

# Beyond self-interest?

**A comparative study of public service motivation and public values among Masters of Public Administration students in China, Denmark and the United States**

Lotte Bøgh Andersen  
Aarhus University &  
Danish Institute of Governmental Research  
([lotte@ps.au.dk](mailto:lotte@ps.au.dk))

&

Yahong Zhang,  
SPAA,  
Rutgers University at Newark  
([yahongzh@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:yahongzh@andromeda.rutgers.edu))

Paper prepared for the American Society of Public Administration conference 2011 in Baltimore

**Panel 04PSL**

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## **Introduction**

The discipline of public administration is beginning to react against New Public Management (NPM) by devoting increased attention towards phenomena beyond self-interest maximization, and research on public values, ‘the desirable’ for society, and on public service motivation, the orientation to do something good for others and society in the delivery of public service, is part of this pattern. The prevalence and dynamics of public service motivation and public values among current public administrators have been studied before (e.g. Kim et al. 2010), but if we want to know more about future public administrators around the world, we should look at the students. What values and motivation do Masters of Public Administration students around the world have? What are the similarities and differences in public values and public service motivation between students in very different cultures?

Based on presentations of the theoretical arguments behind public service motivation and public values combined with existing knowledge about Masters of Public Administration students (e.g. Denhardt, 2001; Soto, Opheim & Tajalli, 1999), the paper will compare the public service motivation and public values of these students in three different countries. It is a ‘most different systems design’, where we investigate countries with very different cultures and forms of government to find out whether the same patterns can be identified in dissimilar contexts. The investigated countries are Mainland China, Denmark and United States.

The main expectation is that public values and public service motivation are important for the master students in all these settings, but that the way in which they play out depends on the cultures and context of the countries. Specifically, we compare countries with varying individualism, power distance, long-term orientation, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. We expect similarities in the general trends and differences in the details. Specifically, we hypothesize that the students in all the countries will have relatively high public service motivation, but that the relative weight of the dimensions—including commitment to the public interest, compassion, self-sacrifice and attraction to policy making—differ. Correspondingly, the students in all the countries are expected to prioritize traditional public values higher than values associated with New Public Management, but the relative weight of values linked to “the general public” versus more market-based values may vary between the countries.

The paper starts with a brief overview of public values and public service motivation theory and discusses the reasons for analyzing values and public service motivation patterns in very different cultures. The methods section explains why we compare masters of public administration

students and why we have chosen the three investigated countries and describes the empirical data which are surveys of master students in each of the mentioned countries (n=693). After a comparison of public service motivation and public values in the three countries, the paper concludes by more fundamentally discussing the relationship between self-interest, duty and altruism in relation to public administration education.

### **Theory: Patterns of public service motivation and public values in different cultures**

When individuals go beyond self-interest, they may do it for different reasons and with different intensity. As we will discuss below, public values can be seen as the desirable end states, while motivation refers to the arousal and direction of effort. We first discuss public value theory followed by a brief discussion of public service motivation. The section then ends with a theoretical discussion of why individuals can be motivated to produce different public values in different ways in different cultural settings.

#### *Public values*

Kluckhohn defines a value as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action” (1962: 395). The word ‘desirable’ is key. A value is something found personally or socially acceptable to wish for, and it is difficult to change (Bozeman 2007: 117). In other words, values are “deep seated beliefs about what is right and wrong” (Nalbandian 1998: 622). Public values are the subset of values which are linked to government by specifying the desirable in terms of (1) citizen rights, benefits, and prerogatives, (2) citizen obligations, and (3) principles for government and policies (Bozeman (2007: 13).

Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) identified more than 60 values related to seven overall value constellations: the contribution of the public sector to society, transformation of interests to decisions, relationships between politicians and administrators, relationships between public administrators and their environment, intra-organizational aspects of public administration, behaviour of public sector employees, and relationship between public administration and the citizens. Within each constellation, one or several value dimensions are specified, each dimension consisting of a number of specific values. They thus showed that public values can be multidimensional.

Christopher Hood (1991) classified public values into sigma values (efficiency and output orientation), theta values (honesty, fairness, mutuality), and lambda values (robustness, adaptability, reliability). He argued that New Public Management was most closely related to sigma values and that this might be at the cost of the other types of values. Other researchers (e.g. Lundquist 2001; Pollitt, 2003: 134-135) have also argued that extensive use of market principles might undermine public values such as openness and responsibility, and this indicates that there might be conflict between different types of values.

Andersen et al. (2010) differentiate between four types of governance: hierarchical, clan, network, and market governance and link these organizational design principles to value foundations. This leads to seven values dimensions, namely 'the public at large', rule abidance, societal interests, budget keeping, productivity, professionalism, and user focus. They found that when the political correctness factor was removed (i.e. controlling for the fact that some individuals tended to see all values as very important), there were signs of value conflicts between the different dimensions.

Bozeman's (2003) understanding of individual public values as "the content specific preferences of individuals concerning, on the one hand, the rights, obligations, and benefits to which citizens are entitled and, on the other hand, the obligations expected of citizens and their designated representatives" (2003: 14) implies that there are patterns of consensus about what everyone should get, what they owe back to society, and how government should work (Rainey et al. 2008: 5). If value conflicts exist (within and between countries), it is important to be able to describe and differentiate between different value patterns.

To ensure some parsimony, this paper only differentiates between very traditional public values and New Public Management, market-related values. To exemplify traditional public values, we use the dimension, which Andersen et al. (2010) called 'the public at large'. This value dimension concerns values such as being accountable towards society in general and prioritizing public insight and transparency. As a contrast to this dimension, we also investigate values related to efficient supply in public service provision, encompassing values such as businesslike operations and high productivity.

"To have a value is not the same as exerting effort to fulfil it" (Rainey et al. 2008), and it is therefore very relevant to analyze motivation, i.e. the arousal and direction of effort. In other words, both public values (the desirable) and the motivation to fulfil them are important. The

next section is therefore about the most relevant type of motivation, namely public service motivation.

### *Public service motivation*

Perry and Wise initially defined public service motivation (PSM) as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organisations that might drive individuals to perform public service” (1990, p. 368). Rainey and Steinbauer emphasize that PSM is about doing something good for a larger public as opposed to egoistic motives when they define the concept as a “general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation or humanity” (1999, p. 23). Similarly, Vandenabeele sees PSM as “the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivate individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate” (2007, p. 549), and Perry and Hondeghem define PSM as “an orientation to do something good for others and society in the delivery of public service” (2008, p. 6). Alternatively, one can simply define public service motivation as the motivation to provide public values (Rainey et al. 2008: 10). All the definitions agree that PSM is altruistic and concerns provision of public services, but it is still relevant to go a bit deeper and ask why some individuals feel motivated to produce public and communal benefits, even without the material returns to themselves that comparable achievements in a profit-making activity would earn.

Perry and Wise suggest that PSM derives from three types of reasons: Rational, affective, and normative (1990, p. 368). However, the understanding of rational reasons as being individual and self-interested is inconsistent with the understanding of PSM as altruistic. Still, PSM can be instrumental when based on an understanding of how means and measures can be combined in order to contribute to the delivery of public services. This means that the instrumental reasons are based on an orientation to do good for others and society, for instance by working to produce public services, participate in the policy process and community activities, or participate in activities for social development (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010: 703). Affective bonding with others can be seen as the emotional basis for serving others (Knoke & Wright-Isak, 1982). Identification is the core of affective reasons. People identify with others, especially the economically disadvantaged, and the sense of oneness with those they identify with brings a willingness to do good for ones they identify with (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010). Norm-based reasons refer to complying with values and norms. Norms and values can be internalized, and people are expected to feel satisfaction and

accomplishment when they contribute to realizing these norms and values. This may be expressed as serving the public interest or a desire to make a difference for a fellow citizen (Kim & Vandenberg, 2010).

If there are different reasons for feeling motivated to public services, it is possible that individuals vary in their patterns of PSM. For example, Brewer, Selden, and Facer (2000) found different PSM profiles, and this implies that it is fruitful to differentiate empirically between different dimensions of PSM. The dominating measurement instrument in the literature was developed by Perry (1996), and it includes four dimensions. “Commitment to the public interest” denotes the desire to serve society based on values and duty. “Compassion” covers the emotionally based motivation to do good for others based on identification and empathy. “Attraction to policy-making” denotes the motivation to improve decision-making concerning public services. “Self-sacrifice” measures the willingness to bypass one’s own needs in order to help others and society. “Commitment to the public interest”, “Compassion”, and “Attraction to public policy-making”, respectively, correspond to the norm-based, affective, and rational/instrumental foundation of PSM. “Self-sacrifice” can be seen as the footing on which the other dimensions rest (Kim & Vandenberg, 2010), because doing something good for others and society in the delivery of public service often requires self-sacrifice, and the dimension concerns the willingness to substitute service to others for tangible personal rewards (Perry, 1996). Are individuals willing to sacrifice some private interest and accept fewer monetary rewards for themselves, because they are motivated (for affective, normative, or instrumental reasons) to do good for others and society? Self-sacrifice can therefore be seen as a form of accelerator underlying the other PSM dimensions. In this paper, we use Perry’s four dimensions, because they constitute an adequate starting point for analyzing variations in patterns of PSM, and the viability and conceptual structure of this measure have been confirmed with various samples, including respondents from different nations (Rainey et al., 2008: 11).

#### *Patterns of public values and public service motivation in very different cultural contexts*

Motivation refers to both the arousal and the direction of effort, and public values can be said to provide the more specific direction for public service motivation (Andersen, Beck Jørgensen, Kjeldsen, Pedersen & Vrangbæk, 2010). Individuals can have more general and more specific public values, and they may have general patterns of public service motivation that relate their motivation to more general public values, as well as more specific patterns of PSM. As Rainey et al (2008: 13) argue, individuals can

be motivated in a general, widely applicable pattern such as that measured by the Perry PSM scale (reflected in expressions such as “serving my country”), and they may also have more specific, proximal, and instrumental values. Perry’s PSM scale can be considered to refer to *general* conceptions of public values, and PSM may represent a universal, internationally applicable pattern of motivation. As Rainey et al. (2008: 11) write there is still an open question as to how much individuals might vary in their patterns of PSM. There may be variation between occupations (as discussed by Rainey et al. 2008), but there may also be variation between different cultures. But how do we conceptualize culture?

Hofstede (2001: 9) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”, and he argues that systems of values are a core element of culture (ibid: 10). It is therefore very relevant to see whether we can find the same *patterns* (but not necessarily the same *levels*) of public values and public service motivation in countries with very different cultures. Hofstede (2001) differentiates between five dimensions of culture, namely power distance, individualism, long-term orientation, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance.

The Power Distance Index concerns the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2001: 98). This represents inequality defined from below, measuring whether a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the citizens. Of course, all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others, and the acceptance of inequality varies. This is relevant for patterns of PSM and public values, because it may affect the level of public service motivation. If the power distance is low, and all individuals therefore have more co-determination, they may feel more responsibility to the common interest (and therefore have higher public service motivation).

Individualism is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. In individualist societies, the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. In collectivist societies, people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 2001: 225). It is important to note that the word 'collectivism' in this usage has no political meaning: it refers to the group, not to the state. The cultural degree of individualism is relevant for patterns of PSM and public values, because it is expected to affect the patterns of PSM; individuals in countries with a more individualistic culture may have PSM based more on individual norms, i.e. more commitment

to the public interest, because this dimension highlights the individualistic aspect of public service motivation with questions such as “Meaningful public service is very important to me” and “I consider public service my civic duty”.

The dimension called long-term orientation (versus short-term orientation) was found in a study designed by Chinese scholars and later adopted as a fifth dimension in Hofstede’s classification of cultures (Hofstede, 2001: 352-4). One pole groups future-oriented questionnaire questions and the other groups past- and present-oriented items. It was first called “Confucian work dynamics” because both poles related to different teachings of Confucius, but the label was changed because the dimension was found across many countries unfamiliar with Confucius’s teachings (Hofstede, 2001: 354). Values associated with long-term orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with short-term orientation are respect for tradition and fulfilling social obligations. In sum, long-term orientation applies to societies which fosters virtues oriented towards future rewards, and short-term orientation applies to societies which fosters virtues related to the past and present (Hofstede, 2001: 359). This dimension is not expected to affect the PSM dimensions as discussed by Perry (1996), but it may be relevant if we distinguish between doing good for different generations (which we cannot do in this study).

Masculinity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders. Women's values differ less among societies than men's values, but men's values vary between very assertive, tough and competitive (and maximally different from women's values) to modest and caring and similar to women's values. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine'. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values (Hofstede, 2001: 2001). Masculinity is primarily relevant for patterns in PSM and values, because the PSM dimension compassion consistently seems to be higher among women (Pandey & Stazyk, 2008). It is therefore possible that residents in countries in more feminine countries have a higher level of this dimension of public service motivation.

Uncertainty avoidance concerns the extent the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown and surprising. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and

religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. Oppositely, uncertainty accepting cultures are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. In relation to public service motivation and public values, the *variation* in values and public service motivation might be higher in uncertainty accepting cultures, and a higher level of self-sacrifice may also be the consequence if individuals believe in an absolute truth.

## **Methods**

This section explains why we compare masters of public administration students and why we have chosen the four investigated countries. It then describes the empirical data which are surveys of master students in each of the mentioned countries.

### *Analyzing Masters of Public Administration students*

The values of Public Administration students have long been discussed in the literature (see for example Nalbandian, 1988). Lately, Svava (2010) found that the respondents have strong public service values. He based his investigation on a survey of Masters of Public Administration students at five universities, and more than 80 percent agreed that meaningful public service and opportunities to help others are important them (*ibid.*). Svava (2010: 361) further argues that generational change in government employment presents numerical, attitudinal, and organizational challenges, and more knowledge about future public administrators around the world might help us handle these challenges. This is the main reason for studying masters of public administration students, but it also played a role that they constitute a relatively comparable groups across very different contexts, and that it is practically possible to gather survey data from them as a part of their education.

### *Comparing mainland China, Denmark, United States, and Taiwan*

This paper does, as mentioned, compare mainland China, Denmark and the United States, but data from Taiwan will be included in a later version of the paper. As shown in table 1, the choice of China, [Taiwan,] United States and Denmark is a classical most different systems design. They have very differences sizes ranging from 6m in Denmark to 1,341m in China. The power distance also varies (highest in China followed by Taiwan, USA and then Denmark with a very low power distance). Two of the countries have individualistic, short term cultures (US and Denmark), and the other two countries have collectivistic, long-term oriented cultures. China and United States have

quite masculine cultures, while Denmark have a more feminine culture, and Taiwan is in-between. On the uncertainty avoidance dimension, Taiwan is the most extreme country with high uncertainty avoidance, while Denmark and China are more uncertainty accepting cultures, and US is in-between. Cultural differences and number of inhabitants are not, of course, the only difference between the countries. The governance systems are very different, and this may also affect the patterns of public service motivation and public values. Analyzing such different countries, the similarities are actually more interesting than the differences, because it is hard to find the causes of the differences (because so many factors differ) while similarities between such different countries are strong evidence of a general trend.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

#### *Data*

The data consist of surveys of public managers in the three (later: four) countries. Table 2 shows the total number of respondents, the survey methods and the specific investigated populations in the four countries.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

The questionnaire can be seen in the Appendix. To measure public values, we utilize a value typology based on forms of governance which has previously proved useful in Danish empirical research (Vrangbæk, 2009), while we used an adapted version of Perry's (1996) instrument to measure public service motivation.

The comparison between the questionnaire answers in different countries should be done carefully because of the known difference in cross-cultural response behavior. "Response set" means the general tendencies to rate all values as more or less important, and it is known to vary between countries (e.g. Hofstede and Bond, 1984). In this paper, we control for an index of scores on a large number of values (others than the ones we investigate). Specifically, this control variable is calculated as the sum of scores on the following questions in the appendix: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1j, 1l, 1m, 1n, 1o and 1p). Thus controlling for the general tendency to rate all values as important, we are able to get a better idea of whether associations are only due to general response set or a more genuine co-variation.

Given that it is an exploratory study, trying to identify patterns which may be similar, we use factor analysis. This technique, particular the principal components extraction method used here, is most useful for exploration, and further work (using for example Structural Equation Modelling) may be needed to better understand the differences in the patterns of PSM and public values.

## **Results**

The paper does, as mentioned, investigate similarities and differences in public values and public service motivation between students in three countries with very different cultures (and sizes). The structure of the analysis is as follows: First, we develop and discuss measures of public value dimensions. Second, we compare the scores on the value dimensions, discussing both absolute difference between the countries and the relative priority of different types of values. Third, we develop measures of PSM and (fourth) compare the public service motivation dimensions, again looking at both levels and patterns in terms of the relative important of different types of PSM. Finally, we look at the relationships between public values and PSM to see whether the concepts are differently related in the investigated countries.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

We do, as mentioned, investigate two value dimensions, namely a dimension with very traditional public sector values such as accountability to society and public insight and a more market-based (New Public Management inspired) value dimension covering values such as productivity. Table 3 shows a principal component analysis which explores whether the same patterns are seen for the three countries. With one exception, the same patterns are found. The items intended to measure NPM values load high on one component and the traditional values load high on the other. The exception is that “high productivity” loads high on both components in China. To account for the fact that the component structure is not quite similar, we both calculate factor scores (based on the analysis shown in table 3) and simple sum indexes, adding the absolute scores of the darkly shaded items for each dimension. If both ways to calculate the scores give the same results, they are more robust.

[TABLE 4 HERE]

Both for sum indexes and for factor scores, table 4 shows that the Danish respondents find values linked to the “general public” in terms of transparency and listening to the public opinion less important compared to Chinese respondents and especially compared to respondents from the United States. In contrast, respondents from China do not see productivity as important as Danish (and US) respondents do. In other words, the relative importance of the two different types of values varies between the three countries. For the value dimensions, we thus find both similarities and differences between the countries: The component structure is quite similar, but the relative priority of the value dimensions differs between the countries.

If we look at public service motivation, the items generally show the expected patterns (the items meant to measure a given dimension generally load high on this dimension and only on this dimension). As shown in table 5, the loading for the Danish respondents are exactly as expected, but there are deviations from the expectations for the Chinese and US respondents (note that this may be due to the lower number of respondents in these countries – more data are being gathered). The deviation for the US respondents is that the items intended to measure commitment to the public interest also load highly on the dimension which can be interpreted as self-sacrifice. These dimensions were also highly correlated in the original Perry (1996) data set, and some research has also left out the self-sacrifice dimension due to this high correlation (e.g. Coursey and Pandey, 2007). As will be shown later, the results in this paper strongly suggest that it is relevant to measure these dimensions separately as there is interesting variation in the relative scores between the countries.

[TABLE 5 HERE]

The deviation for the Chinese respondents is that the items intended to measure commitment to the public interest also load highly on the dimension which can be interpreted as self-sacrifice (because the items which have traditionally been used to measure this dimension, consistently have high loadings). Together with the mentioned result from US, this may suggest that Kim and Vandenberg (2010) are right when they suggest that self-sacrifice is a kind of basis for the other PSM dimensions. Despite these small differences in the patterns, the level of similarity between three such different countries as Denmark, US and China is remarkable. Still, we calculate both sum

indexes and factor score measures of the PSM dimensions to make sure that the differences between the countries (if any) are not only due to the way in which the measures are calculated.

Table 6 shows the average scores on the PSM dimensions for the respondents from the different countries. Significance levels from an analysis of variance (with a Scheffe post hoc test) indicates whether there are significant country differences, but absolute differences should, as mentioned, be interpreted very carefully because of differences in response set. The first result is that all the respondents seem to have a relatively high level of PSM. All the indexes go from 0 to 100, and almost all averages are well above 50. There are, however, differences in the composition of the respondents' PSM. As shown in table 6, Danish respondents have a relatively low score on self-sacrifice and a relatively high score on commitment to the public interest. In contrast, respondents from the US are relatively more attracted to public policy making, and respondents from China seem to be relatively low on commitment to the public interest, but high on self-sacrifice. In sum, respondents from the different countries seem to have different compositions of PSM, but they have almost the same dimensional structures, and the overall level does not seem to differ much (with reservations for the mentioned response set). This is similar to the findings for public values. The main expectation was that public values and public service motivation are important for the master students in very different settings, but that the way in which they play out depends on the cultures and context of the countries. This expectation seems to be right.

[TABLE 6 HERE]

The next interesting question is whether public values relate similarly to public service motivation. This was investigated by looking both at bivariate correlations (table 7) and at correlations (table 8) controlled for the general tendency to rate all values as more or less important (as discussed in the methods section). Both tables show positive associations between self-sacrifice and “the general public” value index, while table 7 also shows a (bivariate) tendency to a positive association between commitment to the public interest and “the general public” value index. Especially the positive association between self-sacrifice and “the general public” value index is robust for analyses which use factor scores instead of indexes (not shown).

[TABLE 7 AND 8 HERE]

The main finding is thus that we find the same broad patterns in public values and public service motivation in very different countries, but that there is also significant variation in the detail. Most importantly, the respondents in the different countries have a different composition of their PSM, and their relative scores on value dimensions related to traditional and NPM values vary.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Investigating patterns in public service motivation and public values among Masters of Public Administration students in China, Denmark and United States, we expected and found similarities in the general trends and differences in the details. The students in all the countries had relatively high public service motivation, but that the relative weight of the PSM dimensions—including commitment to the public interest, compassion, self-sacrifice and attraction to policy making—differed. This was also the case for the two investigated value dimensions which measured traditional public values and values associated with New Public Management, respectively. Although the students in all the countries prioritize the traditional public values highest, there were differences in the relative weight of values linked to “the general public” versus more market-based values. Specifically, the Danish respondents prioritized the market-based values relatively higher than the respondents from the two other countries.

We compared very different countries. They have varying individualism, power distance, long-term orientation, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance, and the most different systems design (with many variables differing between the countries) makes the similarities most interesting. It is noteworthy that we can find similar patterns of public service motivation and public values in such different contexts. Concerning the differences, we cannot say for sure which one of the cultural dimensions (or other factors) which caused them, but this paper indicates that more specific details in the composition of public service motivation as well as the relative priority of different public values may depend on culture.

The Power Distance Index was seen as relevant, because it might be positively correlated with the level of co-determination and this way mean more responsibility to the common interest and therefore have higher public service motivation. The results do not support this expectation – at least, the differences are more complex. The pattern fits for commitment to the public interest (where Denmark, which has the lowest power distance index, ranks highest followed by USA which is also second on the power distance index). But the story is totally different for the

other PSM dimensions. If Power Distance is positively related to public service motivation, it is only for commitment to the public interest.

Individualism, i.e. the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups, was seen as relevant because individuals in more short time oriented, individualistic countries (US and Denmark) may have PSM based relatively more on (individual) norms, i.e. more commitment to the public interest, compared to countries with a collectivist culture (China and Taiwan when this country are added to the analysis). The comparison between Denmark, US and China supports this pattern, so it will be interesting to see whether this holds when Taiwan is included.

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On the individual level, the PSM dimension compassion is consistently higher among women (Pandey & Stazyk, 2008) compared to men, and that made us expect that residents in countries in countries with a more feminine culture have a higher level of this dimension of public service motivation. At first glance, the results do not support this. Denmark, which has the most feminine culture, does not have master students with more compassion, and United States, which has a rather masculine culture, has master students with a high level of compassion.

The discussion of uncertainty avoidance, i.e. the extent the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations, will have to await the inclusion of Taiwan, because this country has very high uncertainty avoidance, while Denmark and China are more uncertainty accepting cultures, and US is in-between.

In sum, only the expectation concerning a relationship between commitment to the public interest and individualism is consistent with the evidence from the three countries. The other expectations concerning culture and public service motivation do not seem to hold. Still, a number of other expectations were supported. The patterns in public service motivation and public values generally were as expected for all the countries, and we also found a consistent positive association

between self-sacrifice and “the general public” value index. This suggests that although there are differences in the specific ways, in which altruism in public service provision unfold, there are also similarities. Given that we study masters of public administration, it would be interesting to compare them to ordinary public employees in the investigated countries and to study how the findings relate to difference in our education of these students, and how their values and public service motivation develop over time. Still, the most important step is to acknowledge that public employees in general and public administrator in particular are not purely self-interested: Public values and public service motivation also play a role.

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Table 1: Investigated countries after inhabitants and scores on dimension of culture

Country	Inhabitants	Power distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation
China	1,341m	80	20	66	30	87
Taiwan	23m	58	17	45	69	93
United States	310m	40	91	62	46	26
Denmark	6m	18	74	16	23	35

Sources: [www.geerthofstede.nl/research--vsm/dimension-data-matrix.aspx](http://www.geerthofstede.nl/research--vsm/dimension-data-matrix.aspx) and <http://www.clearlycultural.com/geert-hofstede-cultural-dimensions/individualism> (both accessed February 1st 2011).

Table 2: Number of respondents after country

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Survey population</b>	<b>Survey method</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
Denmark	455	Attendants at the two Danish program in Public Governance in 2009-11	Postal survey	71 %
China	150 (awaiting more data)			
US	88 (awaiting more data)			
Taiwan	0 (awaiting data)			
Total	693			

Table 3: Principal component analyses of public value items (separately for each country and all respondents together)

	DK		US		China		All	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
<b>Items intended to measure New Public Management value</b>								
1f. High productivity	.845	.042	.219	.761	.533	.440	.237	.732
1g. Business-like operations	.869	-.039	-.167	.880	-.086	.907	-.164	.885
<b>Items intended to measure traditional public value (the public in general)</b>								
1h. Accountability to society in general	-.016	.801	.864	-.032	.902	-.274	.829	-.079
1i. Public insight and transparency (citizens and others can always ask questions)	.017	.789	.834	.036	.602	.384	.767	.090

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Lightly shaded cells shows deviations from the expected pattern. Darkly shaded cells show loadings, which as expected are high (>0.4), while non-shaded cells show loadings which as expected are low. Exact questions can be seen in the appendix.

Table 4: Comparison of mean scores on value dimensions in the four countries

		N	Mean	Sign. of diff. from Denmark	Sign. of diff. from US	Sign. of diff. from China
The general public (index)	Denmark	447	82.7	NR	0.000	0.000
	China	148	89.0	0.000	0.536	NR
	US	88	91.2	0.000	NR	0.536
The general public (factor score)	Denmark	428	-0.21	NR	0.000	0.000
	China	147	0.37	0.000	0.974	NR
	US	85	0.40	0.000	NR	0.974
Productivity (index)	Denmark	436	77.5	NR	0.747	0.000
	China	148	69.7	0.000	0.034	NR
	US	85	75.9	.747	NR	0.034
Productivity (factor score)	Denmark	428	0.10	NR	0.817	0.000
	China	147	-0.30	0.000	0.051	NR
	US	85	0.02	.817	NR	0.051

Note: Significance tests are post hoc (Scheffe). NR: Not relevant

Table 3: Principal component analyses of public service motivation items (separately for each country and all respondents together)

	DK				US				China				All			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<b>Items intended to measure compassion</b>																
It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.	.712	-.007	.006	-.020	.388	.190	-.459	-.158	.029	.008	.291	.812	.477	.127	.307	.180
For me, considering the welfare of others is one of the most important values	.805	-.142	-.061	-.035	.154	.024	-.666	.233	.461	.133	-.255	.484	.276	-.108	-.033	.589
I am often reminded by daily events about how dep. we are on one another	.533	.048	.033	.052	-.077	-.036	-.862	-.165	.748	-.159	-.104	.112	-.067	.038	.006	.879
<b>Items intended to measure commitment to the public interest</b>																
Meaningful public service is very important to me	.287	.237	-.014	.628	.462	-.203	-.134	.444	.652	.105	-.007	.297	.676	.033	-.067	.273
I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community	-.165	-.074	.000	.880	.074	.102	.144	.889	.809	.077	.198	-.315	.802	-.139	-.014	-.195
I consider public service my civic duty.	.035	-.216	.008	.696	.661	-.066	-.124	.274	.770	.074	.088	.023	.538	-.314	-.022	.176
<b>Items intended to measure attraction to public policy making</b>																
The give and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me	.120	.075	.822	.021	.230	.856	.137	-.109	-.013	-.005	.803	.158	.278	.101	.799	-.211
I do not care much for politicians	-.146	-.040	.840	-.032	-.276	.747	-.275	.276	.084	-.009	.859	-.012	-.312	-.197	.750	.173
<b>Items intended to measure self sacrifice</b>																
Making a difference in society means more to me than pers. achievements	.228	-.538	.259	.057	.630	-.019	-.182	.219	.012	.802	.005	-.096	.072	-.688	.161	.030
I feel people should give back to society more than they get from it	-.055	-.748	-.041	.136	.888	-.109	-.005	-.053	-.035	.791	-.034	.051	.046	-.783	-.074	-.035
I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society	.035	-.856	-.067	-.051	.768	.293	.104	-.041	-.006	.843	.012	.046	-.040	-.832	-.020	-.006

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Lightly shaded cells shows deviations from the expected pattern. Darkly shaded cells show loadings, which as expected are high (>0.4), while non-shaded cells show loadings which as expected are low.

Table 6: Comparison of value dimensions between countries

		N	Mean	Sign. of diff. from Denmark	Sign. of diff. from US	Sign. of diff from China
Compassion (index 0-100)	Denmark	425	70,7	NR	0.368	0.836
	China	138	69,6	0.836	0.259	NR
	US	85	73,7	0.368	NR	0.259
Compassion (factor scores)	Denmark	367	-0.20	NR	0.000	0.000
	China	127	0,29	0.000	0.440	NR
	US	77	0,47	0.000	NR	0.440
Attraction to policymaking (index 0-100)	Denmark	438	47,9	NR	0.067	0.320
	China	140	51,4	0.320	0.627	NR
	US	81	54,6	0.067	NR	0.627
Attraction to policymaking (factor score)	Denmark	367	-0.10	NR	0.020	0.102
	China	127	0,12	0.102	0.664	NR
	US	77	0,25	0.020	NR	0.664
Commitment to the public interest (index 0-100)	Denmark	419	81,0	NR	0.999	0.004
	China	142	75,4	0.004	0.071	NR
	US	82	80,9	0.999	NR	0.071
Commitment to the public interest (factor score)	Denmark	367	0.23	NR	0.000	0.004
	China	127	-0,55	0.000	0.002	NR
	US	77	-0,17	0.004	NR	0.020
Self sacrifice (index 0-100)	Denmark	413	57,9	NR	0.000	0.000
	China	139	66,2	0.000	0.843	NR
	US	84	67,8	0.000	NR	0.843
Self sacrifice (factor score)	Denmark	367	-0.20	NR	0.000	0.000
	China	127	0,35	0.000	0.956	NR
	US	77	0,39	0.000	NR	0.956

Note: Significance tests are post hoc (Scheffe). NR: Not relevant

Table 7: Bivariate correlations between PSM dimensions and value dimensions. Separately for each country.

		<b>Denmark</b>		<b>China</b>		<b>US</b>	
		The public index	Productivity index	The public index	Productivity index	The public index	Productivity index
Compassion PSM index	Pearson Correlation	0.102 **	0.068	0.084	-0.063	0.156	0.191 *
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.038	0.168	0.327	0.464	0.153	0.086
	N	418	408	137	137	85	82
Attraction to policymaking PSM index	Pearson Correlation	-0.025	0.069	0.134	0.046	0.083	-0.199 *
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.605	0.158	0.116	0.588	0.460	0.077
	N	430	420	139	139	81	80
Public interest PSM index	Pearson Correlation	0.167***	0.066	0.032	-0.096	0.223**	0.222 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.183	0.704	0.259	0.044	0.042
	N	412	403	141	141	82	80
Self sacrifice PSM index	Pearson Correlation	0.097 *	-0.036	0.244***	0.187**	0.285***	0.259 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.051	0.474	0.004	0.028	0.009	0.019
	N	408	394	138	138	84	82

Note: \* p<0.10, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Table 8: Correlations between PSM dimensions and value dimensions controlled for answer tendencies. Separately for each country.

		<b>Denmark</b>		<b>China</b>		<b>US</b>	
		The public index	Productivity index	The public index	Productivity index	The public index	Productivity index
Compassion PSM index	Pearson Correlation	0.061	0.014	0.056	-0.061	0.076	0.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.288	0.812	0.557	0.519	0.526	0.253
	N	302	302	112	112	69	69
Attraction to policymaking PSM index	Pearson Correlation	-0.097 *	0.106 *	0.068	-0.022	0.086	-0.262 *
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.091	0.064	0.475	0.815	0.475	0.027
	N	302	302	112	112	69	69
Public interest PSM index	Pearson Correlation	0.159 ***	0.004	0.004	-0.121	0.151	0.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.943	0.970	0.199	0.208	0.206
	N	302	302	112	112	69	69
Self sacrifice PSM index	Pearson Correlation	0.136 **	-0.065	0.174 *	0.128	0.237 **	0.167
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.018	0.257	0.065	0.175	0.047	0.164
	N	302	302	112	112	69	69

Note: \* p<0.10, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

## Appendix: Questionnaire concerning values, motivation and competences in the public sector

### VALUES

Public organizations normally have to produce more than services. They have to consider specific values when they carry out their core tasks. Some values may be very essential; some of them may be peripheral or inconsequential.

#### 1. How important do you think these values *should be* in a public organization?

Please mark one option in each row	fundamenta l, very important	Should normally be important	occasionall y be important	Should not be prominent	Should not play any role	Don't know
A. Political loyalty						
B. Judicial values/Due process						
C. Independent professional standards (freedom to use professional discretion in a qualified way)						
D. Balancing societal interests (e.g. considering special interests without letting them dominate)						
E. Satisfying immediate needs of users						
F. High productivity						
G. Business-like operations						
H. Accountability to society in general						
I. Public insight and transparency (citizens and others can always ask questions and look us over the shoulder)						
J. Listening to the public opinion (ensure alignment between public opinion and our activity)						
K. Equal treatment (avoid discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and religion in encounters with users or recruitment)						
L. Continuity (look at the long term and maintain traditions)						
M. Innovation						
N. Ensure good career opportunities for employees						
O. Strengthen user democracy (e.g. help users gain influence using existing channels or creating new ones)						
P. Networking (moving beyond sector limits and traditional jurisdictions)						
Q. Other values, please specify:						

## COMPETENCES of Core Employees

Core employees refer to those performing the core tasks in a public organization.

**2. In your opinion, how *should* core employees in a public organization rate the importance of the following competences?**

Please mark one option in each row	Should be fundamental; very important	Should normally be important	Should occasionally be important	Should not be prominent	Should not play any role	Don't know
A. Ability to interpret the political climate and signals						
B. Ethical awareness						
C. Willingness to take risks						
D. Loyalty to rules						
E. Adaptability						
F. Personal integrity (e.g. honesty and credibility)						
G. Professional drive						
H. Economic awareness						
J. Strong inter-personal skills						
I. Ability to innovate						
K. Other competences, please specify:						

## MOTIVATION

**3. In your opinion, how *should* core employees in a public organization rate the importance of the following motives?**

<b>Please mark one option in each row</b>	Should be extremely important	Should be very important	Should be fairly important	Should be less important	Should not be important	Don't know
A. Professional commitment						
B. Commitment to the organizational task/mission						
C. Good social work environment						
D. A high salary						
E. Career opportunities						
F. Staying within budget						
G. Good relations with higher authorities						
H. Learning and development on the job						
I. Recognition from management						
J. Good relations to users						
K. Recognition from peers						
L. Other types of motivation, please specify:						

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Put one mark in each row.

#### 4. Serving citizen

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/don't want to answer
The individual citizen is more important than formal rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am energized by helping citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The job is not done until the citizen is satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For me, considering the welfare of others is one of the most important values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 6. Contributions to society

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/don't want to answer
I unselfishly contribute to my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meaningful public service is very important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consider public service my civic duty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A public administrator should place greater value on social duty than do his/her political supervisors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 7. Politics and ethics

	Totally disagree	Partly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Partly agree	Totally agree	Don't know/don't want to answer
I generally associate politics with something positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The give and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not care much for politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public administrators who can put a good idea into legislation deserve high respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A well-functioning political system is highly dependent on the competences of public administrators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The administrators' ethic is more important than their professional competences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 8. Self-sacrifice

	Totally disagree	Partly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Partly agree	Totally agree	Don't know/don't want to answer
Much of what I do is for a cause bigger than myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel people should give back to society more than they get from it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe in putting duty before self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doing well financially is more important to me than doing good deeds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Background questions

9. Please mark the type of organization which best describes the organization in which you work now	Please select <u>one</u> type of organization
A. Ministry (in the national central administration)	
B. Agency in the federal administration	
C. Other type of federal institution	
D. Agency in the state-level administration	
E. Other type of state institution	
F. County-level government	
G. Municipal government	
H. Other local government	
I. Outsourced organization or other type of publicly financed organization	
J. Non-profit organization	
K. Currently not employed (please jump to question 13 if you are not currently employed)	
L. Other type of organization, please specify:	

10. Are you a leader of:	Select one option
A. The whole organization (e.g. agency head, school principal)	
B. A part of the organization (e.g. a section or a department)	
C. Not yet leader	

<b>11. What is the function of the organization in which you work?</b> (please mark the most fitting description)	Select one option
A. Social welfare	
B. Health care and hospital services	
C. Education and research	
D. Culture or religious services	
E. Environment and energy	
F. Urban affairs (e.g. building houses)	
G. Commercial services (industry, trade, food production etc.)	
H. Labor market services	
I. Judicial sector (police, courts, prisons etc.)	
J. Defense	
K. Public revenue collection (tax, customs)	
L. Infrastructure, planning and technical services	
M. Foreign affairs	
N. Cross-sectional (economy, legal assistance, revision, coordination etc.)	
O. Other types of functions, please specify:	

<b>12. To what extent do you see the following tasks as core tasks in your department/organization?</b> <b>Please choose one answer per row</b>	To a high extent	To some extent	To a limited extent	To a very limited extent	Not at all	Don't know
A. Production of goods						
B. Production of services						
C. Regulation of citizens and firms						
D. Regulation, coordination and supervision of other public organizations						
E. Policy task (preparing decisions and strategy etc.)						
F. Functions within a bigger organization (HR, budget, IT)						

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

### 13. Work experience

- A. How many years have you worked in this organization?  
Number of years\_\_\_\_\_.
- B. How many years in total have you worked for government agencies since you were 18 years old?  
Number of years\_\_\_\_\_.
- C. How many years in total have you worked for non-profit-organizations since you were 18 years old?  
Number of years\_\_\_\_\_.
- D. How many years in total have you worked for the private sector since you were 18 years old?  
Number of years\_\_\_\_\_.

14. Your age is \_\_\_\_\_years old. Your gender is \_\_\_\_\_(male or female)

<b>16. What types of education do you have (mark all finished educations which have taken a year or more to complete after your basic education)</b>	Mark all the types of education you have completed	Time of graduation	Did you pursuit the degree while you are working? (Yes/No)
A. Undergraduate bachelor's degree			
B. Master of Public Administration			
B. Master of Business Administration			
B. General social science master level education (e.g. law, political science, economics)			
C. Other type of master education (e.g. medicine, natural science, humanities)			
D. Ph.D.			
F. Internal education in the organization (e.g. army officer)			
G. International education (please specify the degree) :			