Mobilizing to take responsibility
exploring the relationship between Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R), Public Service Motivation (PSM) and public service resilience during Covid-19
Toubøl, Jonas; Carlsen, Hjalmar Bang; Nielsen, Marie Haarmark; Brincker, Benedikte

Published in:
Public Management Review

DOI:
10.1080/14719037.2021.2018847

Publication date:
2023

Document version
Early version, also known as pre-print

Document license:
CC BY-NC-ND

Citation for published version (APA):

Download date: 06. jan., 2024
Mobilising to Take Responsibility: Exploring the Relationship between Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R), Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Public Service Resilience during Covid-19

Toubøl, Jonas; Carlsen, Hjalmar Alexander Bang; Nielsen, Marie Haarmark; Brincker, Benedikte

Published in:
Public Management Review (Print)

DOI:
0.1080/14719037.2021.2018847

Publication date:
2022

Document license:
CC BY-NC-SA

Citation for published version (APA):
Mobilising to Take Responsibility: Exploring the Relationship between Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R), Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Public Service Resilience during Covid-19

Jonas Toubøl¹, Hjalmar Bang Carlsen², Marie Haarmark Nielsen³, and Benedikte Brincker⁴

Abstract: This paper explores how other-oriented motivations: Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R) and Public Service Motivation (PSM) relate to voluntary support during the Covid-19 crisis. Drawing on original panel survey data, collected spring 2020, it compares SOC-R and PSM for civic participation. The study reveals that while both forms of motivations relate to voluntary support, PSM remains stable over time while SOC-R varies. Furthermore, SOC-R develops differently over time for those who engage in voluntary support and those who do not. Such heterogeneity is not observed for PSM. Based on these findings, the paper discusses SOC-R’s contribution to public service resilience.

Keywords: Covid-19, Public service resilience, Public service motivations, Sense of Community Responsibility, Volunteering, public service provision, crisis


¹ Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen. jt@soc.ku.dk.
² SODAS and Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen. hc@soc.ku.dk.
³ Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen. mhn@soc.ku.dk.
⁴ (Corresponding author) Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, Bld. 16, DK-1014 Copenhagen, bebr@soc.ku.dk.
1. **Introduction**

In the wake of Covid-19, we have witnessed communities transform into service providers to supplement and, in some cases, even replace an overburdened public sector confronted with strict lockdown measures (Carlsen, Toubøl, and Brincker 2020). This transformation has been of paramount importance to public service resilience during the Covid-19 crisis, and testifies to the timeliness of this special issue. In line with the issue, we understand resilience to entail transformation as opposed to robustness, i.e. it is proactive and involves innovation rather than being reactive. In order for the changes to public service provision that we have witnessed during COVID-19 and that contributed significantly to their resilience to be enduring and truly transformative, the contribution of civil society to public service provision has to persist beyond the crisis. For this to be the case, forms of other-oriented motivations have to permeate civil society and inspire it to contribute to public service provision not only during but also after the crisis.

While research into public service resilience in times of crisis has hitherto predominantly focused on the role of public institutions (e.g., Boin and Lodge 2016) recently scholars have started to pay more attention to forms of public service provision organised across the traditional division of the market, government, and civil society sectors (e.g., Mook et al. 2020; Grubb and Henriksen 2019). The literature echoes this perspective on disaster and crisis management that stresses the centrality of civil society factors like voluntary organisations, NGOs, social capital, and informal networks in relation to such, typically, government-led relief efforts (Krüger and Albris 2020; Whittaker et al. 2015; Aldrich 2012; Stallings and Quaratelli 1985). In the case of Covid-19, studies argue that civil society’s contribution to public service delivery has indeed been crucial (Meyer et al. 2021; Miao et al. 2021; Andersen et al. 2020).

This significance of civil society in relation to public service resilience in times of crisis calls for perspectives that consider both formal and informal actors. Furthermore, they draw attention to the central role of civil society in public service resilience and resonate with the body of literature in public management that points to the centrality of local communities in effectively handling social, material, and psychological consequences of extreme conditions or crises (Steen and Schott, 2019; Brincker and Pedersen, 2020). This body of literature emphasises the importance of other-oriented forms of motivation such as Public Service Motivation (PSM) (Andersen et al. 2020) and a Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R) in motivating community action (Boyd and Nowell, 2020, 2017, 2014; Nowell and Boyd, 2010, 2014; Nowell et al. 2016).

As a point of departure in the public management motivation literature (Nowell and Boyd, 2016, 2020; Brincker and Pedersen, 2020), we argue that PSM should be considered a different form of other-oriented motivation that is distinguishable from SOC-R due to its individualised and universal nature more similar to a human value (Schwartz 1992). The research that this paper reports on seeks to bring this work forward by bringing the literature on motivations for public service provision into dialogue with the wider literature on the contextual dependence of value-dispositions and attitudes (Vaisey and Kiley, 2021; Martin and Lembo, 2020; Schwartz, 2007;
The majority of research that engages with SOC-R has primarily done so by focusing on variations in community and organisational contexts. We add two more dimensions of context, namely 1) those of temporal dynamics and 2) action and practices. We explore how SOC-R varies over these two different dimensions of context. In a prolonged crisis where civil society actors stepped in and took over tasks normally handled by the public sector, the shifting institutional politics during the different phases of the Covid-19 lockdown and reopening, as well as the media agenda, constitute such dynamics of shifting contexts. The central question becomes how SOC-R relates to these different temporal dynamics or periods of the crisis. Turning to context as practice, interactional scholars have argued that we should not look at just the general collective present shaped by government and media agendas but also concrete practices that actors are caught up in to understand what forms of motivation are salient and remain so (Lichterman and Eliasoph, 2014; Carlsen, Toubøl and Ralund, 2021). Following this logic, scholars have found that participating in volunteering and/or activism creates both short- and long-term motivational changes (Carlsen, Ralund and Toubøl, 2020). Thus, SOC-R and PSM may motivate participation in certain practices that may sustain or alter the same motivation and thereby public service resilience in crisis times.

Statistics Denmark collected a three wave panel dataset to analyse SOC-R’s relationship with voluntary public service delivery during the Covid-19 crisis in the spring of 2020. A total of 2,000 respondents completed all three rounds collected at 3-4 week intervals in the period April-June 2020. Based on a population-representative sample, the dataset provides a robust basis for inquiring into the variability of SOC-R across time and sub-populations and its relationship to delivering voluntary Covid-19 related help. This paper reports on the first findings on the role of SOC-R derived from this dataset.

The paper is organised as follows. In the next section, we review the literature on SOC-R, focusing on its relation to PSM and the provision of public services. In doing this, we address how to apply SOC-R and PSM when moving beyond activities in public institutions to capture the role of civil society vis-a-vis public service resilience. Furthermore, we expand the conception of SOC-R by developing temporal and practice-oriented understandings of the contexts of public service provision. Section three introduces the dataset and methodological approach before moving on to the analysis in section four. The first part of the analysis introduces the case of Covid-19 lockdown in Denmark during the spring of 2020. Here, we focus on the dynamics of the different phases of the lockdown and provide some general insights into voluntary help and support patterns. In the second part of the analysis (section 5), we conduct the main analyses of the relationship between SOC-R and voluntary help and its temporal variation for different sub-populations. Finally, in section six, we conclude and discuss the findings in relation to public service resilience in times of crisis.
2. The theoretical framework and hypotheses

*Sense of Community Responsibility and Public Service Motivation*

Other-oriented motivations for public service provision and compliance for the sake of others or the public good is important in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, where vulnerabilities and risks are unequally distributed in society (Pfattheicher et al., 2020). In mainstream public management literature, such other-oriented motivations have been captured by the concept of public service motivation (PSM), denoting the individual’s motivation for doing good for particular others or society (Perry and Hondeghem 2008, vii). Recently the concept of Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R) has been introduced into the public management literature (Boyd and Nowell, 2020). In contrast to PSM, SOC-R aims to highlight the contextual dimension of other-oriented motivations (Nowell and Boyd, 2010). Furthermore, its origin in community psychology points to the relevance of considering public service provisions in voluntary civil society, which, as argued in the introduction, is highly relevant in times of crisis.

In the following, we argue that it is theoretically meaningful to treat SOC-R and PSM as denoting distinct other-oriented motivations for public service provision. In contrast to arguments that PSM can be scaled down to a particular context and thus have significant overlaps with SOC-R (Nowell and Boyd, 2016), we maintain that their different relations to context are valuable and useful theoretically and empirically. To contribute further to the conceptual debate about forms of motivation to deliver public service, especially PSM and SOC-R, we expand upon the understanding of SOC-R contexts by adding a temporal understanding of context as *periods* and an action-oriented understanding of context as *practice*.

The concept of ‘sense of community responsibility’ (SOC-R) was developed by American community psychologists and management scholars Branda Nowell and Neil Boyd a decade ago. It has ties to and highlights the continued relevance of the 20th century scholarship on mutuality and voluntarism as well as the work by scholars such as Simon Springer on mutual aid as a notion that involves principles of cooperation and care (Springer, 2020). Nowell and Boyd define a sense of community responsibility as ‘a feeling of personal responsibility for the individual and collective well-being of a community of people not directly rooted in an expectation of personal gain’ (Nowell et al., 2016). Thus, SOC-R is an other-oriented motivation for public service provision, focusing on the interaction between an existing belief system (norms, beliefs, values, ideology, and standards) and a specific community context (Nowell and Boyd, 2010).

Recently, in 2016, SOC-R was introduced into public management literature (Nowell et al. 2016; Boyd and Nowell, 2017), which has given rise to several studies that engage with the relationship between this construct and Public Service Motivation (PSM). PSM is used as an approach in the public management literature to describe other-oriented behaviour of public employees. It is defined as ‘an individual’s orientation to delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society’ (Perry and Hondeghem 2008, vii). Thus, publicly motivated individuals are willing to contribute to society at large through public service provision and catering to the idea of ‘the public good’. PSM has been employed as an analytical approach to gain insights into, among other things, how the values of the public organisation ‘fit’
with highly PSM-motivated individuals, that is, person-organisation fit (Kristof-brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Wright and Christensen, 2010; van Waeyenberg et al. 2017). PSM has also been used to gain insights into performance and the potential detrimental effects of particular types of performance measurements and incentives in the public sector (Perry and Wise, 1990) Finally, PSM has been linked to burn-out, i.e. the dark side of PSM (Schott and Ritz, 2018).

Within the Public Management literature there has been attempts to disentangle PSM from both altruism and prosocial motivation (Bozeman & Su, 2015; Schott, Neumann, Baertschi, & Ritz, 2019). The latter was originally seen to constitute a form of motivation that constituted a contrast to self-interest and self-concern (Meglino and Korsgaard, 2014). However, in recent years several scholars have pointed out that individuals may be driven by both self-interest and self-concern and by prosocial motivation (Bolino and Grant, 2016). Hence, public management scholars have sought to clarify the relationship between PSM and prosocial motivation by seeing them as identical (Wright, Christensen, and Pandey 2013), as subordinate, i.e. PSM is a subcategory of prosocial motivation that relates specifically to public service provision (Andersen, Pedersen, and Petersen 2018), or both theoretically and empirically distinct (Ritz et. al., 2020).

Recent years have seen the blossoming of studies that explore the relationship between SOC-R and PSM (Andersen, Pedersen, and Petersen, 2018). This includes studies on how PSM, and SOC-R interact in relation to employee engagement and well-being (Boyd, Nowell, Yang, & Hano, 2018), collaborative leadership behaviour (Nowell et al., 2016), and political leadership behaviour (Pedersen et al., 2020). These studies highlight that a central point of differentiation between PSM and SOC-R is their degree of context-dependence. The main contextual axis has been a spatial one. It has been argued that PSM is a highly abstract and general construct that employs an understanding of ‘public good’ and does not engage with the existence, let alone the possible impact, of particular contexts on the motivation to deliver public service. In contrast, SOC-R takes a point of departure and is firmly embedded in contexts. Against this background, research seeks to tackle the question of whether the contrast between PSM, seen as an abstract and general construct, and SOC-R, seen as concrete and tied to contexts, can be maintained or whether, as Brenda Nowell and Neil Boyd discuss, PSM can be scaled down to a context-specific construct (Nowell and Boyd, 2016). Our first hypothesis, therefore, concerns whether SOC-R is related to public service provision, net of PSM.

1. SOC-R is positively related to voluntary public service provision.

Context variation in SOC-R and PSM over time and action
As outlined above, the contextual nature of SOC-R has focused on spatial contexts, typically different organisational or community settings. However, research on values and culture points to two supplementing sources of contextual variation. One explores periods (Whittier 1997, Kevin and Vaisey 2020) adding a temporal understanding of context. The other engages with
practices (Tavory 2011; Lichterman & Eliasoph 2014; Gross 2009) denoting an action-oriented understanding of context. Beginning with context as periods, there are two prominent models for understanding the temporal dynamics of motivation, which we shall use as our starting point for understanding motivational changes across different periods of the Covid-19 crisis: the active learning model and settled disposition model (we are here following Kevin and Vaisey (2020) terminology). The active learning model holds that actors update their motivations in light of new information. This model predicts granular changes in motivations in light of new information, conditions, and problem situations. The settled dispositions model states (Mannheim, 1952; Ryder, 1965; Bourdieu, 1990) that motivations are either shaped through early socialisation in childhood (generational models) or highly constrained by actors’ habitus and thus relatively constant across periods. Such motivations are highly dependent on early socialisation and unlikely to change in the light of even major events (Kevin and Vaisey 2020). These different models operate partly at the temporal scale of the life cycle and diverge from our focus on temporal patterns of other-oriented motivations in and around the Covid-19 crisis. Hence, we need to recalibrate them to account for the more short-term temporal patterns decisive for resilience in public service provision under the Covid-19 crisis. The central question on which we focus is the extent to which the other-oriented motivations of PSM and SOC-R are stable or volatile across the different periods of the Covid-19 crisis.

From the learning model’s perspective, one might argue that the Covid-19 crisis is a significant event that has cemented the importance of other-oriented forms of motivation. Societal and community spirit have been central discourses during the pandemic in Denmark (Andersen et al., 2020). The collective present constructed by, among other things, the media agenda, governmental campaigns, and discourse flowing through interpersonal networks provides strong evidence for citizens that other-oriented motivations are important for solving the collective action problems. In other words, as the Covid-19 crisis continues, even across periods characterised by varying intensity, we should expect other-oriented forms of motivation to remain high across the different periods following the initial period of high crisis awareness. Motivations seen as settled dispositions would oppositely predict that insofar as Covid-19 has any effect, this is likely to be highly situational and ephemeral, dependent upon the initial state of shock and high crisis awareness. This leads to the hypothesis that the effect of Covid-19 on other-oriented motivations is highly volatile and, hence will decrease after a period of heightened critical awareness.

This leads to two opposite hypotheses of how other-oriented motivations vary across periods following the outbreak of Covid-19.

2.1 Others-oriented motivations stabilise following a period of heightened critical awareness (enduring shifts in motivations).

2.2 Others-oriented motivations decrease following a period of heightened critical awareness (short term shifts in motivations).
Enduring changes in other-oriented motivations
The above distinction between short term and enduring changes in motivation assumes that all individuals are equally caught up in and affected by a crisis. However, when considering the practice context of actors, it seems likely that actors’ motivations depend upon the practices that they are involved in (Gross, 2009). Thus, a central aspect of other-oriented motivations is the act of volunteering itself. The positive relationship between motivation and the act of volunteering finds support in the literature on civic action, which demonstrates that motivations do not just drive civic action. Civic action also alters motivations and beliefs (Author, 2019). In a study of the freedom summer civil rights campaign, Doug McAdam found that those who were accepted to participate were much more radical in their beliefs than those who applied but were rejected (McAdam, 1986). Likewise, the authors found that actual interaction with refugees under the refugee crisis increased both actors’ future involvement and their solidarity with refugees (Carlsen et. al, 2020). Witnessing first-hand the particular other in need of help and experiencing the difference one’s help can make demonstrates to citizens the rewards of other-oriented motivations. The motivations reproduce themselves and stabilise through actual interaction.

From this perspective, being exposed, through the media or interpersonal discourse, to the hardship of others during the Covid-19 crisis is not enough to make a lasting impression on actors. Instead, actors need to be practically involved before we should expect that other-oriented motivations endure and stabilise following a period of heightened crisis awareness. This leads to the following hypothesis:

3. *Ceteris paribus*, compared to individuals who do not engage in voluntary work, other-oriented motivations are more likely to endure after an initial high period of crisis awareness for those who have engaged in voluntary work.

In the above discussion, we have not distinguished between the other-oriented motivations of PSM and SOC-R, yet we expect different dynamics to apply to the two forms of motivation. The fact that PSM has a very abstract referent (the public good) and is an individual characteristic rather than a motivation related to specific contexts makes us expect PSM to be stable across time unaffected by the changing periods of the Covid-19 crisis. This is in line with scholars who have argued that PSM is a trait more than a state, which means it is a settled disposition (Boyd and Nowell, 2020; Brincker and Pedersen, 2020). In contrast, SOC-R has more clearly a referent to specific bounded contexts, which is salient in the citizens’ outlook. Hence, we might expect that SOC-R fluctuates more across time as the crisis periods change in intensity and thus transforms through active learning.

3. **Data and methods**
The main focus of our analysis is other-oriented motivations, their relation to voluntary public service provision, and their temporal dynamics during the Covid-19 crisis. The research design
has three logically connected parts. First, to examine our hypotheses regarding the relationship between other-oriented motivations for voluntary welfare provision and temporal contexts, we analysed the different periods of the crisis that were distinguishable due to shifting lockdown phases and public attention during the spring of 2020. To this end, we conducted a short-term historical analysis focusing on the shifting politically regulated institutional phases of the lockdown based on systematic readings of a comprehensive selection of press releases and communications from state actors. Also, we drew on Google Search trend data and findings from studies that mapped the public attention and perceptions during the period. Second, we investigated the nature of the practices of voluntary support to get a grasp of the different contexts they constituted. Third, we analysed the relationship between, on the one hand, shifting contexts in terms of both periods and practices and, on the other hand, other-oriented motivations for help. The two latter parts of the analysis reports the results from an original, population-representative, three-wave panel survey dataset collected by Statistics Denmark.

Figure 1. Correspondence between phases of the COVID-19 lockdown and data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11.3.2020</th>
<th>6.4.2020</th>
<th>7.5.2020</th>
<th>8.6.2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lockdown starting</td>
<td>1st phase of re-opening</td>
<td>2nd phase of re-opening</td>
<td>3rd phase of re-opening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st round, N=3,389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd round, N=2,287</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd round, N=2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Invitations to participate in rounds two and three were distributed in a rolling manner such that respondents from the preceding round would receive the invitation to participate in the follow-up round 3-4 weeks after they submitted their response to the preceding questionnaire. Thus, respondents who, for instance, submitted their response to round one in mid-April would be invited to participate in round two early May and respondents who submitted their responses to round two late may would receive an invitation to round three mid-June and so forth.

The responses came from a random sample of the Danish population in the age range of 16–99 years old. The online questionnaire was distributed electronically through the inbox of e-Boks which is essentially a online hosted e-mail account used for communication with public authorities and large companies like banks, insurance companies, utility suppliers etc.. Because it is a legal requirement that all Danish citizens aged 15 or older are able to receive digital mail from the public authorities through e-Boks, which is the primary means of communication with public authorities, the vast majority of the population is accustomed to the use of e-Boks at a daily basis. Therefore, and in light of the drastic decline of the use of regular postal services in Danish society, it constitutes a reliable means for respondent recruitment. The small group that
consists of predominantly elderly people that has opted out of e-Boks received an invitation by regular post. The invitations were followed by telephone reminders, offering the opportunity of being interviewed by phone. A total of approximately 8,000 Danish residents were asked to take part. A total of 3,389 respondents participated in the first round collected during the month of April; 2,287 took part in the second round collected mainly in May, and 2000 took part in the third round collected during the month of June. The questionnaires of the follow-up rounds 2 and 3 were distributed in a continuous manner aiming for a 3-4 week response interval (figure 1 depicts the correspondence between the lockdown and the data collection process).

Data loss incurs biases related primarily to age, educational attainment, and income, with the response sample displaying a slight overrepresentation of older people, those with higher incomes and longer educations. More troublesome is the underrepresentation of immigrants (sample: 6.8 percent; population: 11.9 percent\(^5\)) which likely reflects a lack of resources to translate the survey into other languages than Danish. Therefore, we make the reservation that the findings should not be generalized beyond Danish citizens and people with permanent residence, which requires passing a Danish language test.

The questionnaires primarily inquired about providing and receiving voluntary support, asking in detail about the kind of support people had received or given and how it was organised. In addition to standard sociodemographic factors, the questionnaire inquired into attitudes, perceptions, and values in general and in relation to Covid-19. In relation to this study, the measures of SOC-R and the value of self-transcendence aiming to capture the abstract and other-oriented dimension of PSM are of particular importance, and we will briefly comment on their operationalisation.

Table 1. The SOC-R survey questions translated into English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC-R 1</th>
<th>When there is a need for someone to volunteer, I feel that I should be the first who does so.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC-R 2</td>
<td>To participate in volunteer work is among one of the best things I can do to create well-being where I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC-R 3</td>
<td>I am always ready to help others in my community, even if it creates problems for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC-R 4</td>
<td>I feel a strong personal commitment towards improving the conditions of my community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC-R 5</td>
<td>I feel it is my duty to do something for my community, even if I do not get anything in return.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We translated SOC-R into Danish and modified it to capture the context relevant to a civil society organised in informal and formalised organisations. Table 1 contains the wording of the questions. Unlike SOC-R, PSM has no standard survey item construct that can readily be applied. We chose to use the section on self-transcendent values from Shalom Schwartz’ basic human value scale (Schwartz, 1992; Davidov, et al. 2008) to measure the dimension of the individual’s other-oriented dispositions, central to PSM (Andersen et al., 2020). Thereby, we choose not to include a fixed definition of a desirable abstract notion of ‘the public good’ (e.g., humanity, society, community, the state, and so on). We do so because the heterogeneity of such abstract notions of publics is likely to be very high when surveying the diverse areas of civil society and the population at large, compared to, for instance, surveying a single or profession where common understanding of the public is more likely to be identifiable. In the empirical analysis that follows, we shall refer to this operationalisation of PSM as self-transcendence to be transparent about the absence of a reference to ‘the public’ in the variable.

For both SOC-R and self-transcendence, we normalised the accumulated responses into a scale ranging 0-1. While self-transcendence was measured in all three survey rounds, SOC-R was included only in rounds two and three. The SOC-R variable was included into the survey in response to the results of the first wave, which indicated the need to include a variable that captured the significance of community responsibility across local, regional and national settings.

The absence of SOC-R in the first wave imposes limitations on what kinds of statistical analyses are possible for the relationship between, on the one hand, temporal and practice contexts and, on the other hand, the other-oriented motivations for voluntary support of self-transcendence and SOC-R. In the present paper, we mainly followed a descriptive statistical analysis strategy that we combined with the panel time-series design to map development over time. Furthermore, we performed logistic regression analyses to describe the relationship between the motivational variables and different forms of helping behaviour.

Table 2 summarises the variables included in the regression analysis. The dependent variable is provision of voluntary help (which is split by the dimension of care. Figure 3 below reports the proportions of the resulting binary variables). It is measured by a survey item asking what kinds of help the respondent had provided during the last three weeks, if any. The question distinguished between seven different kinds of help and an ‘Other’, a write-in category. Focal explanatory variables were SOC-R and self-transcendent values measured as specified above. The remaining variables were treated as controls. In addition to sociodemographic factors known to be associated with volunteering (Wilson 2000), we included attitudinal measures representing competing explanations to SOC-R and PSM. These cover attitudes of solidarity with different geographic groups and the opposite value dimension to self-transcendence, namely self-enhancement measuring a self-oriented disposition (Davidov et al. 2008).
Table 2. Summary of variables in logistic regression analysis of Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care help</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.449</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-care help</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.321</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC-R</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.604</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-transcendence</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-empowerment</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. neighbours</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. area</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. compatriots</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. Europeans</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global solidarity</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong ties index</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak ties index</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.486</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covid positive</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone Covid positive</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single w/o children</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single w children</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple w/o children</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple w. children</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2073</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Setting the scene: The Danish Covid-19 lockdown during spring 2020

The Danish lockdown during Spring 2020 can be temporally ordered into three overall periods, which correspond roughly with the three survey rounds. During the first period from March 15–April 12, the country was in a state of almost total lockdown with only essential operations, mainly central administration and health services, functioning. From April 14, the restrictions on the private sector were loosened, allowing workers to return to their workplaces, but shops and stores were still closed and so were formally organised civil society activities. Day care and the youngest classes in school were also allowed to return, and health services were gradually
expanded. In the second period, from May 12 to June 8, restrictions were gradually loosened in a geographically uneven manner allowing for outdoor activities, including sports and leisure activities, restaurants, and shopping. By the end of May, also certain activities across the educational sector were re-opened. However, distance regulations and a ban on assemblies of more than 10 persons meant that societal activity was still severely restricted and for persons particularly at risk for Covid-19 things did not change much. Finally, from June 8 and onwards, the restriction on assemblies was raised from 10 to 50, and organised events of up to 500 persons were allowed. Distancing regulations were still in place.

Figure 2. Google search-history for the term “corona” in Denmark first half of 2020.

![Google search-history for the term “corona” in Denmark first half of 2020.](image)

Note: The data is search data retrieved from GoogleTrends. GoogleTrends allows users to look at the relative proportion of the total number of searches that use a given term. It returns normalized data so that the place and time when a given search term is the most prominent gets the value 100 and then decreases thereafter. The graph is the temporal pattern on searches for “corona” within Denmark. The reason we choose to look at “corona” rather than “covid”, is that the former is a much more widely used term in Denmark to address the societal situation as a whole. The link to the specific search is here: [https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2020-01-01%202020-08-01&geo=DK&q=corona](https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2020-01-01%202020-08-01&geo=DK&q=corona).

Because these periods reflect substantial shifts in institutional regulations of societal activities and individual behaviour, we employ them as a template for analysing the temporal variance in context. Showing the variation in Google searches on ‘corona’ in Denmark during the first half-year of 2020, Figure 2 gives an indication of attention during the period. Initially, in mid-March, attention, naturally, skyrockets. It then gradually declined before it flattened to stay at a low level from the end of May and the rest of the measurement period.

A similar pattern can be detected for the share of the population carrying out Covid-19 related help during the periods (Figure 3) measured in our survey data. From an initial overall
level just above 50 per cent in the first period, it drops by approximately 9 per cent points in each round.

However, when we split help along the central dimension of the level of care involved, nuances appear. We define care work as activities that involve manifest elements of help being embedded in a caring relationship of commitment such as childcare, help to isolated persons, and support to struggling families/individuals. We contrast this type of care work to other types of help: sharing information, helping with transport, economic support, and donations. While the forms of motivation that this paper explores are certainly relevant to the latter type of help, our point here is that these types of help tend not to imply the kind of relational commitment that we find in cases of care work (Andersen et al., forthcoming).

Figure 3. Distribution of COVID-19 voluntary helpers in the population during the spring 2020

Note. n round 1=3,340; round 2=2,264; round 3=1,971. 95 % confidence intervals. Source: Solidarity and volunteering during the COVID-19 crisis survey. Care help: childcare, help to isolated persons and support of struggling families/individuals. Other help: sharing information, helping with transport, economic support and donations.

Figure 3 reveals that the overall decline in the share of the population involved in help is mainly driven by a decline in types of help other than care work. From period one to three, the share of the respondents that offer other types of help is almost cut in half, whereas care work is reduced by roughly a third going from being the minor type of help to a share roughly equal to other types of help.

This variation reflects changes in institutional regulations in the sense that access to public transportation, shops, stores, and public service provisions was gradually reinstated during the
period. This drastically reduced the need for the practical and economic types of help that we find in the category of other types of help. However, except for the partial reopening of schools and day care that reduced the need for voluntary childcare, the very slow and gradual reopening did not change the need for help for the groups at particularly high risk of being infected with Covid-19 and other vulnerable groups. They still suffered from a lack of access to services and resources from public and civil society welfare providers and, therefore, were in need of care help. Also, as the crisis prolonged, it increased stress and frustration from isolation and insecurity that in turn created new care needs. Thus, the changing supply of support in Figure 3 likely reflects changes in the demand for help, which in the case of care help decreased at a slower pace than other forms of help.

In summary, the results reveal substantial temporal variation regarding attention to and supply of voluntary help during the three periods. Concerning attention, the biggest shift is from period one to two, whereas the supply of help shifted more gradually. The analysis of the supply of voluntary help also indicates that it is meaningful to distinguish between the practices of care help and other types of help, noting that they respond differently to institutional changes. Therefore, in the following, we will consider helping in general as a practice context different from not helping but also distinguish between care work and other types of help.

5. Testing the hypotheses
We initiate the analysis by considering hypothesis one stipulating that \( \text{SOC-R is positively related to participation in voluntary corona related service provision} \). Based on responses from round 2, Table 3 reports the estimates of three logistic regression models of those who provide 1) help (any kind of help), 2) care work, and 3) other types of help compared with those who do not offer help. The results reveal that SOC-R has a substantial and significant relationship to help. This relationship is stronger for care work. Our measure of PSM, self-transcendent values, also has both a substantial effect and is significant. Thus, the models support hypothesis one and suggest that SOC-R and PSM can be empirically distinguished as confirmed by the multicollinearity statistics (not reported). The result also indicates that SOC-R’s relation to care work is stronger than to other types of help. This supports the element of other-orientedness in SOC-R, the presence of relations with and a commitment to a concrete and specific other, which is the central factor distinguishing care work from other types of help. Interestingly, the estimated relationship between self-transcendence and the different forms of help are at the same level.
Table 3. Logistic regression analysis of the relationship between motivations and help

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Help</th>
<th>Care help</th>
<th>Other help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC-R</td>
<td>1.478 (.385)**</td>
<td>2.379 (.461)***</td>
<td>1.587 (.433)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-transcendence</td>
<td>1.274 (.308)***</td>
<td>1.299 (.355)***</td>
<td>1.356 (.345)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-empowerment</td>
<td>.432 (.268)</td>
<td>.150 (.315)</td>
<td>.621 (.294)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. neighbours</td>
<td>.999 (.365)**</td>
<td>1.120 (.423)**</td>
<td>.741 (.405)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. area</td>
<td>-.372 (.395)</td>
<td>-.269 (.463)</td>
<td>-.033 (.438)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. compatriots</td>
<td>.156 (.361)</td>
<td>.212 (.420)</td>
<td>.033 (.403)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity w. Europeans</td>
<td>-.757 (.357)*</td>
<td>-1.122 (.417)**</td>
<td>-.800 (.397)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global solidarity</td>
<td>.530 (.288)</td>
<td>.289 (.335)</td>
<td>.769 (.321)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong ties index</td>
<td>.453 (.340)</td>
<td>.303 (.400)</td>
<td>.788 (.386)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak ties index</td>
<td>-.044 (.272)</td>
<td>-.056 (.314)</td>
<td>.094 (.305)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>.286 (.098)**</td>
<td>.340 (.116)**</td>
<td>.163 (.109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covid positive</td>
<td>-.049 (.296)</td>
<td>-.155 (.352)</td>
<td>.203 (.304)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know someone Covid positive</td>
<td>.353 (.137)**</td>
<td>.377 (.157)*</td>
<td>.378 (.147)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>-.018 (.313)***</td>
<td>(.omitted)</td>
<td>(.omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>-.088 (.307)***</td>
<td>.082 (.385)***</td>
<td>(.omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>.651 (.292)***</td>
<td>-.139 (.381)***</td>
<td>(.omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>1.018 (.289)***</td>
<td>.560 (.359)***</td>
<td>(.omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>.700 (.307)***</td>
<td>1.198 (.354)***</td>
<td>(.omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-150 DKK</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-250 DKK</td>
<td>-.239 (.186)</td>
<td>-.177 (.220)</td>
<td>-.340 (.208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-350 DKK</td>
<td>.166 (.192)</td>
<td>.172 (.229)</td>
<td>.156 (.212)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350-500 DKK</td>
<td>.114 (.190)</td>
<td>.259 (.224)</td>
<td>.025 (.210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500+ DKK</td>
<td>.136 (.205)</td>
<td>.423 (.242)</td>
<td>.007 (.228)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
<td>(-omitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>-.017 (.214)</td>
<td>-.281 (.270)*</td>
<td>.152 (.236)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>.183 (.134)</td>
<td>.269 (.156)*</td>
<td>.236 (.148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>.015 (.241)</td>
<td>.058 (.286)*</td>
<td>.078 (.269)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-.481 (.249)</td>
<td>-.549 (.318)*</td>
<td>-.567 (.281)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis two concerns whether other-oriented motivations stabilise (2.1) or decrease (2.2) following a period of heightened critical awareness. To investigate this question, Figure 4 depicts the development over the three rounds for normalised measure of crisis awareness, self-transcendence, and SOC-R. The 2000 respondents who responded to all three survey rounds comprise the survey population. Our ability to answer the hypotheses is limited in two regards. First, we do not have a before measure. Therefore, we assume that round one levels are the results of an increase due to the Covid-19 crisis. Second, SOC-R is available only in rounds two and three.

---

6 Crisis awareness was measured by a survey question asking about different subjective dimensions of the respondents’ perception of COVID-19. First part of the question was: "To what degree do you experience the new corona virus/COVID-19 as..." which then was followed by different scenarios like "frightening" or "something close to me" which the respondent evaluated on a likert scale ranging from "Not at all" to "To a very high degree". Crisis awareness was measured by the scenario "something I think about all the time." We recognize that this scenario do not define COVID-19 as a crisis per se. Thus, we cannot exclude the possibility that the respondents think about COVID-19 as something different than a crisis, for instance a personal challenge. However, in the context of the data collection period, the spring and early summer of 2020 where the public framing consistently was in terms of crisis, we find that the responses to the question provides an acceptable indicator of the average level of crisis awareness in the Danish population.
and three. Consequently, we are confined to analyse the development of this other-oriented form of motivation in rounds two and three, roughly corresponding to the lockdown phases with the least variation as discussed above.

Despite these limitations, the findings pertaining to the category ‘All’ in Figure 4 can inform the investigation of hypothesis two. While we see a dramatic and statistically significant (95% CI) decrease in crisis awareness from round 1 to 2 (.57-.49), the drop in self-transcendence is small (.69-.68) and statistically insignificant. While crisis awareness drops further from round 2 to 3 (.49-.46, p<0.05), self-transcendence drops slightly (.68-.67), but the change is statistically insignificant. Thus, while crisis awareness varies according to our expectation based on the analysis of public attention and supply of help above, the self-transcendent values that we use to measure PSM remain stable, supporting hypothesis 2.1. This implies that PSM does not appear to depend on shifting period contexts.

SOC-R results point in the opposite direction. SOC-R takes a statistically significant drop (0.60-0.58) from rounds 2 to 3. This is a relatively small drop, to be sure (however, considered relative to the variables SD of 0.14, it is far from negligible). However, in light of the overall small variation from phase 2 to 3, it still indicates that, for SOC-R, periodical contexts matter, which is in accordance with our theoretical expectations and in line with hypothesis 2.2.

**Figure 4. Distribution of crisis awareness, self-transcendence and SOC-R in survey rounds 1-3**

Note. The sample is respondents who completed all three survey rounds, n=2000.

Finally, in figure 4, the population is split between those who help in the given round and those who do not. This split informs our analysis of hypothesis three (Ceteris paribus, compared to
individuals who do not engage in voluntary work, other-oriented motivations are more likely to endure after an initial high period of crisis awareness for those who have engaged in voluntary work), which concerns the potential relationship between contexts of practice and other-oriented motivations. While the gap in crisis awareness widens slightly over the rounds, this is only to a very limited degree the case for self-transcendence, and there are no significant shifts between the rounds or when comparing rounds one and three. Again, SOC-R follows a different pattern. While the level of SOC-R remains stable for the helpers, the level drops significantly for non-helpers (.58–.56). This finding suggests two things: first, the non-helpers drive the overall drop and, second, the context of helping practice stabilises SOC-R. These findings support hypothesis 3.

6. Discussion: Public service resilience during Covid-19

The results from the above analysis inform two overlapping points of discussions. They enable us to engage with the on-going conceptual debate about PSM and SOC-R and contribute to the conceptual clarification and disentangling of the two other-oriented forms of motivation. Furthermore, the results point to different roles for PSM and SOC-R in supporting public service resilience in times of crisis. Below, we shall discuss these points in order and draw our conclusions.

The status of different forms of motivation, including whether they constitute settled dispositions or transform through active learning, is central not only to the public management literature but also to wider debates on the position of values and attitudes in the social sciences (Vaisey and Kiley, 2021; Martin and Lembo, 2020; van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995; Rokeach, 1973; Toubøl and Gundelach, forthcoming). Our findings inform these debates by showing that SOC-R is not simply a specification of PSM (Nowell and Boyd 2016). Rather, the results indicate that PSM captures enduring settled dispositions similar to the way values are conceived of in the wider literature (Schwartz 2007; van Deth and Scarbrough 1995). This taps into the discussion about public value and its meaning (Moore, 1995). In sharp contrast to those who are inspire by the techniques of private managers and advocate their relevance for their public counterparts, scholars who engage with public value see it in close proximity to democratic government. Against this backdrop, they advance the view that in a democracy the arbiter of public value is not only individuals concerned about their own material welfare but citizens valuing the welfare of others and their duties to one another (Moore 2014; Bryson, 2014).

In our empirical analysis, PSM (operationalised as the value of self-transcendence) is stable across the three time periods we measure. Even though it clearly relates to voluntary service provision and those who volunteer to help consistently score higher on the PSM measure compared to those who do not, the gap is stable across time. Thus, neither variation in time period nor practice influences PSM. This suggests that PSM seen as a general disposition without ties to any concrete context (Andersen et al. 2020) denotes an enduring trait rather than a fluctuating state. SOC-R, on the other hand captures, at least partly, different states related to shifting contexts. This points to SOC-R being more responsive to situational changes. However,
the Covid-19 crisis does not initiate a learning process whereby SOC-R stabilises at a high level. Yet, those who help stabilise at a relatively higher level of SOC-R than those who do not help. The latter group’s SOC-R appears to decline as crisis awareness declines and the situation becomes more normal, contrary to those who help. Thus, our findings indicate an enduring learning process, as opposed to a situational shift: SOC-R is stabilised only among those who help and, therefore, take part in situations in which a sense of community responsibility has direct and visible positive consequences.

However, SOC-R and PSM are highly correlated. Therefore, we do not suggest that SOC-R is purely reflecting a state but rather that, in comparison to PSM, its distinguishable feature is its ability to capture context-related states. This tentative conclusion is in need of additional investigation, and the exact nature of the shifting states and attitudes and their relation to traits and values is a central topic in current debates (e.g., Kiley and Vaisey, 2020; Vaisey and Kiley, 2021; Martin and Lembo, 2020). The findings of this paper invite researchers of motivations for public services provision to consider both abstract and universal as well as context-sensitive empirical measures of motivations to capture these important dimensions. The reasons for this are not only academic but also practical. If other-oriented motivations are not simply stable traits but vary depending on contexts, they are not only a pre-existing condition but become an object of on-going institutional and managerial regulation.

This constitutes the natural point of departure for discussing the relevance of other-oriented motivations for voluntarism and public service resilience during Covid-19. While both PSM and SOC-R relate positively to voluntary public service provision and, therefore, are positively associated with resilience, SOC-R also relates to temporal variations. As discussed above, the periodic variation is multidimensional concerning both variation in institutional regulation, which in turn influences the demand and supply of voluntary help, public attention, and crisis awareness, as well as the gradual customisation to the new situation. From the perspective of individual-level life course, motivations’ high dependency on specific periods might be disqualified as local variations. However, from the point of view of public service resilience, this contextual variation indicates a potential to transform citizens’ motivations and mobilise them to take responsibility in a crisis. Hence, for civil society organisations, local communities, and governments, SOC-R seems to be an important motivation to understand in order to support voluntary public service in crises.

Variation in SOC-R relates to these periodic changes, but it does so differently, depending on the citizens’ practice of volunteering. Those who help maintain a high level of SOC-R whereas SOC-R declines for those who do not. Hence, engaging people in voluntary help contributes to maintaining a high level of motivation to deliver voluntary public service, thereby enhancing public service provision’s overall resilience. In turn, by establishing new relations of exchanging voluntary help and support, SOC-R also increases the social capital in society. Such expansion of informal trust networks (Tilly, 2007) that citizens can turn to in crises constitutes in itself an enhancement of society’s resilience. Research has found that around a quarter of the Covid-19 volunteers in Germany were newcomers who did not do voluntary social work before
the pandemic (Koos and Bertogg 2020). This indicates that a substantial expansion of the trust networks has occurred due to the mobilisation of voluntary public service provisions to which SOC-R and PSM are associated, however, in different ways.

The reference to the Covid-19 crisis in a neighbouring country, i.e. Germany, begs the question of the external validity of the present study. The Danish case is of course a specific one. It has characteristics that are particular to the country, most notably a generous welfare state and a population with high trust in public institutions. This provides a specific set of framework conditions that affects the national Covid-19 policy and regulations. Given that the body of literature that this special issue contributes to is emerging, it is hard to ascertain whether the findings derived from the Danish case differs significantly from other cases. Therefore, we remain cautious about uncritically generalizing the conclusions derived from the present study to other cases – and we are hopeful this special issues will contribute to such endeavour.

Acknowledgements
We are grateful to Research Assistant Mia Lunding Christensen, who, from a comprehensive analysis of numerous documents, composed a detailed historical resumé of the phases of the Covid-19 lockdown in Denmark.

Funding
This work was supported by the Carlsbergfondet [CF17-0199]; Samfund og Erhverv, Det Frie Forskningsråd [0213-00028B].

References


