

Rule of Morality vs. Rule of Law

**Establishing a set of values to compare the civil service ethos in
China and the Netherlands**

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to establish a set of values for a comparative empirical study on the civil service ethos in China and the Netherlands. In doing so, it employs a pilot survey on value preferences among civil servants in Shanghai (n=15) and Amsterdam (n=8), as well as a content analysis of values in twenty-eight codes of conduct in China and the EU. Civil servants in Shanghai rank as the three most important moral values incorruptibility, lawfulness and loyalty. In Amsterdam, civil servants rank highest transparency, reliability and incorruptibility. The survey results are ambiguous as to the extent to which they corroborate the classical administrative traditions of both countries. The paper concludes with a final set of twenty-six value as a basis for a large-scale follow-up survey and some suggestions for how executives in both countries should take civil servants' value preferences into consideration in the process of shaping ethical leadership.

Key words: Moral Values, Administrative Ethics, Civil Service, Rule of Morality, Rule of Law

Introduction

Values in public service have been studied by many researchers due to broad interest in the relations between values and civil servants' behavior. Although there is no agreed definition of value, most definitions imply the meaning of "preference" and the demand can be "ordered by relative importance" (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987: 551). For instance, values may refer to "interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties, moral obligations..." (Williams 1968: 283); "A value is defined as "a constellation of attitudes about a concept that contains a moral quality of like or dislike, desirable or undesirable, and should or should not" (Cherrington 1989: 297). Each value, examples of which are honesty or transparency, is of different importance to a person and the same value is differently important for different persons, making it possible to rank values by relative importance.

Moreover, as Van Wart (1998) argues, values drive the thoughts and actions of the people carrying the culture. Values are "the cultural glue of civilizations and the organizations within them, and the fundamental building blocks of culture" (163). In this sense, the administrative culture is partly reflected by the moral values¹ of people who work in administration (e.g. civil servants, politicians). This paper studies the administrative cultures of China and the Netherlands. Their respective cultures are usually referred as "rule of morality" and "rule of law" (Scalia 1989, Fallon 1997, etc.). Chinese traditional² culture is ethics-centered and Confucian moral thought constitutes the cultural base of Chinese traditional morality (Lu 2009). Moral values in Confucian background are obviously different from those at the core of the "rule of law" culture prevalent in the Netherlands.

An increasing number of studies compare different values in different cultures. These studies have investigated people's choices in Confucian and other cultural

contexts. For examples, Whitcomb et al. (1998) investigated business ethical values with a survey conducted in China and the U.S.; Zhang et al. (2005) showed different preferences of traditional Confucian values in four East Asian cultural contexts, indicating Confucian values still remained in East Asia societies but at varying degrees. Ralston et al. (2008) assessed the impact of economic ideology and national culture on the individual work values of managers in the United States, Russia, Japan, and China. These studies demonstrate that Confucian culture is different from others, and even within the same Confucian context, people's rating of values in different regions and countries are different because of different political reforms and social changes (Zhang et al. 2005).

In European and Dutch contexts there is abundant empirical research on public service values (e.g., Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Rutgers 2008; Van den Heuvel et al. 2002; Van der Wal 2008; Van der Wal, Vrangbaek and Pevkur 2008). Comparatively, such empirical data is rare in Chinese academic research. Confucian morals are mostly studied conceptually and historically, or scholars try to show "philosophic understanding" of "classical Chinese mind" in a Western linguistic way (Hall and Ames 1987).

Nevertheless, the existing comparative studies do not focus on prominent values for civil servants, and those on public service values do compare different administrative cultures. In particular, so far very little empirical attention has been paid by Chinese scholars to Confucian moral values. Furthermore, it is not clear whether and to what extent civil servants' value preferences still reflect their administrative cultures ("rule of morality" in China and "rule of law" in the Netherlands).

Therefore, this study aims to show which moral values are considered as most important for being a good civil servant in China and the Netherlands. The results were obtained through a survey in Shanghai and Amsterdam, as well as by investigating values listed in codes of conducts in two countries. The paper explores which moral values belong to which culture and which are most important for civil servants.

We first review literature about values in Eastern and Western public administration, which results in two sets of value to be tested in the survey. Next the results of the pilot survey are presented extensively. This paper ends with a final set of values to be used in a large-scale survey in both countries. In addition, it suggests some implications for ethical leadership in Eastern and Western administrative settings, as the results offer insights on the importance ‘followers’ attribute to moral values and whether and how this differs in different administrative contexts.

Crucial values in an Eastern and Western context

Values related to Confucian morality and governance can be found predominantly in classic Confucian works (e.g., *The Analects*) and a limited body of academic literature. Unlike the absence of empirical data in Chinese literature, a considerable body of literature exists on the core values for politicians or civil servants in a European context.

Values as mentioned in classical Confucian texts and other literatures

“Morality” in Confucian thought contains rich meanings as it refers to personal morals, rules to coordinate interpersonal relationships, ways to run a country, etc. Confucianism considers personal moral cultivation as the first step to ‘become a

human being'. "China was regarded as Kuo-chia, a 'family state'...; ideally it was ruled by a service aristocracy of literary talent" (Finer 1997: 443). Confucius connects personal morals with the way of state management, which are two aspects of the main body of Confucian political ideas.

According to the Confucian idea of "Internal Sage and External King", internal moral cultivation "like a sage" is the foundation of governance. This combination contained in Confucian works, moral norms and expressions known by Chinese people. For instance, Guanzhong (725-645 B.C.) argued that the state would collapse without "Four Principles" (Si-wei): Propriety (Li), Integrity (Yi), Incorruption (Lian) and Shame consciousness (Chi). Dong Zhongshu (179B.C.-104 B. C, West-Han dynasty, famous philosopher) promoted Confucianism to hold the dominant position in China. He combined the power of King, the power of father and the power of husband together to build "the three cardinal guides (San-gang) and five constant virtues (Wu-chang)" theory. San-gang is "ruler guides subject, father guides son and husband guides wife", Wu-chang is "benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and integrity". Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) was the first provisional president when the Republic of China (ROC) was founded in 1912 and later the first leader of the Chinese National People's Party or Kuomintang (KMT). He insisted that traditional morals should not be totally discarded but some positive values such as "loyalty and filial Devotion" (Zhong-xiao), "kindness and love" (Ren-ai), "Faithfulness and justice" (Xin-yi) and "Harmony and peace" (He-ping) should be preserved (Sun Yat-sen 1985: 37). There are eight characters so Chinese people call it "Eight virtues".

Here, prominent moral values for the Confucian (administrative) context were elicited by analyzing contents of these Confucian works and traditional moral norms. The values emphasized by modern scholars were also important references (e.g. K. L.

Lai 1995³, Lu 2009⁴). Based on the previous review, the following Confucian moral values were selected: Humaneness⁵ (Ren), Propriety (Li), Righteousness (Yi), Loyalty (Zhong), Filial Piety (Xiao), Integrity (Cheng-xin) , Humility (Qian-rang), Tolerance (shu), Diligence and thrift (Qin-jian), Wisdom (Zhi) and Courage (Yong). Moreover, the previously mentioned literatures also explain the broader contents of each Confucian concept, and the related values in Table 1 are based on this.

Table 1: Moral values derived from classical Confucian texts

Confucian value	Related values
Ren	Humaneness Kindness Benevolence Friendliness Serviceability
Li	Propriety Courteousness Cautiousness Humility Responsibility
Yi	Righteousness Justice
Zhong	Loyalty Obedience Selflessness Reliability
Xiao	Filial piety Loyalty / Obedience
Cheng-xin	Integrity Trustfulness Faithfulness Honesty Reliability
Qian-rang	Humility/ Modesty Respectfulness Generousness
Shu	Tolerance Consideration Reciprocity
Qin-jian	Diligence Thrift Incurrence Self-reliance Dedication
Zhi	Wisdom Expertise
Yong	Courage Righteousness

Values mentioned in European public administration research

Public (service) values have been studied empirically and extensively in European research. We apply the three value classification methods as distinguished by Rutgers (2008) to show some of the main results of previous studies.

The first and most common way is focusing on core values in terms of “the most frequently referred to values” (Rutgers 2008: 97). For instance, Ethicon (2003) reviewed on 59 codes of conduct of Dutch government organization to get thirteen most often mentioned core values such as integrity, responsibility, carefulness, reliability, restraint; Van der Wal (2006) obtained the 30 most frequently mentioned values in public administration literature through a content analysis of 7 relevant books and 46 issues of journals on administrative ethics and values.

The second way is to compare values chronologically, also compare “old and new” or “traditional and emerging” values. Van der Wal (2008) asked whether “new values” like innovation, quality and profitability are more important than “old values” like integrity, neutrality and efficiency.

The third way is “putting forward some basic bifurcation of or other kind of dimensional distinction between values” (Rutgers 2008: 98), for example, hard and soft values, personal and individual values versus system or organizational values (98).

Ranking values needs to be done within a certain practical context, for instance, within specific organizations such as government agencies or business enterprises, or within different country settings. Value rankings have been proved to be different for politicians and civil servants (Van den Heuvel et al. 2002), as well as for public managers and business executives (Van der Wal 2008).

Methodology

This study compared the data from a survey of 15 civil servants in a bureau of Shanghai and 8 civil servants in the Integrity Bureau of Amsterdam, working for the sectors require professional knowledge about ethics of civil servants. Codes of conduct in two countries were also investigated to find which values were mentioned most frequently.

Sampling and respondent selection

The samples were confirmed in two geographical different cities: the civil servants in Shanghai, China and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The reason of selecting these two cities is: both differences and similarities of moral values preferences in two countries are expected to investigate. In small typical Chinese and Dutch city without many multi-cultural influences, differences will be obvious but similarities are difficult to find. Shanghai and Amsterdam are both international cities which develop in multi-cultural environment, making them not characteristic for single value intendance but more comparative because of the intersections.

The respondents are those who familiar with or having professional knowledge of moral values in civil service since they can provide reliable information. The respondents in Amsterdam worked in legal advising and law enforcement, administrative and paper work, policy-making and risk analysis. The respondents in Shanghai mainly worked in supervision, legal advising and law enforcement, administrative and paper work. According to respondents' request, the name of department in Shanghai is avoided to mention in the survey.

The questionnaires were sent out via mail and e-mail during February 28, 2011 to March 16, 2011 in both cities. The questionnaire for respondents in Shanghai is in

Chinese and English while the questionnaire for Amsterdam is only in English. The response rate of questionnaire from Shanghai is 100% and 80% from Amsterdam.

How to construct a value hierarchy

The respondents were asked to rate and rank the values according to the importance of each value for being a good civil servant. Two steps were taken to establish the order of importance. First, respondents gave the score of each value to show its importance (10 = very important; 1 = not important at all), resulting in a mean (M) score for each value. Then the respondents were asked to rank the 5 most important values out of the list of 30 and order them from 1 to 5. The sum (Σ) of each value which multiplies the frequency with the ranking of the value makes up the final hierarchy.

Construction of a value set for the pilot study in Shanghai

The value set for survey in Shanghai was based on Table 1. Clearly, in table 1 some related values have similar meanings, so it is not necessary to include all of them in the survey. The following statements explain which moral values are included and how to define them.

First of all, although Confucianism is unique to combine personal morals with governance, values of governance also exist in Taoism and Legalism. So besides Confucian values, Taoist values like Liberty, Harmony and Stability, and Legalist values like Lawfulness, Loyalty and Obedience were included as well.

Secondly, Chinese character usually contains more meanings than a responsive English word, so if a Confucian concept contains different values can not be replaced each other, they are all included. For example, the concept “yi” can be understood in different ways or with regard to different aspects. When we talk it in the public

society, it refers to social justice; when we talk in individual aspect, it concerns personal morality as righteousness and propriety.

Thirdly, some Confucian concept is general and can be translated into various English words but with similar meaning, then only one word was used to represent them, such as “ren”. Humaneness expresses the core concern of ren, the values of benevolence, friendliness, kindness are partly contained in humaneness. As a result, only Humaneness is included but other values contained in the definition.

Fourthly, “filial piety” is a very important and typical Confucian value, but it is more relevant to morals in private life nowadays rather than in administration. The related values such as obedience and loyalty are included instead. The similar change happens on “wisdom”, which is a Confucian word but replaced by “expertise”.

Then, although “integrity” is used as translation of cheng-xin in Table 1, it is “not a separate value in the terminology” (Van der Wal 2008:62). However, unlike Van der Wal’s analysis that honesty and impartiality partly characterize “integrity”, the relevant values honesty and reliability are included here to describe the meanings of integrity separately. Honesty represents sincerity and truthfulness that are closely related in meaning, as well as faithfulness with the meaning of complying with promises. Reliability is included with the meaning of being trustworthy and dependable.

Finally, the definition of each value is based on its meaning in Confucian background: from both personal moral and governance perspectives. But some values also in value set for pilot survey in Amsterdam are defined not so “Confucian” but identical with the definitions in the set of organization values (Van der Wal 2008: 65) for the sake of comparison.

Based on these statements, prominent values in Confucian context are shown in alphabetical order with definitions in Table 2.

Table 2: Value set for pilot study in Shanghai

No.	Values
1	Cautiousness: Act carefully and with the caution to avoid error or mistake.
2	Courage: Act bravely to face danger and take risks to pursue what is right.
3	Courteousness: Act politely with good manners and in accordance with social norms.
4	Dedication: Act with diligence, enthusiasm and perseverance.
5	Diligence: Act with persistent effort to carry out tasks or duties.
6	Equality: Act identically and unbiased to the people who have identical rights.
7	Expertise: Act with competence, skill and professional knowledge.
8	Harmony: Act in a balanced way towards human and nature, keep interpersonal relationship and society in good order.
9	Honesty: Act truthfully and comply with promises.
10	Humaneness: Act with kindness and benevolence to advance the interests and welfare of humans.
11	Humility: Act modestly without arrogance and submissively towards others.
12	Incorruptibility: Act unprejudiced, unbiased by private interests.
13	Justice: Act consistently with what is morally right.
14	Lawfulness: Act in accordance with existing laws and rules.
15	Liberty: Act to protect the individual's freedom to make their own choices without control or interference.
16	Loyalty: Act faithfully and with allegiance towards superiors or organizations.
17	People-oriented: Act to achieve public interest in accordance with the common people's concern.
18	Obedience: Act in compliance with the instructions and policies (of superiors and the organization).
19	Propriety: Act appropriately and in accordance with what is considered suitable to one's identity.
20	Reliability: Act trustworthy and consistently towards relevant stakeholders.
21	Respectfulness: Act with appreciation and consideration towards others, conduct without violence or rudeness.
22	Responsibility: Act willingly to take one's obligation and dutifully to make decision or judgment.
23	Righteousness: Act frankly without guilt and adhering to what is morally upright as faith.
24	Self-fulfillment: Act to promote the (professional) development and well-being of oneself as a civil servant.
25	Selflessness: Act without self-concern or self-interest.
26	Self-reliance: Act independently based on ones own capabilities and judgment, free from external constraints.
27	Serviceability: Act helpfully and offer quality and service towards citizens and customers.
28	Stability: Act to achieve the steady society and avoid sudden changes.
29	Thrift: Act to use resources efficiently and economically without waste or extravagance.
30	Tolerance: Act with consideration in others' places to respect their rights, believes or practices.

Construct of a value set for pilot study in Amsterdam

Thanks to Van der Wal's earlier research, the value list for pilot survey in Amsterdam was obtained directly from the results of his study⁶. After reviewing seven relevant books on administrative ethics and on values, as well as 46 issues of "Public Integrity (1999-2003)" and the Public Administration Review (1999-2002), the 30 most frequently mentioned values were listed (shown in Table 3).

Table 3: Value set for pilot study in Amsterdam

No.	Values
1	Accountability: Act willingly to justify and explain actions to the relevant stakeholders
2	Autonomy: Act independently with the right or freedom of self-governance from arbitrary control.
3	Collegiality: Act loyally and show solidarity towards colleagues.
4	Competitiveness: Act willingly to compete, improve or obtain the capability to offer goods/service to the public and get support.
5	Cooperativeness: Act willingly to work with others and adjust differences to get agreement or common purpose.
6	Courage: Act bravely to face danger and take risks to pursue what is right.
7	Dedication: Act with diligence, enthusiasm and perseverance.
8	Effectiveness: Act to achieve the desired results.
9	Efficiency: Act to achieve results with minimal means.
10	Expertise: Act with competence, skill and knowledge.
11	Honesty: Act truthfully and comply with promises.
12	Humaneness: Act with kindness and benevolence to advance the interests and welfare of humans.
13	Impartiality: Act unprejudiced, unbiased by specific group interests
14	Innovativeness: Act with initiative and creativity (to invent or introduce new policies or products).
15	Incorruptibility: Act unprejudiced, unbiased by private interests.
16	Lawfulness: Act in accordance with existing laws and rules.
17	Loyalty: Act faithfully and with allegiance towards superiors or organizations.
18	Obedience: Act in compliance with the instructions and policies (of superiors and the organization).
19	Profitability: Act to achieve gain (financial or other).
20	Prudence: Act carefully and wisely in accordance with sound judgment, perform appropriately at a given time and place.
21	Reliability: Act trustworthy and consistently towards relevant stakeholders.
22	Representativeness: Act as the delegate or agent to achieve the common concern or interest.
23	Responsibility: Act willingly to take one's obligation and dutifully to make decision or judgment.
24	Responsiveness: Act in accordance with the preference of citizens and customers.
25	Self-fulfillment: Act to promote the (professional) development and well-being of oneself as a civil servant.
26	Serviceability: Act helpfully and offer quality and service towards citizens and customers.
27	Social justice: Act out of commitment to a just society.
28	Stability: Act to achieve a steady society and avoid sudden changes.
29	Sustainability: Act out of commitment to nature and the environment.
30	Transparency: Act openly, visibly and controllable.

Although it is not unthinkable that more similar exercises today would produce slightly different results, the review results are robust enough to serve as a basis for the survey here.

Because 20 out of 30 values were defined by Van der Wal, the definitions of these 20 were reproduced here. Some of the other values (e.g. humanness and loyalty) that appear also in Table 2 are identically defined in two tables. The remaining values have been defined with the use of a dictionary or other literature (e.g. de Graaf 2010).

Results

The quantitative data show which values are more or less important for being a good civil servant in two cities, which are shared and which are unique for specific city.

Important and less important values for civil servants in Shanghai

The survey results by civil servants in Shanghai were shown in Table 4, with 10 most important values in bold. Incorruptibility was the most important with the mean of 9.20 and the least one was Selflessness (4.79). Incorruptibility was also ranked 1st and 12 values were never considered as top 5 important values by any respondent.

The respondents gave a score from 1(not important at all) to 10 (very important) to describe the importance of each value, which resulted in the order of ratings. Respondents were not “forced” to choose limited number of values, so the rating implies all the values might receive high scores (Van der Wal 2008). Different values might get same scores, but it did not mean they would be same important when the respondents are forced to choose one from them, e.g. Equality, Honesty and Reliability rated the same (7.60) but they were not equally important when they were compared and ranked. That is also why we need the rankings of all values.

The respondents also ranked 5 most important values by order from 1 (the first most important moral value) to 5 (the fifth most important moral value) after they gave the score to each value. N (frequency of being chosen as one of 5 most important values) and M (mean) are shown in right part of Table 4 as well.

Table 4: Mean of value ratings and results of value rankings by civil servants in Shanghai (n=15)

Value ratings			Value rankings					
Value	M	SD	Value	Σ	N	M		
1	Inc	9,20	1,42	1	Inc	31	9	3,44
2	Lawfulness	8,53	1,51	2	Lawfulness	28	8	3,50
3	Righteousness	8,53	1,46	3	Loyalty	23	6	3,83
4	Justice	8,30	2,33	4	People-oriented	19	5	3,80
5	Responsibility	8,30	1,25	5	Justice	17	5	3,40
6	People-oriented	8,20	1,78	6	Righteousness	14	5	2,80
7	Expertise	8,10	1,63	7	Expertise	13	4	3,25
8	Loyalty	7,63	2,22	8	Obedience	13	5	2,60
9	Equality	7,60	2,23	9	Diligence	11	3	3,67
10	Honesty	7,60	2,67	10	Honesty	8	3	2,67
11	Reliability	7,60	1,96	11	Reliability	8	4	2,00
12	Obedience	7,47	2,56	12	Responsibility	8	4	2,00
13	Respectfulness	7,33	1,50	13	Dedication	6	2	3,00
14	Serviceability	7,23	2,04	14	Humility	4	1	4,00
15	Propriety	7,14	1,51	15	Propriety	2	2	1,00
16	Diligence	7,10	2,07	16	Respectfulness	2	1	2,00
17	Thrift	7,07	1,62	17	Self-fulfillment	2	2	1,00
18	Tolerance	7,07	1,62	18	Courage	1	1	1,00
19	Cautiousness	7,00	2,07	19	Cautiousness	0	0	0
20	Humaneness	6,97	2,16	20	Courteousness	0	0	0
21	Dedication	6,87	2,59	21	Equality	0	0	0
22	Self-fulfillment	6,80	2,40	22	Harmony	0	0	0
23	Humility	6,71	2,70	23	Humaneness	0	0	0
24	Courteousness	6,67	1,84	24	Liberty	0	0	0
25	Harmony	6,67	2,41	25	Selflessness	0	0	0
26	Stability	6,63	1,93	26	Self-reliance	0	0	0
27	Courage	6,47	2,36	27	Serviceability	0	0	0
28	Self-reliance	6,00	1,96	28	Stability	0	0	0
29	Liberty	5,97	2,00	29	Thrift	0	0	0
30	Selflessness	4,79	2,49	30	Tolerance	0	0	0

The order depended on the sum (Σ) but not on the mean as was the case for the ratings, because N was different for each value here and the sum could reflect the influences of both N and M ($M = \Sigma/N$). For example, the mean of Humility was 4.00, which was higher than Reliability (2.00), but it didn't imply Humility was more important. Because only 1 respondent ranked it and there were 4 ranked Reliability,

the sum of Reliability (8) was higher than Humility (4). Arguably, a higher N did not point at a higher importance.

Interestingly, the rating results showed a big leap between Incorruptibility (9.20) and Lawfulness (8.53). It implied that Incorruptibility generally received much higher scores than Lawfulness or any other value. Compare the results by ranking to means of rating, there were minor changes. Equality, Respectfulness and Serviceability rated 9th, 13th and 14th, but not ranked in top 10, particularly no respondent ranked Equality or Serviceability as one of 5 most important moral values. Diligence and Dedication ranked 9th and 13th but rated 16th and 21st which out of top 10. This confirms what discussed before: the values with high scores probably not ranked highly. Except positions changes of Responsibility (rated 5th and ranked 12th) and Loyalty (rated 8th and ranked 3rd), other values were almost in the same positions.

Both the ratings and rankings confirmed that Confucian moral thought was considered more influential than values of other schools, e.g. Taoist values of liberty (rated 29th and ranked 24th), stability (rated 26th and ranked 28th) and harmony (rated 25th and ranked 22nd).

It is worth mentioning that lawfulness surprisingly rated and ranked 2nd, which was seemly not accordance with Confucian tradition. However, when we think of the role that rules, procedures and regulations play in Chinese administration, the prominent position of lawfulness does not come as a surprise. “Rule of law” and “Rule of morality” have worked as two basic strategies to run state affairs since 2001. In this procedure, the force of law and the power of morals were declared to combine together for a stable state. Laws have force to protect social order and individual's legal rights, while morals can gradually and inherently influence individuals to form proper values and behavior. “Rule of law” and “Rule of morality” are considered two

different ways to achieve the same goal – society’s development – and should be treated equally like a “bird’s two wings” (Zheng 2009: 185). “Rule of law”, it has been argued, has recently even been a more fundamental approach or perspective than “Rule of morality” (Wei 2010; Guo 2008). The conscious of lawfulness is increasingly stronger during the balance of “Rule of morality” and “Rule of law”. That exactly explains why Lawfulness rated and ranked highly in this survey.

Important moral values for civil servants in Amsterdam

The survey results by civil servants in Amsterdam are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Mean of value ratings and results of value rankings by civil servants in Amsterdam (n=8)

Value rankings				Value rankings			
Value	M	SD	Value	Σ	N	M	
1 Incorruptibility	9,00	1,07	1 Transparency	26	6	4,33	
2 Transparency	8,88	1,36	2 Reliability	16	5	3,20	
3 Honesty	8,75	1,14	3 Incorruptibility	15	6	2,50	
4 Impartiality	8,63	1,14	4 Impartiality	10	3	3,33	
5 Reliability	8,50	1,14	5 Accountability	9	4	2,25	
6 Accountability	8,14	1,41	6 Social justice	9	2	4,50	
7 Expertise	8,13	0,64	7 Responsibility	7	2	3,50	
8 Social justice	8,13	1,10	8 Honesty	6	3	2,00	
9 Courage	7,88	1,30	9 Prudence	5	1	5,00	
10 Lawfulness	7,88	0,64	10 Humaneness	4	1	4,00	
11 Responsibility	7,88	0,99	11 Responsiveness	4	2	2,00	
12 Effectiveness	7,75	1,00	12 Competitiveness	3	1	3,00	
13 Prudence	7,75	0,45	13 Courage	3	2	1,50	
14 Responsiveness	7,63	1,48	14 Effectiveness	2	1	2,00	
15 Serviceability	7,50	0,89	15 Serviceability	1	1	1,00	
16 Humaneness	7,38	1,19	16 Autonomy	0	0	0	
17 Dedication	7,25	0,89	17 Collegiality	0	0	0	
18 Efficiency	7,25	1,28	18 Cooperativeness	0	0	0	
19 Innovativeness	7,25	1,52	19 Dedication	0	0	0	
20 Representativeness	7,25	0,89	20 Efficiency	0	0	0	
21 Collegiality	7,13	0,83	21 Expertise	0	0	0	
22 Cooperativeness	7,00	1,10	22 Innovativeness	0	0	0	
23 Competitiveness	6,75	2,05	23 Lawfulness	0	0	0	
24 Obedience	6,75	0,84	24 Loyalty	0	0	0	
25 Loyalty	6,50	1,31	25 Obedience	0	0	0	
26 Sustainability	6,38	2,45	26 Profitability	0	0	0	
27 Self-fulfillment	5,88	2,23	27 Representativeness	0	0	0	
28 Autonomy	5,86	1,86	28 Self-fulfillment	0	0	0	
29 Stability	5,75	2,19	29 Stability	0	0	0	
30 Profitability	4,63	2,70	30 Sustainability	0	0	0	

The respondents rated 30 values by describing the importance of each value from 1 (not important at all) to 10 (very important), independent of one another. The Table shows the most important value for civil servants in Amsterdam is incorruptibility. and the least important one is profitability.

Transparency was ranked 1st, and 15 values were never mentioned as top 5 important values by any respondent. Interestingly, competitiveness ranked 12th but rated only 23rd, and humaneness ranked in the top 10 but is rated slightly lower (16th). Expertise and Lawfulness received high scores (rated in 7th and 10th), but surprisingly no respondent ranked any of them as one of five most important values.

When the data is compared to research results of earlier studies, the most and least important values by rating (incorruptibility and profitability) are the same with previous ratings showed by Van der Wal (2008: 70). The comparison of results by ranking revealed that honesty (8th) and transparency (1st) ranked higher than before (13th and 9th), but lawfulness and expertise fell to 23rd and 21st from earlier 2nd and 4th.

It is necessary to remind that the results in this survey were obtained from only 15 respondents in Shanghai and 8 respondents in Amsterdam. It does not contain the same validity as earlier surveys that involved hundreds of respondents.

Similarities and differences between Chinese and Dutch civil servants

Values that are rated among the 10 most important in both cities and can be considered 'shared values' are: Incorruptibility, Honesty, Reliability, (Social) Justice, Expertise, Social justice, Lawfulness and Responsibility.

Values that are ranked among the 10 most important in both cities and can be considered 'shared values' are: Incorruptibility, (Social) Justice, Expertise, Honesty, Reliability and Responsibility. Competitiveness, and Humaneness.

Tables 4 and 5 show the main differences and similarities, but we mention a few interesting contrasts here. Civil servants in Shanghai both rated and ranked highly obedience and loyalty while they rated and ranked in 24th and 25th by respondents in Amsterdam, a classical reflection of both administrative and societal cultures. On another note, as we mentioned before, expertise and lawfulness dropped dramatically when comparing ratings (7th and 10th) and rankings (21st and 23rd) in Amsterdam, but both of them rated and ranked exactly similar in Shanghai (lawfulness rated and ranked both 2nd and expertise rated and ranked both 7th).

The core values in codes of conduct

Codes of conduct usually offer criteria to judge what government employees should do and what should not do, so the codes of conducts for civil service can reveal what an “ideal” civil servant should be like.

Table 6: Listed Values in Chinese governmental codes of conducts

Position	Core values	Percentage of codes in which value is listed (n=26)
1	Lawfulness	92,3
2	Innovativeness	88,5
3	People-oriented	88,5
4	Diligence	84,6
5	Efficiency	84,6
6	Incorruptibility	80,8
7	Propriety	80,8
8	Loyalty	76,9
9	Cooperativeness	73,1
10	Responsibility	73,1
11	Serviceability	73,1
12	Honesty	61,5
13	Reliability	61,5
14	Righteousness	61,5
15	Justice	53,8
16	Courteousness	50,0
17	Pragmaticalness	50,0
18	Expertise	46,2
19	Thrift	46,2

As Rutgers (2008: 97) mentioned, “the most frequently referred to values” is also a way to create order of values. So as an addition to the results of the pilot survey, the percentages of codes mentioning different values also indicate the most important values for being a good civil servant.

We reviewed two state codes, ten provincial codes and fourteen municipal codes in Chinese governments.⁷ Table 6 shows most frequently mentioned values by the percentage of codes in which the value was listed.

The results of core values in Dutch public sector codes of conduct are basically from earlier research results, e.g. Ethicon (2003)⁸ and data published by OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) in 2000⁹.

In order to keep consistent with the values used in pilot survey, some values in Ethicon’s results and OECD publication were replaced: Integrity is often used instead of the closely related “incorruptibility” (Van der Wal 2008: 69), so Integrity is separately contained in Honesty and Incorruptibility here; Trustworthiness and Credibility are contained in Honesty and Reliability; Prudence contains Carefulness; Professionalism can be expressed by Expertise. Legality is quite similar to lawfulness.

Table 7 Core values in Dutch/European codes of conduct

Values
Efficiency
Equality
Expertise
Functionality
Honesty
Impartiality
Incorruptibility
Independence
Justice
Lawfulness
Prudence
Reliability
Responsibility
Restraint
Transparency/openness

So integrity, trustworthiness, credibility, carefulness, professionalism and legality were replaced by incorruptibility, honesty, reliability, prudence and expertise in the following value set construct process. Table 7 shows core values in Dutch codes of conduct.

The final value set for the follow-up survey

The value set was constructed, based on the previous pilot survey results and investigation of the codes of conduct. Arguably, it is impossible to include all these values in final value set. Only the most important ones were selected. So first of all the values which ordered below the 10th were excluded. Then the most important value lists were analyzed respectively in Chinese and Dutch context. Both of them based on three lists: the 10 most important values by rating, by ranking and by codes of conduct. The following rules were made to decide which values would be finally included.

Rules (top 10 of each order):

1. Include those that appeared all in the top 10 of rating, ranking as well as their frequency in codes.
2. Include those that were both highly rated and ranked, or both highly rated and frequently mentioned, or both highly ranked and frequently mentioned in codes.
3. Include those that were rated and ranked, or both rated and mentioned, or both ranked and mentioned in codes.
4. Include those that were highly rated or ranked, or mentioned frequently in codes.

5. Omit those that were rated, ranked or mentioned (as) relatively low.

In terms of these rules, the most important values in the Chinese and Dutch civil service are shown in Table 8, as well as the final value set for further research that combines both.

Table 8 Final value set as a survey research instrument

Most important values in Chinese civil service	Most important values in Dutch civil service	Final value set
1. Cooperativeness	1. Accountability	1. Accountability
2. Diligence	2. Courage	2. Cooperativeness
3. Efficiency	3. Effectiveness	3. Courage
4. Equality	4. Efficiency	4. Diligence
5. Expertise	5. Equality	5. Equality
6. Honesty	6. Expertise	6. Expertise
7. Incorruptibility	7. Honesty	7. Effectiveness
8. Innovativeness	8. Impartiality	8. Efficiency
9. Justice	9. Incorruptibility	9. Honesty
10. Lawfulness	10. Independence	10. Impartiality
11. Loyalty	11. Justice	11. Incorruptibility
12. People-oriented	12. Lawfulness	12. Independence
13. Obedience	13. Prudence	13. Innovativeness
14. Propriety	14. Reliability	14. (Social) Justice
15. Reliability	15. Responsibility	15. Lawfulness
16. Responsibility	16. Responsiveness	16. Loyalty
17. Righteousness	17. Transparency	17. People-oriented
18. Serviceability		18. Obedience
		19. Propriety
		20. Prudence
		21. Reliability
		22. Responsibility
		23. Responsiveness
		24. Righteousness
		25. Serviceability
		26. Transparency

Discussion

From the moral value ratings and rankings by civil servants in Shanghai, the “Rule of morality” administrative culture in China was reflected by prominence of typical Confucian moral values shown in the survey results. Traditional Chinese culture and Confucian values make the “merit-based, hierarchical civil service” (Aufrecht and Li 1995: 181) with “Chinese characteristics” (157). Whereas emphasis on “Rule of law”

nowadays promoted Lawfulness rated and ranked in high position. Moreover, the survey implied that professional ethics and personal morals are gradually separated, and that is different with traditional Confucian thought. Responsibility, Expertise, Reliability and Incorruptibility were quite important compare to less importance of individual morals like Humility, Thrift and Courteousness.

Most of the core values in Chinese governments codes of conduct align with those values in the survey, such as Lawfulness, People-oriented, Honesty, Incorruptibility, Responsibility, Righteousness, etc. Nevertheless, values like Innovativeness, Efficiency, Cooperativeness and Pragmaticalness were not part of the pilot survey in Shanghai. These values are not typical Confucian morals but very important in codes of conduct nowadays. They are related to “intra organizational aspects of public administration” which “contrast with the reliable machine” like innovation or “New Public Management values” such as effectiveness and businesslike approach (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman 2007: 366). This indicates that the Chinese civil service, at least in terms of espoused values in the official codes, is gradually adopting new approaches from New Public Administration and Western administration which are different with traditional Chinese “rule of morality” focuses mainly on individual values. Western administrative techniques were studied in the process of Chinese civil service reform. More independence and professionalism of civil service were also suggested in the answers of respondents to the open question of “what other values are important but not listed in the questionnaire”: “Enthusiasm” with the reason of “civil service should be treated as a career with passion” and “Cooperation” to “complete a common mission”.

For the Dutch civil service, the most prominent values are quite consistent no matter whether we look at the ratings, rankings or the codes of conduct. The

‘Rechtsstaat’ or rule of law principle promoted the legal position of civil servants and civil service evolved into “professional service” (Raadschelders and Rutgers 1996: 83). The results of this survey confirmed the importance of values up to the rules or “up to the job” (van der Meer and Dijkstra 2011: 273) in Dutch civil service.

To conclude, this study had four aims. The first was to get two moral value lists respectively in Confucian moral-based context and European law-based context (table 1 and table 2). Each list includes thirty values which were prominent in terms of literature and previous research. The second was to obtain the empirical insights into moral values preference for being a good civil servant in two cities. The third aim was to construct a value set including most important moral values based on survey results got in both two cities. The values in this final value set are not only “Chinese” or “Dutch” but a combination. The further study was planned to test whether the civil servants in China and the Netherlands have a value preference in accordance with the administrative culture they are in. The last but not least was to offer information for leaders to know more about which values should be paid more attention to construct ethical leadership.

This study is the first attempt to construct a Confucian value set and compare civil servants’ moral value preferences in two administrative cultures. More effort on obtaining interesting quantitative data was at the cost of less depth of conceptual investigation. Further research has been planned to provide more evidence both with a larger sample and more variance among the types of the respondents (junior and senior, different cities etc.)

Implications for ethical leadership

Ethical leadership focuses on what a moral leader should do. “A reputation for ethical leadership rests upon two essential pillars: perceptions of you as both a moral person and a moral manager” (Treviño et al. 2000: 128). No matter a moral person or a moral leader, it implies the questions of personal appropriate conduct and “the promotion of such conduct to followers” (Brown and Treviño 2006: 595). Accordingly, the value preferences of civil servants have important implications for how ethical leadership should come about in both sectors’ public sectors. This importance consist of three reasons in particular.

First, to be able know which moral values ethical leaders should promote towards their staff and which values deserve explicit attention in the process of ‘socializing’ one into the desired organizational ethos, they have to be aware of existing value preferences among their ‘followers’. In other words, ethical leaders have to know what moral standards should be set. The results show that although there are many similarities between administrative cultures and ethics around the globe, there are also particular differences to take into account. In the case of Shanghai and the Netherlands we see perhaps more similarities than differences, but for instance loyalty and obedience are considered much more important by Chinese civil servants than by their Dutch counterparts. By another – more surprising – example, Chinese administrators do not need their leaders to put much emphasis on innovativeness and serviceability as they considered those important already, while this goes much less for the surveyed staff in Amsterdam.¹⁰

Second, leaders should know what their followers think about specific values and specific ethical conduct if they want to change or influence followers’ conduct. Ethical leaders should “communicate with their followers about ethics” (597), how

the followers understand moral values and whether they accept those to be prominent in terms of the organizational standards that ultimately evaluate their conduct.

Third, ethical leaders also need to know who they are leading. In another word, leaders should know that moral values probably are not only prioritized but also *interpreted* and *enacted* differently in difference administrative contexts. Finally, ethical leadership concerns how ethical leaders “should” (595) or “ought” (596) to behave. The main question of “which moral values are most important for being a good civil servant” in this survey also concerns which values “should” be important. In that respect, the results of this study might prove meaningful for leaders that aim to be ethical leaders in Eastern and Western contexts. When setting moral standards in China, emphasis should be placed on for instance loyalty, commitment, justice, honesty and the moral development of civil servants, whereas, next to these values, public sector leaders in the Netherlands also have to act with transparency and accountability at all times in order to persuade their followers to do the same.

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Notes

¹“Moral values” used in this paper concentrated on moral principles, believes and standards accepted by a person or a group, which are different with economic or aesthetic values. In the survey parts, except specific explanation, “value(s)” mentioned simply stands for “moral value(s)”.

²“Traditional” usually means the time from the pre-Qin period to 1911 Xinhai Revolution (Lu Yu 2009). This kind of time division is quite rational and understandable. Xinhai Revolution ended the Qing Period, which means the death of feudal time in China. After the building of Republic of China in 1912, China entered a brand new time. Pre-Qin period is a general name means the whole time before Qin Period (221BC). It contains Xia Dynasty, Shang Dynasty, Zhou Dynasty, the Spring-autumn and Warring States Period. The period before Xia Dynasty is called “Xian Gu” in Chinese, which means “before ancient time”. China had come into feudalism since Qin Dynasty was founded. Confucius lived in the Spring-autumn period, and that is the time Confucian thought stems from. Before Han Dynasty, different schools developed freely and debated each other, which is the famous “a hundred schools of thoughts contend” period. After that, Confucianism was the main part of Chinese traditional culture.

³ Several Confucian concepts that are relevant to the Confucian moral outlook: “Cheng-ming, jen, li, Hsiao, shu and tao” (K. L. Lai 1995: 250)

⁴ 14 moral principles: Loyalty (Zhong), Filial piety (Xiao), Forgiveness (Shu), Righteousness (Yi), Propriety (Li), Integrity (Xin), Respectfulness (Gong), Humility(Rang), Courageousness (Yong), Love (Ai), Benevolence (Ren), Self-reliance (Ziqiang), Diligence and thrift (Qinjian) and Modesty (Qian).

⁵ When I think which word is suitable for a Chinese value, I combine the meaning of this value in Chinese and the correspond one in European research. Sometimes, the word might be not the most exact one, but for the reason of doing survey both in China and the Netherlands, it might be the proper and understandable one. Explanations and brief definitions are given for each value in survey.

⁶ Cluster results for the administrative ethics literature (Van der Wal 2008: 55)

Cluster	Total		
1 Honesty	434	16 Cooperativeness	191
2 Humaneness	422	17 Responsiveness	184
3 Social justice	402	18 Dedication	183
4 Impartiality	380	19 Effectiveness	181
5 Transparency	379	20 Innovativeness	179
6 Integrity	365	21 Lawfulness	152
7 Obedience	357	22 Loyalty	146
8 Reliability	329	23 Consistency	111
9 Responsibility	327	24 Autonomy	99
10 Expertise	314	25 Stability	99
11 Accountability	294	26 Representativeness	88
12 Efficiency	276	27 Competitiveness	77
13 Courage	254	28 Profitability	59
14 Prudence	220	29 Collegiality	48
15 Serviceability	215	30 Self-fulfillment	16

⁷ The state codes of conduct are: State Civil Service Code of Conduct and the Program for Improving Citizens Moral Education. The provincial codes are in: Jilin province (3 codes); Shandong; Inner Mongolia; Hubei; Sichuan; Guangxi; Beijing and Shanghai. The municipal codes are: Nanjing (in Jiangsu province); Jiaozuo (in Henan province); Huangshan (in Anhui province); Guangzhou (in Guangdong province); Anqing (in Anhui province); Baoji (in Shaanxi province); Chengdu (in Sichuan province); Dongguan (in Guangdong province); Qingdao (in Shandong province); Shenzhen (in Guangdong province); Urumchi (in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region); Xi-an (in Shaanxi province); Jilin (in Jilin province) and Hangzhou (in Zhejiang province).Guangdong province); Anqing (in Anhui province); Baoji (in Shaanxi province); Chengdu (in Sichuan province); Dongguan (in Guangdong province); Qingdao (in Shandong province); Shenzhen (in Guangdong province); Urumchi (in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region); Xi-an (in Shaanxi province); Jilin (in Jilin province) and Hangzhou (in Zhejiang province).

⁸ Core values in the Dutch public sector codes of conducts (Ethicon 2003)

Core values	Percent of codes mentioning the value (n=59)
1. Integrity	98
2. Transparency/openness	88
3. Responsibility	78
4. Trust/trustworthiness	76
5. Carefulness	76
6. Independence	75
7. Reliability	68
8. Professionalism	44
9. Restraint	39
10. Functionality	36
11. Credibility	31

⁹ Based on the core values published in all 29 OECD countries, the eight most important frequently stated core public service values were Impartiality, Legality, Integrity, Transparency, Efficiency, Equality, Responsibility and Justice (OECD Public Management Policy Brief : September 2000).

¹⁰ Again though, it has to be noted that the sample of the pilot survey is much too small to draw any general conclusion, and doing so was not the aim of the exercise in the first place.