary	federal	large	Hindu
Jordan	Asia	parliamentary	unitary	small	Islamic
Nigeria	Africa	presidential	federal	large	Islamic

3.3. Sample selection criteria

Twelve organisations from the selected countries were analysed and characterised according to two variables proposed by Emsley (1999): their nature (civilian or military) and the level of government they answer to (local, state or central). The organisations are the Metropolitan Police, the *Guarda Nacional Republicana*, the *Polícia de Segurança Pública*, the *Guardia Civil*, the South African Police Service, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the *Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais*, the *Carabineros de Chile*, the *Bayerische Polizei*, the Kerala Police, the Public Security Directorate and the Nigeria Police Force.

The sample is heterogeneous and representative because the organizations are from different regions of the world, include civilian and military institutions, use different models of policing, and operate in countries with different institutional designs and distinct cultures.

Of the selected police corporations, five are military and seven are civilian. Two of them answer to the local government, three are state police and seven answer to the central administration. The table below lists the police organisations analysed here and the selection criteria.

Table 4 – Sample of police corporations

Countries	Police corporations	Typological variables	
		Nature	<i>Subordination</i>
England	Metropolitan Police	civilian	Local
Portugal	<i>Guarda Nacional Republicana</i>	military	Central
	<i>Polícia de Segurança Pública</i>	civilian	central
Spain	<i>Guardia Civil</i>	military	central
South Africa	South African Police Service	civilian	central
United States	Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department	civilian	local
Brazil	<i>Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais</i>	military	state
Chile	<i>Carabineros de Chile</i>	military	central
Germany	<i>Bayerische Polizei</i>	civilian	state
India	Kerala Police	civilian	state
Jordan	Public Security Directorate	military	central
Nigeria	Nigeria Police Force	civilian	central

4. Data and discussion of findings

Twelve police organisations were selected to obtain a heterogeneous, representative sample. These corporations are from different regions of the world, include civilian and military institutions, use different models of policing, and operate in countries with different institutional designs and distinct cultures: the Metropolitan Police, the *Guarda Nacional Republicana*, the *Polícia de Segurança Pública*, the *Guardia Civil*, the South African Police Service, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the *Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais*, the *Carabineros de Chile*, the *Bayerische Polizei*, the Kerala Police, the Public Security Directorate and the Nigeria Police Force.

The Metropolitan Police was created in 1829. It was responsible for policing most of London, except for the City of London, which is under the jurisdiction of the City of London Police (Fernandes, 2023). This police force is known as the Scotland Yard and, according to Miller (1999), it pioneered crime prevention by using strategies such as visible patrols and full time policing, instead of being a reactive force that only intervened to arrest offenders. The Metropolitan Police, as a civilian force, was a benchmark for police forces in the United States and in the former colonies of the vast British Empire (Mendonça & Dantas, 2016).

The *Guarda Nacional Republicana* (GNR) and the *Polícia de Segurança Pública* (PSP) are the two elements of the Napoleonic (or dualist) model used in Portugal, which combines military and civilian police forces. Both are considered “beat police” with the same mandate: preserving public order. What distinguishes them is their area of operations: the GNR is responsible for cities with smaller populations, rural areas and road traffic, the PSP operates in major urban centres (Fernandes, 2023).

The GNR has territorial jurisdiction over approximately 94% of the country and 54% Portuguese citizens (GNR, 2020; Silva, 2013). The PSP operates in most urban areas and processes about 52% of general crime and approximately 70% of violent crime in Portugal (Poiães, 2018).

The *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard) and the *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía* (National Police Corps) are the backbone of Spain’s dual system, which is based on the same principles as the Portuguese model. The *Guardia Civil* is a military force that operates in smaller towns and rural areas and acts as road traffic police. The *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía*, a civilian force, has jurisdiction in major cities. The *Guardia Civil* operates in all regions of the country. It has over 2,000 stations and a staff of about 80,000 police officers. Its mission is to protect people from criminal acts, enforce the law and bring offenders to justice, guarantee that people have the freedom to exercise their rights and protect the public (Guardia Civil, n.d.).

The South African Police Service (SAPS) was established in 1995 to replace the South African Police Force (SAP) after the country’s racial segregation regime (apartheid) was abolished. It is responsible for preserving order in South Africa. After the police reforms which sought to change the negative image of the police during the apartheid (Carrera Neto, 2020), its organization, which had been military until then, was restructured and the resulting model was very similar to the British. In 2017, it was militarised again. The SAPS is a national force organised into nine provincial services, comprising more than 1,100 police agencies, with provincial commanders (Provincial Commissioners) who answer to the National Commissioner (Carreira Neto, 2020).

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) is responsible for policing in Los Angeles County. It has territorial jurisdiction in half of the county’s 88 cities (the other half is served by local police departments). In addition to policing and investigating crimes, it is also responsible for guarding the courthouse, maintaining correctional facilities, escorting inmates and controlling road traffic in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (Carrera Neto, 2020). The US model is highly fragmented. It is subdivided into municipalities, counties, states and the federal government (Dantas & Mendonça, 2022; Sanderson, 2016). However, local police, county police and sheriffs function as crime prevention forces – that is, as a “beat police” – and are the backbone of the police system in the US.

The *Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais* (PMMG) is one of the 27 public order police forces in the country. During the republican period, Brazil developed a police structure based on a federated model, with 27 units and two police corporations per unit, a “beat police” and an investigative police (the Military Police and the Civil Police), which means it is a dual model divided into preventive and investigative police, rather than a “full cycle” model. The Brazilian

Constitution provides for three other institutions that answer to the federal government: the *Polícia Federal* (Federal Police), the *Polícia Rodoviária Federal* (Federal Highway Police) and the *Polícia Ferroviária Federal* (Federal Railway Police). The new *Polícia Penal* (Criminal Police) was established in 2019 and operates at both levels of government (state and federal).

The PMMG was the police corporation selected in Brazil for three reasons: it is a benchmark for other military police forces in terms of its focus on management and organisational development (its organisational structure includes an office of strategy management and a project management office) (Silva, 2017); it has a statement of values since 2004, which has provided the authors of this study useful historical information; in 2020, it was commended by the *Tribunal de Contas da União* (Federal Court of Accounts) as a “benchmark in developing an Evaluation Model for Public Security Governance and Management” (Fernandes, 2023).

Chile’s *Carabineros* operate as a “beat police” and are the country’s most important and most traditional police force. They were established in 1927 as a result of the militarisation of police activity over the last two centuries and of a modernisation strategy which aimed to implement more controlled and disciplined policing in emergency situations (Rocha, 2014). The Chilean model includes an investigative police (PDI) and crime prevention police (the *Carabineros*). The *Carabineros* answer to the central government. They are a military institution like the Armed Forces and they are responsible for maintaining public order in the country (Fernandes, 2023).

The *Bayerische Polizei* (Bavarian Police) is one of the 16 “beat police” forces that operate in each of the country’s states. The German Constitution is the country’s *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), which defines the federation as a form of State and sets out the agencies responsible for preserving public order in each of the 16 federal units (Carrera Neto, 2020). According to Carrera Neto (2020), in addition to the police forces of each state, called *Landespolizei*, the country’s police system has three federal police forces: the *Bundespolizei* (Federal Police), the *Bundeskriminalamt* (Federal Investigation Police) and the *Polizei des Deutschen Bundestags* (Police of the German Parliament). The *Bayerische Polizei* is the *Landespolizei*. It serves 13 million people and operates in Germany’s largest state – Bavaria. Because the German state is a federation, each police corporation has specific rules, procedures, protocols, etc. (Carrera Neto, 2020).

The *Kerala Police* is one of the 28 state police forces in the federal model used in India. Like the Brazilian and German models, each state of the Republic of India has its own “street police” headed by a Director General of the Police who reports to each state’s Ministry of Home Affairs. The exception is the Delhi Police, which answers to the central government. The Kerala Police is the state police of the state of Kerala, one of the top ranking states in terms of maintenance of law and order. It has the reputation for being a benchmark in public safety and has inspired reforms in other police forces in India (Kerala Police, 2020).

The Public Security Directorate is the only public order police force in Jordan. It is a military force that operates in the whole country. Jordan is a country in Asia located at the crossroads of the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. Its system of government is a unitary constitutional monarchy. The last reform of the country’s police system was in 2019, when

all the security forces were merged to create the Public Security Directorate (Public Security Directorate, n.d.).

The Nigeria Police Force is the only “beat police” in the country. It is a civilian force that answers to the central government and is commanded by an Inspector General of Police appointed by the President of the Republic. The corporation is headed by a Police Commissioner for each of the federal states (Nigeria Police Force, 2023). Nigeria is a federal republic with 36 federal states. It is located in West Africa and it has the largest population on the continent. It is considered a regional economic power.

After selecting the countries and police forces, the next step was to identify the institutional values of each force that would be analysed and compared. The table below contains the statement of values of each corporation.

Table 5 – Statement of values by police force

Police corporation	Declaration of values
Metropolitan Police	Professionalism, integrity, courage and compassion
<i>Guarda Nacional Republicana</i>	Knowledge and innovation, unity, competence, loyalty, discipline and transparency
<i>Polícia de Segurança Pública</i>	Rigour, discipline and a sense of duty; humanism; uncompromising defence of legality and objectivity; rejection of any form of extremism or discrimination; commitment to the mission
<i>Guardia Civil</i>	Honour, service, discipline, loyalty and companionship
South African Police Service	Impartiality, courtesy, honesty, respect, transparency and responsibility
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department	Respect for the dignity of all people; integrity to do right and fight wrongs; wisdom to apply common sense; fairness; and courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms
<i>Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais</i>	Honour, professionalism, hierarchy, military discipline and patriotism and selflessness
<i>Carabineros de Chile</i>	Dedication to service, patriotism, honour, permanent police, sacrifice, fairness, loyalty, versatility, tradition, esprit de corps and comradeship
(*) Bayerische Polizei	Commitment, honour, humaneness, sacrifice, respect, loyalty, impartiality, comradeship, professionalism, quality and respect for human rights
(*) Kerala Police	Commitment, excellence, transparency, fairness, respect and respect for human rights
Public Security Directorate	Human rights and the rule of law; loyalty and belonging; integrity and transparency; participatory and inclusive security; professionalism and training; institutionalism; sacrifice and bravery; humaneness and public protection; excellence and creativity
(*) Nigeria Police Force	Professionalism, competence, cooperation, quality, proximity, respect

(*) As these corporations have not published a statement of values, the values listed above were extracted from the mission or vision statement.

Source: adapted from *Carabineros de Chile* (2024), *Die Bayerische Polizei* (n.d.), Fernandéz (2017), *Guarda Nacional Republicana* (2020), Kerala Police (2020), Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (2021), Metropolitan Police (2020), Nigeria Police Force (2023), *Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais* (2023), *Polícia de Segurança Pública* (2023), Public Security Directorate (n.d.) and South African Police Service (2020).

As we can see, the way in which values are described is different for each corporation. While some listed each institutional value, others expressed them as sentences. On the other hand, some statements contained similar values, which meant that the data had to be standardised. Therefore, to facilitate their interpretation and analysis, the authors made two adjustments: extracting the value or values from each sentence and standardising values with similar meaning (see the table below).

Table 6 – Standardised values

Similar values	Standardised values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of duty • Commitment to the mission • Dedication to service 	Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejection of any form of extremism or discrimination • Respect for the dignity of all people • Human rights and the rule of law • Courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms 	Respect for human rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrifice • Selflessness 	Sacrifice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality • Excellence 	Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanity • Humanism • Humaneness • Compassion 	Humanity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impartiality • Objectivity 	Impartiality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms • Courage • Bravery 	Courage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Participatory security 	Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent police 	Constancy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Creativity 	Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairness • Isonomy 	Fairness

After making the required adjustments, 36 values were identified in the 12 corporations, namely: “professionalism”, “integrity”, “courage”, “humanity”, “knowledge”, “innovation”, “unity”, “competence”, “loyalty”, “transparency”, “respect for human rights”, “commitment”, “legality”, “impartiality”, “honour”, “comradery”, “courtesy”, “honesty”, “respect”, “responsibility”, “wisdom”, “justice”, “hierarchy”, “discipline”, “patriotism”, “constancy”, “sacrifice”, “versatility”, “tradition”, “esprit de corps”, “fairness”, “belonging”, “participation”, “quality”, “proximity” and “cooperation”. Fourteen values were mentioned by three or more organisations. The table below contains these values, categorised as basic and adjacent.

Table 7 – Most mentioned values in police corporations

Institutional values	Number of corporations	Category	
		Basic	Adjacent
Commitment	5		
Loyalty	5		
Professionalism	5		
Respect for human rights	5		
Honour	4		
Respect	4		
Discipline	4		
Sacrifice	4		
Quality	4		
Transparency	4		
Humanity	4		
Impartiality	4		
Courage	3		
Fairness	3		

These values are mentioned by five corporations: “commitment”, “loyalty”, “professionalism” and “respect for human rights”. Eight values are mentioned by four corporations: “honour”, “respect”, “discipline”, “sacrifice”, “quality”, “transparency”, “humanity” and “impartiality”. Two values are mentioned by three corporations: “courage” and “fairness”. While “hierarchy” was mentioned by only one organisation, “discipline” is enshrined in police culture, doctrine and legality (Fernandes, 2023). The pillars of police organisations, both civilian and military, are “hierarchy” and “discipline”, which can be interpreted as obedience to the rules of professional conduct and to one’s hierarchical superior (Sousa, 2009).

Regarding the categorisation of institutional values as core ideology/basic values and adjacent values (Johann, 2013), the values that shape the core ideology of the police in the police organisations analysed here are: “commitment”, “loyalty”, “honour”, “respect”, “discipline/hierarchy”, “sacrifice” and “courage”. These values are similar to the ones mentioned by the Brazilian military police: “discipline”, “hierarchy”, “respect”, “honour” and “courage” (Fernandes, 2023). The section below will briefly address each of these basic values.

One of the most important is “Commitment”, which is also described as “sense of duty”, “commitment to the mission” and “dedication to service”. For Reiner (2004, p. 136-137), the “central characteristic of police culture is a sense of mission. It is the feeling that policing is not just a job, but a way of life with a useful purpose [...]”. The importance of this “sense of mission” is highlighted in a survey of military police officers stationed in the state capital of Minas Gerais, in which 87% of respondents stated that their profession is more important to society than other professions, 61% said that only those who are dedicated to service should be military police officers, and 70% agree that there are protocols and techniques that are only known to police officers (Oliveira Júnior, 2011).

“Loyalty” is linked to police ethos, which emphasises the importance of loyalty to family, citizens, superiors and subordinates, and, above all, to the institution (Sousa, 2009). This value should be expressed not only through behaviours, but through a mindset that includes cognitive and affective elements that are considered essential for the relationships within the police organisation and between its members (Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais, 2020). “Honour” should guide the conduct of police officers, even when they are not on duty. The *Guardia Civil* states that “honour”, one of the institution’s values, is the moral quality that allows a person to fulfil their duty to others and to oneself, and that it should inspire all actions of every member of the community (Silvelo, 2015).

“Respect”, that is, compliance with the rules, is a basic value for all those who have taken on the duty of preserving public order, which shows a commitment to serve and protect citizens (Fernandes, 2017). Most corporations mentioned “respect”, which shows that this value is essential to police culture and to the organization’s mission. It can be defined as the duty to those who serve in the corporation and those who are served – citizens and society –, which requires professional expertise and the ability to respect and guarantee people’s fundamental rights (Military Police of Minas Gerais, 2020).

According to Camargo (1997, p. 4), the values “discipline” and “hierarchy” are “fundamental for public administration; (...) they are necessary to command the troops”. Bretas (1997) asserts that modern police forces are benchmark organisations inasmuch as they are bureaucratic structures that must be efficient and respect certain principles. When they became professional forces, procedures, techniques, discipline and a hierarchy had to be created to facilitate their mission of maintaining order and fighting crime (Oliveira Júnior, 2011).

The value “sacrifice” is a consequence of “commitment”, as personal sacrifice is required to accomplish the mission of preserving public order and protecting people and property. The “war on crime” conception also highlights “commitment” and “sacrifice” (Oliveira Júnior, 2011). As for “courage”, bravery, fearlessness, boldness and other similar adjectives, these qualities should guide the actions of police officers, even at the cost of their own lives (Sousa, 2009). The PMMG defines “courage” as bravery and the fortitude, strength or moral energy that enables a person to face danger (Fernandes, 2023).

The other values identified in this study are adjacent values which are derived from socio cultural changes and global scenarios, such as the public demand for quality services; the empowerment of social actors due to improvements in education, access to information and digital inclusion; increased social participation and mobilisation to demand quality public services; the increasingly complex demands for public policies; and the growing importance of social and cultural diversity on the political agenda and in organisations (Fernandes, 2023).

The current legislation has also introduced further restrictions and oversight of police activity. As a result, a new concept of policing emerged based on the principles of human dignity, legality, justice, freedom and security (Afonso, 2018). These principles, which stem from political and social changes, are driving (and will continue to drive) cultural changes in the police from which other values will emerge, such as those identified in this study: “professionalism”,

“respect for human rights”, “quality”, “transparency”, “humanity”, “impartiality” and “fairness”.

The research question that guided the study – What are the institutional values that currently represent the culture of police organisations in different parts of the world – was answered by identifying a set of 14 values (seven basic values and seven adjacent values).

5. Conclusion

The authors of this study analysed culture in police corporations, specifically, the institutional values that shape it. The study of values in organisational culture is transdisciplinary and has been addressed in several fields of study. In this study, it is approached from the perspective of Management and Police Science, as the institutional values of the Police reveal how it thinks and acts. In other words, its planning, organization, orientation and command, which sustain its strategy. The aim was to outline the international culture of the police, based on each of the institutional values of the organisations analysed here.

The study topic is the institutional values of “beat police” forces, that is, the organisations that conduct visible activities to preserve public order. The study used an exploratory qualitative approach based on a literature review, logical reasoning and a comparative analysis of 12 police corporations from 11 countries, which were selected according to defined criteria to obtain a diverse, representative sample of countries and police forces. The criteria were: the model of police system; area and geographical location; institutional design and civilisation.

The study identified: i) a typology of organisational values categorised according to objectives, dimensions, values and endurance; ii) the existence of a culture with basic and adjacent organisational values – basic values are common characteristics that are almost universal to police organisations (they are stable, typical, traditional and conservative), whereas adjacent values are not integral to the organization’s core ideology, but are equally important because they respond to changes and current and future scenarios; iii) several common attributes in the institution’s values, despite the different types of police corporations that were analysed.

The study’s findings accomplish the general objective and answer the research question that guided the study – What are the institutional values that currently represent the culture of police organisations in different parts of the world? The institutional values that shape the organisational of police forces are: “commitment”, “loyalty”, “honour”, “respect”, “discipline/hierarchy”, “sacrifice” and “courage”. Other values that are becoming equally important, even if they are not a fundamental part of police culture, are “professionalism”, “respect for human rights”, “quality”, “transparency”, “humanity”, “impartiality” and “fairness”.

Finally, the police corporations selected as the study sample placed a high value on “respect”, especially in relation to human rights, highlighting the growing importance of an adjacent value that will become an essential part of police culture in the long term, given the global shift in attitudes towards social and cultural diversity.

The study helps to bridge a gap in academic-scientific research, given the scarcity of studies on the institutional values that currently characterise police culture in different parts of the world. One limitation was the relatively small sample, which can be problematic, as

it can lead to distortions. Further studies should be conducted with a larger sample that includes the continents and civilisations that were not included in the sample, as this will allow for the identification of other institutional values.

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