

# VU Research Portal

## The loyalties of top public administrators

de Graaf, G.

### **published in**

Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory  
2011

### **DOI (link to publisher)**

[10.1093/jopart/muq028](https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muq028)

### **document version**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

### [Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

### **citation for published version (APA)**

de Graaf, G. (2011). The loyalties of top public administrators. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21(2), 285-306. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muq028>

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

### **E-mail address:**

[vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl](mailto:vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl)

# The Loyalties of Top Public Administrators

**Gjalt de Graaf**

*VU University Amsterdam*

## ABSTRACT

Images of the modern public administrator clash with yesteryear's neutral public servants obediently carrying out the orders of elected politicians. Partly influenced by the literature on New Public Management, people often argue that public administrators today should ensure quality services, give value for public funds, be responsive, operate strategically, uphold organizations' reputations, and the like. They thus seem to serve many masters, not just politicians, but do the various masters' interests harmonize or contradict? The research question of this article is: *Where do the loyalties of public administrators lie?* The answer involves all the potential objects of their loyalties: colleagues, the public good, moral imperatives, the law, their organizations, the organizations' clients, and elected officials. What is the composition of loyalty for top public administrators? What are their conceptions of loyalty? With the use of Q-methodology, we identify and describe four distinct types of public administrators within the context of loyalty: (a) by-the-book professionals, (b) society's neutral servants, (c) the personally grounded, and (d) open and principled independents. These conceptions matter because they indicate how administrators behave and make decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written recently on the modern and professional public administrator (Noordegraaf, Steen, and Frissen 2006) who enjoys much discretionary freedom (Meier 1993; Shumavon and Hibbeln 1986). Partly influenced by the literature on New Public Management (NPM) (e.g., Maesschalck 2004) or New Public Service (e.g., Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Light 1999), it has been argued that public administrators should give citizens value for money, deliver quality, be more responsive, operate strategically, improve the reputation of their organizations, and so on (cf. Clarke and Newman 1997; Noordegraaf 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000).

The images of the new public administrator clash with the classic images of the “old” one (e.g., Weber 1946): the public administrator who neutrally and obediently carries out orders of elected politicians. Since Weber, many interesting studies have been done on the separation between administration and politics (e.g., Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Peters 2001; Svava 1999); “One of the most important

The author would like to thank the members of the research group “Integrity of Governance” of the VU University Amsterdam for their invaluable comments. He is also indebted to the three anonymous reviewers for their constructive advice. Address correspondence to the author at [g.de.graaf@fsw.vu.nl](mailto:g.de.graaf@fsw.vu.nl).

doi:10.1093/jopart/muq028

Advance Access publication on June 21, 2010

© The Author 2010. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Inc. All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: [journals.permissions@oxfordjournals.org](mailto:journals.permissions@oxfordjournals.org)

and enduring theoretical constructs in public administration is the politics-administration dichotomy model” (Svara 1998, 51). In this literature, it becomes clear that public administrators today serve many masters, not just politicians. Do any of the interests of their masters contradict each other? And if there are loyalty conflicts, whose interests are considered more important by administrators? As Selden, Brewer, and Brudney (1999, 172) have noted: “Popular stereotypes and scholarly depictions do not provide a clear understanding of how public administrators perceive their roles and responsibilities or how they use their considerable discretionary powers.”

Among the various objects of loyalty—colleagues, the public good, administrators’ consciences, administrators’ organizations, the law, the organizations’ clients, and elected officials (Bovens 1998, chap. 9 and 12; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; ’t Hart and Wille 2002; Nieuwenkamp 2001)—*where do the loyalties of top public administrators lie?* This is our main research question and its answer is likely to be a mix of all possible loyalties. This mix is also likely to lead to loyalty conflicts: *what loyalty conflicts do top public administrators experience?*

Our results describe four conceptions of loyalty. Administrators’ conceptualizations of their loyalties are morally important: they indicate how administrators behave and make decisions (cf. de Graaf 2003, 2005a; Fletcher 1993). Furthermore, having different conceptions means having different loyalty dilemmas and conflicts.

Before presenting the results of the Q-study, we describe conceptions of loyalty with respect to existing literature. We then discuss the main concepts and theoretical background of the study, followed by a description of Q-methodology and the research background. Next we describe the empirical results and present the four loyalty conceptions of public administrators. In the last section, we discuss the results of the study.

## LITERATURE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS’ LOYALTIES AND ROLES

### Questioning Weber’s Ideal Type

The classic public administrator as envisioned by Max Weber (e.g., 1946) is neutral and predictable and has unquestioned obedience and loyalty to the elected political authorities in order to serve the public good (Weber 1946). “According to Weber, administration should be removed from politics and should serve as the neutral servants of their political masters” (Fry and Nigro 1996, 37). In this view, the role of a politician is to give direction to policies; the bureaucrat’s role is not to engage in political decision making but to execute the orders of their political superiors (Fry and Nigro 1996). This image of the administrator, dominant in the first half of the twentieth century, has been questioned both normatively and empirically. We can refer, for example, to the many important studies on the relationship between administrators and politicians and the proper role of administrators in the political process (e.g., Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Peters 2001; Peters and Pierre 2001; Svara 1999, 2001). Because this study is not on the administrative-political dichotomy but on loyalties and loyalty conflicts perceived by administrators, rather than summarize this literature, we will only point out some objections to Weber’s ideal type that explicitly deal with loyalty issues.

Public Choice is a clear example of a school with mainly empirical objections to Weber’s ideal type. The school states that people in general—which of course includes politicians and administrators—are motivated by self-interest. The loyalty of public

administrators thus lies primarily with themselves and their own interests, not the public good or elected officials (Dunleavy 1991). The principal-agent theory is an outgrowth of the assumption that all actors are self-interested; trying to align the interests of principals and agents.

Other scholars have argued on empirical grounds that the image of Weber's public administrator is simply outdated. The ever-changing organizational context in America and bureaucracies worldwide changes role perceptions and loyalties (Bovens 1998). The complexity of societal problems, professionalism of public administratorship, media influence, and citizens' expectations of responsiveness from administrators (Rosenthal 1999), or transformed constituencies and increased policy volatility (Durant 1991; Rourke 1991), all play a role in the changing context. Denhardt (1988) has mentioned that public administrators have become more involved in making as opposed to merely executing policy; or, as 't Hart and Wille (2002) have phrased it, complementarity and teamwork among elected officials and administrators are important elements of modern discourse on the relationship between politics and administration. O'Leary (2006), in her important study of Guerilla Government, has discussed the reality of bureaucratic politics and pointed to three oft-cited books on the policymaking influence of career public servants: Kaufman's (1960) *The Forest Ranger*, Hirschman's (1970) *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, and Lipksy's (1980) *Street-Level Bureaucracy*. Clarke and Newman (1997) have argued that the expertise and education of public administrators have risen and that some sense of professionalism has developed. Professionalism implies a certain expertise and values which give direction to their actions. Clarke and Newman (1997, 7) have called professional knowledge "the engine of social progress and improvement which would enhance the 'public good'." Professionalism, whatever its form, changes administrators' perceptions of role, which in turn reshapes loyalties.

*Normative* questions about public administrators with limitless obedience to superiors and officials (e.g., Eichmann's bureaucracy) have also been raised in the literature (e.g., Arendt 1994; Bauman 1991) and in the more recent work on administrative evil by Adams and Balfour (1998). Administrators, they have argued, should not be neutral cogs in the wheel but influence the decisions they make based on their own conscience. It has been argued that unquestioned loyalty to the established authorities, public administrators, and police in World War II played a crucial role in heinous crimes. Responsibility and moral agency, they have concluded, should not be exclusively placed in the organization as a whole or at the top; an irreducible individual moral agency remains for every member. Uncritical loyalty to officials is dangerous and can lead to morally disastrous conduct.

In NPM literature, the strict loyalty of public administrators to elected officials has also been questioned normatively. Loyalties of public administrators should lie with values like efficiency and effectiveness (cf. Clarke and Newman 1997; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000).

### **Role and Role Conceptions in the Literature**

In the literature "loyalty" and "loyalty conceptions" are closely connected to "role," "role conceptions," and "role obligations" (e.g., Bovens 1998; Cooper 1998; Petter 2005). An "administrative role" has been defined by Selden, Brewer, and Brudney (1999, 175) as "a cohesive set of job-related values and attitudes that provides the public administrator a stable set of expectations about his or her responsibilities." Values play an important part in

this definition, proving that loyalty concept and conflicts are also closely connected to the value concept (de Graaf and van der Wal 2008). A study of public administrators' loyalty conflicts is therefore closely tied to the (mostly normative) public administration literature on values, moral conflicts, and ethical dilemmas (e.g., Bowman and Williams 1997; Cooper 1994; Frederickson 1993).

Roles and role perceptions of public administrators have been studied extensively. Downs's (1967) classic *Inside Bureaucracy* described five ideal types: climbers, conservers, zealots, advocates, and statesmen. Many others, like Long (1952) and Suleiman (2003), have studied the role of public administrators and their use of discretionary powers. O'Kelly and Dubnick (2005) have distinguished several models of bureaucratic behavior on theoretical grounds and central to administrative ethics in the context of "dilemma-facing situations": the intuitive, blameworthy, virtuous, reflexive, adaptive, just, rational, strategic, and moralist bureaucrat. Empirical studies on the perception of responsibilities or loyalties and empirical research on how public administrators self-reflect on exercising their considerable discretion are rare, even though O'Kelly and Dubnick (2005, 393) have stated that "the study of public administration in general should be aimed at analyzing how public administrators make decisions in the face of dilemmas and in the context of the structures bureaucracies provide." Selden, Brewer, and Brudney (1999) have provided an interesting empirical study using Q-methodology on how administrators perceive their role and responsibilities and found five role perceptions: stewards of the public interest, adapted realists, businesslike utilitarians, resigned custodians, and practical idealists.

No single study, to date, has focused directly on the loyalties of top public administrators.

## DEFINITION AND OBJECT OF LOYALTY

### The Concept of Loyalty

Before we can answer anything about where the loyalties of public administrators lie, we must clarify the concept of loyalty. Etymologically, the word traces back to the Latin *legalis*, meaning law. Loyalty could then have been expressed by subjects being faithful to legal objects and furthermore suggests a willingness to sacrifice. Serfs and lords come to mind here. Our definition, however, applies to persons with *various* objects of loyalty: to what or whom is a person loyal? Whether it involves sacrifice or the law is contextual.

Loyalty has normative, symbolic, and emotional connotations. Like integrity, there cannot be too much of it. Graham and Keeley (1992, 191) have said: "Loyalty is very popular. It has few opponents. Consider the alternative and the label it evokes: disloyalty, treachery, betrayal, and treason." Another similarity between integrity and loyalty is that neither is often empirically studied, perhaps because making the concepts operational is difficult. And when the concepts are studied, their definitions vary. Loyalty has been defined as a desire to be and remain in the group (Ewin 1992, 419), an allegiance to a concept outside the self (Hoffmann 2006, 2314), a disposition to accept rather than to criticize (Birch 1975, 75), an emotional attachment and reaction to its object (Ewin 1993, 389), a devotion to a cause (Royce 1908, 16), or being true to obligations (Vandekerckhove and Commers 2004, 22).

In his classic *Functions of the Executive*, Barnard pointed to the importance of loyalty. Barnard concluded that: "There are a number of words and phrases in common use with

reference to organization that reach back to the factor individual willingness. ‘Loyalty,’ ‘solidarity,’ ‘*esprit de corps*,’ ‘strength’ of organization, are the chief .... Thus ‘loyalty’ is regarded as not necessarily related to position, rank, fame, remuneration, or ability. It is vaguely recognized as an essential condition of organization” (Barnard 1938, 84).

Most studies in organizational science that do study loyalty empirically have used Hirschman’s (1970) theory and definition (e.g., Golden 1992, adding the dimension of “neglect”; Lee and Whitford 2008, adding the dimension of “pay”). In his *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, the object of loyalty is the organization, giving rise to the term “organizational loyalty.” When we read in the literature, for example, that whistleblowing violates the obligation to loyalty, it refers to this type of loyalty. Because we consider public administrators’ various objects of loyalty in our research, this particular construct of organizational loyalty is clearly inadequate.

As can be deduced from the different definitions, sometimes loyalty is described as an attitude, sometimes behavior (Withey and Cooper 1992). It makes more sense to treat the concept in this study as an attitude, a dedication—noting, however, that dedication always influences behavior. In doing so, we do not specify loyalties as merely ideational: they affect work and behavior in daily practices, mostly by prioritizing signals, issues, and meetings (cf. Fletcher 1993). According to Jeurissen (1997), for example, loyalty is an attitude aimed at an object, which involves a predisposition to act, is durable, and contains an element of preference.

Pursuant to the above discussion, we will define loyalty as *the willing and practical dedication of a person to an object* (cf. Stoker 2005, 273). Amidst all the ambiguities, we agree with most organizational scholars that (1) the subject identifies the object of loyalty (the cause) and (2) the subject behaves in a way that promotes the interests of the object of loyalty (Fletcher 1993).

## Objects of Loyalties

What are the possible objects of loyalty for public administrators? Several attempts to answer this have been made by administration scholars. Waldo (1988) has identified 12 sources and types of ethical obligations of public servants (a list that, in his opinion, could be expanded indefinitely). They include obligations to the Constitution; the law, nation, or country; democracy; organizational-bureaucratic norms; profession and professionalism; family and friends; the self; middle range collectives; the public interest; humanity; and religion or God.

Bovens (1998) has analytically distinguished five conceptions of bureaucratic responsibility. The object of loyalty changes in each (table 1).

**Table 1**  
Five Conceptions of Administrative Responsibilities

Type	Objects of Loyalty
Hierarchical	Superiors and orders
Personal	Conscience and personal ethics
Social	Peers and social norms
Professional	Profession and professional ethics
Civic	Citizens and civic values

Taken from Bovens (1998, 149).

About the hierarchical conception, Bovens writes: “One could call the idea that functionaries owe their superior strict obedience, their organization complete loyalty, and the outside world utmost discretion, the orthodox or classical conception of bureaucratic responsibility” (Bovens 1998, 149). Often the terms neutrality or impartiality are used for this view of responsibility. Since democratic control of public organizations is important, so is the idea of “primacy of politics,” the classical conception. Does loyalty of administrators then lie simply with political leadership? No, it could not be this straightforward. Bovens (1998, 155):

If control by democratic organs is the most important consideration, one would rather expect the loyalty of the civil servant to lie first and foremost with the (majority of the) popular representatives and only secondary with the political leadership, and only after that with his own official superiors and departmental organization.

Furthermore, as we saw earlier, the classical model leaves no room for individual accountability.

To address this, Bovens distinguishes other conceptions of bureaucratic loyalty. In the personal conception, the emphasis is on the beliefs and personal values of the administrator. In the social conception, loyalty lies with colleagues, friends, clients, family, subordinates, and acquaintances. In the professional conception, loyalty is driven by their profession and professional rules. Bovens notes that the latter is on the rise and has the advantage of introducing external moral considerations into the organization. It could thus assist in counteracting phenomena like groupthink, peer pressure, and crimes of obedience. The fifth and final conception is civic: loyalty to citizens. It allows disobedience to political leaders based on appealing to general public interests, such as preserving the rule of law or preventing large-scale waste of resources. The conceptions are “forces that work on an individual functionary in the case of conflicts of loyalties. A strong centripetal force often emanates from the hierarchical and social conceptions of loyalty.” (Bovens 1998, 165).

Based on an extensive literature study, Petter (2005) distinguished eight themes or responsibility types connected to specific values: (1) moral responsibility (personal morality, public service, public interest), (2) professional responsibility (competence, expertise, good practice), (3) hierarchical responsibility (compliance, oversight, productivity), (4) fiscal responsibility (efficiency, economy), (5) legal responsibility (rule of law, constitutional rights), (6) leadership responsibility (leadership, prudence), (7) consumer responsibility (flexibility, effectiveness), and (8) public responsibility (social equity, openness, responsiveness). Each connects to a specific potential problem area.

### **Loyalty Conflicts and the Thick-Thin Distinction**

As soon as multiple loyalties of public administrators are distinguished, loyalty conflicts are unavoidable. Since each loyalty is closely tied to specific values, these conflicts can in part be described as value conflicts or ethical dilemmas (Bowman and Williams 1997; Cooper 1994; Frederickson 1993; O’Kelly and Dubnick 2005). Most literature on how administrators deal with dilemmas in their public service roles has been more empirical in nature than the literature on the exercise of discretionary powers in modern bureaucracies. Like the empirical research of this article, it has focused on understanding the nature of administrators’ dilemmas. The world of administrators is seen as one of “multiple, diverse and often conflicting expectations (Dubnick and Romzek 1993).” (O’Kelly and Dubnick 2005,

395). O’Kelly and Dubnick (2005, 396) state that the “tick-thin distinction” (Williams 1985) runs to the heart of administrators’ dilemmas.

*Thin* moral reasons are universal, general moral principles, and applied without reference to specific contexts and situations, as in: “administrators should first and foremost be loyal to political electives.” *Thick* moral reasons, on the other hand, are context-specific reasons, a tractable morality (de Graaf 2003, 2005a).

The thick-thin distinction is similar to the distinction between the micro- and macro-morality often used in corruption literature (de Graaf and Huberts 2008). Micro-morality has to do with connections to people in our social circles (family, friends). Moral obligations in our personal lives are characterized by reciprocity: we help friends and family just as we expect them to help us. Macro-morality, in contrast, emphasizes the universal. It is the product of the process (described by Nelson 1949) of universalizing morality and claims the legitimacy of its norms on institutions of the law, a universal system of formal norms. Macro-morality is characterized by the complementarity of rights and duties as the primal modus of social ties.

The thick-thin distinction will be used here to describe the origins of administrators’ loyalties. O’Kelly and Dubnick (2005, 398) have said:

The thick-thin distinction is very helpful in clarifying moral philosophy and thought, denoting as it does dilemmas people face as they are torn between, on the one hand, allegiances to communities and peers and, on the other hand, duties towards all humanity or toward fixed principles of action established, a priori, to any hard case that might emerge.

Given the close conceptual relationship between specific values and objects of loyalties, the distinction can be used to understand loyalty dilemmas and the justifications, background, and evolution of loyalties.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: Q

Here we study and describe the loyalty conceptions and conflicts of Dutch top public administrators. The context is relevant: Aberbach et al. (1981) already noticed “clear differences between the United States and Europe on the degree of intertwinement between political and administrative elites” (Lee and Raadschelders 2008, 423). The Dutch context in brief is the Netherlands is a decentralized unitary state, with parliamentary sovereignty and cabinet government. Only the Members of Parliament are directly elected by the voters, not the cabinet and its ministers. After parliamentary elections, a cabinet formation takes place, resulting in a coalition. Almost all cabinet ministers head a department, which are staffed by career public administrators (no party political appointments). “The idea of the loyal, politically neutral civil servant recruited on the basis of Weberian ‘merits’ criteria is an entrenched norm” (’t Hart and Wille 2006, 126). Dutch politico-administrative relations comply with the functional village model in Peters’s typology (Peters 1997): politicians and administrators share a policy role along functional lines (Brans et al. 2006, 61). The Netherlands is often described as a consensual democracy (Lijphart 1999). For a good overview of the Dutch administrative system, see Andeweg and Irwin (2005) or Toonen (1990); for more on the specific relationship between ministers and top officials in the Netherlands, see ’t Hart and Wille (2006).

There are various ways to empirically study where the loyalties of public administrators lie; here Q-methodology was deemed most suitable because Q-study results are clusters

that are functional rather than logical (de Graaf and van Exel 2009; van Exel, de Graaf, and Brouwer 2006). In other words, the clusters are not logically constructed by the researcher, they result from the empirical data; they are *operant*. Q-methodology can reveal a characteristic independently of the distribution of that characteristic relative to other characteristics in a population. Unlike surveys, which provide patterns of variables, Q-methodology provides patterns of persons, in this case, administrators. Q-methodology is a mixed qualitative-quantitative small-sample method that provides a scientific foundation for the systematic study of subjectivity, such as people's opinions, attitudes, preferences, and so on (Brown 1980, 1993; Watts and Stenner 2005). Q-methodology has been linked to Weber's theory before (Brown 2000; Stephenson 1962). On the type of research question of this article, Petter (2005, 211) has said:

For instance, do administrators who evaluate subordinates based on hierarchical responsibility also emphasize other low-autonomy perspectives? Or do they balance it by also stressing an outcome focus, such as public responsibility? A Q-methodology study may reveal patterns.

Q-methodology was applied to this study through four steps (discussed below): selection of relevant statements (Q-set), selection of respondents (P-set), respondents' ranking of statements (Q-sort), and interpretation of the results (Q-analysis).<sup>1</sup>

### The Q-Set

In a Q-methodological study, people typically are presented with a sample of statements about some topic (here, issues concerning the loyalties of public administrators), called the Q-set. We compiled a list of all the quotes on loyalties, responsibilities, and role conceptions found in academic and popular literature. The original list contained more than 600 quotes. According to Brown (1980), it is best to use a structure for selection of a representative miniature of such a list. Whatever structure is used, it forces the investigator to select statements widely different from one another in order to make the Q-set broadly representative (Brown 1980). Irrespective of the structure, it is the subject that eventually gives meaning to the statements by sorting them (Brown 1993).<sup>2</sup>

A Q-set of 42 statements was chosen (see Appendix) by first discarding overlapping statements and second, applying the following schedule to the statements:

Table 2 is based on Bovens's (1998) objects and Petter's (2005) responsibilities of administrators' loyalties.<sup>3</sup> We ensured that each theoretically relevant category was represented in the 42 statements in both the object and background of different loyalties. The logic of the Q-set was not used to classify the respondents. As stated above, Q-study results are functional rather than logical clusters; that is, the researcher does not logically construct the clusters. They result from the empirical data; they are *operant*.

1 The main source for Q-methodology is Stephenson (1953). Within the social sciences, Brown (1980) is a classic.

2 The limited number of comparative studies that have been carried out indicate that different sets of statements structured in different ways can nevertheless be expected to converge on the same conclusions (Thomas and Baas 1992–1993).

3 The models supplement each other and largely overlap. The first four conceptions of Bovens overlap with the hierarchical, moral, leadership, and professional loyalties of Petter. Bovens's fifth conception, civic responsibilities, was specified in Petter's societal, legal, and customer loyalties. Petter's eighth responsibility, fiscal, is now seen as part of the professional loyalty.

**Table 2**  
Logic of the Q-set

	Thick	Thin
Hierarchical loyalty		
Personal loyalty		
Social loyalty		
Professional loyalty		
Societal loyalty		
Legal loyalty		
Customer loyalty		

*Note:* Adapted from Petter (2005) and Bovens (1998).

### The P-Set

The set of respondents is usually not randomly chosen but theoretically structured (Brown 1980), and all viewpoints should be included. All top-level Dutch public administrators are automatically members of ABD (Algemene Bestuursdienst; the Directorate for the Senior Public Service), the professional organization for top administrators. Since its foundation in 1995, public administrators officially work for the ABD rather than a particular ministry. Total ABD membership is 857. At its highest level are 61 administrators spread throughout 15 ministries, 52 of which are men and 9 women.<sup>4</sup> By letter, we requested all for interview. We also invited 50 other ABD members from different ministries (Interior; Health, Well-being and Sport; Defense and Foreign Affairs) to ensure variety. From this group, all 26 women were selected for gender leveling and 24 men (6 from each ministry) were selected randomly. Of the total 111 invitees (76 men and 35 women), 38 agreed to interview.<sup>5,6</sup>

### The Q-Sort

By Q-sorting, people give subjective meaning to the set of statements and so reveal their subjective viewpoint. Stephenson<sup>7</sup> has presented Q-methodology as an inversion of conventional factor analysis, in the sense that it correlates persons instead of tests (i.e., by-person factor analysis). If each individual had unique likes and dislikes, their Q-sorts would not correlate. If, however, significant clusters of correlations exist, they can be factorized, described as common viewpoints, and individuals can be mapped to a particular factor.

Using a quasi-normal distribution, respondents were asked to rank-order the 42 statements from their own point of view according to some preference, judgment, or feeling (figure 1).<sup>8</sup> The two statements he or she agreed with most were put on the right (for a score of +3); the two he or she disagreed with most on the left (−3). The statements they felt

4 Based on Internet data of March 5, 2007, at <http://www.algemenebestuursdienst.nl>.

5 Discounting undeliverable invitations (many addresses were invalid), the response rate was a respectable 42%.

6 The interviews were held by drs. Angelique Hornstra and drs. G. J. de Graaf.

7 William Stephenson, the inventor of Q-methodology, served as the last assistant to Charles Spearman, the inventor of conventional factor analysis (Brown 1997).

8 Even though a forced distribution was used, some deviations were tolerated. If the Q-sorters found the forced distribution too much unlike their positions, they were allowed to slightly vary the number of statements they were “supposed to” have in a category.

**Figure 1**  
Fixed Distribution of the Q-set

Most Disagree					Most Agree	
(Statement Scores)						
-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
(2)	(4)	(9)	(12)	(9)	(4)	(2)

indifferent about (or did not understand) were put in the middle (the 0 category). The final distribution was the Q-sort. The Q-sorts were factor analyzed with the objective of revealing a limited number of corresponding viewpoints.

After the statement sorting, we held a second interview with each respondent to gain insight into the reasoning behind their choices, for example, “Why did you put these two statements in the +3 category?” “Do you see an issue concerning loyalty that is missing in the statements?” This helped with the final analysis of the different factors.

**Q-Analysis**

The individual Q-sorts were factor analyzed using PQMethod 2.11<sup>9</sup> (extraction method: centroid; rotation method: varimax) in order to reveal the distinct ways in which the statements were rank ordered. The analysis led to four factors (or loyalty conceptions) A, B, C, and D. For each factor, a composite sort was computed based on the rankings of the respondents loading on that factor and their correlation coefficient with the factor as weight. This idealized Q-sort represents the way in which a person loading 100% on that factor would have ranked the 42 statements (see Appendix).

Each factor was interpreted and described using the characterizing and distinguishing statements and the explanations of respondents loading on the factor. A statement is *characterizing* by its position in the outer columns of the idealized Q-sort of the factor and is *distinguishing* if the position is statistically significantly different from its position in the idealized Q-sorts of all other factors. Respondents’ explanations (which were transcribed literally during post-Q-sort interviews) are cited in italics to illustrate administrators’ way of thinking and support the description of that viewpoint. Corresponding statement numbers from the Q-set are noted in parentheses.

**RESULTS: THE FOUR LOYALTY TYPES**

Even though all administrators subscribe to the notion that of being loyal to their ministers, the loyalty is interpreted differently, resulting in different kinds of loyalty conflicts. Four loyalty conceptions were elicited from the analysis and are presented below in the form of a label and narrative (cf. de Graaf 2005b; van Exel, de Graaf, and Brouwer 2006).

9 Dedicated software and manual can be downloaded from <http://www.rz.unibw-muenchen.de/p41bsmk/qmethod>.

### Factor A: By-the-Book Professionals

Public administrators of the by-the-book professional type of loyalty want foremost to serve society and its citizens. They believe this can best be done by being loyal to their own profession and professional rules. This is clearly not a loyalty to the stakeholders of their own organization or colleagues. Their moral reasoning is generally thin.

Factor A administrators work for the government because they want to serve society (#7): —*That has always been my motivation. For me working in the private sector was not an option. It is a sense of duty. —Being loyal to your minister is your task, but once the minister harms the public interest, the loyalty stops.* That means that they aim for the societal effects of their work. Administrators who are merely focused on their own output are not good public administrators (#22): —*You have to be effective in society, not just effective for your department. Administrators should be focused on improving things in society. You have to worry about outcome; output is just focused on the short term, something to strive for immediately. —We are here for the citizen, first and foremost. Administrative output is about great policy business, which can be bad for society. You have to be loyal to the minister, but there are boundaries.* “Being there for the citizen” is meant in a broad, abstract sense and thus denotes a thin relationship, not an actual relationship with a citizen or stakeholder: —*There is too much talk about ‘being closer to the people’ and so on. My conviction is that people are at a distance from us and that’s the way it should be. You have to defend what you do, be accessible and approachable, but the relationship should not be too close or too personal.*

Public values are clearly held above administrators’ own political values (#13): —*If there’s tension between public values and my own political values, the public values prevail.* That does not mean that administrators should have a clear picture of the “good society”; elected politicians are responsible for that. However, blindly following the minister is not something a professional should do (#34): —*If the minister asks for something inappropriate or irresponsible, I won’t do it.*

Society can best be served by being a professional public administrator, which is not about pride, status, or peer connectivity: —*This is a professional institution in the service of the government. —It’s all about quality. Colleagues sometimes have specific interests in mind or specific assignments that are in their way. I don’t do that.* Being professional also means that an administrator should not misbehave in private life (#29): —*Administrators should set a good example in society for being impartial. That’s the only way to make sure that people look up to you. In private life you also have to watch that, especially top administrators. —As an administrator you can’t afford to let it all out on weekends. You always have to behave decently. That’s part of being a public administrator.*

Professionalism and professional rules are important (#32): —*Professionalism and loyalty are the leading values in my job. I’m a professional. You have to be loyal to the rules of your profession. —I’m not someone who just follows orders. My profession, knowledge, and conscience determine the borders of my job. —Professionalism is the key word for public administrators. You have to be loyal to the rules of your profession. —Professionalism is important and that doesn’t just mean knowledge, it also means that you behave decently and follow the rules of the game. Your behavior should be guided by the public interest.* Bending the rules to help societal stakeholders or specific citizens is unprofessional (#30) and can even lead to conflict: —*Rules form the playing field. Only politics can change that. I do not condone being ‘flexible’ to ‘satisfy’ all our stakeholders. —Societal partners are important, but a deal is a deal. If someone wants something different, the rules should*

*be changed. —The smallest bit of arbitrariness or privilege-granting is wrong. It undermines the principles of our constitutional state. Rather than hindering effectiveness and efficiency (#37), rules are a necessary part of any good and fair government. These administrators, however, are not neutral rule followers (#21) and a professional administrator is not a slave to the rules. —I don't just stamp pieces of paper!*

### **Factor B: Society's Neutral Servants**

Like the professionals, neutral servants feel a strong loyalty to society in general and to public values. They believe they can best serve society by being as neutral as possible; in a democracy elected officials should make the decisions. Of all types of top administrators, they are most loyal to their ministers and have the fewest conflicts with them. Their loyalty is not with their "profession"; the profession and professional rules were not mentioned by these respondents. Another difference from by-the-book professionals is that their own opinions and convictions carry less weight in their work.

Neutral-servant administrators want to serve society (#7); they work with passion for the government (#24): *—My whole career has been in public service, a conscious choice. —I find pleasure in serving society in my regular and additional functions. My goal is to help society through my job.* They are focused on societal effects rather than bureaucratic output (#22): *—That's my greatest horror and annoyance. I work for the central government because I want to do something for society. There's too much attention nowadays on measuring output, but that's not what it should be all about. It should be about whether something actually happens. —Sometimes bureaucratic output is bad for society. We're here for the citizen. You have to be completely loyal to your minister. —Output is nice to show quick results. But our work should be organized to achieve lasting societal effects. Will the citizen be better off? That should be the leading question.* Personal values should not be above an individual's own political values (#13). And it is not so much a personal opinion of what is right that should guide administrators' behavior: *—Personal values are important, but you should serve the public interest. When personal values play too big a role, public trust in government is undermined. —That administrators should not base their decisions on personal values is very important. It is the only way to maintain legal security and equality before the law. —I find administrators influenced by political parties' considerations to be gravely in error. —The elected political should always have the last word. —The minister has certain goals and it is my task to technically advise on how he can best reach those goals.*

Neutral servants clearly serve the public good in general; their loyalty is not with their own organization or ministry (#35). They are also least rebellious when ministers ask them something unlawful (#2): *—The elected officials are responsible, period. However, when something is bad for citizens, I warn the minister more than once.*

The major parting point from by-the-book professionals is that neutral servants find their own role less important and think that top civil servants do not have the right to opine publicly about their occupations' affairs (#5). *Freedom of speech is inside the walls. You have to be allowed to say anything to the minister. Outside you have to restrain yourself, otherwise there is a loyalty problem. —Of course I feel that I should be able to talk to my friends about public affairs. But once I speak as a top administrator, my personal opinion does not count. —As an administrator it is not your decision. You present choices and the elected officials decide. —Never reveal outside that you disagree with something.* In this

respect, it is nonsense to claim that the disqualification of public administrators' opinions cannot be tolerated (#39); again because it is all about being a good advisor, not about the personal opinion of the administrator. *"When you're with three administrators at one table and personal opinions are allowed, the minister gets three different pieces of advice; that doesn't work. There has to be one objective, qualified opinion. Only then is it administrative advice. Quality is not in the word opinion; it suggests something personal."*

### Factor C: The Personally Grounded

The loyalty of these public administrators tends to lie with their private lives and their own consciences. They often use thick moral arguments. They weigh work loyalties against those dictated by other societal roles, sometimes leading to loyalty conflicts. They are critical of government and bureaucracy and dislike rules because they impede creativity.

Their private lives matter above all else, including their high-level jobs (#1): *—The business at work sometime creates tensions at home, like not giving attention to your wife and children. But in the end I would always choose for my private life. My family comes first. —My private life is more important than my job because a job is just one facet of who I am. My life has many components.* They therefore are not twenty-four-hour civil servants (#24): *—I can't imagine being that. When I come home I am a mother, wife, and all sorts of other things. I have many roles and identities. Expecting me to behave as an administrator outside the office is absurd.*

Loyalty to their identities and consciences is important (#34, 25): *—On my policy terrain, I am the expert. I look at an interest that goes above the minister. —Neither as a human being nor as a professional can I do things that go against my conscience. Sometimes balancing is necessary but too much balancing means there is something wrong and it is time to leave. That makes the loyalty dilemma for our profession tough sometimes. —I cannot do something if it will keep me awake at night. My identity is the most important.*

Rules and regulations do not lead these administrators' jobs; indeed, they have a notable dislike of them (#11): *—They're repugnant to the individual mind; they kill its creativity. Every day it seems there's a new litany of rules. They're not interesting and don't work. You have to follow most rules, but sometimes you have to apply a higher norm. —What's legal doesn't interest me. Rules are made by people in power and often stem from their own interests or the latest fads. As a society you have to have some rules, but in the end I pursue a higher value. —Government is schizophrenic. It has an urge to control everything just to make sure everything is executed correctly. I find it important to know the rules, but it cannot be that a 'system-of-madness' determines what I can and cannot do . . . I see too many colleagues who strictly follow rules. It destroys their creativity.*

Nor does the loyalty of this type of administrator lie with stakeholders in their policy field. Letting concerned parties know they disagree with policy is beyond the purview of their jobs (#31): *—If I think that a minister ought to do something else, it's an internal matter. —I keep matters internal. I would not tinker with external powers as a counterweight to a minister's decision.* For these administrators, elected politicians have the last word: *—The primacy is with the politician.*

### Factor D: Open and Principled Independents

The loyalty of independent public administrators lies clearly with their own principles, the law, and official rules. They argue mainly in terms of thin guidelines and principles. They

were averse to the statements that began with “I [think, feel, believe, etc.]” There is too little room to express their own consciences, which in any case might lead to loyalty conflicts. They believe that elected officials should determine the general direction of policies under the limits of the law and official rules. Loyalty conflicts also arise when ministers want something disallowed by law or when expressing themselves in public.

Independent administrators will not quickly go against their conscience: —*The goal of my job is not just to do what management wants. It’s a mix of my own conscience, external contacts, etc. —Doing something I can’t live with means I’m on the wrong path, I’m embracing the wrong loyalty.* In any mature democracy, top public administrators should be allowed to say what they want in public; that’s simply freedom of speech (#5). This sometime leads to loyalty conflicts; the role of the involved citizen may clash with the role of top civil servant. —*I feel that an administrator is part of society. He should therefore be allowed to speak to outsiders. You don’t make policy behind your desk; you have to talk to outsiders. —I feel we sometimes say too little in public. I do that sometimes, but am not thanked for that. Of course, you can’t say that what the minister wants is bullocks, but you should be able to publicly express concerns. Politicians determine in the end, but that doesn’t mean I have to be silent about it.*

Public administrators may decide for themselves what they believe the best option is, which doesn’t mean they have the right to make the final decision (#20). *Politics decide, not the civil service.* Public administrators should not base their decisions on personal values; in such cases, citizens could no longer trust that policies and rules are followed uniformly (#41). —*The core of our job is our workmanship; choices are part of that. But there are professional boundaries to that. I do not make decisions about gay marriages or abortion. If you want to determine that sort of decision, you are in the wrong trade.* What follows from that is that loyalty to the minister is important (#31), but it is not an absolute loyalty. These administrators will not do something that is against the law, even if asked by the minister: —*That’s my civil responsibility. If the minister wants to do that, I won’t participate.*

Loyalty does not lie above all at home (#1). Administrators should not complain about the tensions and responsibilities that come with their positions: —*Whatever’s important in my job, I take home. If it takes a toll on my private life, so be it. It’s the sort of thing that comes with the job.*

### COMPARING LOYALTY CONCEPTIONS OF TOP DUTCH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS TO OTHER PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS

The loyalty types of Selden, Brewer, and Brudney (1999)—“stewards of the public interest,” “adapted realists,” “businesslike utilitarians,” “resigned custodians,” and “practical idealists”—are different from those identified in our study. In particular, we found no businesslike utilitarians who could be described by statements like, “Efficiency is far more important to me than being fair or sensitive. I feel that being fair is an excuse for accepting a lack of competence and a lowering of standards” (Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999, 189). Possible explanations are (1) the authors’ concept of role (and therefore their Q-set) was broader; (2) their sample of public administrators differed from ours, which was restricted to top administrators; (3) contexts have significantly changed over the past ten years; and/or (4) cultural differences (the Netherlands versus the United States) affect conceptions of loyalty. This raises the question of the extent to which Dutch top public administrators’ conceptions of loyalty differ from other types of administrators and other nations’ top administrators.

A similar study among top municipal administrators and street-level bureaucrats (to be more precise: local license providers) in the Netherlands (de Graaf 2010; de Graaf and van der Wal forthcoming) found that top public administrators' conceptions of loyalties seem to be different from other groups of administrators. For example, and perhaps not surprisingly, client loyalty seems to play a large role in the loyalty conceptions of street-level administrators, whereas loyalty to stakeholders in the policy field (the equivalent of client loyalty for top-level administrators) plays a small role in the loyalty conceptions of top administrators as described in the previous section; just like among the top municipal administrators (the smallest of all distinguished objects of their loyalty; de Graaf 2010). Some types of license providers express a strong loyalty to their clients, types that have been identified in the literature (e.g., Lipsky 1980). In the case of street-level bureaucrats, therefore, dealing with government clients on a daily basis has a significant impact on loyalty and engenders a type of loyalty not seen in top-level administrators.

"Hierarchical loyalty" seems to be the most important object of loyalty for all three groups of administrators. To this generalization, we immediately add that the hierarchical loyalty is interpreted differently *within* each group (see, e.g., the Results section) as well as between the groups and is contextually dependent. Furthermore, hierarchical loyalty is clearly weakest in street-level bureaucrats relative to other groups; indeed, the hierarchical loyalty of several types of municipal license providers is relatively weak. An explanation for this could be that street-level bureaucrats, unlike top administrators, rarely deal directly with elected political superiors, which influences the way they interpret hierarchical loyalty. Since they also have the strongest loyalty to clients they have day-to-day contact with, we can hypothesize that, in general, the higher the frequency of contact with specific stakeholders, the stronger the loyalties towards them.

Are the loyalty conceptions of top Dutch administrators different from other Western-style democracies? And does the form of government influence the loyalties of top administrators? As argued previously, context is relevant (Aberbach et al. 1981). Yet, it can be hypothesized that the nature of the work of top administrators in Western-style countries is similar to such an extent that the differences between the loyalty conceptions of Dutch top administrators (as presented here), and, say, American top administrators are smaller than those between Dutch top administrators and Dutch municipal license providers. Based on the hypotheses on the differences between the Dutch groups and the international comparative literature on political-administrative relations, we could furthermore hypothesize that contextual factors of influence on international differences between loyalty conceptions of top administrators include the degree of intertwinement between political and administrative elite and the recruitment of top administrators (e.g., Aberbach et al. 1981; Lee and Raadschelders 2008). Lee and Raadschelders (2008, 243): "In terms of recruitment for top bureaucratic positions, national differences have been found. The United States appears to emphasize loyalty and political responsiveness to the government in power; the British model stresses expertise of top-ranking civil servants, while the German model combines loyalty and expertise." Combining this with the differences between the groups in the Netherlands, we can expect hierarchical loyalty to be more important in the United States and professional loyalty to be more important in the United Kingdom. Also, we can expect the strong involvement of the Dutch civil service in the production of policy advice and limited use of political advisers (Brans et al. 2006, 58) to influence loyalty conceptions in the Netherlands.

Because of the aforementioned connection between the ambiguous concepts of loyalty and accountability, a comparative study could add to the literature on different accountability notions within and between Western-style democracies (e.g., Bovens et al. 2008). The classical model leaves no room for individual accountability.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Although all administrators see their elected ministers as important objects of loyalty, no type adheres to Weber's ideal of unquestioned obedience and loyalty. We found differences in how modern top public administrators weigh their loyalty to the minister vis-à-vis other loyalty objects; four different loyalty conceptions were identified. By-the-Book Professionals (conception A) want first to serve society and its citizens. They generally use thin moral reasoning and are more loyal to their own profession and professional rules than the other top administrators. Like them, Society's Neutral Servants (conception B) feel a strong loyalty to society in general and public values. Unlike conception A, however, they believe they can best serve society by being as neutral as possible and by giving little weight to their own opinions and convictions; of all types, they are the most loyal to their minister and have the fewest conflicts with them. The Personally Grounded (conception C) generally employs thick moral arguments. More than any others, their loyalty lies most with their private lives and individual consciences. They weigh their loyalties against those dictated by other societal roles, sometimes leading to loyalty conflicts. They dislike rules because they impede their creativity. In contrast, the loyalty of the Open and Principled Independents (conception D) lies largely with their own principles, the law, and official rules. More than any other administrators, they employ thin guidelines and principles.

The high correlation between the factors ranged from .42 to .63, which usually indicates an underlying consensus among respondents. In our case, it meant that the top administrators did not view their loyalty conceptions completely differently; the four factors can be seen as variations on a common theme. To help with pinpointing where the theme lies, a second-order factor analysis was performed on the four Q-sorts.

The underlying theme is that all administrators subscribe to the notion of being loyal to their ministers (the hierarchical object of loyalty), as was concluded earlier by 't Hart and Wille (2006). The second-order analysis revealed that another object of loyalty is also important to all administrators: in the underlying consensual factor, statements concerning society as the object of loyalty were most important (statements #7 and #13). Most top administrators stress the importance of the public interest (as opposed to their own political values) and that they work for the government because they want to serve society. This indicates a strong Public Service Motivation (PSM) among top Dutch public administrators (Perry 1996).

Several statements were ordered very similarly by the administrators (contributing to the rather high correlations). For example, all four types rejected the view that efficiency is more important than impartiality and fairness (see statement #4 and its associated factor scores in the Appendix). Whatever the influence on Dutch civil service, these traditional public values remain central, even at the cost of efficiency: —*Effectiveness is of course important, but it's not what government is about. —Government is not a company. There are demands like transparency and so on. Citizens should be able to trust government. That means procedural justice and impartiality, including the bureaucracy that it sometimes brings.*

Also notable is that none of the administrators felt a strong connection with other ABD members; their loyalty is therefore not with their particular organization: —*Does not interest me. All the emails I get, I delete without reading. —They're nice people, but I have more to do with the top of the civil service. They happen to be ABD members, but only their position is important to me. —I would function perfectly well without the ABD.*

When we look at the objects of loyalty as earlier distinguished in table 2, it is clear that hierarchical loyalty is the most important of all the loyalty conceptions. Loyalty conception B has the highest loyalty to political superiors and conception D has arguably the lowest. The second-order factor analysis revealed that society is also an important object of most top administrators' loyalty (indicating a strong PSM in this group). Also notable is that loyalty to stakeholders in their policy field ("customer loyalty" in table 2) plays the smallest role. Administrators' loyalty to colleagues has an important role in their conceptions; the other five objects of loyalty (hierarchical, personal, professional, societal, and legal) all play a dominating role in at least one of the loyalty conceptions.

Based on a survey of its readers, the Dutch journal *re.Public*,<sup>11</sup> recently claimed that more than half of the respondents (presumably administrators) indicated that they were not willing to work for a Partij voor de Vrijheid politician.<sup>12</sup> This started a media discussion on just where the loyalty of Dutch administrators in fact lies—the research question at hand here. The question was answered by the four descriptions of loyalty conceptions of top administrators. They described how top public administrators conceptualize their loyalties and weigh objects of loyalties against each other. Administrators' conceptualizations of their loyalties are morally important: they indicate how administrators behave and make decisions (cf. de Graaf 2003, 2005a; Fletcher 1993). Furthermore, different conceptions mean different loyalty dilemmas and conflicts, which are in turn indicative of different solutions.

## APPENDIX

**Table A1**  
Idealized Scores of the Factors of the 42 Statements

	A	B	C	D
1. In the end, my private life is more important than my work.	1	0	3	-2
2. When elected officials ask something of me that is against the law, and despite my warnings they do not listen to me, I will not do what they ask.	1	-1	0	2
3. Committing to obligations towards colleagues can lead to cronyism.	0	-1	0	-1
4. In my work, efficiency is more important than impartiality and fairness.	-3	-2	-2	-3
5. In any mature democracy, top public administrators should be allowed to say what they want to in public. That's simply freedom of speech.	-1	-3	-1	3

*Continued*

<sup>10</sup> May 8, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> The Partij voor de Vrijheid is a new anti-Islamic party in the Netherlands headed by Geert Wilders.

**Table A1** (continued)  
Idealized Scores of the Factors of the 42 Statements

	A	B	C	D
6. It is my main duty to mediate between conflicting interests and to find solutions everybody can live with.	0	-1	-1	0
7. I work for the government because I want to serve society.	3	3	1	1
8. I try to mitigate extreme resistance from societal partners of our organization.	0	0	1	1
9. Sometimes elected officials want something that is practically impossible. What I notice in those cases is that we as public administrators have a very hard time saying "no."	0	0	0	0
10. In my work, I worry about the well being of less privileged citizens	0	1	-1	0
11. I find it very important to know all the rules and regulations and to stick to them.	0	-2	-3	-2
12. The public administrator whose actions are determined by party political considerations undermines essential principles and procedures of democracy.	1	2	2	1
13. In my work, I should apply public values over my own political values.	2	3	1	1
14. How I look at things in my work is partly determined by the people who surround me in my private life; a discussion with friends can influence my judgment.	-1	0	1	1
15. I have my own opinions on the morality of my actions when at work—I cannot leave that up to my political superiors.	1	0	0	-1
16. Even without religious or philosophical motives, administrators should be allowed to refuse a task if their conscience dictates so.	0	0	0	-1
17. Public administrators should be accountable to criminal law for their public actions, even when doing exactly what their political superiors expect or want them to do.	-2	-1	-2	-1
18. It is my main duty to do what management expects me to.	-1	-2	-1	-2
19. The most important features of good public administrators are that they are loyal to their organization and discreet in the outside world.	1	0	0	0
20. A public administrator works in public service. The political official should be his/her first client, but public administrators should decide for themselves what they think the best option is.	-1	-1	-1	-2
21. I know what is legal, not what is right. I stick to what is legal.	-2	-1	-1	-1
22. Good public administrators focus on societal effects. Bad public administrators focus on bureaucratic output.	2	2	0	1

Continued

**Table A1** (continued)  
Idealized Scores of the Factors of the 42 Statements

	A	B	C	D
23. Even when my personal convictions about the public good are at odds with instructions of the elected official, I should follow his or her instructions.	1	1	1	0
24. I feel like a public administrator 24 hours a day.	-1	1	-2	-1
25. I should be able to live with myself, which is why being loyal to my own conscience is the most important thing for me.	1	0	2	1
26. Loyalty to my minister can be less important than serving the public interest.	-1	0	1	0
27. Acting with integrity means for public administrators that they act according to their conscience.	1	-1	-1	0
28. Public administrators who are strongly focused on their own careers don't necessarily want the best for their colleagues.	0	1	0	0
29. Punishable or reprehensible conduct in your private life can sometimes be at odds with your duty to behave as a good public administrator.	2	1	1	1
30. Sometimes you have to bend the rules a little when dealing with societal partners of the organization.	-3	0	1	-1
31. When I disagree with a policy, I simply tell the concerned parties of our organization.	-1	-2	-3	-3
32. I believe that professionalism and loyalty to professional rules are the leading values in my work.	3	0	2	2
33. I will not easily betray my colleagues, even when it would bring me into deep trouble.	-1	0	0	-1
34. When I find an assignment irresponsible, loyalty to my own conscience and identity is the deciding factor.	2	1	3	2
35. I feel a stronger connection with government in general than with my own ministry.	0	2	-1	0
36. A top public administrator should always be careful not to express him- or herself publicly if the minister dislikes such behavior.	1	1	0	0
37. The rules that I have to follow in dealing with stakeholders lower my efficiency and effectiveness.	-2	-1	-1	0
38. As a top public administrator, I feel strongly connected to other ABD members.	-2	-1	-2	-1
39. The disqualification of any educated opinion – including public administrators – cannot be tolerated in a modern democracy.	0	-3	1	1
40. Political officials often have an interest in the short term only, which leads to ad-hoc decision making. It is the task of public administrators to also look at the long run.	0	2	2	2
41. Public administrators should not base their decisions on personal values because in such a case citizens can no longer trust that policies and rules are followed uniformly.	-1	1	0	3
42. Good personal relations with my superiors will make me more committed to my work.	0	1	0	0

## REFERENCES

- Aberbach, J. D., R. D. Putnam, and B. A. Rockman. 1981. *Bureaucrats and politicians in Western democracies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Adams, G., and D. Balfour. 1998. *Unmasking administrative evil*. London: Sage.
- Andeweg, R. B., and G. A. Irwin. 2005. *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1994. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Barnard, Chester Irving. 1938. *Functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 1991. *Modernity and the holocaust*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Birch, A. H. 1975. Economic models in political science: The case of exit, voice and loyalty. *British Journal of Political Science* 5:69–82.
- Bovens, Mark. 1998. *The quest for responsibility*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Bovens, Mark, Thomas Schillemans, and Paul 't Hart. 2008. New forms of accountability and EU governance. *Comparative European Politics* 5:104–20.
- Bowman, James, and Russell L. Williams. 1997. Ethics in government. From a winter of despair to a spring of hope. *Public Administration Review* 57:517–26.
- Brans, Marleen, Christophe Pelgrims, and Dieter Hoet. 2006. Comparative observations on tensions between professional policy advice and political control in the low countries. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 72:57–71.
- Brown, Steven. 1980. *Political subjectivity: Applications of Q-methodology in political science*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.
- . 1993. A primer on Q methodology. *Operant Subjectivity* 16:91–138.
- . 1997. *The history and principles of Q methodology in psychology and social sciences*. Kent, OH: Kent State Univ. Available at: <http://facstaff.uww.edu/cottlec/Qarchive/Bps.htm>.
- . 2000. *Types of social organization: A confluence of Weber and Stephenson*. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity. Muncie, IN: Ball State Univ.
- Clarke, J., and J. Newman. 1997. *The managerial state*. London: Sage.
- Cooper, T. L., ed. 1994. *Handbook of administrative ethics*. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Cooper, Terry. 1998. *The responsible administrator*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- de Graaf, G. 2010. De loyaliteiten van gemeentelijke topambtenaren. *Bestuurswetenschappen* 64 (2): 36–57.
- de Graaf, G., and L. Huberts. 2008. Portraying the nature of corruption. Using an explorative case-study design. *Public Administration Review* 64:640–53.
- de Graaf, G., and Z. van der Wal. 2008. On value differences experienced by sector switchers. *Administration & Society* 40:79–103.
- . 2010. Forthcoming. Public sector professionals. Empirical evidence from Dutch Municipalities. In *Professionals under pressure. Perspectives on professionals and professionalism in public service delivery*, ed. Steijn, B., Noordegraaf, M. Amsterdam Univ. Press.
- de Graaf, Gjalt. 2003. *Tractable morality. Customer discourses of bankers, veterinarians and charity workers*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Erim.
- . 2005a. Tractable morality. *Journal of Business Ethics* 60:1–15.
- . 2005b. Veterinarians' discourses on animals and clients. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 18:557–78.
- de Graaf, Gjalt, and Job van Exel. 2009. Using Q methodology in administrative ethics. *Public Integrity* 11 (1): 63–78.
- Denhardt, K. G. 1988. *The ethics of public service, resolving moral dilemmas in public organizations*. Westport: Greenwood.
- Denhardt, Robert B., and Janet Vinzant Denhardt. 2000. The new public service: Serving rather than steering. *Public Administration Review* 60:549–59.
- Downs, A. 1967. *Inside bureaucracy*. Boston, MA: Little Brown.

- Dubnick, Melvin J., and Barbara S. Romzek. 1993. Accountability and the centrality of expectations in American public administration. In *Research in public administration*, ed. J. L. Perry, 37–78. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Dunleavy, P. 1991. *Democracy, bureaucracy and public choice*. Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Durant, R. F. 1991. Whither bureaucratic influence?: A cautionary note. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 1:461–76.
- Ewin, R. E. 1992. Loyalty and virtues. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 42:403–19.
- . 1993. Corporate loyalty: Its objects and its grounds. *Journal of Business Ethics* 12:387–96.
- Fletcher, G. P. 1993. *Loyalty: An essay on the morality of relationships*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Frederickson, H. George, ed. 1993. *Ethics and public administration*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Fry, Brian R., and Lloyd G. Nigro. 1996. Max Weber, and US public administration: The administrator as neutral servant. *Journal of Management History* 2:37–46.
- Golden, Marissa Martino. 1992. Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect: Bureaucratic responses to presidential control during the Reagan administration. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 2:29–62.
- Graham, Jill W., and Michael Keeley. 1992. Hirschmann's loyalty construct. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 5:191–200.
- Hirschman, A. O. 1970. *Exit, voice and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Hoffmann, E. A. 2006. Exit and voice: Organizational loyalty and dispute resolution. *Social Forces* 84:2312–30.
- Jeurissen, R. 1997. Geen organisatie zonder loyaliteit. *Filosofie & Praktijk* 18:169–82.
- Kaufman, H. 1960. *The forest ranger*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.
- Lee, Kwang-Hoon, and Jos C. N. Raadschelders. 2008. Political-administrative relations: Impact of and puzzles in Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman, 1981. *Governance* 21:419–38.
- Lee, Soo-Young, and Andrew B. Whitford. 2008. Exit, voice and loyalty, and pay: Evidence from the public workforce. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18:647–71.
- Light, Paul. 1999. *The new public service*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Lijphart, Anton. 1999. *Patterns of democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.
- Lipsky, Michael. 1980. *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.
- Long, Norton E. 1952. Bureaucracy and constitutionalism. *American Political Science Review* 46:808–18.
- Maesschalck, Jeroen. 2004. The impact of new public management reforms on public servants' ethics: Towards a theory. *Public Administration* 82:465–89.
- Meier, K. J. 1993. *Politics and bureaucracy: Policy making in the fourth branch of government*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Nelson, Benjamin. 1949. *The idea of usury. Form tribal brotherhood to universal otherhood*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Nieuwenkamp, Roel. 2001. *De prijs van het politieke primaat: Wederzijds vertrouwen en loyaliteit in de verhouding tussen bewindspersonen en ambtelijke top*. Delft, the Netherlands: Eburon.
- Noordegraaf, M. 2004. *Management in het publieke domein. Issues, instituties en instrumenten*. Bussum, the Netherlands: Coutinho.
- Noordegraaf, Mirko, Martijn van der Steen, and Paul Frissen. 2006. Andere ambtenaren. Of en hoe andere ambtenaren ontstaan. *Bestuurskunde* 15 (3): 2–9.
- O'Kelly, Ciarán, and Melvin J. Dubnick. 2005. Taking tough choices seriously: Public administration and individual moral agency. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16:393–415.
- O'Leary, Rosemary. 2006. *The ethics of dissent. Managing Guerrilla government*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Perry, James L. 1996. Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 6:5–22.
- Peters, B. Guy. 1997. Bureaucrats and political appointees in European democracies: Who's who and does it make any difference? In *Modern systems of government*, ed. A. Farazmand, 232–55. London: Sage.
- . 2001. *The politics of bureaucracy*. London: Routledge.

- Peters, B. Guy and J. Pierre, eds. 2001. *Politicians, bureaucrats and administrative reform*. London: Routledge.
- Petter, J. 2005. Responsible behavior in bureaucrats: An expanded conceptual framework. *Public Integrity* 8:197–217.
- Pollitt, C., and G. Bouckaert. 2000. *Public management reform*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Rosenthal, U. 1999. De politiek-ambtelijke rechtsstaat. Over de tweezijdigheid van de politiek-ambtelijke verhoudingen. *Liberaal Reveil* 40:146–51.
- Rourke, F. E. 1991. American bureaucracy in a changing political setting. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 1:111–29.
- Royce, Josiah. 1908. *The philosophy of loyalty*. New York: Macmillan.
- Selden, Sally Coleman., Gene A. Brewer, and Jeffrey L. Brudney. 1999. Reconciling competing values in public administration. Understanding the administrative role concept. *Administration & Society* 31:171–204.
- Shumavon, D. H. and H. K. Hibbeln, eds. 1986. *Administration discretion and public policy implementation*. New York: Praeger.
- Stephenson, W. 1953. *The study of behaviour: Q-technique and its methodology*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- . 1962. Ideal types. *Psychological Record* 12:9–16.
- Stoker, K. 2005. Loyalty in public relations: When does it cross the line between virtue and vice? *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 20:269–31.
- Suleiman, Ezra N. 2003. *Dismantling democratic states*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Svara, James H. 1998. The politics-administration model as aberration. *Public Administration Review* 58:51–8.
- . 1999. The shifting boundary between elected officials and city managers in large council-manager cities. *Public Administration Review* 59:44–53.
- . 2001. The myth of the dichotomy: Complementarity of politics and administration in the past and future of public administration. *Public Administration Review* 61:176–83.
- 't Hart, Paul and A.W. Wille, eds. 2002. *Politiek-ambtelijke verhoudingen in beweging*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Boom.
- . 2006. Ministers and top officials in the dutch core executive: Living together, growing apart? *Public Administration* 84:121–46.
- Thomas, D. B., and L. R. Baas. 1992–1993. The issue of generalization in Q methodology: “Reliable schematics” revisited. *Operant Subjectivity* 16:18–36.
- Toonen, Theo. 1990. The unitary state as a system of co-governance: The case of the Netherlands. *Public Administration* 68:281–96.
- Vandekerckhove, W., and Ronald Commers. 2004. Whistle blowing and rational loyalty. *Journal of Business Ethics* 53:225–33.
- van Exel, N. J. A., G. de Graaf, and W. B. F. Brouwer. 2006. Everyone dies, so you might as well have fun! Attitudes of Dutch youths about their health lifestyle. *Social Science & Medicine* 63:2628–39.
- Waldo, D. 1988. *The enterprise of public administration*. Novato: Chandler and Sharp.
- Watts, S., and P. Stenner. 2005. Doing Q methodology: Theory, method and interpretation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 2:67–91.
- Weber, Max. 1946. Politics as a vocation. In *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 196–244. Oxford Univ. Press.
- Williams, Bernard. 1985. *Ethics and the limits of philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Withey, Michael J., and William H. Cooper. 1992. What's loyalty? *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 5:231–40.