ELITE ETHOS
VALUES AND MOTIVES OF POLITICIANS AND PUBLIC MANAGERS IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

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ABSTRACT
This paper reports on a qualitative interview study into the values and motives of
government elites – politicians and public managers – in the Netherlands, the EU, and the
US (n=84). The study aims to answer two central questions: how and to what extent are
values and motives of politicians and public managers different and alike?, and which
factors (functional, institutional, country- and system specific) might explain these
differences and similarities? It is hypothesized that differences between both groups of
government elites decrease when boundaries between both groups are less clear and
political influence on appointments of the senior civil service increases. Yet, because the
existing literature is unclear about which factors might determine differences and
similarities between both groups (and between different countries and systems) and why,
we employed an explorative rather than a testing design. The paper concludes with a
number of research hypotheses on the factors that are most decisive in relation to the
differences and similarities between both groups.
INTRODUCTION
The leaders of our most paramount institutions are scrutinized more than ever before: ‘the elite’ is under fire. Whether it concerns the global financial crisis or the ‘failed’ multicultural society, the general public is outraged by the havoc their leaders have caused and trust in the elite seems to have reached a new low; a development that started at the end of the 20th century and has resulted in a rise of populist movements across the political landscape of the Western world (Butora 2007; van Biezen 2008).

Increasingly, we as a general public seem to wonder what these men and women that are supposed to selflessly govern us and manage our business affairs are actually doing. Weren’t the elite supposed to be more informed and more skilled than the general public, and therefore awarded a societal and electoral trusteeship to decide upon the complex and crucial issues that affect us all (cf. Frissen 2009)? Recent events have shown us that such an ideal type image may have little to do with what really happens in the situation rooms and board rooms where crucial decisions are being made. It makes one wonder what really happens inside the minds of the elite. How do they reason morally and which values underpin their conduct and decision making? Are they motivated to do what they do by some higher cause or merely by an appetite to increase their own status and position? In other words: What drives and guides those with public power?

The elites to be studied here are government rather than the more general governing elites (Rhodes et al. 2007), referring to both elected (politicians) as well as non-elected individuals (senior administrators or public managers) that possess ample public decision making powers. They, individually and together, have the most substantial impact on “what gets proposed for consideration by governments, what gets passed into law, and how law gets implemented” (Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman 1981:24). Differences between political and bureaucratic elites are the focal point of study (cf. Aberbach et al. 1981), in particular in terms of the values and motivations that drive and guide both groups in doing what they do. Our study focuses on advanced Western democracies, whose government elites are appointed either by merit or through democratic elections.

This paper reports on the first empirical phase of the project: 84 in-depth qualitative interviews with (former) politicians (MP’s and Ministers) and senior administrators in the Netherlands, within the EU (EC and European Parliament) and the US (New York State and Washington DC). Because these countries are well-developed, relatively high-income, advanced and stable democracies, they can be compared on a number of differentiating dimensions (e.g., political influence on senior civil servant appointments) without being too different to compare at all. The study wants to answer the following central research question:

Which values and motivations guide government elites in Western democracies, how do they differ between politicians and public managers (in different countries and systems) and how can these differences be explained?

Through a rather explorative research design factors are mapped that might account for differences and similarities between the values and motives of the two populations of government elites. The paper concludes with a number of hypotheses to be tested in a large-scale cross-country survey study. Before presenting the data, analyses and results, a perspective is developed on the concept of ‘elite ethos’: relevant theoretical insights and concepts are discussed, drawing from scholarly debates on public values, public sector and public service motivation (PMS), the study of government elites, and the dynamics of political-administrative relations.
STUDYING GOVERNMENT ELITES: DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

Beyond the current, sometimes biased and sensational attention to elites there has been a scholarly interest for decades into the behavior, decision making and moral judgment of ‘those that govern us’. Three main types of (government) elite studies can be distinguished.

First, there are studies with a strong focus on individual members of the elite, on leaders, heroes and examples. Political psychoanalysts but also investigative journalists have studied the moral reasoning and decision making of presidents and prime-ministers, usually by allowing the elite to reflect on their own ‘monologue intérieur’. Paragons of such journalistic endeavors include the Frost-Nixon interviews in 1977 that inspired a successful motion picture directed by Ron Howard (released in 2008)\(^1\), but also the recent writings on president Bush’s decision making with regard to the second invasion of Iraq by renowned journalist Bob Woodward (2006, 2008), or the inside stories of the Blair Premiership by his former spin-doctor Alistair Campbell (2007). Recent examples of a more political-psychological or philosophical nature include works on the leadership styles of US presidents by Fred Greenstein (2003, 2009), the ethics of the former US president by Peter Singer (2004), the traits of Australian prime-ministers by Paul Kelly (2009) or the behaviors of former and late French president Mitterand by Vincent Gounod (2009). In addition, the countless (auto)biographies of former prime-ministers and presidents written by their ghost writers present us with very insightful accounts of what one might call ‘elite ethics,’ yet they bear the danger of too positive self-reporting.

It goes without saying that such ‘biography’ type of studies are extremely valuable in unraveling the actions and decisions of public leaders and do carry much relevance for the study that is proposed here. These studies, however, are with the exception of Singer’s book not centered on the determination of specific values and motives that guide elites.

Second, there is a long standing body of literature within sociology, political science and anthropology that focuses on the characteristics of elites as groups or systems. Recently, elite studies employing network analysis have seen the light within the Netherlands, focusing on business elites (Heemskerk 2007, Heemskerk and Fennema 2008), as well as political-societal elites or the “Dutch top 200” (Dekker and van Raaij, 2006, 2007, 2008), inspired by the legendary 200 of Mertens.\(^2\) With their focus on elite groups, networks and classes rather than on individual leaders and managers, these studies remind us of the way in which sociologists have studied elites in relation to power and status (Domhoff and Dye 1987) and the issue of inequality (Bottomore 1964). Similar to most of the more classical studies into elites and elite behavior (e.g., Edinger and Searing 1967; Searing 1969), these examples focus more on commonalities in background characteristics, mobility and socialization than on attitudes and values. In recent years, within the field of public administration and public management elites have been studied with a focus on the mobility and career paths of administrative elites (Theakston and Fry 1989), and elite circulation and networks (del Alcazar 2002).

Third, we can observe a number of more recent attempts by political scientists and political anthropologists to systematically map the concrete behaviors and attitudes of individual members of government elites. These studies are guided by questions such as ‘what do senior civil servants actually do?’ (Noordegraaf 2000), and ‘what does a regular

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\(^1\) More down-to-earth examples from the Netherlands are the documentaries ‘De Keuken van Kok’ (1998) by Niek Koppen and ‘De Wouter Tapes’ (Tegenlicht, VPRO, 2007: www.vpro.nl/programma/tegenlicht/afleveringen/33546127).

\(^2\) In a speech on October 19\(^{th}\) 1968, union-leader Jan Mertens stated that the Netherlands were largely governed by an “old boys’ network” of no more than 200 – predominantly unelected – individuals. That statement resulted in fierce societal debates about the extent to which the equality ideals of the Dutch welfare state could actually be realized.
day of a member of the political elite look like?” (Rhodes 2009; Rhodes, ‘t Hart, and Noordegraaf 2007). As such ‘life at the top’ studies also deal with moral dimensions of elite conduct and examine government elites more empirically and more systematically than is the case in many biography studies, they come closer to what is proposed here. However, those studies that are most relevant in the context of this project focus on the interplay and difference between political elites on the one hand and administrative elites on the other, in terms of behavior, attitudes, values and mutual role conception (e.g., Aberbach et al. 1981; Derlien 2003; Hacek 2006; Laegreid and Christensen, 2003; Richards and Smith 2004; ‘t Hart and Wille 2006; van den Heuvel, Huberts and Verberk 2002).

When the moral dimension is brought in and the last decade is taken to be the main timeframe of observation, a research lacuna becomes apparent. Arguably, despite a considerable amount of academic attention to the ethics of the business elite in recent years, empirical research into the ethics of government elites is lacking. When we go further back in time, a few classical empirical works that focus (in part) on the ethics of government elites can be distinguished (Aberbach et al. 1981; Hoogerwerf 1986; Putnam 1973, 1976; Searing 1978). However, although these works will be part of our analysis of elite values by means of a starting point, using them as a direct framework for empirical study seems hard to defend. After all, over the last thirty years fundamental changes have taken place in the way public sectors are organized and particularly in the way politicians and (senior) civil servants relate to and interact with one another. So, what kinds of concepts and studies are out there to serve as a framework to study the ethics of government elites?

Elite Ethos or Elite Ethics: What are we studying?
Certainly, many parts of what comprises the ethics of government elites have been addressed with use of different labels and descriptions in important scholarly debates, such as those on public values (e.g., Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007), public service and public sector motivation (PSM) (e.g., Perry and Hondeghem, 2008), public service ethos (e.g., Lawton and Rayner, 2011), managerial values in relation to ethical decision making (e.g., van der Wal 2008), and good governance (e.g., Bouckaert and van de Walle 2003).

What then do we mean exactly by elite ethics? It may very well refer to a number of things simultaneously, which makes it a more complicated concept than it appears to be at first sight. To come up with a conceptualization and demarcation of the concept, a number of relevant debates in public management and political science will be discussed. Up front, it should be noted that we perceive of ethics as not just the collection of moral values and norms that (should) guide public official’s conduct. We interpret the concept rather broad; in some ways arguably closer to the concept of ethos, also including the specific motives and motivations that underpin the conduct and decision making of government elites.

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3 A rudimentary search in prominent political science (AJPS, APSR) and public administration journals (PAR, PA and JPART) in the period 2000-2010 with the keywords “elite,” “elite ethics,” “elite values,” “elite, values” or “elite, ethics” results in no more than eight hits (articles) in which public sector elites are empirically studied, none of which relate the elite specifically to the subject of ethics. These findings align with those of Menzel (2006), and Lawton and Doig (2006) on the lack of attention to ethics in top-tier PA journals (in their case, for the period 1999-2004).

4 Studies on values and ethical decision making of business leaders are much more common (see for instance the abundance of such publications in the popular Journal of Business Ethics).

5 Although it has to be noted that less academic, more popular fora such as www.elite-research.com attribute attention to elite studies and methods that seem suitable to study different types of elites, with some attention to ethics-related issues.
To ensure conceptual clarity, we need to take a closer look at a number of closely related – central concepts in debates on administrative ethics and good governance: public values, public interest, public sector and public service motivation (PSM), public service ethic and public service ethos. We look at the genealogy of the concepts, their different usages and meanings, and the way in and the extent to which they are related, intertwined or perhaps even tautological. As a result, we present a conceptualization and definition of what we mean by elite ethics in this project.

Public Service Ethos
Indeed, as Rayner et al. (2011:28) point out in a recent study, the public service ethos that originated in the 19th century (in their case, in the UK), was characterized by a concern with ethical ideals, including service to the community, and originally adopted by an elite group of civil servants (Audit Commission 2002). A framework developed by Pratchett and Wingfield (1994:14) includes accountability, bureaucratic behavior (demonstrated through the exercise of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity), public interest, motivation, and loyalty, and they conclude that “the public service ethos is a confused and ambiguous concept which is only given meaning by its organizational and functional situation, and may be subject to very different interpretations over both time and location.”

However, despite its ambiguity, it is claimed by many scholars that such a thing as a public service ethos does exist, and that individuals working in the public service (note that the discussion so far seem to concern civil servants rather than politicians) subscribe to and are motivated by such an ethos (Horton 2008; Lawton 1998; Vandenabeele, Scheepers & Hondeghem 2006). That, in turn, presupposes a commitment and concern to promote the public interest, howsoever defined, rather than a private interest, according to the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee (2002, para. 4,7), who in a government report also provide a definition of a public service ethos: “a principled framework for action, something that describes the general character of an organization, but which, and more importantly should also motivate those who belong to it”. Thus, according to Rayner et al. (2011:29), “this ethos describes an existing state of affairs, provides guidance for action, and inspires those who work in public service organizations”. The ethos is subject to change, dynamic, normative and, according to Lawton (1998) not necessarily always ethical, especially when related to the concept of an elite because it then becomes associated with ‘jobs for the boys’, ‘misguided loyalties’ and ‘empire building’, to name a few.

In the end, Rayner et al. (2011:29-30) define the public service ethos as “a way of life that includes a set of values held by the individual, together with organizational processes and procedures that shape, and are shaped by, those values. Such values are enshrined in organizational goals that are directed toward public rather than private or sectional interests. Public service ethos is therefore a function of individual motivation and values, such as honesty and altruism, organizational goals and processes that accomplish accountability and impartiality, and goals that enhance the common good. It thus indicates a belief system that may explain ‘why’ individuals are motivated by it, ‘how’ they deliver public services in accordance with its values, and “what ends” they perceive it to endorse.”

If a public service ethos does indeed include specific public values (in a principled framework for action) and at the same time refers to a specific motivation to adhere to and pursue these values, it serves as the perfect concept for the study proposed here, that want s to investigate both motives as well as value preferences of government elites. Still, the almost exclusive focus on civil servants continues to be an issue of concern.
STUDYING ELITES IN AN ERA OF DYNAMIC POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE RELATIONS

Before discussing differences in values and motivations between elected and appointed government elites, and differences between country systems, we go into the dynamics of the classical ‘politics-administration dichotomy’ (Goodnow 1900) in the light of different reforms and developments that have taken place during the last century. This is relevant here, because although the relationship between politicians and public managers is not the main object of study, both the ideas that underpin the classical dichotomy as well as more recent dynamics in the relations between politicians and public managers affect greatly their values and motives and the extent to which they might differ.

THE CLASSICAL POLITICS-ADMINISTRATION DICHOTOMY

For long, it has been assumed that politics and administration presuppose a partly similar but mainly very different set of values and motivations (Weber 1921; Wilson 1887). As noted by Lee and Raadschelders (2008: 421), “In practice as in theory, the distinction between civil servants and politicians solidified in Europe from the early nineteenth century. In the United States and at the end of that century, advocates of scientific management focused on efficiency while social reformers clamored for anticorruption measures. Both groups asserted that efficiency and reform would be best served if administration were largely separated from politics.” One might even say that at the 19th-20th century turnpike the behavior of political elites that was increasingly seen as corrupted, and based on favoritism and individual interests, gave birth to the notion that (public) administration needed a field of study and an institutional educational environment of its own (as described in the seminal article ‘The Study of Administration’ of later US president Woodrow Wilson that was published in 1887).

At the time of Wilson’s article many countries that we consider nowadays to be advanced Western democracies did not have inclusive suffrage, voting rights for women, merit-based systems for public service appointments, or, for that matter, ‘real’ competitive elections for most of the (local) government positions (e.g., Dahl 2001; Huntington 1993). Politics was considered to be a business of corruption, patronage and cronyism and it was not before the second half of the 19th century that public opinion started to turn against corrupt political practices in Western countries, and the systems of public values that we are so very used to nowadays started to emerge (Kroeze 2008, 2009; van der Meer and Raadschelders 2003). One could say that the classical political ‘virtues’ as described by Machiavelli (1515) were up till then still very much in effect. Machiavelli stated that a ruler had to be a public figure above reproach, whilst privately acting amorally to achieve state goals. The ruler does not dismiss morality, but rather politically defines morality which – as in the criteria for acceptable cruel action – must be decisive: swift, effective, and short-lived, with the end justifying all means. Regardless of whether many of the traits Machiavelli described might or might not still guide political elites nowadays (that is up for empirical testing), the Machiavellian conduct of politicians in those days provided ammunition for the advocates of the separation of politics from administration.

The notion of functional-structural separation is central to what O’Flynn (2009) describes to be the first of three main generations of reform that have shaped the field of public administration: the traditional model of public administration. This model comprises a synthesis of Wilson’s doctrine of separation, Weber’s bureaucracy, and Taylor’s scientific management (Hughes 2003). The main trait of the model is that politicians develop grand plans and administrators carry them out (O’Flynn 2009:3). In the classical ‘politics-administration dichotomy’ the function of politics is to make policy, or more precisely, “setting the task for administration” (Wilson 1887:210). The function of public
administration, on the other hand, is “neutral policy implementation” (Demir 2009:877) or as Goodnow (1900:23) stated more explicitly, “execution of the state will.”

Since it first appeared, the strict politics-administration dichotomy has been challenged within the field of public administration, and has been characterized as much more differentiated (Putnam 1975) for a number of reasons. Moreover, the dichotomy has been criticized for being grounded in an “oversimplified characterization” of the relationship between elected officials and public administrators (Demir 2009:877). A number of administrative reforms and governance developments can be distinguished which render the traditional model of limited usefulness as a conceptual lens to describe twenty-first century public sector reality.

A first development is that civil servants are increasingly involved in what has been traditionally described as ‘political roles.’ In fact, this was one of the main conclusions of Aberbach et al. (1981) in their classical study on the political and bureaucratic elite in Western democracies. Of their famous four images to describe the relationship between politicians and administrators, image IV (‘the complete blurring of roles’) seemed to be becoming the face of the future (‘t Hart and Wille 2006:124).

**POLITICIZATION AND MANAGERIALIZATION OF THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE**

In response to a supposedly growing bureaucratic influence on the traditional domain of politicians, increased political control over bureaucratic power was advocated and in the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first new political offices were created (Lee and Raadschelders 2005; Light 1995) and (new) top civil service positions were politicized (see Raadschelders and van der Meer 1998). Such politicization of the senior civil service in many Western democracies is increasing according to a number of different scholars (see ‘t Hart and Wille (2006) for the Dutch case, Campbell and Wilson (1995) and Kavanagh and Seldon (1999) for the British case and Derlien (2003) for the German case), although pace and nature might differ for the regions that are part of this research project. This development has all sorts of (problematic) implications for the relationship between senior administrators and their elected masters, making it less safe and predictable than it has been in the decades before (Nieuwenkamp 2001; USBO 2004), but also more ambiguous (‘t Hart and Wille 2006) and more conflict-ridden (Christensen and Laegreid 2003).

Indeed, scholars witness an increasing role of politically appointed special advisors (Richard and Smith 2004) and ‘ministerial courts’ (Rhodes 2009). They operate closely to the political spectrum yet often further away (both principally as well as physically) from the traditional departmental bureaucratic hierarchy while exerting considerable influence within the executive core. It seems indicative of a political elite that tries to shape more and more to its liking the policy making machine. In the Netherlands, the creation of the Senior Civil Service (in Dutch: ABD) has led to a situation in which senior civil servants might still not be appointed along party lines but can be dismissed along those lines much easier and more silently than was previously the case, due to their obligation to rotate every few years (‘t Hart and Wille 2006:129). For the British situation in particular, Wilson and Barker (2003) argue that the traditional level of mutual respect between politicians and civil servants has more and more shifted towards a less happy and harmonious relationship. According to ‘t Hart and Wille (2006:144), “under these conditions, reciprocity and mutual understanding give way to the mutual risk avoidance and hence less productive collaboration at the very heart of national government.” Thus, the development which can be described as the politicization of the senior civil service has made relations between
politics and administration less stable and predictable than they were in the traditional model, and arguably more problematic.

A second concomitant development that has influenced gravely the relation, approximation and co-dependence between the political and administrative elite, is related to the second generation of public administration reform which has been largely captured by the label new public management (NPM). NPM emerged in a response to the major dysfunctions of the traditional model – lack of innovation, responsiveness, efficiency, too much red tape and so on (O’Flynn 2009). Without going into the NPM movement in too much detail because many others have done so already (for an overview of new public management reforms, see the oft-cited Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004)), it is generally recognized that this generation of reform made the public manager emerge as a key actor. Since NPM has emerged, politics and administration are not seen as separated and decoupled anymore as was the case in the traditional model.

It is too simple just to perceive of NPM as a purely administrative operation that solely concerns the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucratic apparatus. Different types of NPM-related developments and public sector reforms in many Western countries were aimed at making public managers more accountable and controllable and reinstate the ‘primacy of politics,’ and have created new demands on top officials (Peters & Pierre 2001). In that sense they served partly the same purpose as did the politicization attempts. Paradoxically, they have also led to a less predictable environment on both sides of the public elite spectrum (‘t Hart and Wille 2006), with no neat separation between the two and many cases of confusion (Liguori, Sicilia and Steccolini 2009).

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ‘PUBLIC MANAGER’

Given NPM and other more recent governance developments such as increasing policy co-production across organizations and sectors and the rise of networks (Hondeghem 1998) hardly anyone seems to hold the position anymore that the modern senior civil servant is still the distant, politically neutral figure he used to be (Noordegraaf 2004; Peters and Pierre 2001). Moreover, these developments seemed to have created a new type of senior civil servant: the responsive, involved, pro-active and ‘hands on’ public manager (Noordegraaf 2004, 2008). Public managers are more than classical bureaucrats, as “public management scholars recognize the public manager as an active and motivating agent, rather than as an actor that passively executes the will of their political masters” (O’Flynn 2009:2). Arguably even to a larger extent than becoming more businesslike as a result of NPM (see van der Wal 2008) public managers seem to have become more assertive policy advisors that are getting closer to the domain of politics (van Thiel, Steijn and Allix 2007).\(^6\)

In an overview of recent debates on public management and public values, O’Flynn (2009) shows what this development ‘from bureaucrats to public managers’ implies in terms of public values. Following Jones (2005) she states that public management has emerged as a field distinct from public administration. This shift has serious implications in terms of the study and practice of ethics, which is for public management scholars concerned with “principles and values by which public managers may determine right from wrong as well as the character needed to sustain judgment and action” (Dobel 2005:156). It implies that a relatively passive role for public administrators as implied by Dobel in his

\(^6\) It should be noted that the emergence of the public manager is primarily a non-US phenomenon because senior bureaucrats in the US have always been more involved in ‘direct political activities’ (Aberbach et al. 1981:23), and are in some cases directly politically appointed. Thirty years ago already these authors stated that “the distinction between civil servants and political appointees is much more blurred in this country than in Europe” (1981:23).
view on their moral obligation, “obedience to the mandates of law and policy mediated by
the elected and appointed officials of democratic regimes” (2005:159), will not apply to
senior civil servants anymore.

The classical neutral, almost amoral notion of the civil servant made proponents of
the anti-dichotomous argument criticize the ethical implications of the dichotomist view
(Demir 2009:877) even before the public manager emerged as such. For instance, Adams
and Balfour (2004), taking the seminal work of Arendt (1963) as a starting point, and
Denhardt (1989), have argued that the idea of strict separation of policy formulation and
implementation seemed to strip public administrators of their moral responsibilities. It
follows upon this that calling senior civil servants public managers has important
implications in terms of ethics and values. Again, rather than being actors that execute
policies with adherence to classical Weberian values such as efficiency, lawfulness,
neutrality and impartiality, they are increasingly seen as ‘co-creators of public value.’ One
thus might propose that politicians and public managers have grown closer in embracing
certain public values as a result of this; at least to those that concern the development of
public policy such as responsiveness, serviceability, collaboration, and ‘buzzword’
accountability (see e.g., Bovens and Schillemans 2009).

The recent proliferation of scholarly publications on ‘public value’ and ‘public
values’ that address this issue has emerged as a result of what O’Flynn (2009)
concerns to be the very recent and third generation of public administration reform. Arguably, this
reform movement is again a reaction on the dysfunctions of the NPM model and it is yet
emerging under a variety of labels, (new) governance and public value being the two most
prominent ones. There’s no settled model, however, there are common characteristics and
practices emerging from the twin pressures of what is happening in government, and what
some commentators are saying should happen (O’Flynn 2009:4).

Describing the changing roles and agendas of both politicians and public managers
is important because it contextualizes the subject of this study. It is expected that the shifts
from public administration to public management, and from public management to
governance, are affecting the values but also the motivations of both the elected and the
appointed government elite. Just assuming that empirical results and theoretical
assumptions from two or three decades ago apply to the dynamic modern-day public sector
environment would result in false propositions and irrelevant empirical outcomes. Whether
the traditional Weberian bureaucrat and the Machiavellian politician, who operate in
isolation and separation from each other and are guided by a very distinct ethic might still
to some extent exist or if there are indeed many blurred lines has to be seen. To test this
empirically is exactly what this study proposes to do.

A POLITICS-MANAGEMENT CONTINUUM AS EMPIRICAL ANSWER TO A DEADLOCKED DEBATE
The complementarity view rests on the premise that there is a continuum that moves from
politics on one end toward management on the other end. Politics and management seem to
have a dichotomous-like relationship, while policy and administration seem to be blended,
with reciprocal influence and overlapping roles (Demir 2009:878-885). Its proponents are
aware of the sensitivity of their arguments from a political point of view. Just as does
Moore, they argue explicitly that public administrators should refrain from those activities
that fall within the realm of politics: “What makes an activity political or policy related
depends on (1) the degree of partisanship suggested in the activities, and (2) the need for
independent leadership initiatives undertaken by administrators” (Demir 2009: 877-878). If
the partisan nature of politics results in public managers’ identification with particular
interests, it decreases trust in their professional competence and independence. On the other
hand, independent leadership initiatives undertaken by public administrators may undermine the position of elected officials (Svara 1990). Complementarity scholars consider elected officials to be senior partners in the relationship; therefore, their authority must be fully respected by professional public administrators (Nalbandian 1994). A public manager acting as the “master vis-à-vis elected officials is a result that is not acceptable to scholars who uphold the complementarity view” (Demir 2009:878). Such explicit undermining and imperialistic activities aside, the complementarity view allows involvement from public managers in the policy-making process, which “includes conflict resolution, policy leadership, policy initiation and formulation, goal setting and resource allocation, policy analysis, and policy evaluation” (878). As such, it serves as a middle ground between the dichotomy and political bureaucracy perspectives, in that it acknowledges “the logical and psychological distinctions” between politics and administration (Waldo 1980:69), but also addresses the problem of bringing the two together in a symbiotic association yet keeping each in its proper place (van Riper 1983:489, in: Demir 2009).

The view aligns with that of Svara (2001, in: ‘t Hart and Wille 2006:125), who proposes a more positive perspective on political-administrative relations than many others do in arguing that most current interactions among officials resemble the win-win situation of complementarity. Still, he acknowledges classical differences and states that:

Although sometimes politicians and bureaucrats perform functions that necessarily overlap, they maintain distinct roles based on their unique perspectives and values and the differences in their formal positions.

Testing empirically among city managers in the US, Demir (2009:885) concludes that “the complementarity view provides a reasonably accurate description of political–administrative relations: There appears to be a politics–management dichotomy, in that managers rarely get involved in activities that suggest politics. Also, some policy activities, such as conflict resolution and policy leadership, stand near the political end of the continuum.” Finally, Demir corroborates the validity of the continuum by stating that (855):

[Public] managers report high levels of involvement in policy analysis, goal setting and resource allocation, and policy initiation and formulation. Elected officials, on the other hand, seem to be much less involved in activities that represent the management end of the administration–management continuum (e.g., personnel management and organizational coordination). A greater number of elected officials, however, frequently engage in administrative activities such as administrative goal setting, policy implementation, and performance evaluation and improvement.

Applying the politics-management continuum allows us to differentiate expectations on contrasts between values and motivations of politicians and public managers in relation to different government activities or domains. In doing so, we add a contextual frame to the expected differences between both groups and the directions in which these differences may lead. For it can be expected that public managers consider other values to be important in policy-related activities than they do in activities that are purely managerial in nature, we can formulate the first general research propositions as to the contexts in which the prioritization of values might differ between elected officials and senior administrators.

An example of such an initiative in the Netherlands was the overt attack of secretary-general Sweder van Wijnbergen on his Minister Annemarie Jorritsma in a newspaper article by proposing an alternative tax policy, and basically questioning her leadership skills and competences (see NRC Handelsblad, 23-03-1999).
Public managers embrace different public values in activities concerning politics and management than they do in activities concerning policymaking and administration.

Politicians embrace different public values in activities concerning policymaking and administration than they do in activities concerning politics and management.

In activities concerning policymaking and administration politicians and public managers show more public value congruence than they do in activities concerning politics and management due to their mutual involvement in the former and the dichotomous nature of the latter.

Now it is time to zoom in on which specific values and motivations have been distinguished by scholars in previous studies, so that we can construct a framework to test empirically the specific differences between both elite groups. We do so, firstly, by exploring the debate on public value and public values that has proliferated during the last few years and has taken centre stage in the international public administration arena.

Public values and government elites

Public value and public values

Political scientist Mark Moore (1995) and public management scholar Barry Bozeman (2007) have published the most oft cited works on public value and public values respectively. The debate on ‘public value’ and ‘public values’ offers a proper starting point for empirical study here, not in the last place because it is situated within those governance developments that characterize best nowadays political-administrative relations. As such, it provides context to the concept of the public manager (cf. O’Flynn 2009) as applied in the present study.

How should one exactly distinguish between ‘public value’ and ‘public values’? Public value is considered to be the potential to be realized of a given political and institutional setting in creating something substantively valuable for a given public (Moore 1984, 1995). Moore (1995:52) contends that managers can create public value in two ways: they can “deploy the money and authority entrusted to them to produce things of value to particular clients and beneficiaries,” and they can create public value through “establishing and operating an institution that meets citizens’ (and their representatives’) desires for properly ordered and productive public institutions.” Public value is likely articulated in substantive terms rather than financial and is relative to the environment in that it is commonly related to a public problem that an agency seeks to address rather than an absolute standard (O’Flynn 2009). It focuses on (1) a wider range of value than public goods; (2) more than outputs; and (3) what has meaning for people, rather than what a public sector decision maker might presume is best for them (Alford and O’Flynn 2009:176). It thus seems safe to state that the main task of both the elected as well as the appointed government elite is to create public value and by doing so, pursue the public interest. Exactly how they perceive public value has to be realized and which public values should guide them in doing so, is what has to be studied empirically.

What then are public values? Bozeman (2007:13) describes society’s “public values” as “those providing normative consensus about (1) the rights, benefits, and
prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (2) the obligations of citizens to society, the state and one another; (3) and the principles on which governments and policies should be based”. The present study focuses predominantly on the third category of public values, for they are supposed to be guiding the conduct and decision making of the governing elite. Without engaging endlessly in a debate on how to define values as many others have done before us, we make a pragmatic choice for the following definition that served well in earlier empirical studies: “values are important qualities and standards that have a certain weight in the choice of action” (van der Wal et al. 2008:468). By means of providing a little more context, let us further assume with Bozeman (2007:116) that a value is (1) relatively stable, (2) has strong potential to affect behavior, (3) changes (if at all) only after deliberation, and (4) helps define one’s sense of oneself. With these provisions we see that “value” is conceived as much broader and potent than related concepts such as preference or even opinion (116).

Empirical examples of the values of Bozeman’s third category include for public managers accountability, incorruptibility, efficiency and lawfulness (van der Wal et al. 2008:472), as well as adaptability and stability (Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:360). For politicians they include the common good, social cohesion, sustainability, will of the people, collective choice and citizen involvement, whereas political loyalty as specified through accountability and responsiveness is most important for the relationship between public administrators and politicians (360).

THE ‘EMPIRICAL TURN’ IN THE PUBLIC VALUES DEBATE

Just because the concept of public values is so broad and encompassing, and the literature on public values is “nearly boundless” (Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:356) discussions of the concept have long suffered from a lack of conceptual clarity. Indeed, public values have been at the forefront of many debates in public administration in different shapes and forms, making it seem like everybody is discussing public values while it turns out that very different things are addressed within the same debate. Some authors discuss in general the safeguarding of public values in a time of privatization (de Bruijn and Dicke 2006), or the reconciliation of public values in a time of business-like public management philosophies (Kernaghan 2000; Frederickson 2005). Another approach has been to just posit public values, making no pretense of deriving them. For example, Antonsen and Beck Jørgensen (1997) conclude that Danish public values include, among others, due process, accountability, and, welfare provision. Others have also addressed public (service) values in general by proposing sets, lists or frameworks of public values on normative rather than empirical grounds (Gregory 1999; Kernaghan 2003; Shergold 1999; Tait 1997). Subsequently, the examples of public values that are mentioned in the literature differ widely (de Bruijn and Dicke 2006: 718).

Recently however, public management scholars have begun to derive specific and contextualized sets of (public) values through empirical research, in the form of systematic content analyses of recent literature (Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; van der Wal, Huberts, van den Heuvel and Kolthoff 2006) and quantitative surveys of public sector employees and managers (Stackman, Connor and Becker 2006; van der Wal et al. 2008; van der Wal, Pevkur and Vrangbaek 2008; Vrangbaek 2009). These studies show a plethora of different values to be important for the conduct and decision making of public sector employees.

Empirical studies on values of politicians and public managers (or conventionally ‘bureaucrats’) have not always referred to the concept of public values as such, especially those that were conducted before the concept was adopted as enthusiastically as it has been
in the last years. Such more classical studies (e.g., Aberbach et al. 1981; Searing 1978) have measured values with an individual as well as a more institutional and constitutional character. Here, however, the term public values is used as an overarching concept that comprises both values that relate to the public sector’s contribution to society, the transformation of interests to decisions, the relationship between (public) administration and politicians, as well as intra-organizational aspects of public administration and the behavior of public-sector employees (based on Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007:359). Such an approach fits best here because it seems arbitrary to limit a priori the study to narrow types and categories of values (i.e., explicitly demarcated as ‘individual’ or ‘organizational’) that might be regarded as ‘out of touch’ or ‘out of context’ by the government elites themselves. For example, the classical study of Searing (1978:74) on elite values showed that values explicitly labeled by academic commentators can be regarded as rather odd and foreign by political elites.

Using classifications of values ourselves does not have to contradict such an open interpretation of the concept. Although Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman do provide classifications as well, they present them as neither mutually exclusive nor separated from one another. Their ‘public values universe’ that consists of seven constellations (2007:359) shows different overlaps and interplays that correspond with how values are often perceived in real life; being both complementarily, neighboring as well as conflicting. After discussing the empirical evidence on values and motivations held by public managers and politicians and the handful of studies that compare both elite groups, these constellations will be used to contextualize those values that will be selected for empirical study.

Now that the seen has been set, time has come to zoom in on the real subject of study: differences between values and motivations of politicians and public managers in Western democracies. First, we go into two influential classical studies on the values of government elites by means of a starting point for discussion.

**Empirical Differences Between Values of Politicians and Administrators**

**Classical Studies into the Values and Attitudes of Government Elites**

As said, an abundance of literature exists on the leadership styles and skill sets of government elites (e.g., Bell, Hargrove and Theakston 1999; Rhodes 2010; ’t Hart 2010). However, studies that focus specifically on their values are sparse. In between the late 1940’s and late 1970’s a few scholars engaged in empirical studies on values and attitudes of government elites (e.g., Aberbach, Chesney and Rockman 1975; Hargrove 1969; Jacob, Teune and Watts 1968; Putnam 1973; Searing 1978). However, since the seminal work of Aberbach et al. (1981), not many large-scale attempts have been made anymore, let alone attempts with a cross-country research design.

An oft-cited study and one of the few that examines values of politicians with use of a large-scale research design is that of Searing (1978). He studied over 500 members of the British House of Commons through interviews and questionnaires. Searing approaches values from an individual perspective by applying Brewster Smith’s (1949:477) classical definition of values as “highly generalized attitudes that define a person’s orientation to life in terms of the things he deems most important.” In specifying his study aims the study of Searing (1978:67) shows some similarities with the present study: “The present inquiry will treat values as political ideals, abstract conceptions of ends and means that are explicitly held by individuals and serve as standards for interpreting and evaluating their political experience.” Using a combination of tape-recorded interviews and a questionnaire-based
value ranking measurement the author takes the well-known 36 values of Milton Rokeach (1973) as a framework for study, that distinguish between means (e.g., compassion, loyalty, efficiency and cooperation) and ends values (e.g., social equality, capitalism, privacy and strong government).

A few interesting notions are worth mentioning. First of all, respondents differ in their opinions about the existence of a stable hierarchy of values that guides them in any given situation (1978:73). One type of respondent argues to have a “rudimentary hierarchy of values, but that it is very sensitive to political events and changes a good deal, even from week to week,” while the other position is “that true pragmatists will only choose among values in specific situations, so much so that they never develop anything like the ranking’s instrument hierarchical value systems” (73). While this suggests that some people have less stable values than others, it also touches upon one of the many methodological challenges of values measurement that Searing recognizes, which will be dealt with in later sections.

Discussion of results of the ranking exercise and the contextualizing interviews focus mainly on the differences between conservative and labor MP’s, which are indicative of their political color and ideology: i.e., conservative MP’s value free enterprise higher than do their left-wing counterparts, while labor politicians value socialism much higher. More general values such as social equality are valued as almost equally important.

Interesting as these results may be, it is questionable whether concepts such as socialism and free enterprise can be considered (public) values within the definition that guides this study. Moreover, the results might even be considered to be somewhat tautological in that they reflect directly the political color of the respondent in a two-party system that is strongly demarcated along those same lines. The fact that the political landscape is nowadays much more fragmented than back in the 70’s and many of the countries that participate here have a multi-party system render the results of Searing’s study not very useful for determining politician’s public values, apart from his methodological recommendations.

Aberbach et al. (1981) conducted what is perhaps the most oft-cited study on the relations, differences and similarities between political and bureaucratic elites in Western democracies. Although they did not focus specifically on (public or moral) values, their study provides numerous insights in related issues such as beliefs, and task and role conception. Moreover, the present study mirrors in many ways the study of Aberbach et al. (1981), in terms of themes of inquiry, selection of countries and respondents, and methodological approach. Surveying and interviewing over 500 parliamentary politicians, nearly 900 senior bureaucrats, and more than 150 younger administrators (“high-fliers”) from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States, their study is by far the most extensive one ever conducted on this topic.

The authors discuss four images of the relationship as well as the difference between politicians and bureaucrats: the policy/administration image that aligns with the classical dichotomy of Goodnow and Wilson; the facts/interests image, which assumes that both politicians and bureaucrats participate in making policy, but that they make distinctive contributions in that bureaucrats bring facts and politicians interests; the energy/equilibrium image in which politicians are passionate, partisan, even ideological, and bureaucrats are, by contrast, prudent, practical, and pragmatic; and the pure hybrid which suggests a virtual disappearance of the Weberian distinction, producing hybrids that shift between political and administrative roles, with senior bureaucrats that enter a ministerial cabinet to become a politicians themselves a few years later as an increasing development (1981:14-20).

Because their study is so extensive and deals only in part with beliefs, ideologies and values, only those results that are relevant to the present study are discussed. Similar to
Searing, Aberbach et al. perceive values and ideologies mainly in terms of political preferences (i.e., left or right) and specific, concrete value statements such as accountability or responsiveness are not part of the investigation.

**WHAT PUBLIC MANAGERS VALUE MOST**

The results of two recent studies are of specific interest here because they concern top-level public managers (van der Wal et al. 2008a, 2008b), and in the latter case also deal with differences and similarities between EU member states. This presents us with a first idea of elite value preferences in some of the countries to be included in the present study. The results of a survey of 231 elite public administrators in the Netherlands (all members of the ABD) in which they had to prioritize twenty values in terms of their importance in decision making, show a traditional and consistent value pattern (van der Wal et al. 2008a:476). The Dutch senior civil service ranks as most important values – ‘accountability,’ ‘lawfulness,’ ‘incorruptibility,’ ‘expertise,’ ‘reliability,’ ‘effectiveness,’ ‘impartiality,’ and ‘efficiency’.

Such values are consistent with often mentioned crucial public sector values in the public administration literature (e.g., Kernaghan 2003:712) and in earlier research among Dutch civil servants (van den Heuvel et al. 2002); ‘integrity,’ however, is often used as a specific value instead of the closely related ‘incorruptibility’. The same goes for strongly related values such as ‘transparency’ (‘openness’) and ‘reliability’ (‘trustworthiness’). ‘New’ or ‘emerging’ values (Kernaghan 2000, 2003), such as ‘innovation’ and ‘profitability,’ traditionally associated with the private sector, are not present in the most important actual public sector values. A subsequent series of qualitative interviews with a selection of the same executives largely corroborated the outcomes, while specifying.

A comparison of public values as prioritized by public managers in the Netherlands, Denmark and Estonia (van der Wal et al. 2008b: 329) ‘openness’ and ‘transparency,’ ‘accountability,’ ‘efficiency,’ and ‘effectiveness’ were all considered to be important in each of the three countries, and although responsibility and predictability were not literally part of the surveys, their importance is reflected through the high rankings of accountability (to the general public) and competence (the former), and equal opportunities, due process, equality, and especially continuity (the latter).

Recent studies on the values of politicians are simply not out there, for which there might be two reasons. First, politicians and especially parliamentary politicians seem less prone to participate in research than their bureaucratic counterparts are, arguably because of their public visibility and fear of media repercussions. Second, ethics and values related topics seem to be more of an issue in the field of public administration than in the field of political science lately. However, even the more classical studies on politician’s values focus on political (socialist, conservative) values (e.g., Searing 1978; Aberbach et al. 1981) rather than broader public, organizational and policy-related values. As we will see later, the same goes for empirical studies into public sector and public service motivation (PSM), which only concern civil servants and, so far, have kept politicians out of the picture.

**COMPARATIVE STUDIES ON THE VALUES OF POLITICIANS AND ADMINISTRATORS**

Empirical studies into the value preferences of political elites are virtually non-existent, but there is some evidence from earlier comparative attempts. What then does such empirical evidence, scarce as it may be, tell us about specific differences between political and bureaucratic leaders in terms of ethics and values? Different studies do show that politicians on the one hand and civil servants on the other do not only differ in their prioritization of important values and norms but also perceive each other’s values and moral viewpoints to

A large-scale survey study among politicians and civil servants in all levels of government by van den Heuvel, Huberts and Verberk (2002:117) showed that Dutch politicians embrace mostly values such as ‘honesty,’ ‘incorruptibility’ and ‘openness,’ while administrators in the Netherlands value most ‘expertise,’ ‘lawfulness,’ ‘dedication,’ ‘serviceability’ and ‘efficiency’. However, when asked, public managers perceive politicians to be a little too fond of themselves when it comes to the importance of ‘honesty’ (and also ‘impartiality’), whereas politicians argue that the emphasis on ‘impartiality’ and ‘collegiality’ by public managers should be put into perspective (116). 8

For the US case, Bowman and Williams (1997:518) show that administrators (n=422) doubt that the “ethical standards of elected and appointed officials are as high as those held by career civil servants” (55 percent). According to the authors, “the respondents agree with Paul Appleby (1952:x) , who warned of the harm that can be done by top officials who are “amateurs in governmental responsibility”” (518). In a follow-up study, Bowman and Connolly Knox (2008) derive a similar conclusion: this time, 58 percent of the respondents shae doubt about the ethics of their political leadership. Interestingly, a core issue according to the respondents is “the proliferation of political appointees and the politicization of upper-grade career managers” (2008:629).

De Vries (2002) is one of the few authors that conducted a cross-country inquiry among both (local) politicians and public administrators; in his case, into the seemingly universal value of ‘honesty’. It was found that “in the eyes of local elites, honesty still seems to be a universally appreciated value. In all countries investigated, more than 90% of the respondents feel that truthfulness and honesty should never be compromised.” (329) However, when translating the abstract ideal (ethos) into principles for everyday practice (ethics), not much of the universality or of the deontological reasoning remains, according to de Vries: “Within different countries, local elites vary considerably in their opinions about concealing facts and presenting them in a one-sided way to achieve community goals.” (329) Different kinds of pressures that might lead to compromising honest behavior are presented, but unfortunately differences between politicians and administrators are not discussed explicitly.

While interpreting these results though, it has to be noted that with one exception the data date from before this century – and thus before some of the major developments that have been sketched could have had their influence on value preferences. In addition, many of the respondents in the above surveys were not holding a very senior position, regardless of being elected or appointed officials. It is therefore questionable whether they can be considered to be part of the government elite. Also, the studies do not move beyond national borders with the exception of de Vries’ study which only concerns one single value. On a final note, the majority of these studies were conducted before the public values debate emerged as such, and show no consistency with respect to the value constructs, scales and questions that were used. For these reasons, a study that empirically compares both groups across countries with use of a uniform measurement instrument is paramount.

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8 Alternatively though, studies outside the realm of public administration show no differences in the way in which high-level decision makers (elected vs. non-elected) deal with ethical dilemmas (see e.g., Mamhidir, Kihlgren and Sorlie 2007, who conducted a study on decision with regard to elderly care within the field of bioethics).
PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES IN CODES AND STATEMENTS

Most public services of Western democracies, in particular OECD countries, nowadays have so-called public value statements which are often attached to more general codes of conduct and in many cases even to binding legal frameworks for administrators, such as the Australian ‘Public Service Act’ or the Dutch ‘Ambtenarenwet’. In addition, in these countries many public sector agencies and local government organizations have adopted specific codes and specific values statements of their own. The extent to which such codes – that contain mostly very general value statements that nobody disagrees on – reflect and guide actual public service conduct or rather show ‘espoused truisms’ is always subject to debate. However, regardless of which ontological or epistemological validity such statements might carry, it is relevant to discuss them at this point to get a first idea of which values are considered to be most important in the countries and systems that will be studied.

MOTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS OF GOVERNMENT ELITES

PUBLIC SERVICE AND PUBLIC SECTOR MOTIVATION

For a good two decades, an increasing number of scholars has been involved in inquiries into the ‘existence’ of a specific motivation that is unique for those that have chosen a career in public service. For a number of countries and groups of public sector and non-profit organizations’ employees, the ‘existence’ of such a specific public service motivation has been empirically demonstrated (for an overview of research, see Perry and Hondeghem 2008). But what exactly is public service motivation or PSM?

Perry and Wise (1990:368) define public service motivation as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations”. According to Vandenabeele (2008:32), public service motivation is “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”. While public service motivation thus relates directly to working in the public sector, Perry and Hondeghem (2008:3) draw attention to the distinction between ‘public service motivation’ and ‘public sector motivation’. The latter refers to the motivation to work for government mainly because of its labor conditions such as security of tenure (‘job security’), career perspective, pension systems or flexibilities in combining work and family life.

The concept of public service motivation, however, refers to being motivated to serving the public good (Perry and Hondeghem 2008). Whereas public sector motivation includes a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, as well as private or individual and public interest as triggering action, public service motivation more specifically refers to the intrinsic orientation on the public interest as a driving force behind commitment and to the experience of meaningful social action. This also implies that, in contrast to public sector motivation, public service motivation may not only be found inside, but also outside the government sector (Steen 2008).

Perry (1996, 1997) identified four dimensions of public service motivation, which relate to distinct categories of rational, norm-based and affective motives. These are attraction to participate in public policy making; commitment to the public interest (a public orientation and concern for the public weal, also including a sense of civic duty and social justice); self-sacrifice (the willingness to substitute service to others for tangible personal rewards); and compassion (patriotism of benevolence, combining love of regime values and love of others).
INTERNATIONALIZING AND BROADENING PSM

While the concept of public service motivation originated in the United States, Vandenabeele and Van de Walle (2008) believe it to be relevant in many national settings: In fact, Vandenabeele (2008), Vandenabeele, Scheepers, and Hondeghem (2006), Coursey and Pandey (2008), Kim (2009), and Steijn (2008), have confirmed the viability of the concept in different national settings. However, the authors also suspect that, alike the existence of individual patterns of public service motivation, institutional and societal differences may cause different patterns of public service motivation in different nations. Applying the concept in a West-European setting, for example, Vandenabeele (2008) retains Perry’s dimensions, yet also adds a fifth dimension of public service motivation, namely democratic governance (including adherence to democratic values and good governance, need for public service, and accountability of public service).

In the literature, public service motivation is associated with other value-laden concepts. With altruism and pro-social behavior, public service motivation shares the element of other-regarding behavior (Steen 2008; Perry and Hondeghem 2008). Similar to the construct of public service ethos, that reflects “fundamental values, beliefs, and ideals held by politicians, public servants, and the public about that regime” (Horton 2008:28), it refers to public service as an ideal (Horton 2008). Also, public service motivation is seen as holding an ethical content. Maesschalck, van der Wal and Huberts (2008:161) see public service motivation mirroring typical public (service) values, especially those values that refer to “some kind of external accountability to society.” Yet, they also find a number of public sector values, such as values linked with the ethics of decision making and organizational aspects, such as ‘lawfulness’ or ‘effectiveness’ not specifically included in the public service motivation concept. Brewer (2009) advocates that items on ethics should be added to the existing measures of public service motivation, but his suggestions are very general and do not concern specific public values.

PUBLIC VALUES AND PUBLIC MOTIVATIONS: SAME BREED OR DIFFERENT SPECIES?

The specific motivations to serve the public interest are indeed related to a number of crucial public values that have been discussed earlier. So far, however, both concepts have been treated in isolation from each other in the literature. More specifically, as pointed out by Rainey, Koehler and Yung (2008:10): “much of the PSM research has pursued a conception of PSM that involves only a few references to any public values that might appear on any list or inventory.” According to Rainey et al. (2008:8) both Moore and Bozeman describe highly motivated managers that want to create public value and produce public values, but they treat their level of motivation as a pre-existing condition. They “concentrate primarily on identifying and analyzing public values, without much attention to why and how individuals are motivated to produce them.” (8) In order words: to have a value is not the same as exerting effort to fulfill it. This implies that values can be at the basis of motivations but are not identical in meaning. Somewhat contradictory, however, the authors seem to argue that motivations lie at the basis of values rather than the other way around.

Without engaging in endless conceptual psychology debates on whether values precede motivations or the other way around, it seems safe to state here that while deeper lying personal values might result in motivations to go and work for government, these motivations lie at the basis for ’producing’ (we prefer the term ’realizing’) specific public values when one already works in the public sector. Because it can be expected that politicians enter the public sector very differently and with different motivations than is the case for (career) public managers, they can also be expected to embrace different public
values (their values may differ for a number of other reasons that have been discussed already). For the case of public values, some empirical evidence exists that corroborates this expectation, but what about comparative research into motivations among politicians and public managers?

**Motivation in Public Management rather than in Political Science**

In recent years, studies into public service motivation have moved beyond just the public sector and concern businesses and ngo’s as well. Surprisingly, however, not a single study has been conducted on the ‘existence’ of PSM among politicians. Even in the state of the art volume ‘Motivation in Public Management’ (Perry and Hondeghem 2008) hardly any attention is paid to motivational traits of elected public officials.

Based on common sense as well as studies that have characterized the world of politicians as dominated by a short attention cycle, media pressures and public scrutiny (Ross 1988), it might be expected that politicians differ substantially from public managers in their motivation for a public sector job. This might be more the case for public sector motivations than motivations to dedicate a large part of the career to the public service. Whereas for instance ‘job security’ is often mentioned by civil servants as a specific job motivation, this applies much less to their political counterparts. Moreover, in many cases individuals that enter the political arena will leave the security from a job in business, academia or civil service behind to choose for the unpredictable and volatile world of politics.

**Dimensions of public service motivation:**

*Attraction to participate in public policy making;*

*Commitment to the public interest* (a public orientation and concern for the public weal, also including a sense of civic duty and social justice);

*Self-sacrifice* (the willingness to substitute service to others for tangible personal rewards);

*Compassion* (patriotism of benevolence, combining love for regime values and for others);

*Democratic governance* (including adherence to democratic values and good governance, need for public service, and accountability of public service).

**A ‘Public Values and Motivations Continuum’ from Politics to Management**

Regardless of which specific developments one takes into account, it seems safe to state that the archaic and static politics-administration dichotomy as proposed and described by Weber and Goodnow does not reflect anymore 21st century public sector reality. This assumption has important implications for this study. The question is what these developments do imply for the differences in values and motivations between elected officials and public managers that are supposed to co-dependently serve the public interest and create public value as the governing elite.

On the one hand, it may very well be the case that politicians and public managers have grown closer with regard to their outward focus and their dependence on the approval of and accountability towards ‘the public,’ i.e. the citizens that they are supposed to represent and serve (cf. Noordegraaf 2008). Svara (2001), who proposes a continuum

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9 Note that this development is applied here to top-level civil servants (public managers) in particular, and that it may much less apply to lower ranked public employees whose jobs still consist of loyally and procedurally executing public policies.
rather than a dichotomy for interpreting contemporary political-administrative relationships, also emphasizes complementarity as a key issue. His presumption is that politicians and public managers are highly dependent upon each other for getting their respective jobs done. On the other hand, it is argued that elite officials within the core executive are not ‘living together’ but increasingly ‘growing apart’ (‘t Hart and Wille 2006:143), due to the pressures and uncertainties sketched above which have made the traditionally negotiated order between politicians and bureaucrats tenuous (144).

**Table 1. Public values and motives in different political-administrative domains**

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**Public values and motivations to be empirically tested in this study**

In an oft-cited study, Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) map out what they refer to as the ‘public values universe’. As to date, it is not only the most comprehensive set of public values distinguished from relatively recent literature (their public value universe is the result of a bibliometric study of public administration and political science journals from 1990-2003), but their typology also succeeds in plausibly distinguishing between seven constellations to which (sets of) public values apply. These constellations allow a distinction between public values that can be predominantly associated with ‘good’ political conduct and being representatives on behalf of constituents, public values that apply first and foremost to the administrative organization, its employees and policies, and ‘good’ public administration and public management, and those that apply to the relationship between politics and administration.

Values important for politicians:
**Constellation: The contribution of the public sector to society**
- Public Interest
- Social Cohesion
- Human Dignity
- Voice of the Future
- Regime Stability

**Constellation: The transformation of interests to decisions**
- Democracy
- Will of the People
- Collective Choice
- Citizen Involvement
- Protection of Individual Rights

**Values important for public managers:**

**Constellation: Behavior of public sector employees**
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Honesty
- Moral standards
- Ethical consciousness
- Integrity

**Constellation: Intraorganizational aspects of public administration**
- Openness–secrecy
- Responsiveness
- Listening to public opinion
- Advocacy–neutrality
- Compromise
- Balancing of interests
- Competitiveness–cooperativeness
- Stakeholder or shareholder value
- Robustness
- Adaptability
- Stability
- Reliability
- Timeliness
- Innovation
- Enthusiasm
- Risk readiness
- Productivity
- Effectiveness
- Parsimony
- Business-like approach
- Self-development of employees
- Good working environment

**Constellation: Relationship between public administration and the citizens**
Legality
Protection of rights of the individual
Equal treatment
Rule of law
Justice
Equity
Reasonableness
Fairness
Professionalism
Dialogue
Responsiveness
User democracy
Citizen involvement
Citizen’s self-development
User orientation
Timeliness
Friendliness

Constellation: The relationship between public administrators and their environment
Political loyalty
Accountability
Responsiveness

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REGIONS AND COUNTRIES

Next to some of the developments that have been discussed which are of influence of the dynamic nature of political-administrative value differences, such differences are expected to be highly dependent on the specific administrative configurations of a country or system: in some countries a classical politics-administration dichotomy is still in place, whereas other countries show an increasingly politicized civil service with (non-elected) political advisors that operate outside the traditional bureaucratic structures with considerable influence within the executive branch. In the most extreme case, public managers are directly politically appointed (more on country specific differences in political-administrative relations and configurations later).

RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

P₃ In general, politicians associate with the pursuit of the public interest values such as responsiveness, accountability, and political efficacy

P₄ In general, public managers associate with the pursuit of the public interest values such as loyalty, consistency, neutrality, efficiency and lawfulness (procedural correctness)

P₅ When it comes to their perception of effective policy making and implementation, politicians and public managers consider the same set of values to be important
When it comes to the perception of their respective roles and professions (i.e., being ‘good’ politicians and ‘good’ public managers), politicians and public managers differ substantially in the values they consider to be most important. U.S. politicians and public managers share more similar values associated with role conception than do their European or Australian counterparts. Within the European Union, the value differences between politicians and public managers associated with role conception are larger than within the U.S. context. The value differences between politicians and public managers associated with role conception are smaller within the US context than within the European or the Australian context. Politicians and public managers have a substantially different public sector motivation (PSM), which is partly related to their different conception of how to pursue the public interest (see P₁ and P₃) but concerns in particular different perceptions on job security and career strategy.

**In-depth elite interviews**
The third and final part of the study consists of about 30-40 interviews with the “elite of the elite”; world leaders such as (former) presidents, prime-ministers, senators, mayors from capitol cities, but also (former) top public managers, such as secretary-generals, secretaries and agency heads of large government agencies and bureaucracies (such as EPA, Ministry of Finance, Municipality of London, etc.)

There is a good argument to be made for interviewing former elite rather than public leaders who are at present still in function. Besides issues such as time constraint (making one or multiple interview appointments with current prime ministers arguably is a mission impossible), former elite is probably much more inclined to discuss retrospectively and openly dilemmas, value trade-offs and difficult decisions.

**Online survey**
The second part of the project consists of a survey that will be hosted online for a 6-month period in 2010, supported by the software application Examine 2.0 (www.examine.eu). The aim is to obtain 1,000 valid responses, more or less equally divided between the participating countries (taking into account their considerable differences in size). In short, the responses should be almost equally divided between the participating EU countries, with a total of about 290 million inhabitants (n=450), and the US, with a total of about 300 million inhabitants (n=450), with Australia, with about 20 million participants, accounting for a considerably smaller portion (n=100).
REFERENCES


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