

**PUBLIC SERVICE VALUE ORIENTATIONS:
PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES INFORMING THE
CLASSROOM**

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This study's purpose is to learn how practitioners view and prioritize their respective public service values through Q methodology. Public Service Values are important for accreditation guidelines from the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), guiding MPA programs. The author sampled 40 public service values and their respective definitions with 34 Oklahoma public servants from various levels of government, nonprofits, and faculty in public administration sorted according to the condition of instruction, "*What do you find more important in your workplace?*" Using Q method, three PCA-Varimax factor arrays revealed the differing sets of core values among public servant perspectives. Factor scores, field notes, and post-sort interviews were used to interpret the arrays, with three practitioner perspectives found: *Moral*, *Public Interest*, and *Results-Oriented*. These perspectives can help inform practitioners, academics, and students that the nature of the work means perspectives matter in public service and the classroom.

Master in Public Administration (MPA) and public affairs programs are tasked with promoting public service values for two reasons. First, selecting public service values differentiates MPA programs from alternative professional credential granting programs such as the Master in Business Administration (MBA) degree (Piskulich 2016). Second, Network of Schools of Public

Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) seeks to employ the accreditation process to promote public service values as the “heart of the profession” (Molina & McKeown, 2012, p. 376). As a result, Haque & Gunther-Canada (2018) argue that public service values will certainly gain import with MPA faculty as NASPAA’s public service value initiative expands. Embedding into programs means, faculty discussing what and how public service values uniquely fit with their respective programs. Therefore, defining and cataloging these values are important to NASPAA and its accreditation process as faculty must articulate what public service values most drive their curriculum (Network of Schools of Public Policy Affairs and Administration, 2009, p. 2).

Partly because of this NASPAA emphasis, the last few decades have seen, a resurrection of interest in the topic of values in public administration (e.g., Bozeman, 2007; Beck, Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Pesch, 2008; Spicer, 2009, 2010; van der Wal & van Hout, 2009). This focus on values is likely a resurgent counter to more often “‘technocratic intent’ of recent administrative trends” (Jørgensen & Rutgers 2014, p. 1) and as counterweight to the business sector (Moore, 1995). Some scholarship has been focused on “value families,” where scholars argue that they found the most important values that often hang together (Sherman, 1998; Toonen, 2003; Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Molina & McKeown, 2012). And, other scholars acknowledge that “context matters” (Molina & McKeown, 2012, p. 384), in the administrative context, or largely, the operational environment in which administrators carry their daily work shapes public service values (Brudney, Hebert, & Wright, 2000; Seldon, Kernaghan, 2003). Appleby (1949) and Bailey (1964) argue that this environment demands that administrators possess certain moral qualities to serve the public. Recently, Zeemering (2019) found four perspectives on how MPA students view public service values through the usage of Q Methodology. Zeemering’s findings illuminate an alternative approach to scrutinizing the origination, inculcation, and application of public service values.

Beginning where Zeemering (2019) left off, the purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of public servants toward public service values. Doing so contributes to filling a lacuna in the broader literature which, has overlooked how public service values are emphasized differently across contexts, or operational environments, in the field, whether it is street level bureaucrats, public managers, or those who serve in the public interest. Molina & McKeown (2012) believe that we need to think more about these contexts. Findings herein, question the proposition that establishing hierarchies of public values or constellations of competing values by itself is useful for accomplishing the inculcation of public service values in faculty, students, programs, and ultimately, public servants. Hopefully, by further exploring practitioner perspectives, MPA faculty can facilitate clearer articulation and application of the public service perspective in the classroom and provide a way to understand how and why policy and management conflicts over values arise.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While public service values begin with neutrality in mind, they are important in communicating, and acting on those values. In this way, we teach MPA students about public service values, especially as they relate to action itself. In this literature review, it is important to start at the concepts that relate to these public service values, such as neutrality/impartiality, then discretion & conflict, value families, and then finally communicating action. The following subsections show that public service values have many facets beyond abstract application.

NEUTRALITY/IMPARTIALITY

Public administration was originally supposed to be value neutral. Wilson (1887) and Willoughby (1927), for example, argued that administration and that of politics were fundamentally distinctive

and should be approached that way. Overeem (2005) found that blurring of “politics” and “policy” caused many to dismiss “partisan politics” for instead “policy politics.” Therefore, Overeem (2005) argues that importance of neutrality in politics and policy are established within the politics-administration dichotomy. According to scholars at the time, traditional areas of politics, such as state legislatures, town halls, and even the governorships, were found to be value-laden (Goodnow, 1900). This led to the push for the “Dichotomy,” or the separation of the political process from the implementation process of administration (Wilson, 1887). This was dealt with through a value-neutrality stance (Willoughby, 1927; Wilson, 1887). Miller (2015) defines neutrality as a “personal ethic of deference to the duties of the job” and “can signify stepping away from selfish adherence to one’s own biases and predispositions” (p. 141). To create a science of administration without bias, Lynn (2001) argues the real aim was to protect American public administration from continued corruption by patronage politics. Triantafillou (2015) finds that while neutrality may limit corruption, it may also undermine political agency. Today, there is debate on whether neutrality is achievable (Miller, 2015).

In opposition to this view, Appleby (1949) and Waldo (1984) recognized the value-laden nature of public administrative decision-making because values are always in the context with some sort of purpose or end in mind. Likewise, Simon (1997) continued this line of thinking just after World War II with calling scholars to be cognizant of the limits on their own rational decision-making. Spicer (2015) finds that neutrality is not possible. Instead administrators should find ways to promote hearing the other side and other follow Constitutional practices.

DISCRETION & VALUE CONFLICT

Politics often make many public decisions involving significant input from affected groups through elections, public meetings, and lobbying, public servants, often exercise discretion constantly,

often with a great deal of latitude and only sporadic oversight, i.e., the street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1971; Riccucci, 2005; Hupe & Hill, 2007; Lipsky, 2010). As these decision-makers are often pulled by various managerial, political, and economic influences, this discretion can fail to adequately align with official directives, or even their own personal and values (Gailmard, 2002; May & Winter, 2007).

Even when decisions are supposed to be made squarely on policies and procedures, in actuality, they are undermined because of mutually exclusive and legitimate courses of action, called value conflicts, are often too common in public decision making (Tetlock, 1986; Keeney et al., 1990; Tetlock 2000; de Graaf & van der Wal 2010). However, critiques of this discretion are often met with resistance citing impending interference of organizational performance without it (Bozeman et al., 1992).

Rohr (1988) argues for the ethical responsibility of public decision-makers to apply a wider range of values their discretionary decisions; however, the reality is that disagreement exists as to what ones are most important. Frederickson (1997) and Adams and Balfour (2014) likewise argue for public administration use of widely held public values, which are a self-conscious reflection of the normative character of the scholarship. And yet, the mere existence of multiple stakeholders (with differing value sets and interests) is a common part of the fabric of public decision-making that public servants must figure out as their situations are framed and reframed from different perspectives (Gregory & Keeney, 1994; Thomas, 1995; Bryson, 2004). Because of this variance in perspectives, this makes ambiguous distinction between fact and values (Lindblom, 1979; Etzioni, 1986; Stone, 1997; Jann, 2003; Entman, 2004). An early goal public values research was a comprehensive, hierarchical list of public values—conflicts starkly with the observations even as far back as Frederick Taylor. However, the fact is that decision-makers lack the ability to compare all relevant values as they have what Simon (1997)

called “bounded rationality.”

VALUE FAMILIES

Proponents of this view argued public servants were supposed to create “public value,” such as effectiveness and efficiency, as well as fairness and social justice. Bozeman (2007) criticized its market focus, believing business can and often neglects to make sure certain values are recognized. Benington & Moore (2011) argue public value should highlight the stipulations necessary for a functioning democracy. Kernaghan (2003a) found public service values could be categorized, covering four value areas: (a) ethical, (b) demographic; (c) professional, and (d) human.

Gertha-Taylor (2009) argues further that restoring trust requires attention to public service beyond self-interest. Waldo’s (1988) *Map of Ethical Obligations* offers a framework for examining the variety of public service obligations that extend beyond the self, including, but not limited to “the Constitution law, nation/country, democracy, organizational/bureaucratic norms, profession, family/friends, middle-range collectives, public interest/general welfare, humanity /the world, and religion/God” (p. 576).

There are multiple “value families” where authors contend that they have found the most important values, such as Sherman’s (1998) study that found that 1. Honesty and integrity, 2. impartiality, respect for the law, 3. respect for persons, etc. topped the list. Toonen (2003) identifies three ‘families’ around which primary values in public administration are as follows: 1. Parsimony and economy, 2. Fairness, equity and rectitude, and 3. Robustness, resilience and sustainability. What’s more, Jørgensen & Bozeman (2007) recognized 72 public service values describing the social and organizational environment.

In addition, the values *honesty*, *integrity*, and *lawfulness* were found to be the most important values to the 52 public administrators surveyed in their sample (Molina & McKeown, 2012). However,

they also find the values of *sustainability*, *self-interest*, and *profitability*, were rated the least important to the administrators.

One study avoided aggregating families of values. While this paper's focus is on public servants in the field, Zeeming (2019) analyzed student perspectives using Q Methodology. He found, 1. Stewards, 2. High-performers, 3. Advocates, and 4. Analysts. Unlike Zeeming, the purpose of this paper is to describe the perceptions of public servants toward public service values. This, in turn, can inform students what perspectives to prepare for after graduation.

While these value families clarify how values stick together, their approach was not designed to capture differences in individual conceptions of public service values.

COMMUNICATING ACTION AND PROMOTING PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES

Molina & McKeown (2012) argue some values were more important than others. Yet, they say the question for how context matters for public service values has seldom beyond been empirically explored. This study highlights the importance and need for more research on the various public contexts in which public service values are exercised and the significance of the organizational role performed (see Brudney, Hebert, & Wright, 2000; Seldon, Brewer, & Brudney, 1999). Unfortunately, most of the literature regarding public values are largely concerned with establishing hierarchies of public values or constellations of competing values (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Kernaghan, 2003).

Stuteville & DiPadova-Stocks (2011) found the unforgiving speed of changes – i.e., capitalism, globalization, and technology – has increased unpredictability, stability, feeding distrust in public institutions (Blind, 2007; Hetherington, 2005). It is in these times, the authors argue, where “core values are needed to provide order and constancy to both personal life and professional institutions”

(p. 604). Furthermore, values are important because they serve as both a guide during changing times as well as a scaffold for action in public life. “Public service values provide needed touchstones not only for the profession of public administration, but for citizenship in general and the professions” (p. 604).

The time has come for thinking about values for serving the public to help public administrators make sense of the changes and challenges now facing them in their communities in these complex times (Benington & Moore, 2011). Public administrators have come to find public values quite important. George Frederickson (1994), for example, claims that “values are the soul of public administration” (p. 32). Waldo (1984) defined public service values as “criteria for action” (Molina, 2009, p. 267). However, Waldo (1984, p. 58) famously declared that since there are “[n]o single, agreed, and authoritative definition of Public Administration is possible.” It is not surprising Waldo concludes that what values public service represents is a rather “confusing and controversial enterprise.”

Public values as those provide agreement on ideal concepts that citizens should be obligated toward, such as benefits, and rights; likewise, the standards governments and policies should be based (Bozeman, 2012). Public Service values are a subset of values directly related to an individual’s role as a public servant in carrying out the functions of a given position (Witesman & Walters, 2013). Benington & Moore (2011) argue that public service value thinking is important in its ability to help scholars and practitioners understand and analyze interactions, interdependence, and interconnections, between and among between different levels of government (local, regional, national, even supranational).

Svara & Baizhanov (2018) caution about the variance of their respective values, therefore, creating inconsistencies in graduate education content. In their review of 125 self-studies of NASPAA accredited programs, they found that public service values in

professional competencies were “essential but incomplete.” Few self-study reports recognize values most often found in academic literature, i.e., representativeness, impartiality, and serviceability. They find wide variation in how programs described their values. Only ethical awareness seemed to be common among most programs.

What’s more, faculty must show how students will learn these; and to “demonstrate that its students who learn the tools and competencies to apply and take these values into consideration in their professional activities. Doing a better job of helping society incorporate public values - other than economic efficiency - into public policy and management is likely to yield social benefits beyond a clearer identity for NASPAA and its members” (Mandell, 2009, p. 262).

Public service values have had an impact in many strands as noted in the literature review, i.e., concept of neutrality, then discretion & conflict, value families, and then finally communicating action. The focus on public service values is part and parcel the continuing evolution of public administration thinking and practice. From the beginning the debate was about how to separate itself from business values. But, also the push for neutrality moved into the recognition that public service is value-laden. Many values were developed overtime, but because public decision making can be undermined by the potential of mutually exclusive, yet legitimate courses of action conflict can take shape. However, by the field developing public service values they become a self-conscious reflection of the normative character of the scholarship. In addition, while scholarship acknowledged various value families to elucidate how values stick together, this approach often failed to capture differences in individual conceptions of public service values. Amid advances in how public service developed, NASPAA embraced public service values to shape the field especially through MPA programs.

As Svava & Baizhanov (2018) argue, public service values are “essential but incomplete” because of the wide diversity of program descriptions. Public service values are both tools for reflection and calls to action, but they can be further refined into practice. Therefore, this paper’s main focus is largely on Molina & McKeown’s (2012) aggregation of values. These authors do acknowledge the need to figure out whether context matters and encourage scholars to explore this area more. This paper works toward understanding the diversity of value perspectives in the public service.

Scholars often bring up public service motivation (PSM), or the study the ongoing relationship between one’s overall motivation and the public interest. Perry and Wise (1990: 368) define PSM as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations.” Both public service values and (PSM) address whether public service delivery is driven by something more than self-interest. Anderson et al. (2013) note that both public service values and PSM may overlap, they are not always integral. Therefore, this paper will not delve too deeply in this literature while focusing instead on public service values.

METHODS

While Zeemering (2019) used Q Methodology to explore public service values with students in the classroom, this study, purposively, or strategically sampled (34) practitioners, in Q the sample is called a Pset. The sample is supposed to be purposive to capture a diversity of perspectives, not generalizable to the larger population. Therefore, this study selected a diversity of public servants from various levels – local, county, state, federal, nonprofits, and faculty in Oklahoma in order to create a sample to focus on particular population characteristics, which illuminates

the research question (Patton, 1990; Watts & Stenner, 2012). I also used a demographic survey and then Q methodology. In the survey, I asked 11 demographic questions including a Likert-type scale found with one being more liberal and 10 most conservative.

Q methodology is a research procedure using factor analysis to study both subjectivity and scientifically (Stephenson, 1953; Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 2013) as utilized for this study. People perceive their respective worlds differently. Through Q methodology, differing perspectives toward a topic are identified. Q is an exploratory technique and is appropriate to create and apply specific hypotheses as is the case in traditional positivist methodologies (Durning & Brown, 2007; McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Watts & Stenner, 2005; 2012), and in qualitative studies (Rogers & Rogers, 1990). In addition, this methodology can bring to light research questions with “potentially complex and socially contested answers” (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 75). The sample selected for our study did not exhaust the distinct perspectives existing on public service values. This study is not general to a larger population of people, but only to the condition of instruction and topic of study itself (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1963).

Public administration scholars have utilized Q method in studying individuals for areas such as role, responsibilities, and values. To illustrate, Selden, et al. (1999) use administrator role conception in terms of neutrality competence while others focus on stewardship. Similarly, De Graaf and Van Exel (2008) focused on administrative ethics, Zeemering (2009) compares city economic development professionals’ views on sustainability, and Addams & Proops, 2001; Focht, 2002) focus on policy conflict. Zeemering’s (2019) study focused on how students perceived public service values.

The instrument developed for this study contained 40 Q statements sampled from 70 unique values that was considered the concourse of all possible public values (See Appendix 1). Five of the values

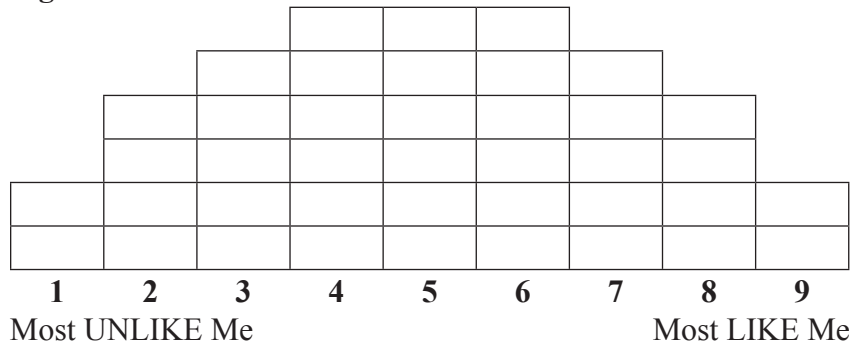
were from Kernaghan (2003a) four principle themes: Democratic, Ethical, Professional, and People (See Table 1) and another five were from the American Society for Public Administration (APSA) Code of Ethics. These authors used a four-point Likert scale, rating each value from “unimportant” to “always important.”

However, Molina & McKeown (2012) who use descriptive statistics to aggregate overall numbers of values selected by importance, largely ignoring context. As the first step in Q, they find that an issue topic was chosen whereby individual’s opinions differ. In this study, I used the condition of instruction: “*What do you find more important in your workplace?*” (See Figure 1). From this condition of instruction, verbal statements, regarding different public service values were accumulated from the literature as noted above. This selection of 40 statements is called the Q sample (See Appendix I).

Typically, there are between 30 to 60 Q-statements used to survey people with a distribution of an interviewee’s answers on a scale from between -4 to +4 with “Most Unlike Me” on one end and “Most Like Me” on the other (Brown, 1980). The public servant practitioners, in this study, placed each statement in a respective square, which are arrayed with a layout in this paper with 40 statements in the Q sort (See Figure 1). Due to this number, the recording board is laid on a grid with 2, 4, 5, 6, 6, 6, 5, 4, 2 pyramid, or platykurtic configuration (Brown, 1980). Q methodology is useful in illuminating how different individuals, in this case, public servants in different contexts may view their public service values in various ways.

What do you find most important in your workplace?

Figure 1 Condition of Instruction and record sheet



Statements in the Q sort interact and with the meanings on the cards, in this way, the sum is greater than its parts (Stephenson, 1953). In the analysis of this interaction, they create factor arrays, as they demonstrate the configuration characteristic of that specific factor (Watts & Stenner, 2005; 2012). Brown (1980) recommends at least four or five persons loaded on a factor as being sufficient for factor arrays that have highly reliable factor scores. Analysis stops at this point because a *theoretically saturated* threshold (Brown, 1980) was met. Therefore, the sample size does not have to be high as long as the participants studied are diverse. In addition, A 10-pt Likert-type scale in the survey is used to ask about ideology.

FINDINGS

ANALYSIS OF THE Q STUDY

Three factor arrays regarding public service values arose: *Moral Practitioner*, *Public Interest Practitioner*, and *Results-Oriented Practitioner* through Q methodology to understand public service value orientations. Each perspective is defined by how people sorted collectively and analyzed by a factor analysis. The findings will go over each of the three perspectives found noting

the number statements with what was on the card. I found three themes that seem to typify each perspective based, noted below, on the statements on the cards the respondents chose to place on the record sheet as noted in Figure 1 above.

Table 1. Themes by perspective

	<i>Moral Practitioner</i>	<i>Public Interest Practitioner</i>	<i>Results-Oriented Practitioner</i>
Theme One	Ethics	Democratic	Results
Theme Two	Anti-Democratic	Ethics	Ant-Democratic
Theme Three	Professionalism	People	Common Good

Comparing all three factor arrays and their respective themes

The three factor arrays seem to most agree with each other. Most consensus items regarding honesty, humanness, lawfulness, and collegiality.

MORAL PRACTITIONER

Of the 12 sorts defining this value group, nine were in security for fire service on either the federal, state, or local level. 10 of the 12 are male, most possessing some college, but three being post college. Six made at least \$100k, with four having annual incomes of \$50k or less. Ten of the 12 were white and two were Native American. Seven are Republican, and only three were Democrat, while one is an independent, and the other is a Libertarian. A Likert-type scale found they rated a “5.9,” which makes this first perspective more conservative than liberal overall with 1 being more liberal and 10 most conservative. Overall, the sorters defining this perspective think of themselves as being very ethical or moral as a practitioner of public administration. Dominant themes supported by the data lead to the interpretation of *Moral Practitioner* as ethical, intrinsically motivated, a call to service to the public, and professionalism.

The statements show below with numbers, which represent the number on each card and found in Appendix 1 to see the statement in context with the others. Selected by interviewees relating to ethical or moral and the array position of each are as follows, with Indicates Significance at $P < .01$) by an asterisk. This factor array had an Eigenvalue of 8.1781 and an explained variance of 24 percent.

Again, I found three themes found below (Also see Table 1 above).

Theme One-Ethical Values

The findings reveal that *Moral Practitioners* seem to firstly, follow ethical values, such as integrity, trust, incorruptibility, and honesty as noted by the following the most significant statements, as the respondent read the card, of this group noted below.

(Appendix I the number before the statement helps designate a card in the factor analysis and the number after notes the factor arrays designated with a plus sign meaning “Most like me” see Figure 1).

21.* I try to operate in accordance to my values and moral uprightness. (Integrity) (+4)

40.* I try to promote the honesty, integrity and reliability of others – essentially a “faith in people.” (Trust) (+3)

19.* I believe it is essential to proceed without prejudice or bias in favor of my own private interests. (Incorruptibility) (+3)

15. I want to act in a truthful manner and to comply with my promises. (Honesty) (+3)

“That’s all we got, we can’t violate that,” said the exemplar in a post interview noted regarding the concept of integrity.

Theme Two-Anti-Democratic Moral Practitioners are intrinsically motivated and not concerned about Democratic values such as transparency, pluralism, and representativeness as well as the

economic value – profitability as evidenced by these statements for theme two:

29. It is vital that I focus on achieving financial gains for the organization. (Profitability) (-4)

27. I try to accommodate the interests of a diverse citizenry. (Pluralism) (-3)

39. I try to operate in a way that is open and visible to citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders. (Transparency) (-3)

33. I try to get things done with preferences of citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders in mind. (Representativeness) (-2)

“I’m not here to make money, I’m here to do what’s right,” post sort note by exemplar, on the value, of “Profitability.”

Theme Three-Professionalism

Moral Practitioners view themselves as professionals in the field. This is not a primary driver for them. Reliability is reasonably related to professional values, effectiveness, and expertise, as evidenced from theme three.

31.* Acting in a manner that is consistent, predictable, and trustworthy is what I do. (Reliability) (+2)

9.* I try to perform in a way that best achieves the desired results. (Effectiveness) (+2)

11. Acting with competence, skill, and knowledge is essential to me. (Expertise) (+2)

Essentially, the *Moral Practitioner* is driven by his or her moral authority backed by an important but secondary concern for professionalism. They are also prone to avoid outside pressures such as profitability or Democratic principles, as their own morality and ethics are the chief decision-making tools around their value priorities.

PUBLIC INTEREST PRACTITIONER

Of the 10 in this P set, six were from the nonprofit world, three from the state level and only one local. Seven of 10 are male, half possessed a post college, four earned a college degree and only one had some college. Half made at least \$100,000 household income, one made \$75,000, and two made \$40,000 or below. Nine of 10 were white and one was Native American. Five are Democrat, three are Republican, and two are independent. The Likert scale is from “1” most liberal to “10” most conservative, and this perspective to score averaged a “5.5” making the Pset more conservative than liberal overall. This factor array had an Eigenvalue of 3.4295 and an explained variance of 10 percent. Again, I found three themes found below.

Theme One-Democratic

Dominant themes were supported by the data and led to the interpretation of the *Public Interest Practitioner* as public interest, ethics, and people, but extremely critical of antidemocratic workplaces.

This perspective is extremely focused on the public interest as well as serviceability, selflessness, and social justice as well as two critical powers in Authority and Obedience.

30. Promoting the public interest is an imperative for me. (Public Interest) (+4)

36.* To me it is all about helping provide quality service to citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders. (Serviceability) (+4)

35. I focus on seeking to make the world a better place for everyone beyond mere self- interest. (Selflessness) (+3)

37. Promoting a fair and just society is important to me. (Social Justice) (+2)

1.* I feel leaders have the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. (Authority) (-4)

24. * I tend to comply with the instructions of my superiors.
(Obedience) (-4)

“It’s the public interest that determines for me how I gauge my success,” a post sort interview by an exemplar.

Theme Two-Ethics

This perspective is also focused on ethics, but it takes a lesser role than the first array. For the *Public Interest Practitioner*, ethics, such as integrity, honesty, and trust are important, but they do take a back seat to serving the public interest, as noted below.

21.* I try to operate in accordance to my values and moral uprightness. (Integrity) (+3)

15. I want to act in a truthful manner and to comply with my promises. (Honesty) (+2)

40. I try to promote the honesty, integrity and reliability of others – essentially a “faith in people.” (Trust) (+2)

Theme Three -People Related

Three people-related values— Humaneness, Selflessness, and Benevolence seem important as well.

16. I try to exhibit respect, compassion, and dignity toward others. (Humaneness) (+3)

35. I focus on seeking to make the world a better place for everyone beyond mere self- interest. (Selflessness) (+3)

3. For me acting in a manner that promotes good and avoids harm for citizens. (Benevolence) (+2)

“If I do it all for me, then I really didn’t do anything important in the first place,” post sort interview with an exemplar.

The *Public Interest Practitioner* is driven by helping others, especially in the public sphere first and foremost. They back it up by their secondary focus on ethics and specifically caring for individuals.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

RESULTS-ORIENTED PRACTITIONER

Of the five in this Pset, nine were in security on the federal, state, and local level. Three of five were from the nonprofit world, two from the state level and only one locally. Only one makes at least \$100,000 household income, three had \$75,000, but only 1 was \$40,000, or below. All are Caucasian. There are two Democrats, only one Republican, only one independent, and one “other.” The Likert scale averaged “5,” which makes it more moderate ideologically than the first two aforementioned factor arrays. This factor array had an Eigenvalue of 3.0727 and an explained variance of nine percent.

Again, I found three themes found below.

Theme One-Results

These *Results-Oriented Practitioners* dominant themes are supported by the data that lead to the interpretation of this factor array as they find effective and innovativeness as most important followed by their expertise and results. They see themselves as a problem solver who unravels these puzzles through proper resources and their own innovation. Through Expertise, creativity flourishes, and nourished through professional development.

9.* I try to perform in a way that best achieves the desired results. (Effectiveness) (+4)

20.* I think it is essential to perform with initiative and creativity in introducing new policies or products. (Innovativeness) (+4)

11. Acting with competence, skill, and knowledge is essential to me. (Expertise) (+3)

35. I focus on seeking to make the world a better place for everyone beyond mere self- interest. (Selflessness) (+3)

34.* I focus on promoting the well-being and professional development of myself. (Self-Interest) (+1)

35. I focus on seeking to make the world a better place for everyone beyond mere self- interest. (Selflessness) (+3)

“If you get stuck in the rules, you can’t be innovative,” post sort note by exemplar, also known as a respondent, regarding innovativeness.

Theme Two-Anti-Democratic

This perspective is certainly not worried about Democratic values, such as equity, trust, representativeness, responsiveness, and public interest.

3.* I think it is essential to be fair and impartial. (Equity) (-4)

40.* I try to promote the honesty, integrity and reliability of others – essentially a “faith in people.” (Trust) (-4)

32.* I try to act in a manner that is consistent with the values of citizens. (Representative) (-3)

33. I try to get things done with preferences of citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders in mind. (Responsiveness) (-1)

30. Promoting the public interest is an imperative for me. (Public Interest) (-2)

“All the items in the card sort are values, but somethings have to come first. Getting input and feedback and weighing the impact on individuals is obviously always a factor, but you can’t let yourself be stagnated by the need to talk forever. You will never be able to listen to/accommodate/include/please everyone,” an exemplar said in a post sort interview.

Theme Three-Common Good

This factor array also finds that people are important, though with values such as selflessness, benevolence, and humanness, too. Results are effective for the common good as evidenced by the values below and the exemplar post sort note.

35. I focus on seeking to make the world a better place for everyone beyond mere self- interest. (Selflessness) (+3)

3. For me acting in a manner that promotes good and avoids harm for citizens. (Benevolence) (+3)

16. I try to exhibit respect, compassion, and dignity toward others. (Humanness) (+2)

“I want to see results, but for the common good,” post sort note by exemplar, otherwise known as a respondent, said.

In addition, the *Results-Oriented Practitioners* are least trusting of people by far. Both the *Moral* and the *Public Interest Practitioners* are the most critical of profitability and yet the *Results-Oriented Practitioners* are more likely to accept it as a necessary evil. Equity is somewhat embraced by the *Moral Practitioners*, though it does not register for the *Public-Interest Practitioners*, but totally shunned by the *Results-Oriented Practitioners*.

The first and third factor array, *Moral* and *Results-Oriented Practitioners*, respectively are both critical of Democratic values opposed to the large embrace of Democratic values by the Public Interest Practitioner. Both *Moral* and *Results-Oriented Practitioners* are just as critical on the value representativeness. And yet, they differ on most of these Democratic values. The former is most critical of pluralism and transparency, but the latter is most critical of equity, trust, and responsiveness. It seems that *Moral Practitioners* are more critical of more broad external Democratic concepts. Whereas equity, trust and responsiveness seem to reflect more personal worries that might slow down Results-Oriented problem solving.

Likewise, the value of self-interest seems to mean different things. The first two perspectives articulated the value as negative while the *Results-Oriented Practitioner* found it somewhat positive. “I try to put others first over myself,” said an exemplar in a post note. Whereas, a *Results-Oriented Practitioner* said, self-interest as a value “is all about developing myself professionally. There is nothing wrong with that,” said one exemplar.

DISCUSSION

Dominant themes surfaced for all three arrays, which led to the interpretation of each. The *Moral Practitioner*, for example, are most focused on ethics, rather than intrinsic motivation, service to the public, and professionalism. They are quite critical of the public. The next factor array represents an interpretation of the *Public Interest Practitioner* as very focused on the public interest, with secondary concerns on ethics, people, but very critical of antidemocratic workplaces. These *Results-Oriented Practitioners* dominant themes are supported by the data that lead to the interpretation of this factor array as they find being effective and innovative as most important followed by their expertise and results.

It is interesting that Molina & McKeown (2012) find Honesty, Integrity, and Lawfulness as the most highly ranked values found in their survey 52 administrators, while they found, Sustainability, Self-interest, and Profitability, rated the least important. Whereas, I find there is some universal consensus that “Honesty” (3, 2, 3) and for the most part, “Integrity” (4,3,1) both most typify the *Moral Practitioners*, but the other two perspectives are not all that different on these two specific values (See Appendix I). This perspective is also most likely to say “impartiality” (3,1,1) is important. Likewise, Seldon, et al. (1999) and Sherman (1998) reinforce the value of impartiality and neutrality as important perspectives.

Interestingly, the *Results-Oriented Practitioners* are the least into the concept of “Integrity.” There is also more disagreement among what practitioners in this study regarding items labeled: “Lawfulness,” “Sustainability,” “Self-interest,” and “Profitability.” These items rated most important in the Molina and McKeown

(2012) “Lawfulness” (2,0,0) seems to resonate the most with the *Moral Practitioners* but is of no real importance to the other perspectives. In Molina and McKeown (2012)’s findings of public service values administrators rated some values as less important “Sustainability,” (-3, -1, 1); “Self-interest,” (-2, -3, 1); and “Profitability,” (-4, -3, 1). But, as you can see, the *Results-Oriented Practitioner* seems to be the most out of step, noting all these values somewhat positive. This paper’s results contradict Molina and McKeown’s (2012) findings for the most part. While these authors admit that context matters, they do not examine this from the view of the individuals themselves.

The three perspectives found in the factor arrays are a bit different. The *Moral Practitioner*, *Public Interest Practitioner*, and the *Results-Oriented Practitioners* I find that each perspective relates to a specific way of viewing public service and associated values. The first are the *Moral Practitioners* who view ethics as a primary way of thinking followed by professional values but opposed by democratic values. The *Public Interest Practitioners* are much more focused on helping Democratic and People-related values, and unlike the *Moral Practitioners and the Results-Oriented Practitioners*, critical of antidemocratic values. At the same time, the *Results-Oriented Practitioners* are most focused on results, professional values and critical of Democratic values.

The *Moral Practitioners* relate to Swanson, Territo and Taylor’s (2008) findings about how education shapes professional conduct, especially among law enforcement-related public administrators who focus on concepts such as respect for authority, courage, honesty, and lawfulness, which is what we find here. In this factor array associated with this perspective, I find focuses highly on ethics primarily followed by professional values but opposed by democratic values. This perspective is also comparable to Zeemering’s (2019) examination of students and finds similarly what he calls Analysts in their ethical stance in the public service. Morality is not defined as universal code, rather only relates to that

which is believed as right or wrong by many (Gert & Gert, 2016). It makes sense, 9 of 12 in the Pset were in either security for fire service on the federal, state, and local level.

The *Public Interest Practitioner* is quite different from the *Moral Practitioners*. In this perspective, I found 6 of 10 were from the nonprofit world. Public Interest is the general public's well-being, (*Random House Dictionary*, 2001). This perspective is somewhat analogous to Zeemering's (2019) Steward perspective. Both perspectives focus on the Public Interest, Serviceability, Social Justice, and Integrity.

NASPAA (2009) standards clarify that public service values include "pursuing the public interest with accountability and transparency." This perspective is much more focused on helping through Democratic and People-related values, as noted in Kernaghan's (2003) typology of values. Both the *Moral Practitioners and the Results-Oriented Practitioners* are critical of democratic values and more business values (see Griffin, Ebert, & Ricky 2010). However, *Public-Interest Practitioners* are in the opposite direction, most being skeptical of oppression and authoritarianism. This perspective seems to fit most nicely with the idea of what ideally is the point of public service in the literature. To clarify, scholars call this Public Service Motivation (PSM), which is defined as "an individual's orientation to delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society" (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008, vii). *Results-Oriented Practitioners* though are much more attentive on results and professional values, though also critical of Democratic values as noted by Kernaghan (2003a). This perspective is also similar to Zeemering's (2019) High Performer's perspective with Effectiveness as primary. Leaders who focus on results over people in organizations is well documented (See Bass, 1990; Van Wart, 2017). An important finding here is that "context matters" as notes by Molina & McKeown (2012).

If a public servant is in law enforcement, he or she might be more

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focused on ethical values, alternatively, if one is to work in the nonprofit world, then the public interest is the focus. However, in some contexts, results matter the most. Assuming that aggregating public service values is a way to understand public service values but does little to understand the nature of public service. This also ignores what Kernaghan (2003b) notes that there can be an intrinsic strain between various public service values themselves. To illustrate, between democratic values like the “rule of law” or “accountability” and those of professional values, such as “innovation” and “efficiency.”

CONCLUSION

While Zeemering’s (2019) used Q Methodology to explore public service values in the classroom describing student perceptions, this paper studied a different group - practitioners. This study interviewed and Q-sorted public servants from various levels – local, county, state, federal, nonprofits, and faculty in public administration outside of a classroom. This paper and Zeemering’s (2019) both point out the need for more faculty to further discuss how to “properly link between stated values in and the coverage of those values in the curriculum” (p. 5). In addition, these findings also support Stout’s (2018) point that public administration teachers should refrain from a homogenized view of what is the best public service perspective because that approach more akin to “indoctrination rather than education” (pg. 12). So, in a field where “ideas do make a difference” because “thought leads to action” (Denhardt & Catlaw, 2014), scholars need to link not only student values, but those in the field as a reference point. Both in practice and in the classroom, values are not just aggregated, but people learn and practice through different lenses, because of different expectations, orientations, created over a lifetime. Therefore, it seems that an aggregated number of values is a universalizing force in the field. But this only get us so far in

understanding what public service values are important. Not unlike de Graaf, Huberts, & Smulders (2014), this paper finds that understanding value orientations in the field as well as in the classroom is of importance because of the ever-increasing range of demands on public servants, whether goal ambiguity and/or differing responsibilities and relationship, it is not surprising that value conflicts become commonplace. Therefore, NASPAA needs to change from an aggregated view of public service values to one where there are multiple perspectives. This study shows that not everyone in the public service thinks the same way, not unlike Zeemering's (2019) findings with students.

Since Svava & Baizhanov (2018) find public service values are "essential but incomplete" because of the wide diversity of program descriptions, maybe that diversity is actually a strength as long as those values, or even value families, are acknowledged as legitimate depending on the student's respective career goals, and allowed to prosper. As noted above, that while these value families are found to hang together, this approach was not designed to capture differences in individual subjective conceptions or make the connection to specific areas of public service.

Zeemering (2019), for example, found that not all students think the same way when it comes to public service values. So, if public service values are going to maintain as the "heart of the profession," it should acknowledge the context of how different legitimate student career paths matter. For example, is the context where an employee is dealing with a direct boss as a city manager, or the public interest as a politician who deals with citizens, or as an executive director dealing with a board? Moreover, MPA program faculty should also acknowledge that if they are placing students in nonprofits, they will have to deal with a different set of embedded values versus someone else who plans to work in the public interest or even in emergency management because of their differing value priorities. Hopefully, by acknowledging the importance of context, or operational environment, MPA faculty

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can better teach and apply the various approaches to the public service perspective. Faculty will maybe even be able to better provide a multi-perspective framework that allows improved diagnosis on the ways to deal with policy and management conflicts over unseen public service values that often arise in the workplace and between various types of public servants. In addition, this may help public service values play a more of a “complete” role in how we teach and practice by better linking what we teach through theory with practice.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies might focus on diagnosing this conflict through an understanding the barriers and bridges to possible resolutions whether in the classroom or in the field. More research should also be done on how neutrality itself is questionable when practitioners have different value orientations. It might also be helpful to have students not only understand their perspective (i.e. Zeemering, 2019), but to also match their public service value orientations that already occur in the field. Having students understand that their public service field does not have a universal set of public values, but it all depends on perspective might better prepare students for the field.

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Appendix I Sorted Statements with Factor Arrays

No.	Statement	Factor Arrays		
		1	2	3
1	I feel leaders have the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. (Authority)	0	-4	-2
2	It is important to be willingly to justify and explain my actions to relevant stakeholders. (Accountability)	0	0	0
3	For me acting in a manner that promotes good and avoids harm for citizens. (Benevolence)	0	2	3
4	I think it is important being loyal and showing solidarity toward other colleagues. (Collegiality)	-1	-2	-1
5	It is for me confronting fear and act rightly in the face of personal risk. (Courage)	1	-1	-2
6	I believe it is important to be committed to a task or purpose. (Dedication)	1	-1	2
7	Including different types of people, such as people of different races or cultures is imperative to me. (Diversity)	-1	1	0
8	Proceeding with others through the normal judicial system, especially as a citizen's entitlement is key to me. (Due Process)	-2	0	-3
9	I try to perform in a way that best achieves the desired results. (Effectiveness)	-2	1	4
10	My goal is to act in a way that achieves the desired results, but especially for me to use minimal resources as well. (Efficiency)	-2	-3	2
11	Acting with competence, skill, and knowledge is essential to me. (Expertise)	2	1	3
12	I believe it is critical to carefully manage available resources. (Economy)	-1	-2	1
13	I think it is essential to be fair and impartial. (Equity)	2	0	-4
14	Following the rules that apply to all is a focal point for me. (Fairness)	1	-2	-3

15	I want to act in a truthful manner and to comply with my promises. (Honesty)	3	2	3
16	I try to exhibit respect, compassion, and dignity toward others. (Humaneness)	4	3	2
17	I perform without prejudice or bias toward particular individuals or groups. (Impartiality)	3	1	-1
18	I operate in a manner that includes citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process. (Inclusiveness)	-1	1	-3
19	I believe it is essential to proceed without prejudice or bias in favor of my own private interests. (Incorruptibility)	3	-3	-1
20	I think it is essential to perform with initiative and creativity in introducing new policies or products. (Innovativeness)	-1	1	4
21	I try to operate in accordance to my values and moral uprightness. (Integrity)	4	3	1
22	I try to comply with existing laws and rules. (Lawfulness)	2	0	0
23	It is important to me to have a strong feeling of support or allegiance. (Loyalty)	-1	-2	2
24	I tend to comply with the instructions of my superiors. (Obedience)	1	-4	-2
25	I often promote the organization's interests. (Organizational Interest)	-2	-1	2
26	Promoting active citizen participation in administrative decision making is important to me. (Participative)	-4	-1	0
27	I try to Accommodate the interests of a diverse citizenry. (Pluralism)	-3	0	1
28	I try to ensure that a public service ethos and competence is achieved. (Professionalism)	1	3	-2
29	It is vital that I focus on achieving financial gains for the organization. (Profitability)	-4	-3	1
30	Promoting the public interest is an imperative for me. (Public Interest)	-3	4	-2

31	Acting in a manner that is consistent, predictable, and trustworthy is what I do. (Reliability)	2	-2	0
32	I try to act in a manner that is consistent with the values of citizens. (Representative)	0	-1	-3
33	I try to get things done with preferences of citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders in mind. (Responsiveness)	-2	0	-1
34	I focus on promoting the well-being and professional development of myself. (Self-Interest)	-2	-3	1
35	I focus on seeking to make the world a better place for everyone beyond mere self-interest. (Selflessness)	1	3	3
36	To me it is all about helping provide quality service to citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders. (Serviceability)	0	4	0
37	Promoting a fair and just society is important to me. (Social Justice)	0	2	-1
38	I seek to protect and sustain nature and the environment. (Sustainability)	-3	-1	1
39	I try to operate in a way that is open and visible to citizens, customers, and other relevant stakeholders. (Transparency)	-3	2	-1
40	I try to promote the honesty, integrity and reliability of others – essentially a “faith in people.” (Trust)	3	2	-4

