# ORIGINAL ARTICLES

# Professionalism vs. Public Service Motivation: Can Public Administration Education Alleviate the Tension?

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Prior research has documented pernicious effects of professional education on prosocial and public service motivations. Considering the centrality of these values for public administration education—also increasingly professionalized—it is vital to understand the effect undergoing such training has on future public servants. Based on a historical review of the emergence of professionalism, with special emphasis on the Weberian conceptions of rationalization, we develop hypotheses regarding the likely effect of M.P.A. education on students' public service motivation and leadership styles, and test them using data from surveys completed by students before beginning and after graduating from a Master of Public Administration program. The effects on leadership styles are consistent with the aspirations of M.P.A. programs; however, the effects on public service motivation are mixed, and largely congruent with the literature on the effects of professional education on prosocial and service motivations, and not fully congruent with the aspirations of M.P.A programs.

> *… the specific difference between the bureaucrat and the civil servant being that the civil servant is a liberally educated man whose liberal education affects him decisively in the performance of his duties*. (Strauss, 1995, p. 18)
>
> *It is not easy to find a man who can study for three years*
> *without thinking about earning a salary.*
> *(Confucius,* The Analects, *Book VIII)*

The M.P.A. degree is intended to educate public servants to "carry out their day-to-day work in a manner that is informed by broad understandings and relevant conceptual perspectives" (McSwite, 2001, p. 111). As with other professions, M.P.A. education includes bodies of esoteric, theoretically grounded knowledge, technical skills, and values to guide its practice (Abbott, 1988; Becker, 1962; Evetts, 2014; Hughes, 1958; Noordegraaf, 2007). In addition to expertise, all professions profess to promote the public good (Cogan, 1953; Hall, 1968; Lewis & Maude, 1952; Snizek, 1972). These values are especially highlighted in the field of public

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administration, where the notions of "public service" and "the public interest" are central to the identity and public image of public administration as a profession. Accordingly, assessing the extent to which professional M.P.A. training enhances students' commitment to the public interest, furthers their motivation to serve the public, and cultivates the relevant leadership skills to do so is of interest to the educational and professional communities as well as to the general public.

Such an assessment is especially important given that some fifty years of research documents professional education's *negative influence* on students' empathy, prosocial motivations, or concern for the public good in fields such as medicine, law, and engineering (e.g., Bombeke et al., 2010; Cech, 2013; Coulehan & Williams, 2001; Crandall, Davis, Broeseker, & Hildebrandt, 2008; Erlanger & Klegon, 1978; Hojat et al., 2004; Hojat et al., 2009; Khajavi & Hekmat, 1971; Michalec, 2011; Ondrack, 1975; Sheldon & Krieger, 2004; Sherman & Cramer, 2005; Wolf, Balson, Faucett, & Randall, 1989).[1] Such studies have repeatedly demonstrated, in general, that undergoing a course of professional education causes a decline in students' prosocial and service motivations and their empathy, and that their attitudes shift from "idealistic" towards "pragmatic" over the course of such education (Ondrack, 1975)—overall, a pronounced de-emphasis in the inclination for or the ability of moral reasoning.[2]

This article addresses the puzzle of professional education's pernicious effect on students' social concerns by examining professionalism as a theoretical construct, relying heavily on Max Weber's thinking about the rationalization of education in modern society. It then turns to the question of an M.P.A. education and its influence on students' commitment to public service and their leadership styles. These questions are assessed using data from student surveys completed before beginning and after completing a typical NASPAA-accredited M.P.A. program. The inherent tension between bureaucratic imperatives and questions of values and moral behavior motivates the study hypotheses, grounded in the literatures of professionalization, bureaucratization, and rationalization. It appears that professional education, in general, is inherently hostile to developing a nuanced and rigorous understanding of "the public interest," but M.P. A. degrees do provide unique opportunities to alleviate the antagonism between instrumental rationality and democratic values.


## PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, RATIONALITY, AND VALUES

Across professions, graduate education includes knowledge of theory, technical skills, and norms that address the accepted attitudes of professional practice (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Professional education plays a central role in socializing students to the profession's norms, values, and dispositions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), leading to "similarities in work practices and procedures, common ways of perceiving problems and their possible solutions, and shared ways of perceiving and interacting with customers and clients" (Evetts, 2013, p. 780). Socializing students in the profession's norms and values not only shapes their work as practitioners but also legitimizes professional conduct in society (Buchholtz, 1989; Long & Driscoll, 2008). The inclusion of norms and values in professional education helps maintain the profession's social legitimacy (Frankel, 1989; Long & Driscoll, 2008), and dedication to the common good, or the "service ideal," is one of the values typically associated with professions (Evetts, 2003; Goode, 1957; Greenwood, 1957; Hall, 1968; Hughes, 1958).

Despite the importance of prosocial values to professional practice, the evidence suggesting that professional training actually *hurts* such values is substantial. Empirical studies of students in the "established professions" of medicine, law, and engineering have repeatedly demonstrated that professional education causes a decline in students' prosocial and service motivations (e.g., Bombeke et al., 2010; Cech, 2013; Coulehan & Williams, 2001; Crandall et al., 2008; Erlanger & Klegon, 1978; Hojat et al., 2004; Hojat et al., 2009; Khajavi & Hekmat, 1971; Michalec, 2011; Ondrack, 1975; Sheldon & Krieger, 2004; Sherman & Cramer, 2005; Wolf et al., 1989), diminishes empathy (Pedersen, 2009), and shifts students' attitudes from the "idealistic" to the "pragmatic" (Ondrack, 1975). Many programs incorporate an "ethics component" (typically a class in ethics) and actively endorse the values of compassion, yet tacitly subscribe to detachment, self-interest, and objectivity (Coulehan & Williams, 2001). However, the "hidden curriculum" of professional education (Goldie, 2000) likely cancels out the effects of compartmentalized ethics training.

Competency-based education (Spady, 1977; Voorhees, 2001) was once the domain of vocational training but "has become the norm for professional graduate degree programs" (Rissi & Gelman, 2014, p. 335). The shift to competency-based education is another manifestation of the trend in rationalization of education and training, predicted and observed in its nascent form by Weber (1968, p. 998). Weber's thinking remains indispensable to analysis of bureaucratic rationalization and its implications—not because he is in any way a "progenitor" of public administration—a "perverse identification" (Lynn, 2001, p. 157), but because of the value of his broader sociological insight placing the genesis of modern bureaucracies in social context, thus revealing the social and historical origins of important ideas still central to modern notions of professionalism. These notions go beyond public administration as such, but apply to it as a particular professionalizing discipline.

The rationalization of education, according to Weber, was a consequence of bureaucratization, which in turn reshaped education and transformed its goals and ideals away from educating "the cultivated individual" and towards specialized training. Bureaucratization is a thoroughly modern process, and one that is primarily responsible for the break with the medieval, religion-based notion of professionalism. Although the established professions (most notably law[3] and the sciences) continue to emphasize their medieval origins, there is a radical discontinuity between the notion of modern professionalism, based exclusively on mastery of certain technical content, and the notion of medieval professionalism, understood by those practicing it as recognizing and honoring divine will in the world, specifically in their practice. Medieval scientists or lawyers were faithful and devoted to their professions, in part because of being fearful of deforming divine intent by engaging in "unprofessional conduct" (e.g., by conducting careless or inaccurate observations), or by developing legal arguments with insufficient care and attention, thus interfering with divine justice (Vernadskiǐ & Aksenov, 1993). While undeniably these origins of professionalism—especially later in even more democratized form, such as the Protestant devotion to a calling—are historically important, the quantitative "explosion" in rationalization and professionalization does not occur until the late nineteenth century, when religion no longer had any structural role to play in the modern social organization. Accordingly, the basis of professionalism became exclusively mastery of a body of knowledge as such, and lost its connection to divinely sanctioned duty.

Sociological research has yielded sets of characteristics that distinguish professions from other kinds of work (Benveniste, 1987; Evetts, 2003; Goode, 1957; Greenwood, 1957; Howe,

1980; Hughes, 1958; Noordegraaf, 2007; Sullivan, 2004) as well as accounts of their evolution from "mere jobs" to professions (Abbott, 1988; Caplow, 1954; Larson, 1977; Wilensky, 1964). While there is a variation in the different features in attempted "inventories" of the characteristics of professions, professions are generally defined as

> occupations with special power and prestige. Society grants these rewards because professions have special competence in esoteric bodies of knowledge linked to central needs and values of the social system, and because professions are ostensibly devoted to the service of the public, above and beyond material incentive. (Larson, 1977, p. x)

Formally, the success of the "professional project" (Muzio & Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 391)—the creation of a professional association that promulgates a code of ethics and secures a monopoly over practice in the field—distinguishes professions from other occupations (Abbott, 1988; Evetts, 2002; Larson, 1977).

M.P.A. education has been a part of this broad trend towards rationalization, and a large volume of work has been developed on the skills/competency/outcome approach to M.P.A. training (e.g., Aristigueta & Gomes, 2006; Holzer & Lin, 2007; Poister & Ingraham, 1991; Roberts & Pavlak, 2002; Tompkins, Laslovich, & Greene, 1996; Williams, 2002). Over the last thirty years, M.P.A. programs have been moving from a disciplinary-based generalist approach (Medeiros, 1974) to a professional-specialist approach (Raffel, 2009; Waldo, 1965). M.P.A. training has deemphasized the study of the state and political institutions but increased the emphasis on analytical techniques and practices (Holzer & Lin, 2007).

The project of professionalizing public administration education can be considered successful, based on both the external markers and the intellectual development of the field. The development of the modern state and politics "demanded training in the struggle for power" (Weber, Gerth, & Mills, 1946, p. 90), and educational programs and certificates, including public administration degrees, are called upon to provide the training for administrative officials. Accordingly, public administration meets the two fundamental benchmarks of professionalism: autonomous expertise (e.g., possession of the substantive expertise necessary to fulfill the administrative functions of the state), as well as professed dedication to public service and a sense of calling to the profession, or "the service ideal" (Rainey & Backoff, 1982; Wilensky, 1964). Professionalism's traditional path has been laid out for public managers, with the M.P.A. degree "or equivalent" being a requirement for many job openings, with the formation of professional associations, the establishment of training schools, and the identification of essential competencies (Noordegraaf, 2007).

Although the technical component of public administration as a profession may appear less defined and less rigorous than that of many other professions, its knowledge domain is conducive to successful professionalization by being neither too general and vague nor too narrow and specific, but occupying a middle ground most conducive to successfully claiming monopoly over a knowledge area as a basis for professionalization (Wilensky, 1964). This professionalization has been accomplished partly as a result of redefining professionalism in public administration as the "content of control," rather than "controlled content" (Noordegraaf, 2007). Although public administration has moved away from its disciplinary origins toward providing "professional orientation" (Waldo, 1965), its jurisdictional claims have not changed drastically; M.P.A. education provides *both* training in administrative functions and a survey of professional analytical techniques, with some variation across programs (Roeder & Whitaker, 1993).

The key professional norms into which M.P.A. students are expected to be socialized are commitment to the public interest and commitment to leadership. Indeed, the centrality of a sense of calling is more pronounced in public administration than in the "common professions," and also much easier to justify, at least rhetorically. As Weber et al., 1946 observe, "Modern bureaucracy in the interest of integrity has developed a high sense of status honor; … And without such integrity, even the purely technical functions of the state apparatus would be endangered" (p. 88). Indeed, if public administration is mostly concerned with public bureaucracies, in an important sense it is a "meta-profession," rendering much of the effort to distinguish professionalization and bureaucratization unnecessary at least in this context, the literature on the topic already being "plagued with contradictions and inconsistencies" (Kerr, Von Glinow, & Schriesheim, 1977, p. 329).

The practices of the bureaucrat and the professional are driven by the same principle: adherence to rationally established ways to act; and Weber himself did consider that obedience to rules and technical competence are simultaneous bases of authority in bureaucracy (Gouldner, 1954), and that professionalization and bureaucratization are simply aspects of rationalization (Ritzer, 1975). Larson's (1977) analysis establishes bureaucratization as one of the driving forces behind continuing professionalization (including the fact that governments are the principal employers of professionals). In earlier work, Parsons (1939) demonstrates that the legitimacy of both the professions and bureaucracies is based on functional specificity, rationality, and the application of universal impersonal standards. The lack of a clear distinction is currently being rediscovered, in the development of concepts such as "bureaucratic professional labor" (e.g., Caria & Pereira, 2015).

Weber (1968) considered the rationalization of education and training, and the proliferation of professional programs, to be a byproduct of bureaucratization. With the bases of power becoming increasingly rational, the social prestige of educational certificates, and claims of expertise more generally, increases drastically.

> When we hear from all sides the demand for an introduction of regular curricula and special examinations, the reason behind it is, of course, not a suddenly awakened "thirst for education," but the desire for restricting the supply for these positions and their monopolization by the owners of educational certificates. Today, the "examination" is the universal means of this monopolization, and therefore examinations irresistibly advance. (Weber et al., 1946, p. 241)

A key component of modern professionalism is not merely possessing but also controlling expert knowledge (Abbott, 1988). This is also why it is not only beneficial but also necessary that the professions and the bureaucracies would find it beneficial to claim a sense of "calling," given that technical competence alone cannot provide the basis of legitimacy (Gouldner, 1976). Attempts to reconcile "calling" with technical competence, however, quickly lead to paradox, as they amount to an attempt to reconcile fundamentally incompatible bases of authority.

"Charisma" is a theological term, adopted by Weber from the work of the Protestant theologian Rudolph Sohm (Rieff, 2007, p. x). However, instrumental rationality is antithetical to the notion of calling, understood as devotion to a certain end, for the simple reason that technical-scientific instrumental rationality has no capacity to derive ends: it merely has the capacity to clarify the range of means available given certain firmly established ends (Weber et al., 1946).

A *devotion* to an "end"—or a "calling"—is inherently irrational. The methodical pursuit of an end through discipline necessarily "eradicates personal charisma" (Weber et al., 1946,

p. 253). Accordingly, bureaucracy is "intrinsically alien and opposed to charisma, as well as to honor" (Weber et al., 1946, p. 254). The application of the term "charisma" in contemporary context and management practice diverges from this meaning of "charisma" to such an extent that a different word would seem to be required. The modern charismatic is a "purely political animal," "a performer, whose actions are divorced from ethical considerations" (Rieff, 2007, p. x).

Thus the idea that a "calling" is a defining characteristic of professions is suspect.[4] Weber explicitly discusses the notion of "calling" only in relation to charismatic authority,[5] and when discussing the duty of bureaucratic work, he simply means that "entrance into an office, including one in the private economy, is considered an acceptance of a specific duty of fealty to the purpose of the office, in return for the grant of a secure existence" (Weber, 1968, p. 959). Thus, a bureaucrat does not pledge allegiance to "the public interest," but to an office, and his or her duty is to impersonal and functional purposes. "These purposes, of course, frequently gain an ideological halo from cultural values, such as state, church, community, party, or enterprise" (Weber, 1968, p. 959).

The discharge of business per "calculable rules" and "without regard for persons" (Weber, 1968, p. 975) inherently requires the elimination of any considerations unrelated to efficiency: "Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is "dehumanized," the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation" (p. 975). Hence, the predictability of the effect of exposure to professional education: higher disregard for persons, lower ability to empathize, and the like.

The surrendering of an increasing number of life activities and problems to professional management results in power inequality between professionals and nonprofessionals. The "disabling effects" (McKnight, 2000) of professionalism involve the translation of a need into a deficiency, the placing of the deficiency in the client, and narrow definitions of problems and their solutions that match the needs of the professional enterprise (McKnight, 2000). The cumulative result is disempowerment of citizens, and the empowerment of professionals. "Professionalism, thus, is an ideology used to justify the ascension of the 'new class' to positions of power ... . As such, it represents class conflict, rather than social harmony" (Meisenhelder, 1983, p. 296).

Considering the status advantages of acquiring professional status, merely claiming that professional practice is based on a "calling" cannot be taken on faith, and historically the construction of the merit-based administrative professional class has been met with strong, though ultimately defeated, opposition (Weber et al., 1946). The emphasis of technical expertise, in part, has been an instrument of the attendant political struggle to convince the reluctant public that the rising administrative and political classes are not allied with the economic elites and instead are a group

> that is devoted to the commonwealth, and not furthering its own private interests by attending to the interests of the rich. It is defined as trustworthy, as capable of helping all groups in the society, as capable of adjudicating differences among them, precisely because it is supposedly not allied with any one of them more than others, and because it does not pursue private interests that might compromise its impartiality. (Gouldner, 1976, pp. 275–276)

This was possible to achieve mainly because of the triumph of liberalism as the dominant ideology, and of the liberal democratic welfare state as the dominant element in

the world-system (Wallerstein, 2011). Only when many fundamental political questions were reframed as a matter of gradual, rational, reformism was it possible for the professions—and professional bureaucracy—to derive legitimacy, if implicitly, from the seeming coincidence of the interests of rulers and ruled. As Weber emphasizes,

> the sure instincts of bureaucracy for the conditions of maintaining its own power … are insepar-ably fused with this canonization of the abstract and "objective" idea of "reasons of state." Most of the time, only the power interests of the bureaucracy give a concretely exploitable content to this by no means unambiguous ideal; in dubious cases, it is always these interests which tip the balance. (Weber, 1968, p. 979)

This flexibility of the connection between bureaucracy's own justifications and how the challenges of the state are addressed is evident in the post-Weberian intellectual currents in public administration theory. For example, schools of thought such as the New Public Management (e.g., Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Hood, 1995; Lane, 2000) or Collaborative Public Management (e.g., Agranoff & McGuire, 2004; McGuire, 2006; O'Leary & Vij, 2012) exemplify how quickly and thoroughly bureaucracies themselves, and public administration theory, can adapt to changing circumstances of power distribution (e.g., the rise of neoliberalism, and the resulting budgetary problems necessitating collaborative activities across governments, respectively).

## MORAL BEHAVIOR AND PROFESSIONALISM

Moral behavior and modern professionalism are logically impossible to reconcile. The professions (including public administration) have sought to address the concerns over ethical conduct by adopting codes of ethics. The codes of ethics ostensibly bolster the legitimacy of the profession or the organization in the eyes of the public (Long & Driscoll, 2008; Preston, Cooper, Scarbrough, & Chilton, 1995), and function as a form of "social contract" "reinforcing an occupation's claim to a unique social utility" (Buchholtz, 1989, p. 62). However, not only are codes of ethics typically incapable of providing guidance to anyone facing an actual ethical dilemma (Buchholtz, 1989), but in prioritizing the following of professional norms and conven-tions, they essentially deny the legitimacy of any moral qualms professionals might experience with regard to the behavior expected of them (Stewart, 1985), and cannot inform the professional what actions are ethical—the appropriate professional response is not necessarily the "morally right" response in all situations, and moreover, sometimes a behavior called for by professional norms is in conflict with behavior mandated by moral judgment (Stewart, 1985).

However, just because altruistic commitment to the public interest may be somewhat ideo-logical and incongruent with the internal instrumental logic of professions and bureaucracies, this does not mean that it is insincere. As McKnight (2000) elaborates,

> … this mask of service is not a false face. The power of the ideology of service is demonstrated by the fact that most servicers cannot distinguish the mask from their own face. The service ideology is *not* hypocritical because hypocrisy is the false pretense of a desirable goal. The modernized servicer believes in his care and love, perhaps more than even the serviced. The mask is the face. The service ideology is *not* conspiratorial. A conspiracy is a group decision to create an exploitative result. The modernized servicer honestly joins his fellows to create a supposedly beneficial result. (McKnight, 2000, p. 185)

As a result, students enrolled in professional programs may learn and adopt the language of "commitment to public interest," although without necessarily embracing, or even understanding, its meaning, or any of the costs, the sacrifices, and the frustrations that would inevitably accompany actually trying to work in the public interest. (see Hypothesis 1 below). Although many programs (professional and M.P.A.) have incorporated an "ethics component" and actively endorse compassion values, they nevertheless tacitly endorse detachment, self-interest, and objectivity (Coulehan & Williams, 2001): The "hidden curriculum" (Goldie, 2000) often cancels out the effects of ethics training—already weak, and often confounded with moralizing (Churchill, 1978).

The notion of "the public interest" is central to most M.P.A. curricula. The "public," "the public interest," or "the public good" is indispensable to courses in the policy process and policy analysis (Romero, 2001), public budgeting, economics, and organizational theory. However, in these applications the notion implicitly plays an instrumental role—as a variable that has a clear meaning, and can and must be established in order to perform a certain kind of analysis. Similar to other professional programs, even if it actively endorses certain ethical values, the curriculum tacitly emphasizes objectivity and detachment. An indirect support to this assertion is found in studies finding no discernible differences in attitudes between students in public administration programs vs. the generally more technically oriented public policy and policy analysis programs (de Soto, Opheim, & Tajalli, 1999).While the subject matter necessitating discussing the notion of public interest may counteract the trends in professional education towards de-emphasis and detachment from such notions, these competing rationales require an empirical test. Hence,

> Hypothesis 1: Students completing the M.P.A. program will display lower levels of public service motivation than students just entering the program.

Though congruent with the cumulative research on professionalization, the hypothesis is tentative, since, as indicated above, the logic and structure of the M.P.A. curriculum could to some extent temper the negative effects of professional education on public service motivation, if not reverse them. That there is no discernible effect is plausible as well, and has at least one precedent in the literature (Kjeldsen, 2012), finding that the level of public service motivation of students in fields related to public service delivery does not change over the course of study.

Another important aspect of public administration education, fusing normative and instrumentally rational priorities, concerns leadership attitudes—in particular, charismatic or "transformational" leadership. Future public administrators are exposed to wide range of training in managerial techniques, typically emphasizing the ability to use appropriate "leadership styles" and personal charisma in order to attain goals for which formal power alone may be insufficient. Such skills are valuable in the context of U.S. public service, an environment where multiple competing interests and powers and levels of government assert jurisdiction over policy issues, often making confusing and even contradictory claims to power.

More important, it should be emphasized that although such techniques or styles nominally seem preoccupied with providing inspiration and developing personal charisma, they are nevertheless techniques—highly rationalized, empirically researched techniques developed to unlock the potential of the informal organization, as well as to elicit residual effort and

motivation from employees, beyond what could be achieved with incentives and exercise of formal power. This rationalization is also the very reason why such leadership techniques can be taught (Northouse, 2012).

Transformational leadership is highly prized in modern bureaucratic organizations (both public and private) vis-à-vis "transactional leadership" (Bass, 1990). Transformational leadership refers to behaviors where a leader is not only successful in orchestrating the day-to-day operations of an organization on the basis of delegating tasks and administering rewards and punishments as appropriate, but "transforms" them, by providing and implementing a new and improved vision of what the organization could be. Education in leadership is, and can only be, professional if based on the "skills" or "styles" approach to leadership, rather than on charismatic (or "trait") approaches (Northouse, 2012).

In courses such as Human Resource Management and Organization Theory, M.P.A. students receive systematic instruction in what kinds of leadership strategies and styles are available to them in different work situations. In this sense, there is no conflict at all between a bureaucracy's need for hierarchy, structure, and stable and predictable rules, and its seemingly endless appetite for "transformational leaders" who can envision a "better" way for the organization to operate. Students are exposed to systematic techniques to recognize and implement leadership strategies and styles appropriate to different situations. Thus, transformational leadership is congruent with bureaucratic rule for the same reason bureaucratic discretion is: It essentially refers to the ability of bureaucrats to assert their power and proceed as they see fit, since their overall conduct is driven by objectivity and rationality. Hence, unlike H1, it is intuitive and uncontroversial to suggest

> Hypothesis 2: Students completing the M.P.A. program will display a higher degree of transformational leadership than students just entering the program.

## VARIABLES

The independent (or "treatment") variable in this study is exposure to the full course of study in the M.P.A. program. Since the questions posed pertain to the cumulative impact of exposure to an M.P.A. program as a whole, this is operationalized as a binary variable, coded "0" for the student responses to the survey administered in the very beginning of the program (i.e., at student orientation), and "1" for the responses to the survey administered upon graduation. The same questions are asked in both surveys.

The dependent variables are borrowed without modification from prior studies on public service motivation and leadership styles. The public service motivation is measured both as a global scale and as subscales,[6] as described in the original contribution by Perry (1996). Since the length of the original PSM scale is of practical and methodological concern, we also use the short PSM scale for comparison, developed by Coursey and Pandey (2007).

To measure leadership styles, we use form MLQ-6S from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Bass and Avolio (1992). MLQ is one of the most widely used instruments to measure transformational and transactional leader behaviors (Tejeda, Scandura, & Pillai, 2001). The styles measured by MLQ-6S include "Inspirational motivation,"

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Obs. | M | SD | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exit survey | 223 | 0.33 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 |
| Public service motivation (PSM) scale | 221 | 58.7 | 7.1 | 20 | 77 |
| PSM scale—short version | 221 | 37.8 | 5 | 14 | 49 |
| PSM subscale: | | | | | |
| Attraction to policymaking | 221 | 11.1 | 2.2 | 4 | 15 |
| Compassion | 219 | 16.2 | 2.5 | 7 | 23 |
| Self-sacrifice | 221 | 15.3 | 2.7 | 6 | 20 |
| Commitment to the public interest | 221 | 16.2 | 2.4 | 4 | 20 |
| Transformational leadership | 218 | 51.6 | 9.2 | 28 | 72 |
| Transformational leadership subscale: | | | | | |
| Inspirational motivation | 218 | 12.6 | 2.7 | 4 | 18 |
| Intellectual stimulation | 218 | 12.3 | 3 | 4 | 18 |
| Individualized consideration | 218 | 12.8 | 2.7 | 5 | 18 |
| Idealized influence | 218 | 13.9 | 2.4 | 5 | 18 |
| Transactional leadership | 218 | 23.7 | 4.9 | 11 | 36 |
| Transactional leadership subscale: | | | | | |
| Contingent reward | 218 | 11.8 | 3 | 4 | 18 |
| Management by exception | 218 | 11.8 | 2.4 | 6 | 18 |
| Laissez-faire/nonleadership | 218 | 8.6 | 2.5 | 3 | 16 |

"Intellectual stimulation," "Individualized consideration," "Idealized influence" (measures of transformational leadership), as well as "Management by exception" and "Contingent reward" (transactional leadership). See Table 1 for descriptive statistics.

## DATA AND METHODS

The hypotheses developed above are tested using a data set of survey responses to the relevant questions by students entering and exiting the M.P.A. program at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). The design for this study is a pre- and post-test design with no control group. Since fall 2011, new incoming students have been administered entry surveys during their orientation, before any exposure to the M.P.A. program's learning materials or activities. Exit surveys have also been given to those who have successfully graduated from the program. The surveys mirror each other so that changes in public service motivation, and increased prefer-ences for inspirational leadership styles and relationship-building attitudes can be monitored using this pre- and post-test. For the present analysis, the last data collected are from spring 2014, and the survey has not been administered since then. Accordingly, the data set consists of 223 total records, including 151 records of completed entry surveys from fall 2011 to spring 2014, inclusive, and 77 records of completed exit surveys from fall 2011 to spring 2014, inclusive.[7] Thus, we compare two groups of student responses: the cumulative responses of all students that have started the program between fall 2011 and spring 2014, and the cumulat-ive responses of program graduates during the same period. The pre- and post- samples are

analyzed as independent samples in the analysis (only 22 students both enter and graduate within the data-collection period). The nature of the independent variable (i.e., exposure to the full course of the M.P.A. program) enables this type of analysis, and guarantees that all respondents are fully exposed to the "treatment" even if they graduated in fall 2011, the year the surveying begun.

Although inherently a weak design (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2001), the pre- and post-test comparison in this particular case is robust against most common threats to validity. There are no apparent alternative explanations of the effect of the M.P.A. program course of study that could be conceptualized to account for the measured differences. The testing effect is implausible, given the *at least* two-year period between the two surveys; and even if a testing effect could exist (e.g., by sensitizing students to the measured concepts), such an effect would pale in comparison with the M.P.A. program's priority to explicitly heighten student sensitivity to the issues of public service, leadership, and so on, and moreover could be construed as a desirable teaching outcome in its own right Regression is not an applicable threat, since respondents are not selected based on extreme scores. Maturation is not a plausible threat either: The student body is highly diverse,[8] and especially the preservice group (which would plausibly be expected to mature more noticeably over the course of a two-year program) is in the minority, as compared to the in-service and/or mid-career students. History is not a concern either, considering that (a) there is no apparent alternative historical explanation that could be conceptualized as responsible for changing student's attitudes while in the program, and (b) the cumulative composition of the comparison groups (i.e., entrants in different years treated as one group and graduates from different years treated as another) further weakens the possibility of history as an alternative explanation. Instrumentation is also not a threat, since the same survey instrument is used for the pre- and post- surveys.

The only plausible threat to validity of possible concern is mortality (i.e., nonrandom attrition): Since students who are less suited and less receptive to the concepts and attitudes the M.P.A. program is trying to instill may drop out or not graduate, it is possible that the remaining students could exaggerate or even artificially create effects that would otherwise be attributed to the M.P.A. program. However, this threat is downplayed by the fact that the dependent variables are not direct assessment criteria based on which students are graded while in the program, and furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that students do not finish the program mainly due to financial and family reasons.

With regard to external validity (generalizability), the reliance on data from a single institution poses inherent limitations, although there are factors that mitigate against this concern. The curricula of NASPAA-accredited public administration programs demonstrate a high degree of uniformity (Breaux, Clynch, & Morris, 2003), and the main differences, to the extent they exist, concern the relative emphasis on institutional/management versus the analytical relative emphasis (Roeder & Whitaker, 1993). At a minimum, the results may be applicable at least to institutions comparable to UTSA—state universities in large urban areas, originally "commuter" and mainly "tier 2" schools. The only apparently distinctive feature of UTSA in general, and specifically of its M.P.A. program, is the high proportion of Hispanic students (~50 percent of the total). It is unclear if and in what ways this fact could bias the results, but even if it does, UTSA remains comparable to many similar schools in the southwestern region of the country. Table 2 presents the results of the pre- and post-comparison.

TABLE 2
Means Comparisons of Entry and Exit Surveys

| Variable | Mean-Entry | Mean-Exit | Mean Difference | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public service motivation (PSM) global scale | 58.5 | 59.7 | 1.2 | 0.122 |
| Public service motivation scale—short version | 37.6 | 38.6 | 1 | 0.098 |
| *PSM subscale* | | | | |
| Attraction to policymaking | 11 | 11.3 | 0.3 | 0.356 |
| Compassion | 16.1 | 16.3 | 0.3 | 0.448 |
| Self-sacrifice | 15.2 | 15.6 | 0.3 | 0.379 |
| Commitment to the public interest | 16.1 | 16.5 | 0.4 | 0.107 |
| Transformational leadership | 50.4 | 54.3 | 3.9 | 0.002 |
| *Transformational leadership subscale* | | | | |
| Inspirational motivation | 12.2 | 13.4 | 1.1 | 0.001 |
| Intellectual stimulation | 11.9 | 13.3 | 1.4 | 0.001 |
| Individualized consideration | 12.6 | 13.2 | 0.6 | 0.132 |
| Idealized influence | 13.7 | 14.4 | 0.7 | 0.049 |
| Transactional leadership | 23.5 | 24.4 | 0.9 | 0.154 |
| *Transactional leadership subscale* | | | | |
| Contingent reward | 11.6 | 12.3 | 0.6 | 0.121 |
| Management by exception | 11.8 | 12.1 | 0.322 | 0.320 |
| Laissez-faire leadership (nonleadership) | 8.7 | 8.5 | –0.1 | 0.754 |

## RESULTS

The results on public service motivation are ambiguous: The differences in the average PSM score using the full PSM scale are not statistically significant ($p = 0.122$), but the differences in the PSM scores using the short version of the PSM scale are marginally significant ($p = 0.098$). Examining the differences in the PSM subscales, it appears that the differences in the global PSM scales are entirely driven by a positive change in the "Commitment to the public interest" subscale ($p = 0.107$). The pre- and post- changes in all other subscales (attraction to policymaking, compassion, and self-sacrifice) are smaller in magnitude and *not* statistically significant. Accordingly, H1 is not supported: Instead of the hypothesized negative effect, the data suggest a no effect or weakly positive effect driven by marginally increased levels of commitment to the public interest (a PSM subscale).

The students report notably increased and statistically significant levels of transformational leadership attitudes: The average transformational leadership score increases by almost 10 percent between the entry and the exit responses ($p = 0.001$). This increase appears to be driven mainly by attitudes captured by the inspirational motivation subscale, followed by intellectual stimulation and idealized influence, but not "individualized consideration."

The average change in the scores for "transactional leadership" is positive but not statistically significant ($p = 0.154$), and the change appears to be mainly in the "contingent reward" subscale ($p = 0.121$). No statistically significant change is recorded in the laissez-faire/nonleadership scale ($p = 0.754$).

The results on "transformational leadership" are unsurprising, reassuring, and congruent with the M.P.A. program's missions. It is also reassuring that the effects of M.P.A. education on values related to public service do not appear to be quite as negative as predicted based on

studies in other professions: In fact, no statistically significant negative effect is established in this study, and there are even plausible weak positive effects. The effect of M.P.A. education on public service motivation overall is positive and marginally statistically significant, especially when using the shortened PSM scale, as validated by Coursey and Pandey (2007).[9] Disaggregating PSM in its component dimensions showed that M.P.A. education had a positive effect on the "commitment to the public interest" dimension, and no effect on the other PSM scale dimensions (compassion, self-sacrifice, and attraction to policymaking).

In short, the answer to the question posed in the title is "Yes"—albeit not a resounding "Yes." First, the magnitude of the effect is small (a 1-point difference on a scale ranging from 1 to 77) and marginally significant). Second, only one of the subscales/dimensions of public service motivation appears to be responsible for the positive effect, "commitment to the public interest" (showing a 0.4 point average increase on a scale ranging from 4 to 20); the other dimensions of the scale (compassion, self-sacrifice, and attraction to policymaking) appear not to be affected by M.P.A. education.

In the absence of notable change in any of the other dimensions capturing compassion, willingness to self-sacrifice, and willingness to participate in the messy process of politics and policy, the combined results suggest the following socialization mechanism: Students are acquainted with the rhetorical importance of the notion of the public interest, resulting in a statistically significant, though substantively small increase in their PSM scale (1 point) and commitment to public interest subscale (0.4 point). The lack of effect on the other PSM subscales suggests that this is not accompanied with a deeper understanding or actual commitment to the sacrifices and discomfort that may be involved in the pursuit of the public interest. This raises interesting questions for professional education, most notably the nature of safeguards against acting in violation of the public interest (e.g., when it is not professionally beneficial to continue to do so).

## CONCLUSION

The considerable literature of critiques of professionalism, bureaucracy, and the social embeddedness of science often fails to convey, or fails to convey lucidly, that such critiques are *not* attacks on knowledge, professionalism, and rationality as such. And most certainly such critiques are not attacks on *science*. They are—albeit often implicitly—attacks on *scientism*—"the claim that science is disinterested and extra-social, that its truth claims are self-sustaining without reference to more general philosophical assertions, and that science represents the only legitimate mode of knowledge" (Wallerstein, 2004, p. 13).

The strategies to counteract scientism, implicit in the above definition, have not been popular in professional education and practice, as this would constitute a tacit admission that the social power of the professions has perhaps stretched farther than their internal justifications permit. However, public administration is relatively more vulnerable to attacks on its legitimacy than other professional fields with much more esoteric and better-defined "knowledge monopolies," and rethinking the relation of the field with knowledge and power may not be even optional, but rather imposed. In particular, if very little remains "that can be considered 'irrational' in the older sense of 'incomprehensible'" (Jameson, 1991, p. 268), then what special legitimacy is there any longer in the paradigms of establishment social science (Wallerstein, 1995, p. 263)? Public administration may have a particularly hard time facing this question, as its

justifications, more than those of most other professions, involve implicitly claiming that self-governance is beyond the grasp of the ordinary person, and belongs to public administrators empowered to make decisions influencing people's lives. "Being ruled by and giving reward to people whose only asserted claim (and that a dubious one) is that they are smarter, that is too much to swallow. The veil can more readily be pierced" (. Wallerstein, 1988, p. 106).

The tension between capacity and control is an old—and permanent—issue in our field (e.g., Lynn, 2001; Stewart, 1985). The only realistic approach is reflection on and thoughtful maintenance of the precarious balance between bureaucracy and democracy, or between the specialists and the nonspecialists. Neither extreme—specialists imposing their solutions upon the collectivity, or the political decision-makers ignoring the knowledge and recommendations of specialists—is morally or intellectually acceptable. We need somehow systematically to intrude public debate on the issues, and "the balancing of multiple needs and interests" (Wallerstein, 2003, p. 264). This cannot be done without reviving Weber's notion of "substantive rationality" (as opposed to formal or instrumental rationality)—rationality referring to what is rational in terms of collective, widely applicable value systems.

Weber's overall intellectual orientation is grounded in the humanist tradition of liberalism, concerned with the freedom of the individual to create free institutions. The relentless expansion of bureaucratization, according to Weber, was shrinking the space for the exercise of this freedom, something Weber saw as inevitable: "Weber was an honest and passionate scientist; when he had finished constructing his model and found himself enclosed in it, he stayed. To his way of thinking, there is no way out" (Rieff, 1990, p. 202). Teaching inspirational or charismatic leadership—a contradiction in terms, as Weber and others (e.g., Rieff) clarify—is also not a reliable, or even viable, strategy to cultivate charismatic leaders capable of devotion to a cause in the public interest, insofar as it merely represents rationalization and control of the informal organization, as well as of the informal means to control the environment and enhance organizational power.

Professional education has never overcome the dilemma inherent in one of the cardinal tenets of liberalism, namely that institutional design alone can insure that the pursuit of self-interest will lead to beneficial social outcomes. There are no creeds, submission to which could cultivate charismatic devotion, and with institutions alone being demonstrably incapable of curbing predatory conduct, with the biggest rewards reliably flowing to those guilty of the most egregious violations of the public interest, the discussion of quaint notions of honor and virtue can never be fully eliminated from any governance discourse. While public administration education cannot and will not magically transform in "credal order," its history and subject matter nevertheless permit expanding the space in which students can be encouraged and empowered to form moral convictions. What steps might this include?

The answer is not moralizing. The answer is also not an attack on professionalism. The first—and easiest—avenue to pursue should be based on the fact that the declines in empathy detected as a result of professional education by itself diminish striving towards professionalism (Neumann et al., 2011). This reversal seems strange in the context of the dominant analyses of professionalism, but perhaps it is not so strange if we consider the real possibility that Weber may have fundamentally misdiagnosed the relationship between discipline and charisma. Weber considered discipline and charisma to be incompatible, since he understood discipline as rational and external. However, the exact opposite may be true: What if discipline is "the extension of personal charisma" (Rieff, 2007, p. 28), since the discipline of the charismatics is based on inwardness—the "mobilization of fresh renunciations" (ibid.)—and thus discipline is the

result of internalization of and submission to a creed, rather than merely following external, instrumentally rational, rational-legal orders?

If so, this has profound implications for professional education in general and public administration in particular. The main implication is in a shift in emphasis from the technical bases of professions to much more careful and extensive attention to the values and the communities professionalism is supposed to serve, and especially to the bases of authority of those serving, and the interdicts they must submit to: "price of power justified is the complete submission of the powerful to an authority that is not in their service" (Rieff, 1973, p. 166).

Above all, this means maintaining a dialogue with, rather than further abandoning, humanist tradition, as well as with increasingly forgotten traditions of public administration itself. If this were currently the norm, our students and we would not need to be reminded that overemphasizing formal rationality at the expense of substantive rationality is a very recent event in intellectual history.[10] Unlike the technical conception of reason, Western tradition going back to antiquity is based on "practical reason," according to which knowledge is to be used "not to accomplish a given objective, but to train the virtues specific to a given profession or calling or practice and, more generally, to encourage the development of character and the pursuit of moral perfection" (Lasch, 1984, pp. 253–254). Rigorous and comprehensive education in this tradition—*formerly, and only to some extent,* the focus of the elite baccalaureate liberal arts degree—of course, cannot be squeezed into in the limited niches available in the already busy M.P.A. curriculum. However, students could be given at least the awareness and the tools to pursue self-education. For example, the ethics courses should include more in-depth coverage of classical texts in political and moral philosophy, and perhaps also the study of classic works of art (Marini, 1992a, 1992b). Further, in spite of the trend towards professionalization and generally to emphasizing quantitatively rigorous scholarship, public administration has always been and remains—and always will be—a field with a high diversity of intellectual approaches and research traditions, allowing public administration to become "post-normal science" with a much broader frame of reference than positivist fields (Riccucci, 2010). This diversity should be treasured and preserved, rather than reduced.

It may also be beneficial to rebuild some bridges burnt in the process of professionalization and emancipation of public administration as a field, namely its connections to political philosophy and political science—or, at a minimum, articulating the ways in which public administration itself, in fact, has "a matrix of political theory" (Waldo, 1965, p. 6). It is hardly plausible that we can educate responsible and competent public servants without providing them with an understanding of the origins and meaning of bureaucracy and the state in a historical and sociological context, and their modern crises and challenges. In the absence of a sound historical understanding of the genesis and the nature of the modern state, even the analytical abilities, not to mention the ability to articulate a public service perspective, are severely degraded (Lynn, 2001; Thompson, 2006). The ways in which *public administration is a political theory* (Waldo, 1948) need to be made explicit—especially in an era of formidable challenges to the nation-state (e.g., Ohmae, 1995) exposing the fragility of many theoretical and ideological assumptions of the discipline.

Public administration education can restore some space in which its students can form deeper understanding and convictions about what it really means to be a member of the "officer class" (Rieff & Woolfolk, 2007). It can do so by (critically) reviving valuable but forgotten intellectual traditions, and also looking outside its own boundaries and to other disciplines as intellectual partners (rather than a source of "tools").

In fact, such a strategy could be one of the very few things that could distinguish and protect M.P.A. programs amidst the growing sea of ever more specialized professional programs and certifications, from which public and private bureaucracies can and do pick their staffs. The incessant professionalization and emphasis on technical competencies in education in general leaves less and less that M.P.A. programs can claim as "their own"—that is, not better accomplished by more specialized programs and certifications reflecting finer and finer divisions of labor—and which could, ironically, result in rapid deprofessionalization of the M.P.A. itself. "A profession that has virtually abandoned its traditions is unlikely to defend them later" (Lynn, 2001, p. 145).

## NOTES

1.  See Pedersen (2009) and Neumann et al. (2011), for reviews of the connections between medical education and empathy.

2.  Significant in the discussion of professional education in the M.P.A. context is that the declines in empathy are positively correlated with exposure to clients/patients (Newton, Barber, Clardy, Cleveland, & O'Sullivan, 2008; Sherman & Cramer, 2005; Wilson, Prescott, & Becket, 2012). It is hard to imagine that public servants whose commitment to the public interest diminishes with increased exposure to the diversity of stakeholders they are expected to serve can be desirable under any circumstances.

3.  That law is essentially one of the first sciences is not surprising, considering the fundamental religious notion that God is the bearer of the highest justice; the Church also needed to develop a rigorous system of law scholarship for important practical reasons, such as dealing with socializing the faithful, routine dispute resolution, and especially in its conflicts with secular authorities (Berman, 1983).

4.  Although part of the reason for this confounding can originate from the simple fact that "calling" and "profession" are both denoted by the same word in German (*beruf*).

5.  "Devotion to the charisma of the prophet, or the leader in war, or to the great demagogue in the *ecclesia* or in parliament, means that the leader is personally recognized as the innerly 'called' leader of men. Men do not obey him by virtue of tradition or statute, but because they believe in him. If he is more than a narrow and vain upstart of the moment, the leader lives for his cause, and 'strives for his work' " (Weber et al., 1946, p. 79).

6.  Attraction to policymaking, commitment to the public interest, compassion, self-sacrifice.

7.  The discrepancy in the number of observations between entry and exit surveys is consistent with the approximately 50 percent graduation rate of M.P.A. programs nationally, and of [University of Texas at San Antonio] in particular.

8.  For example, the student population included 57 percent female, 45 percent Hispanic/Latino, 13 percent African American, 2 percent Asian, and 3 percent international students.

9.  The main difference in the shortened PSM scale is that it excludes the self-sacrifice subscale.

10.  "For a long time, a diametrically opposite view of reason was prevalent. This view asserted the existence of reason as a force not only in the individual mind but also in the objective world" (Horkheimer, 1947, p. 4).

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