

SEARCHING FOR MEANINGS: A CRITICAL-REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP APPROPRIATION IN BRAZILIAN TOWNS¹

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to develop a critical-reflexive analysis of entrepreneurship in public administration based on two significant works of Alberto Guerreiro Ramos: ‘The sociological reduction’ and ‘The new science of organizations.’ The research is qualitative, based on bibliographic, documentary data, in-depth interviews, online questionnaires, and direct observation. The results show that the challenges present in the context of study indicate that small municipalities can present fertile ground for the development of entrepreneurial practices. The analyses have also shown that the main deficiencies of the small towns are the managers’ lack of training, the lack of effective articulation with the federal level, the lack of an environment capable of fostering proactivity and participation, the financial crisis, and the necessary behaviors and arrangements. A huge gap for the development of effective business practice is the loose coordination of the Union, states and cities, which is a historical feature of the country.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship. Organization. Public Administration. Municipality.

EM BUSCA DE SENTIDOS: UMA ANÁLISE CRÍTICA/REFLEXIVA DA APROPRIAÇÃO DO EMPREENDEDORISMO EM MUNICÍPIOS NO BRASIL

Esta pesquisa tem por objetivo desenvolver uma análise crítica/reflexiva do empreendedorismo na gestão pública, a partir de duas obras centrais na produção de Alberto Guerreiro Ramos: “A redução sociológica” e “A nova ciência das organizações”. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa

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a partir de dados bibliográficos e documentais, entrevistas em profundidade, questionários *online* e observação direta. Como resultados observou-se que os desafios presentes no contexto amostral indicam que os pequenos municípios podem apresentar um terreno fértil para o desenvolvimento de práticas empreendedoras. As análises indicaram, ainda, que as principais deficiências dos órgãos municipais são a falta de capacitação de seus gestores, a falta de articulação efetiva com o ambiente federal, a falta de um ambiente que incentive a pró-atividade e a participação, a crise financeira e os comportamentos e arranjos que urgem. Uma lacuna central para o desenvolvimento de uma prática empresarial efetiva, é a falta de coordenação entre União, estados e municípios, o que historicamente ocorre no país.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo. Organizações. Administração Pública. Município.

BÚSQUEDA DE SIGNIFICADOS: UN ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO / REFLEXIVO DE LA APROPIACIÓN DEL EMPRENDEDOR EN LOS MUNICIPIOS BRASILEÑOS

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo desarrollar un análisis crítico / reflexivo del emprendimiento en la gestión pública a partir de las obras significativas de Alberto Guerreiro Ramos: 'La reducción sociológica' y 'La nueva ciencia de las organizaciones'. Este trabajo es una investigación cualitativa basada en datos bibliográficos, documentales, entrevistas en profundidad, cuestionarios online y observación directa. Los resultados muestran que los desafíos presentes en el contexto muestral indican que los pequeños municipios pueden presentar un terreno fértil para el desarrollo de prácticas empresariales. Los análisis también indicaron que las principales deficiencias de los órganos municipales son la falta de capacitación de sus gestores, la falta de articulación efectiva con el entorno federal, la falta de un entorno que incentive la proactividad y participación, la crisis financiera y los comportamientos y arreglos que lo necesitan. Entre estas características, una brecha central para el desarrollo de una práctica empresarial efectiva es la falta de coordinación entre la Unión, estados y municipios, que históricamente ha ocurrido en el país.

Palabras clave: Emprendimiento. Organizaciones Administracion Publica. Municipio.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship in the public sector (EPS) is one of the subjects that instigates the debate about the directions of contemporary public administration. This theme has aroused the interest of academics – especially in the international context – as public managers who see in entrepreneurship the possibility of a renewal of public management to generate public value for citizens (DIEFENBACH, 2011; MEYNHARDT & DIEFENBACH (2012); LEYDEN; LINK, 2015). In Brazil, in addition to highlighting the imminent relevance of the theme in the Brazilian perspective, the literature also points out potential collateral effects of this practice incorporated into the public sector. As Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2015, p. 93) evidence, the development of entrepreneurs in the public sector "on the one hand [...] contributes to building new ways to maximize organizational productivity and effectiveness. On the other hand, it poses risks for

the maintenance of democracy in the public sector". In this perspective, Meynhardt e Diefenbach (2012) showcase that entrepreneurs can bring a climate of innovation and proactivity through the entrepreneurial orientation (EO).

However, entrepreneurship has been interpreted as a central category in the analysis of public policies and behaviors within public organizations (LEYDEN; LINK, 2015; VALADARES, 2016). Although it seems a tautology, entrepreneurship in the public sector has taken some distinct connotations of private entrepreneurship, mainly because the size of public organizations embodies values beyond a market perspective. Also, one must consider the purpose and the republican ethos that permeates this context to establish effective development guidelines.

According to Klein *et al.* (2010), the deceleration of the world economy, after 2008, raised the interest of governments to implement EPS, as a series of new issues have impacted the public sector as well as the relationship between the public and private sectors. In this sense, public managers have sought to innovate and experience new processes of public policy management, and public agencies have a more active role in creating innovative products and processes, making relations within and outside the government system more dynamic.

The understanding of public entrepreneurship was broadly disseminated by the Reinventing the Government movement in 1990s, side by side with the New Public Management (CARROL, 2017; HAQUE, 2020). This movement, according to Engel, Fisher and Galetovic (2006) and Morris (2007), has directed the performance of governments to a more entrepreneurial way, legitimizing the impending discussion of the EPS. Examples of this more dynamic activity may be the privatization of sectors traditionally regulated by the government, the use of information technology, the global outsourcing of public administration functions and the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPP). This context widens reforms that influence the transition to entrepreneurial management within the public sector. Furthermore, it is noticeable the practices of privatization, outsourcing, performance target, result-based budget, agencification and others (HAQUE, 2020). Corroborating the previous arguments, Morais *et al.* (2015) state that EPS is in full growth and the search for evidence of the categories and elements that support the incorporation of this phenomenon in public management is essential for the contextualization of this debate in public administration in Brazil.

Despite the favorable context, however, it is important to mention that private and public organizations have idiosyncrasies that make them distinct as taken by their types, values,

objectives, and also interests involved in this work (KEARNEY *et al.*, 2009). Above all, when seeking for a more accurate look for public organizations (permeated by a republican ethos), it is fundamental to create reflection mechanisms for the reinterpretation of concepts, which in a way have not been developed for the public context. In this regard, we seek to endorse the discussion held by Souza and Paiva Jr. (2010) when they see entrepreneurship in the public sector in a multidimensional perspective. The authors suggest that "there is a need to approach public entrepreneurship as a social, collectivized and social interaction phenomenon, as has been suggested by Nordic authors as opposed to atomistic entrepreneurship that minimizes collective actions" (SOUZA; PAIVA JR., 2010, p. 4).

For this exercise, the works of the Brazilian sociologist Alberto Guerreiro Ramos 'The Sociological Reduction' and 'The New Science of Organizations' are fundamental for a reflexive and critical analysis of the incorporation of foreign concepts within the Brazilian public administration. In this perspective, this theoretical framework becomes profitable for the construction of a critical awareness of the incorporation of this practice so widespread and defended by international scholars and used by Brazilian managers as a strategy for the development of a public administration by results. Therefore, this research aims to develop a critical reflection of entrepreneurship in Brazilian public management from two central works in the production of Alberto Guerreiro Ramos: 'The Sociological reduction' and 'The new science of organizations'.

In structural terms, this work was constructed in five sections beyond this introduction. In the first one the main concepts of entrepreneurship in the public sector are discussed. In the second is built the trajectory of 'The sociological reduction' and 'The new science of organizations'. The third section presents the methodological procedures of the research. In the fourth, we show the characteristics of the EPS in the municipal context in Brazil and, in the fifth and last part, we present the main conclusions of this research.

1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (EPS)

In general, entrepreneurship in the public sector can be defined from the entrepreneur. According to Leyden and Link (2015) this actor is the one who perceives an unexplored opportunity and acts on it. In this sense, according to the authors, entrepreneurship in the public sector involves the perception and action of the public manager facing the opportunities incurred. Entrepreneurship in the public sector, in this way refers to a series of governmental

and / or private sector initiatives that are jointly established through innovative public policies and by entrepreneurial behaviors in the quest to provide better quality public services and products to society (DIEFENBACH, 2011).

According to Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2015, p. 85) "the diversity of terms that define entrepreneurship within organizations can generate confusion as well as contradictions". That is why the reader should be aware in what sense entrepreneurship in the industry has been taken. In the international literature it is possible to take it both in the functionalist sense and in the collective perspective. However, the phenomenon in its essence is taken from the functionalist perspective (DIEFENBACH, 2011; LEYDEN; LINK, 2015).

In the view of Shockley, Frank and Stough (2002) EPS is not a new concept. The origins of this discussion date back to the mid-1960s. One of the earliest discussions can be seen in the work of political scientist Mancur Olson, published in 1965, entitled 'The Logic of Collective Action', in which he identified public entrepreneurs as being a broad group of individuals who contribute to the elaboration of policies that generate collective results – here EPS was called the Political Entrepreneur (WAGNER, 1966). Yet in that decade, more precisely in 1964, Elinor Ostrom showed that the crucial difference between EPS and private entrepreneurship lies in the restrictions imposed on first such as constitutional rules and administrative acts (OSTROM, 1964).

Although the idea of EPS emerged in the 1960s, according to Shockley, Frank and Stough (2002), it was in the later decades that a greater number of studies and practices were developed on the subject. The year 1970 thus became a propitious moment for ideas and models of entrepreneurship to take center stage in public organizations. Driven by important contextual changes, EPS theories began to take shape. One of the factors that contributed the most to the EPS as a possibility of renewal of public administration was the movement of New Public Management (NPM) itself.

This trend was based on the search for the incorporation of business discourse in the public sector, being a movement with global reach, implemented in several countries (HOOD, 1991; POLLITT, 2000). Among the main premises of NPM, the most important are market orientation, orientation to stakeholders (external) and citizens seen as costumers (POLLITT, 2000). Diefenbach (2009) adds that NPM's strategic objectives were to seek greater levels of efficiency, effectiveness and productivity and cost reduction, which included downsizing, outsourcing and privatization of services.

Like the NPM model, widespread and implemented by Anglo-Saxon ideals, such as those present in the speech of British leader Margareth Thatcher and the American governor Ronald Reagan, EPS became an alternative for the diffusion of a more flexible and strategic vision for rulers in the 1970s. These decisions, however, did not relativize the potential limitations of incorporating a private view into the public sector, making EPS rhetoric a classic alternative to government discourse (OSBORNE; GAEBLER, 1994; DIEFENBACH, 2011). At the end of the 20th century, the neoliberal discourse took a sense of ideological reaction against the interventionist thoughts of the state, impacting the way of conceiving public administration and driving the NPM model (ANDREWS; KOUZMIN, 1998; PAULA, 2005).

With the spread of NPM and neoliberalism, according to Edwards et al. (2006), the discourse of entrepreneurship has become part of the managerial discourse. At the root of this discussion is the interest in letting managers have the freedom to manage – particularly using private sector concepts such as benchmarking –, legitimizing a public service that acts in a managerial way, that is, as an anti-bureaucracy – here thinking in the dysfunctional bureaucracy – capable of innovating and providing risks (EDWARDS *et al.*, 2006). EPS starts to be understood from the capacity of public organizations to promote efficiency, administrative flexibility and the ability to adapt in environments with constant turbulence and competitiveness (KEARNEY; HISRICH; ROCHE, 2009). More definitions can be seen in Table 01.

Table 01 - Definitions and central categories of the EPS

Definition	Central categories	Authors
It occurs whenever a political actor is attentive and acts in potential on the opportunities of profit, moving, thus, the system in which the actor is incorporated towards the balance	Search for opportunities; balance	Shockley et al. (2006)
It is defined as an individual or group of individuals who engage in the desired activity to initiate changes within the organization. It involves adapting, innovating and facilitating risk. Personal goals and objectives are less important than generating a good result for the public organization	Commitment; risks	Kearney et al. (2007)
It occurs when an individual observes and acts on an opportunity for results in political terms	Political results	Holcombe (2002)
It is a process of introducing innovation to the practice of the public sector. [...] The generation of an innovative idea; conception and transformation of the idea into practice in the public sector	Innovation	Roberts (1992) and Roberts and King (1991)
Process of identification and search of opportunities by individuals and / or organizations. In addition, this process is often characterized by innovation, risk taking and proactivity	Risks and Opportunities	Currie et al. (2008)

A process of creating value for citizens by bringing together unique combinations of public and / or private resources to exploit social opportunities. [...] implies an innovative, proactive role of government in society towards improving the quality of life. It includes generating alternative revenues, improving internal processes and developing new solutions to inadequately satisfied social and economic needs	Public value; government and society; proactivity	Morris and Jones (1999)
Use of resources in new ways to maximize productivity and effectiveness	Productivity and Efficiency	Osborne and Gaebler (1994)

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Diefenbach (2011, p. 33).

With the analysis of the definitions in Table 01, it is observed that EPS helps to promote a more innovative and dynamic organizational environment. Elements such as the search for opportunities, innovation, risks, the commitment of public servants and the search for new opportunities come to bear the role of the public agent, whether politician (elected or appointed) or even public servant (LEYDEN; LINK, 2015). The public entrepreneur starts to contribute effectively to raising the level of autonomy, the vision of the future and the culture of risks in the public sector (BELLONE; GOERL, 1992).

Moreover, according to the international literature, EPS generates a state of alert for opportunities in public organizations, since the ability to coordinate the actions of other people to achieve the goals is remarkable in public entrepreneurs. Seen from this perspective, EPS becomes of interest to the actors present in the context of public organizations, since it becomes understood as a binding element and catalyst for results, capable of promoting a culture of innovation and risk taking for organizations in this sector, formerly involved in bureaucratic dysfunctions (OSBORNE; GAEBLER, 1994; LEYDEN; LINK, 2015)

Beyond the economic perspective, great changes in politics, economics, society, and the government itself have imposed challenges to the administrative traditions, such as voters and elected officials demanding effective programs that do not consume excessive tax revenues; globalization that requires adaptive economies supported by agile public agencies; citizen's desire for a more responsive service (PAGE, 2005). In view of these new demands, advocates of the New Public Management believe that the appearance of entrepreneurial public organizations in the last decades of the twentieth century is no accident (POLLIT, 2000; PAGE 2005).

The actions linked to entrepreneurship in the public sector are often guided towards cost reduction and the improvement of productivity, once public managers are frequently on a tight budget (CARNES *et al.*, 2019; OSBORNE; GAEBLER, 1994). In this sense, EPS has the

potential to promote the efficiency and quality of services that public organizations provide to citizens (PIENING, 2011). Nevertheless, the effects of EPS can go beyond the improvement of services, including the creation of new and more effective public policies and new services throughout implementation (BERNIER, 2014). As the actions associated with EPS must be guided by accountability, sustainability, equity, responsiveness, and citizen satisfaction, in order to avoid issues about democratic decision-making, and accountability, many benefits build up to public sector organizations that display entrepreneurial behavior, providing roots for the creation of additional value for citizens and society in general (LUKE *et al.*, 2010; KIM, 2010).

In other words, the EPS goes further from just saving resources within the public administrative process, generating innovations to help improve its management beyond the economic aspect. In this light, Emmendoerfer (2019) highlights the institutional political innovations that have the potential to change the rules of the political game, like participatory budget and public policies managing councils; the public services innovations that occur through the incorporations of management trends aiming to improve the administrative processes and accountability; and organizational innovations that create or change organizations and decision-making/managing processes, like innovation labs and innovation networks within governments.

In this perspective, the rise of the New Public Management represents more than a simple transfer of instruments from private management to public management, as public managers are allowed the position of potential novelty generators, surpassing the role of only managing resources. The "rise" of public managers to such position also call for some reflection on their profile and environment.

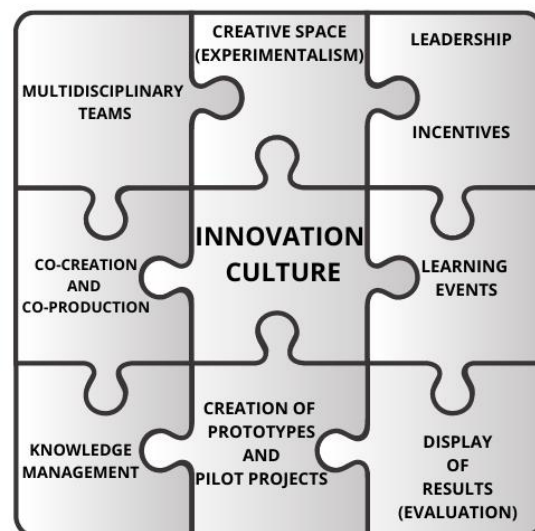
Strongly influenced by the NPM, the perspective on the modern public entrepreneur is mainly individual, a stance also reflected on the fact that the literature on individual entrepreneurs is well developed, with the entrepreneur's personality usually being at the center of discussion (MORRIS; JONES, 1999; BERNIER; HAFSI; 2007). However, Bernier and Hafsi (2007) raise awareness of the critical role a variety of original, creative contributions play in situations in which there is an essential dominant individual's contribution. Collins (2009) states that a good environment is where top managers build space for the creative entrepreneurial contributions of a large number of managers.

Furthermore, Riccucci (1995) and Roberts (1992) argue that in environments that are resource tight, turbulent, or both, which seems to be the case specially in developing

democracies, the risk of individual entrepreneurship is perceived as too high, enabling the emergence of entrepreneurship of distinct nature. In this sense, the individual venture may give place to a collective endeavor highly affected by the organizational environment (BERNIER; HAFSI, 2007).

For Emmendoerfer (2019), the practice of entrepreneurship in the public sector results from environments that nourish within their guidelines a culture that prompts intra-entrepreneurship. For the scholar, it is necessary to go even further so that public sector entrepreneurs can implement innovation within the public sector, nourishing many other elements in favor of the innovation culture, such as interdisciplinary teams, co-creation, and co-production, knowledge management, creation of prototypes and pilot projects, leadership, incentives, learning events and the display of results for evaluation. Such elements are represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Elements of innovation culture in the public sector



Source: Adapted from Emmendoerfer (2019)

In the same direction, Kim (2010, p.25) suggest that organizational structures and strategies in the public sector have to be adjusted so entrepreneurial activities and culture can be stimulated through opportunity-driven management:

State governments can increase entrepreneurial orientations by setting appropriate organizational structures and strategies, supporting practical managerial and cultural activities (e.g., participatory decision making, employee's empowerment approaches, professional development activities, and responding to external changes and concerns promptly (KIM, 2010, p.25).

Therefore, reinvention and transformation to public entrepreneurship ought to be achieved through structural and functional shifts toward more opportunity-driven approaches instead of resource-driven strategies.

2 'THE SOCIOLOGICAL REDUCTION' AND 'THE NEW SCIENCE OF ORGANIZATIONS'

Alberto Guerreiro Ramos is one of the main Brazilian authors in the context of organizational studies. Together with Maurício Tragtenberg and Fernando Prestes Motta, he fought for the autonomy of Brazilian organizational studies, sustaining, epistemologically, scholars with the interest of constructing an autonomous and local research (SOARES, 1995; ANDREWS, 2000; BARIANI, 2010; TENÓRIO; PINHO, 2010; FILGUEIRAS, 2012). In the view of Tenório (2010, p. 30), Guerreiro Ramos was "the first Brazilian sociologist to worry about organizational studies, including anticipating Anglo-Saxon critical thinking".

The first work to be analyzed in this research is 'The Sociological Reduction'. The work consolidates, in a systematic and scientific scope, an effort, especially in the attempt to create a national sociological thought (LEITE, 1983; BARIANI, 2005; FARIA, 2009; AZEVÊDO; ALBENAZ, 2010; BOAVA; MACEDO; ICHIKAWA, 2010). According to the author, the sociological reduction consisted of "a method to enable the scholar to practice the translation of knowledge and experiences from one perspective to another" (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965, p. 54-55).

According to Faria (2009), the inspiration base for sociological reduction is the systematic awareness that there is a sociological thought in line with the Brazilian perspective. In addition, the Guerreiro Ramos (1965) conception seeks to contribute to the "integration of sociological discipline in the most representative currents of contemporary universal thought" and "formulate a set of methodical rules that stimulate the achievement of a sociological work endowed with a pragmatic value about the role it can play in the process of national development " (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965, p. 53).

The sociological reduction (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965) emerges as a thesis for the construction of an interpretative base of society capable of making the national mentality solid (BARIANI, 2010; FILGUEIRAS, 2012). In a general sense, "it consists in the elimination of all that, by its accessory and secondary character, disturbs the effort of understanding and the

obtaining of the essential of a data" (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965, p. 81). The reduction is not restricted, therefore, "in the restricted domain of sociology, the reduction is a methodical activity whose purpose is to discover the referential presuppositions, of a historical nature, of the objects and facts of social reality" (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965, p. 82); it is a methodical attitude. It is not a spontaneous task to transplant foreign concepts or practices, but rather an activity that requires a methodical attitude in search of a deeper knowledge of social practice (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965).

It is also worth mentioning the fact that the sociological reduction does not admit the existence in the social reality of objects without presuppositions. For Guerreiro Ramos (1965), influenced by Weberian sociology, social reality is organized in a systematic way and from facts that are connected to each other. This implies that social reality can not be conceived in a serialized way. Social reality is understood from the connections that are established in social practice. It is fundamental that the process of knowledge, through sociological reduction, absorb the social values established between the meaning of the objects of study in an attempt to understand more specifically the nodes that are established among established social phenomena (AZEVEDO; ALBERNAZ, 2010; FILGUEIRAS, 2012).

Another characteristic of the sociological reduction is the fact of postulating the notion of the world. A reciprocal relationship between consciousness and objects is admitted. In the words of Guerreiro Ramos (1965, p. 83), "the world we know and act on is the place in which individuals and objects find themselves in an infinite and complicated frame of reference." It is necessary, in the light of the sociological reduction, that the researcher seeks cultural references to stipulate the objectives of his research.

The impossibility of repeating the meaning of an object in social reality is admitted, since the context or perspective in which the objects are allocated constitute them. In this way, it is considered that the context interferes in the sense that an object has for a given community (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965). "The sociologist arrives at the sociological reduction when he transforms a demand for self-confirmation that arises in the society in which he lives his demand" (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1965, p. 83). This means that sociological reduction is not based on individual lucidity, since it is imminent in the society where the sociologist is inserted, that is, his or her supports are collective rather than individual.

Moreover, it is a critical-assimilative procedure of foreign experience. According to Guerreiro Ramos, it is not necessary for the researcher to isolate himself from foreign knowledge, nor to romantically exalt local, regional or national production. Making reduction,

on the contrary, implies using foreign production as a subsidiary for local production. This is important because the transplantation of concepts and practices is not considered subversive. The sociological reduction contributes to the process of how the transplantations are performed, that is, the intention is to submit the transplantations to selected selective criteria. It is important to say that "imported concepts and categories must be reinterpreted by the national culture, to adapt them to their meaning content" (FILGUEIRAS, 2012, p. 354).

In the construction of 'The new science of organizations', Guerreiro Ramos makes clear that his thinking is still based on the thesis of the sociological reduction. The author sought to produce an alternative model of thinking capable of breaking with the psychological syndrome inherent to market-centered society. In the view of Guerreiro Ramos (1989), the dominant organizational theory is naive. This ingenuity comes from relying on the instrumental rationality that nourishes its practical success.

Instrumental rationality, or formal reason, can be understood as that which is determined by the utilitarian calculation of consequences, aiming at an objective or an outcome, its main feature being the fact that it is centered in the market system. The substantive rationality, or value reason that will be the basis for the development of the substantive theory of human life associated with Guerreiro Ramos, in the second chapter of 'The New Science of Organizations', is premised on being independent of the expectations regarding success and is not characterized by the incessant search for the result, that is, by the end of the action. It is in substantive rationality that critical thinking is evidenced, the basis of the construction of a new organizational science (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1989).

In Guerreiro Ramos's conception, the organizational theory produced in his time could not understand the degree of complexity of the factors that constituted the society. The central failure of organizational theory resided in its psychological foundations that were based on the perspective of formal theory, that is, of functionalist theory. Often, by leading people to behave and not to act, the current organizational theory, according to Guerreiro Ramos, disseminates in the organizations a behavioral syndrome that arises as a consequence of the attempt to model the social order to the economic criteria (SOARES, 1995; ANDREWS, 2010; PIZZA JR., 2010). The behavioral syndrome is a way of conditioning the thought of society to the enclave of the market, that is, the formal or instrumental reason. This syndrome distorts the values present in the associated human life, converging them to the search of individual interests, "that is, a society in which the pure calculation of the consequences replaces the common sense of the human being" (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1989, p. 52).

This syndrome can be understood from four central categories, which are: fluidity of individuality, perspectivism, formalism and operationalism (FARIA, 2009). According to Guerreiro Ramos, the fluidity of individuality represented the incessant search for the satisfaction of individual desires. In it is present the feeling that things are transient, not having a purpose in them. It is also characteristic the search of the individuals to maximize the utility, to reach their successive desires of success. Specifically, there is no significance of the process for the attainment of these desires, but rather their purpose. The perspectivism is related to the fact that the individual is taken

in a fluid view, with the interpretation of society as a system of contracted rules, the individual is led to understand that both his or her conduct and the conduct of others is affected by a perspective [...] to behave well, then the man only has to take into account the external conveniences, the points of view of others and the purposes of the game (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1989, p. 59).

As for the formalism, man starts to conform to the rules and norms established in society to obtain social approval. One does not question the meanings of these rules, believing that human conduct can be balanced by the way in which they are constructed. Man, in this way, does not act, only behaves. To behave means to say that people have a behavior based on functional rationality, in which their interpretive mode is based on the utilitarian calculation of consequences.

In operationalism, or positivistic operationalism, "only the norms inherent to the method of a natural science with mathematical characteristics are adequate for the validation and verification of knowledge" (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1989, p. 62-63). This trait is characterized by focus on the control of aspects of associated human life and pragmatism, focus on what is useful in the operation. According to Guerreiro Ramos (1989, 65), "it is in this sense that what misrepresents operationalism is its identification of the useful with the true. Utility is a notion full of ethical ambiguity".

For Guerreiro Ramos, through the behavioral syndrome, it is possible to understand that the cognitive policy of the science of the current organizations was centered in a psychological model oriented toward the market. For the author, cognitive politics is related to the distorted interpretation of reality that, consciously or unconsciously, favors the interests of agents related to the market. In this sense, cognitive politics focuses the psychological from society to the interests of the market, transforming the community ties and the culture of a certain social fabric into an instrumentalized logic, destroying the possibility of constructing substantive values.

According to the understanding of Pizza Junior (2010), in 'The New Science of Organizations', Guerreiro Ramos establishes new currency for the conceptualization of organizations, since the perception about them is broadened beyond its formal elements. In other words, Guerreiro Ramos seeks a look beyond the subordination to the econometric rules of market-centered society, pointing to new forms of organizational structure that differ from the hegemonic and economic structure. In these terms, for Guerreiro Ramos, the cognitive politics of market-centered society led to a parochial vision of human nature. Both theorists and practitioners of prevailing organizational theory began to behave as mere operators of management tools and plans, accepting in a passive way the positivist operationalism, immediately. This fact contributed to the fact that the market-centered society remained essentially instrumental in relation to the communication processes in the organizations, focusing eminently on the efficient purpose of each process.

However, in proposing a substantive approach to the organization, Guerreiro Ramos intends to amplify the analytical capacity of organizational science theorists and practitioners so that they can analyze and understand the contradictions and paradoxes that the organizational theory of their time produced (SOARES, 1995; FARIA, 2009). It should be considered that the proposal of Guerreiro Ramos will guide organizational theory to understand that human needs require multiple types of perspectives. Formulating operational conditions peculiar to each of them is a necessity, since the market system cannot meet all the needs of man. It means that the economic aspects inherent in time and living space, the cognitive systems and the social scenes of a given society are only one of the possibilities, among others, for understanding a global vision of human existence.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is characterized, predominantly, as qualitative. In terms of data collection was based on bibliographic research, documentary, in-depth interviews, online questionnaires and direct observation (CRESWELL, 1997). The analysis of documents was based on those available at institutional Web sites of representative organizations of municipalities in Brazil – mainly the National Confederation of Municipalities (Portuguese acronym: CNM) and the National Front of Mayors (Portuguese acronym: FNP). It should be highlighted that no specific features of respondents were exposed, in order to safeguard their

anonymity. So, to spell out the participation of any respondent, it is mentioned the code or label given to that particular actor. The coding of the researched actors can be observed in Table 2.

The interviews were conducted with managers of municipalities of the state of Minas Gerais. Twenty-five interviews were carried out, three (R1 to R3) of which took place in organizations representing municipal interests in Brazil – National Front of Mayors (FNP) and Municipal of Municipalities of Minas Gerais (MMA).

Table 02 - Interviewee's Profile

Code	Position/ Function	Acting	Code	Position/ Function	Acting
R1	Coordinator	Projects	R14	Mayor	Government
R2	Advisor	Projects	R15	Head of Cabinet	Government
R3	Advisor	Technical areas	R16	Advisor	Legal sector
R4	Manager	Education	R17	Secretary	Government
R5	Mayor	Government	R18	Secretary	Education
R6	Secretary	Tourism	R19	Secretary	Administration
R7	Secretary	Government	R20	Head of Cabinet	Government
R8	Manager	Agriculture and environment	R21	Deputy mayor	Government
R9	Head of Cabinet	Government	R22	Secretary	Education, tourism and sport
R10	Secretary	Health	R23	Head of Cabinet	Government
R11	Manager	Agriculture	R24	Secretary	Government
R12	Secretary	Culture	R25	Secretary	Economic development
R13	Secretary	Finances			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The first round of interviews was held with members of the FNP in July 2016. Then the field survey was started in the selected municipalities. In the middle of this process, the interview was scheduled at the Association of Municipalities of Minas Gerais (Portuguese acronym AMM), which was a strategic partnership in this research, because the association's advisor provided an e-mail list of the representatives of all the micro-regional municipal representative associations of the state of Minas Gerais.

With this information, a semi-structured online questionnaire was developed, based on the theoretical aspects and already with the inclusion of important field information, which was sent to all these representative associations. Before this operation, 53 municipalities of Minas Gerais and 64 respondent actors were surveyed, based on primary data. In addition, a considerable amount of bibliographic, documentary and direct observation data (which was

instrumented by the construction of 19 field diaries containing details of each municipality surveyed) was analyzed.

To analyze the data, the technique of material content analysis was used (BARDIN, 2011). Understanding content analysis as a mechanism to ensure objectivity and subjectivity makes this methodological strategy important for this research. The analysis of the data was operationalized from five analytical categories elaborated from the following theoretical framework: a) strengthening of the national mentality; b) subsidiarity of foreign intellectual production; c) organizational rationality; d) organizational cognitive policy; e) parochialism. For the purpose of analysis, the different techniques of data collection and analysis were submitted to the triangulation process (CRESWELL, 1997; STAKE, 1995).

4 DELIMITATIONS OF THE EPS IN MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN BRAZIL

Public administration in Brazil goes through a moment of change that fundamentally will have impacts on organizations, actors, discourses and systems belonging to the Brazilian public context. At the heart of its development, the technical, political, economic and moral debate comes to a climax in 2016 with the discussion of greater accountability of managers, due to the aggravation of corruption and the policy of budget cuts that has generated conflicting impacts in the Brazilian political and administrative arena.

The continuous aggravation of Brazil's political and economic situation and its influence in the context of Brazilian municipalities has been the subject of discussion. According to FNP (2015), "it is in the cities [...] that the effects of a political and economic crisis are felt more acutely, especially for the less favored classes of the population" (FNP, 2015b, p. 1). In view of this fact, a public sphere has been strengthened to discuss the role of subnational governments in Brazil, especially in the municipal context, to promote the agenda of the municipalities in Brazil through negotiations to vote on projects in the National Congress focused on municipal interests.

One of the themes associated with the current municipalist movement is the role of municipalities in the face of the demand for greater professionalism in local public management. In the view of CNM (2008), a new scenario was consolidated for municipal public management. The characteristics of this new context are the sophistication of managerial technologies and organizational structure and economic and social crises. These impact the

performance of the local public manager, especially with regard to their ability to conduct government planning. Changes in the municipal context are a trend that occurs in the context of public management in the world (FARAZMAND, 2012). Both in the technological context and in the managerial context, one sees in this perspective the very future of public administration, based on the implementation of managerial / entrepreneurial practices and the frequent use of technology.

Given the evidence from the aforementioned context, there are important challenges for the municipal public manager in Brazil. Among the main ones, according to the data of the field research those found in Table 03 can be highlighted.

Table 03 - Main challenges faced by the municipalities

Challenges	Short description
Fund-raising	Difficulties in raising funds go beyond the foreseen transfers.
Difficulties in establishing reasonableness in government relations	The dialogue between municipal, state and federal entities does not present a clear perspective. In much of the municipalities, contact with other governmental spheres depends on the figure of a political actor
Effective social participation	In the municipalities surveyed, in general, the debate about participation and civic spirit is still peripheral. In most of them there is still the need for citizens to understand the exercise of citizenship in addition to private benefits
Technical training of managers	There is a latent need for technical empowerment of managers. In most municipalities, these are unaware of various techniques available for municipal management
Political-party relations still very present in the municipal reality	The political debate is still directed by the categories of the patrimonial model of management (Damatta, 1980; Faoro, 2000; Holanda, 1995; Lanna, 1995).
Need for more effective municipal representation	The performance of representations, in most cases, is not effective in relation to the desires of the public managers surveyed
Establishing a focus on results	High rate of ignorance of the importance of planning and monitoring public administration
High budget cuts at the municipal level	The economic crisis has affected the transfers to the municipalities.

Source: Prepared by the author. Search results.

The need for training of municipal public managers is latent. Technical capacity, in this sense, is one of the prerogatives of the EPS in the researched literature, since the ability to innovate, pursue opportunities, achieve high levels of productivity and efficiency, and create public value for society depends on the understanding of the instruments of management present in the environment of the current public administration (OSBORNE; GAEBLER, 1994; MORRIS; JONES, 1999; CURRIE et al., 2008; KEARNEY; HISRICH; ROCHE, 2009; DIEFENBACH, 2011; KLEIN et al., 2010). This means that the culture of results in the public

sector demands managers who are more and more skilled and acquainted with the dynamic of management present in the public sector. For R4 what prevents the professionalization of the servers, in the current moment, is the lack of available resources, that is, the fact that the municipality has to raise funds to invest in new projects. There are also difficulties in recruiting and selecting qualified and committed professionals with qualified public management.

Several respondents also highlight the financial issue of municipalities. In this context R10, R11 and R20 highlight the difficulty of fulfilling the payroll of city hall employees; R21 and R22 emphasized that the lack of resources makes the training of municipal public managers particularly impracticable, which according to R21 is fundamental to the achievement of alternative resources. For R10, the greatest difficulty of the municipality is to generate income so that the producers have an environment more conducive to the generation of jobs and the acquisition of raw material. R11 mentioned that the difficulties come from the transfers made by the federal and state government. According to the interviewee, the cut in the transfers of the Municipal Participation Fund (Portuguese acronym: FPM) is leading municipalities to a very great difficulty to undertake in works (has projects, but has no recourse). The cuts pressure the municipality to act with its own resources, that is, they cause the manager to act in an entrepreneurial way, since, often, the transfers from the federal and state government do not collaborate.

Another important factor in Table 03 is the need for more effective actions regarding intergovernmental relations. In addition, the issue of federalism and the decentralization of public policies in Brazil is discussed. According to the interviewees, the relationship between revenues and expenses in the country leaves the municipalities susceptible to government transfers. In this sense, they show that the decentralization of municipal responsibilities does not accompany the relation of the collection of resources, that is, in the managers' view, this mismatch must be the subject of discussion in the Congress, mainly by the representative entities. R24 presents an incremental challenge for local managers: the dependence of public power on local businesses. This makes pernicious the relationship, according to the managers interviewed, because the agenda of the local executive and legislature is driven by the interests of the business community, since, often because of lack of other resources, these companies employ a large part of the local community.

In addition to the problems already mentioned, it is worth highlighting what R4 mentions as a very central challenge for the development of the management of the current municipalities. According to R4, there is still a very strong political commitment in this context

(understand how to exchange favors). Corroborating this argument, R1 added: "There is a policy issue, right?! A political commitment (which, in a way, reflects the paternalism), but in relation to the legal situation, today, we have to have a certain standard right ?!".

This political dependence can also be seen in the relationship of municipal management with members of the legislature. It is notorious, as said before, the emphasis of the municipal managers with regard to the financial question. To break with this problem and obtain new resources for the municipality a very common practice in the municipalities surveyed is the political strengthening of "patronage" of deputies, for the search of new resources. According to R12 "here are several bills of parliamentary amendment. The budget, today, from both the state and the Union, is 70% focused on projects that the municipality develops and 30% parliamentary amendment".

It is evident in the research carried out that public managers, to deal with the lack of budget, seek resources through the transfer of deputies. However, this exchange reveals a dangerous link for municipal managers and, above all, for the strengthening of democracy. In turn, this patronage generates political commitments of electoral campaign for public managers, that is, the exchange relation becomes based on clientelism and personalism (DAMATTA, 1980; NUNES, 2010). According to R17, the deputy who supports the municipality is able to provide resources for works, for new investments in outpatient fleets and for building of blocks. However, this symbolic 'debt' relation remains with this member of the Legislative, who, in the future, reverts in support of his campaign, as highlighted in the following passage. In the words of the interviewee "this practice makes us hostage to the deputies and this patronage prevents the municipalities from growing".

Although there is a well-directed interest in the management and financial aspects, however, Table 3 shows that there is a lack of a transformation of the relations between the State, society and public management. In this debate some discussions are relevant. One of them is social participation (TENÓRIO, 2005; PERES JÚNIOR; PEREIRA, 2014). The municipalities still lack greater social participation, especially in the organizations institutionally established as the management councils and also the participatory planning. In this context, R6 and R7 mentioned that, in the implementation of public policies in municipalities, dialogue with society is still minimal. According to R7

Sometimes we hold public audiences, we call for the municipal sanitation plan (I distributed the poster, I divulged in the church that is the most efficient means of communication), the participation of the citizen was very rare. Making a planning meeting so that a Multiannual Plan (MAP) can be made is impossible. People do not

have this view of the importance of participation. In their view, it is politicians who must do this kind of thing. Unfortunately it is this vision. That's why I told you. I do not think it's a peculiarity here. So, the decisions are more discussed between the executive and the legislature (R7).

In the perspective of R8 on civil participation, the manager mentioned that people are even participative; however, they are discredited as to the effectiveness of their participation. According to the manager, because of this centralized management and lack of incentive to active participation, there is little interest in society to participate and obtain its benefits from an active citizenship. Again, the assertion that a distinct stance is required of the public power, as regards the strengthening of active citizenship, is seen in R8's speech. By not stimulating this kind of mentality, the discourse of the municipal managers becomes resigned and loaded with disinterest, as seen in the speech of R4 and R11, respectively: "no, this does not happen here no"; "Unfortunately, in the interior, the population sees the city hall as a place of political interest to obtain positions ".

In the context of participation, a central factor to promote complementarity in the formulation and implementation of public policies is the public policy management councils. These councils, according to Tatagiba (2005, p. 209), "constitute one of the main experiences of participatory democracy in contemporary Brazil". According to the author, they are present in the context of most municipal entities in Brazil and aim to represent topics such as health, education, housing, environment, transportation, culture and other topics pertinent to municipal management. According to the author, they are relevant due to their historical novelty, which "consists of betting on the intensification and institutionalization of dialogue between government and society – in public and plural channels – as a condition for a more equitable and efficient allocation of public resources" (TABAGIBA, 2005, p. 209).

In the view of Olival, Spexoto and Rodrigues (2007, p.1015), in Brazil, the public policy councils opened "space for the creation of a series of experiences of popular participation in the public arenas of political decision" giving basis for an institutional innovation with regard to the formulation and implementation of public policies in Brazil. In the specific literature cited, the effectiveness of these councils when put into practice in Brazil (PAULA, 2005) is also questioned. Often, because they do not use a civic rationality, the councils serve as an asylum for party political connotations, making social participation inefficient (ABRAMOVAY, 2001; BAVA, 2001; OLIVAL; SPEXOTO; RODRIGUES, 2007). Faced with this discussion, in trying to establish dialogues from the perspective of social participation through management councils, in the words of R5,

The council in the city of the interior of the state is almost merely of approval character. We already have the topic ready for the council to approve or not. Council initiative is almost non-existent. First thing you hear from a person invited to be a counselor is if he will get paid for the job. [...]. It's funny how people are not concerned about the quality of teaching in the municipality. They evaluate education well, but we have a sad reality. We have one of the worst teachings in the area (R5).

Based on the diagnosis of the main challenges that are present in the cities surveyed, it is possible to notice, as highlighted at the beginning of this section, that even public managers place considerable emphasis on the economic perspective, that is, the market enclave is still the central element for the entrepreneurial action of the managers of the public organizations studied (GUERREIRO RAMOS, 1989). An important issue in this scenario is the need to improve public services and articulate the quality of public management to efficiency and effectiveness indicators (HOOD, 1991).

The discourse that permeates the researched context meets the premises established by New Public management, that is, a management based on instrumental rationality (as Guerreiro Ramos points out, naive) prevails as a central category. This directs the incorporation of the EPS into fiscal and financial issues, disregarding the social processes inherent in public administration as the issue of participation, civism and even the realization of a republican *ethos* (PAULA, 2005; DENHARDT, 2012). The discourse of the EPS based on instrumental rationality strengthens the perspective that the action of public entrepreneurs can be carried out in the same way as the action of private entrepreneurs (intra-entrepreneurs) strengthening the private discourse in the context of the municipalities (SIQUEIRA; MENDES, 2009).

In this regard, R3 has pointed out that the main challenge for representative organizations of municipal interest is to provide solutions to the problems faced by the current municipalities, that is, to act in the mediation between the products offered and the capacity of the local public managers to apply them. As shown, the focus is mainly on the budget economic issue. In the words of the interviewee "the challenge is to think of solutions for municipalities, because our difficulty today is budgetary. The great challenge in Minas Gerais is the budgetary difficulty" (R3).

In addition, according to the interviewee, the town halls of the municipalities of Minas Gerais, most of the time, work without a team and an effective technical capacity, and still deal with political-party issues that are still latent in this context, in which mayors who, when well intentioned, have difficulty understanding public management and, they are often malicious, aiming exclusively to benefit from their private lives, these mandates, says the adviser. This, in

Diefenbach's view (2009), is one of the inherent risks of New Public Management's instrumental approach, since, by bringing to the center of the public administration the variable management, in a dependent way, the political, social and cultural issues, it happens to the periphery of the discussion.

Consequently, taking the EPS by the instrumental bias is to catalyze the distancing of public organizations from the real interest of the citizens. Within all of the EPS's potential, it is worth highlighting the need to reconcile the fundamental democratic values of accountability, citizens' participation, the formulation of public policies aimed at the public good with policies and strategies for the implementation of the EPS in organizations public policies. According to Bellone and Goerl (1992), conciliating EPS with the *ethos* of public administration implies the creation of a civic spirit so that entrepreneurship is strengthened by a culture of active citizenship marked by political, civic and social participation.

5 CONCLUSION

Getting close to the end of this work it was observed that the challenges that are present in the sample context indicate that small municipalities can present a fertile ground for the development of entrepreneurial practices. Considering the literature, the fostering of entrepreneurial orientation by municipalities may corroborate to higher levels of innovation, be it of products, processes, and in the social realm. When considering the primary scope of public organizations and the context of the municipalities in the sample, the potential for generating public value from the performance of public entrepreneurs must be considered. Above all, special attention should be paid to the public servants who have direct contact with the users of municipal public policies. The so-called street-level entrepreneurs become strategic in delivering results for society as a whole (ARNOLD, 2020).

On the other hand, the obstacles imposed to the development of the entrepreneurs' potential are relevant in the sample. Here it is worth highlighting the low organizational capacity of the municipalities. Often small, they still lack structure, training, and development of a team focused on results. Historically, the municipalities' low state capacity demands a discussion and expansion of the effort to review the Brazilian federative pact. By centralizing public revenues in the Union, the process of redistribution of resources (mainly from the Municipal Participation Fund - FPM) has not yet met the demand of small municipalities. Furthermore, due to the small municipalities' low economic activity, the environment for the

promotion of public entrepreneurs, whether political and/or institutional, becomes even more challenging. The presented examples, for the most part, depend on the effort of a particular individual and not of a set of institutional actors. The results of these isolated entrepreneurial practices are still small. However, it is important to keep in mind that incorporating entrepreneurship in the public sector must be taken seriously, since, as while it propels the search for results, the formulation of partnerships, the technical and behavioral development of public agents, it can also boost the search for self-interest, patrimonial relations and the mere search for economic results (rent seeking) as well.

Taking into consideration the this work`s proposal, which is to critically analyze the incorporation of an entrepreneurial orientation in municipal organizations, some contrasting elements can be observed. An environment of uncertainty that lacks effective management base for processes and products innovation is presented. In the analyzed sample, it was observed that municipal organizations` main deficiencies are the lack of training of their managers, lack of effective coordination with the federal environment, lack of an environment that encourages proactivity and participation, financial crisis and behaviors and arrangements that urge one to conclude that patrimonialist practices are part of the local political grammar. In view of such characteristics, one stands out and might represent a central gap for the development of an effective entrepreneurship practice (considering local aspects). It is the lack of coordination between the Union, states, and municipalities in Brazil. This issue is historical in Brazil.

Historically, there has been a focus of managerial development within the Union. An analysis of the 1995 management reform coined by ex-minister Carlos Bresser Pereira, showcases an appropriation very similar to those of large-scale reforms carried out in Europe and the USA in the 1980s. Thus, in the municipal environment it was assumed that management practices, entrepreneurial behavior and innovation are elements of paramount importance for the development of municipal capacities. Although this assumption is positive, the assimilation of these practices did not follow a critical / reflexive direction. As seen in the sample data, the construction of a foundation was neglected, as well as carrying out sociological reduction, a reflexive activity, an opportunity to understand the degree of use of these concepts and to re-signify it to the local context.

For the construction of an effective municipal capacity, this work proposes a return to the reflection of the elements evidenced by Alberto Guerreiro Ramos. Both in “The Sociological Reduction” and in “The New Science of Organizations,” there are elements to encourage researchers, managers, coordinators, and those who work in the context of local

management in Brazil to seek the development of local capacities. Local capacities here are understood as a multidimensional concept that involves political, institutional, administrative, and technical components.

In entrepreneurship, as seen in the literature discussed here, exists the potential to develop new possibilities based on the technical and political behavior of the local bureaucracy. First, it is necessary to invest in foundation, understand the context, and implement strategies that consider the local reality, of the front line, of those directly in contact with the citizen. The strengthening of management also comes from strengthening political, institutional and technical components. More than a discourse, entrepreneurship is characterized by a movement to strengthen planning in the municipality. In addition, it is also characterized by encouraging participation and strengthening of municipal representative bodies such as management councils and participatory budgeting. In this reinterpretation, perhaps entrepreneurship does not even have that name, but the essence of the performance of managers (see sociological reduction) starts to refer to an entrepreneurial and proactive management.

Given these considerations, it is concluded that seeking the essence of entrepreneurship in the public sector based on Alberto Guerreiro Ramos's contributions is seeking to go beyond the simple creation of yet another nomenclature. In this reflective proposal, the search for the essence of the term resides searching for the creation of an environment that strengthens the central premises of the place. It is important to mention where we are speaking from. An environment that needs to be rebuilt. In this process there are elementary meanings within literature and practice of entrepreneurship that can renew this noble group of municipalities, which in Brazil, are in the vast majority - small municipalities.

Above all, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in which the lack of federative coordination in Brazil is reiterated, this work proposes a critical/reflective agenda by pointing out possibilities for interpreting and reframing entrepreneurship in the public sector in small municipalities in Brazil. In terms of contributions, this research pushes forward the understanding of entrepreneurial practices in Brazilian municipalities. Although sparse, it was possible to observe the efforts of municipal managers in the search for alternatives for local development. Without these managers' availability and interest, the search for results becomes much compromised. Regarding the literature, this research contributes to a recent field of studies in Brazil that seeks to understand the importance of entrepreneurs' formation for the renewal of public organizations' management and the delivery of public value. Furthermore, this research indicates the relevance of understanding public managers at their different levels,

including at their most operational level, the so-called street-level bureaucrat. Future studies may seek to understand the role of street-level bureaucrats in carrying out entrepreneurial public policies in Brazilian municipalities. In this sense, it is worth seeking researches that delimit the performance of this manager both in small and medium-sized municipalities.

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