

Creating a Motivated Workforce: How Organizations Can Enhance and Develop Public Service Motivation (PSM)

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The impact of organizational action on the enhancement and development of public service motivation (PSM) was explored through interviews with mid-level managers at two federal agencies. Participants expressed substantial individual variation in their initial reasons for pursuing government employment, with a large majority citing pragmatic reasons rather than the altruistic ones PSM research might indicate. However, individuals' conceptions of public service motivation are dynamic over time and change as those individuals move through organizational levels and positions. This research was undertaken in response to the call for more investigation into the practical implications of PSM for public employers, and results indicate that organizations can have a distinct impact on the development and framing of employees' public service motivation.

Introduction

The effects of public service ideals and ethics are of crucial concern for human resource managers, public administrators, and scholars alike. What causes individuals to seek public sector employment? What motivates them to stay in their jobs and, most importantly, to perform well? What traits characterize those who dedicate their lives to public service? Can organizations effectively impact motivation, specifically public service motivation? These and similar questions have been the foundation for academic and practitioner efforts aimed at gaining a better understanding of how public management practices impact the performance of government.¹

Public service motivation (PSM), a specific branch of motivational research, is one theoretical framework that is useful for considering these issues. It offers a lens for viewing the nature of public sector incentives as well as a mechanism to evaluate public servants' behavior. PSM is most often grounded in the definition developed by James Perry and Lois Wise: “[A]n individual’s predisposition to respond to motives

grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations.”² This definition suggests that some individuals are instilled with a unique public-service ethos attracting them to government service and influencing subsequent job performance.³

In the past two decades, research into PSM from theoretical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives has produced many advances.⁴ To date, a majority of the research has focused on the existence of PSM and on broad comparisons between public sector and private sector employees, with some authors expanding the scope to include non-profit organizations. Extensive comparisons of public and private sector employees yielded rich results that have extended the understanding of what PSM is, the pro-social impacts of PSM levels, and antecedents of PSM⁵, as well as the behavioral impacts of PSM.⁶ Human Resources journals have seen an expansion of this topic in their pages as authors have further explored the managerial implications of this topic.⁷

The research presented in this article responds to the call for more empirical work aimed at validating and testing the theory of public service motivation specifically in the area of practical implications for public employers. An examination of the comments of mid-level managers at two federal agencies explores the role that organizational action plays in the enhancement and development of employees’ public service motivation. In addition, the research examines whether public service motivation or orientation was in fact an important determinant in job selection.

Participants expressed substantial individual variation in their initial reasons for pursuing government employment, with a large majority citing pragmatic reasons rather than the altruistic ones PSM research might indicate. However, individuals’ conceptions of public service motivation are dynamic over time and change as those individuals move through organizational levels and positions. Findings indicate that individuals view organizational behavior as having an impact on the development of employees’ public service motivation and organizational dedication.

Individual perceptions of the importance, their personal level of public service motivation, and perspectives on public service were found to be highly varied; reasons for higher levels were attributed first to personal development or characteristics,⁸ with secondary reasons stemming from organizational factors, management practices, and leadership styles.⁹ The findings presented in this research offer support for previous research in the area of public service motivation development, and contribute to the understanding on this concept through the inclusion of a unique sample and the use of in-depth qualitative research with rich data that provides contextually based results.

The article begins with a brief review of the literature. It then outlines the research method employed and reports the principal research findings and conclusions. The article ends with a number of recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

As the “human capital crisis” in government becomes more pressing, PSM may offer some insight into ways of attracting and retaining talent.¹⁰ To marshal the human

resources necessary to achieve their missions, organizations must convince individuals to accept employment and remain in their jobs. Additionally, to prosper, organizations must encourage employees to work effectively and efficiently.¹¹ Motivating employees to perform at these high levels remains a crucial concern for organizations and a central focus of public management studies.¹²

The notion that some individuals have a “public service ethic” that attracts them to public service and subsequently influences their job performance drives much of PSM research.¹³ PSM provides both the analytical framework to determine the nature of public sector incentives and an evaluative mechanism through which the behaviors of those connected to providing services can be examined. As noted, the most widely accepted definition of PSM stems from research in which Perry and Wise both defined the concept as well as identified three analytically distinct categories of motives primarily associated with public service motives: rational, norm-based, and affective. Actions grounded in utility maximization fall into the rational category; for example public policy making can be exciting and dramatic and reinforce a person’s self-image of their own importance (so while serving the public they are also satisfying a personal need). Norm-based motives are actions that originate from an effort to conform to social or cultural norms. Affective motives are actions grounded in emotional responses to various social contexts.¹⁴

In 1996 James Perry extended this research by developing a measurement scale for PSM. Working with the theoretical literature and focus groups and testing his results with confirmatory factor analysis, Perry identified four categories for a PSM scale: public policy making, public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Perry’s PSM scale provides a methodologically sophisticated measurement instrument and is an important contribution to research on this topic.

Much of the PSM research has clarified and tested the Perry and Wise construct and explored presumed differences in the motivation of employees in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Through the work of several authors,¹⁵ the hypothesis that motivation differs across sectors has been affirmed and continues to gain attention and empirical support. With few exceptions, researchers have found significant motivational distinctions between employees in the public and private sectors.¹⁶ Those in the public sector are consistently found to have a lower need for financial compensation, status, and prestige but a greater need for meaningful work.¹⁷

Additional research has examined how different levels of public service motivation are translated into practice as well as how that practice affects outcomes for individuals and organizations.¹⁸ Researchers’ efforts to understand the behavioral impact of PSM have found PSM to be correlated with pro-social behaviors and positive organizational outcomes.¹⁹ For example, Gene Brewer and Sally Selden examined the link between attitudes (a common focus of research) and behavioral outcomes, thus enhancing the understanding of how different levels of PSM manifest in actual work.²⁰ These researchers found that individuals with higher PSM levels are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors such as whistle-blowing. Phillip Crewson found that individuals with high levels of PSM also exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment.²¹ Katherine Naff and John Crum found a significant relationship

between federal employees' job satisfaction, performance, intention to remain in government service and support for government reinvention efforts.²² David Houston found that public employees are more likely to place a higher value on the intrinsic rewards of work that is important and provides a feeling of accomplishment.²³

Perry contributed further to the construct validity of his PSM scale when he investigated the relationship of PSM to five sets of correlates: parental socialization, religious socialization, professional identification, political ideology, and individual demographic factors (e.g., age, income, gender, and education). Despite mixed findings, and some unexpected anomalies, Perry's research not only helps to validate the PSM scale but also contributes to our understanding of the reasons people choose to enter public sector employment and how these reasons relate to their subsequent PSM levels.²⁴

Recent articles have highlighted the importance of understanding PSM for human resources and organizational management. Gregory Mann argues that public service motivation might be harnessed as a motivational force for human resource managers.²⁵ Leonard Bright presented a deeper understanding of the characteristics of those in public organizations who exhibit higher levels of PSM, primarily that they have higher levels of education and are more likely to be in management positions. Additionally, he finds support for a negative relationship between PSM levels and preferences for monetary rewards.²⁶ Patrick Scott and Sanjay Pandey find a linkage between PSM and perceptions of red-tape.²⁷ Perry's recent work has attempted to develop a theory of motivation that serves as an alternative to the rational choice theories that have dominated the research and thinking about motivation in organizations. He examines how motivation is embedded in organizations that are, in turn, within the larger context. As he notes in his title, he is working to "bring society in" to the research of motivation. Perry focuses on the formative role that socio-historical context plays. This brings in the notion of how social processes shape individuals' normative beliefs and emotional understanding of the world.²⁸

Donald Moynihan and Sanjay Pandey, build upon Perry's work on the role that socio-historical context plays.²⁹ They test Perry's theory (2000) and examine the role that organizational factors play in shaping PSM. Looking at state government health and human services managers, Moynihan and Pandey find support for the role of socio-historical context. Their results indicate that public service motivation is strongly and positively related to level of education and membership in professional organizations. Their results underscore the significant influence of organizational institutions, indicating that red-tape and length of organizational membership are negatively related to public service motivation, whereas hierarchical authority and reform efforts have a positive relationship. Both the Perry and Moynihan and Pandey studies support the notion that better understanding of PSM can lead to important managerial gains. By gaining a better understanding of the bases of motivation for their employees public and non-profit leaders can better leverage their managerial practices and decisions.

Despite progress in theory development, measurement, and empirical investigation, additional research on public service motivation is needed to understand behavioral implications as well as structural and organizational influences. Given the

positive outcomes related to PSM, it is important to continue to gain a better conceptual and practical understanding of how to understand and impact PSM.

This research builds upon previous motivation research particularly the work of those interested in the influence of socio-historical and organizational factors. Specifically it examines two main areas of concern: reasons for selection decisions and reasons for employee retention. Both of these concerns are examined with a focus on how and if PSM has an influence or impact.

Methodology

To examine the impact of public service motivation on employees data was gathered through interviews and surveys. The opinions, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors of individuals serve as the primary source of data. The question of why individuals selected public sector employment was examined with particular attention to the questions of if and how public service motivation elements influenced this selection. The research goes on to examine issues of retention and the relationship to PSM, including the extent to which individuals maintained, enhanced, or decreased their PSM focus. These questions were examined through an exploratory case-based methodology that employed open-ended, semi-structured interviews. This methodology allowed contextual data to be collected from each respondent. In addition, Perry's 1996 survey instrument was administered. This instrument has been used and validated in several previous studies.³⁰

Gene Brewer, Sally Selden, and Rex Facer note the importance of examining the concept of public service and individual conceptions of public service by "listening to those who perform it."³¹ The research presented here follows in this tradition.³² Thus, interview responses are a primary, and appropriate, source of qualitative data on how employees understand and respond to their work. As Mathew Miles and Michael Huberman note, in qualitative research "[t]he researcher attempts to capture data on the perception of local actors 'from the inside,' through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding (*Verstehen*), and of suspending or 'bracketing' preconceptions about the topics under discussion."³³ Miles and Huberman go on to highlight the benefits of qualitative data for investigating "*naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings*" (emphasis added) in which meaning, as well as the ability to connect that meaning to the social world, is a focus of concern.³⁴

In the present study, interview data was coded into quantitative categories as well as serving as the source of data for inductive analysis.³⁵ Open-ended data were coded and analyzed with QSR NUD*IST—a qualitative data analysis tool.³⁶

In essence, the interviewees helped develop a construct of what PSM meant to respondents and how and why it was influential in their decision process and behaviors. The combined questionnaire and interview approach not only allowed the research to address the established dimensions (such as policy interest); it also provided, through the inductive analysis, a chance to consider confounding data and alternative explanations, including organizational influence and developmental practices. Interviews were conducted between July 2001 and July 2002.³⁷

Selection and Sample

PSM has often been studied within organizations where the link to altruistic and public service intention is evident. The cases under investigation here were purposely selected because of their non-social service orientation. The agencies studied for this analysis were the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

The IRS and the USPTO are large, business-oriented regulatory agencies with the potential to have significant impact on the national economy. The two agencies differ in that the IRS is an enforcement and collection agency, while the USPTO is a stimulating agency whose mission is aimed at promoting the progress of science and the useful arts. The present study began with the assumption that public service motivation factors would be present and would vary within and between the agencies. In addition to serving different functions, employees of the two agencies have distinctly different characteristics (specifically educational backgrounds). Employees at the USPTO are primarily physical scientists and engineers, while the IRS is home to a league of accountants. The USPTO's primary duty is to promote industrial and technological progress by encouraging investment in innovation and fostering the entrepreneurial spirit.³⁸ The mission of the IRS is to "[p]rovide America's taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all."³⁹

Case selection took place through a multiple-step process of first identifying the agencies of interest and then choosing a population of employees within the agencies.⁴⁰ The research sample chosen were upper middle managers, individuals who are not yet executives but work in the higher levels of the organization (General Schedule 13–15 or the equivalent). Middle managers hold professional positions with authority and discretion;⁴¹ they have significant influence within the organization. This population constitutes a large portion of federal civil servants and includes the agency leaders of the future. The individuals selected came from several different units and divisions, but all were involved in executive-readiness training programs at their agencies. At the USPTO, one class of students comprised the sample, and at the IRS two concurrent classes were sampled. The research population was therefore not random but was deliberately selected from a larger group of people being prepared for leadership roles. Although a purposive sample, subjects varied in their levels of PSM and their conceptualizations of PSM, as well as in experience and positions held.

To determine a baseline of respondents' PSM levels, James Perry's original forty-question Public Service Motivation questionnaire with the addition of a set of demographic questions was administered.⁴² The survey response rate was 92 percent for the Patent and Trademark Office ($n=35$) and 67.4 percent for the Internal Revenue Service ($n=55$). More than half the respondents completing the survey agreed to be interviewed (44 percent and 60 percent at the USPTO and the IRS respectively). No significant or systematic differences were apparent between those who agreed to be interviewed and those who declined. In reference to both PSM level and other demo-

graphic dimensions, only a slight variation was seen between the interview sample and the broader survey sample.

Table 1: Interview Sample

Index	Interviewed	Declined interview
Mean PSM score	14.8	14.4
Gender (percentage female)	40.8	41.7
G.S. level (percentage G.S. 15)	90.0	85.3
Age (percentage 35–50)	73.5	78.4
Age (percentage 51–65)	20.5	18.9

Findings and Discussion

Conventional wisdom and the empirical research both argue that people who seek positions in the public sector are different from those who work in the private sector because they have higher levels of public service motivation.⁴³ As noted, this research examined individuals in non-social service oriented and business related agencies to determine if they followed this pattern and indicate a strong sense of motivation stemming from the public service function. Results indicate that respondents were motivated by a public service orientation but that its impact on selection decisions was less than might have been presumed.

To gain an understanding of participants' PSM levels Perry's PSM scale was used, which measures PSM based on the four dimensions of (1) public policy making, (2) public interest, (3) compassion, and (4) self-sacrifice.⁴⁴ Perry's 1996 instrument was replicated in this study, and, as a result, a PSM score was determined consistent with previous studies. The PSM scale weights all four dimensions equally, resulting in a scale that ranges from 4 to 20.⁴⁵

Results indicate that the individuals in this sample have relatively high levels of PSM, compared to individuals with similar characteristics in other federal agencies.⁴⁶ Responses at the IRS were on average slightly higher than those of the USPTO with the exception of the area of interest in public policy making. Given these levels of PSM

Table 2: PSM Scale Information

Index	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Public policy making	1–5	3.33	0.97
Public interest	1–5	3.96	0.60
Self-sacrifice	1–5	3.71	0.63
Compassion	1–5	3.65	0.57
Public service motivation	4–20	14.60	1.92

*Note: The scores presented for range and mean are the scores after the indexes were standardized so that they would all be weighted equally in the final combined index.

Table 3: USPTO and IRS PSM Scale Information

Index	USPTO			IRS		
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Public policy making	35	3.32	0.93	54	3.323	1.01
Public interest	35	3.86	0.51	54	4.03	0.64
Self-sacrifice	35	3.63	0.55	55	3.763	0.67
Compassion	34	3.62	0.56	55	3.663	0.58
Public service motivation	34	14.42	1.65	53	14.713	1.09

the question arises to if PSM had an active role in selection or retention of these employees.

Agency Selection

Although respondents indicated high levels of PSM within survey results and indicated in interviews that they valued the public service aspect of their jobs, interest in fulfilling a public service desire was seldom the primary motivator leading individuals to select public sector employment initially.⁴⁷ A majority of respondents entered these organizations for much more pragmatic or rationally based reasons.

Respondents at the IRS and USPTO identified three primary reasons for selecting the agency for employment: economic, expertise, and government security and flexibility. At both the IRS and the USPTO the most common reason the organization was chosen for employment was economic—in other words, because the respondent needed a job. Of respondents interviewed, 60 percent of those at the IRS and 57 percent of those at the USPTO selected the agency because they were in need of employment. While applying to a variety of organizations in varying sectors, they received an offer and accepted the position but not for reasons primarily related to a greater social- or service-related aspect.⁴⁸

As one IRS respondent summed it up:

I really just needed a job. And I was very interested in getting some work experience, but I never thought in a million years that I would have a government type job. It's not something that I planned on doing.

Another IRS respondent commented:

I came from New York to go to school, and while at school I realized that I needed a job. I knew how to type, so I took the civil service placement, and I got a GS-3 typist job. I only thought I would be there for a little while, but I kept getting promotions, kept going up, and I'm currently assistant director. Twenty-four years later, I am still here.

A third respondent at the IRS explained:

Actually, unemployment chose government for me. I had worked in private industry. I was only twenty at the time—so only for about a year and a half—and had my daughter. So I was out on maternity leave. And the State of New Jersey, one of your job-hunting requirements was always to take—if you had a clerical background—both state and federal civil service tests.

The story was similar at the USPTO, with one respondent noting:

It was not really a choice. I remember I graduated in 1974. The job market was not that great, and I had a couple interviews and sent out lots of resumes. And, basically, that's the first offer I got, and I just grabbed it.

At the IRS, the second most cited reason (16.7 percent) was because respondents wanted to focus on the area of tax, and working for the IRS was a natural match with their skills. One respondent commented:

I was finishing up my master's degree in accounting. I was looking at government and at private companies. The reason that I came to the IRS was because I wanted to specialize in tax.

This reason was followed by those who entered the IRS because of the job security and flexibility of working for government (13 percent), as simply stated by one respondent: "I think a lot of it, of course, is the pay, job security, and career mobility."

At the USPTO the second most common reason for coming was the desire for job security and/or job flexibility (28.6 percent). A response from the USPTO captured this well: "[I]t was 15 years ago. At that time the government was more stable than [the] private sector. The private sector is very unpredictable."

A small percentage of respondents indicate a desire to serve the public as an initial selection consideration, with one respondent from each agency indicating this to be the primary criterion for selection. Making a move into government from military positions (with little preference to agency selection), and location were also mentioned.

Although relatively high levels of PSM were found within this population, a sense of public service was seldom important to their initial selection of the organization. Rather, public service motivation developed after time within the organization and served as a retention and performance tool. The results indicate that the concept of public service motivation is dynamic and changes over the course of an employee's career. This is consistent with Romzek, who argued that over time organizational loyalty and commitment are strengthened as a result of organizational membership.⁴⁹

Despite the initial lack of draw as a result of the public service nature of the work, several respondents indicated that they felt that it would be a good recruitment mechanism. Many respondents noted that applicants they have worked with get excited

when the public service contribution aspect is explained to them. Respondents noted that often a focus on public service was not part of the recruitment process but might have made a difference.

Motivation and Retention

Respondents were asked what their primary motivators and current feelings about public service were as well as why they remained with the organization. The types of motivation expressed by employees at both agencies were similar, with a high degree of overlap in the specific aspects and elements indicated. Motivational forces fell into three clear groupings at the IRS: public service/service to the organization, challenge of work, and opportunity for advancement. The most frequent response, given by almost a third of the respondents, was that they wanted to make a difference and/or wanted to help people. The people that they wanted to help often were other members of the organization—indicating strong organizational commitment. At the Patent and Trademark Office, patterns of motivation groupings were less distinct but three main categories did emerge: the mission, challenge of work, and career opportunities. The most frequent response related to the nature of the work or job. Slightly less than one-third of the respondents commented that it was primarily because they enjoyed their jobs or found them interesting, challenging, or generally pleasant professional experiences.

In both groups a similar percentage of respondents were motivated by the flexibility and security of their position. A greater number of IRS respondents spoke of the importance of making a difference and undertaking meaningful work but the concept was still present among the USPTO respondents. A small set of individuals at each agency indicated that a quickly approaching retirement date motivated them, one gentleman smiled and commented that if people at his level did not admit that retirement and their pensions were at least a partial motivator they were not being completely honest. USPTO employees referred to this as “golden-handcuffs,” a reference to the fact that they are so vested in their pension plans, earn high salaries, and are so specialized that it makes leaving the organization difficult.

The job security and flexibility inherent in government work was often cited as a motivator for working in either agency. A USPTO respondent simply stated: “Stability. I guess that’s my primary motivator. Also, it is a fair salary for what’s asked of me, and what’s given to me is reasonable.” Financial reward was mentioned more often at the USPTO than at the IRS as an employment incentive. It should be noted that respondents in both agencies assigned higher levels of public service motivation to themselves than what they believed were present in the organization at large.

Challenge and interesting work were also an important element at both organizations. A woman at the IRS captured the sentiment of many by simply noting, “every time I started to get bored, a new opportunity would be offered to me that was interesting and challenging.” Individuals in both organizations discussed the importance of serving the public. The other prominent motivator at the USPTO was the desire to “leave a mark” and to “train the next generation of examiners.” Variation was at least partially attributed to the varying management styles, techniques, and cultures in

these two agencies as well as to the employees' individual characteristics and attributes.⁵⁰

Findings around motivations of managers in the two case-study organizations are consistent with Hal Rainey's concept that the motives of younger, newer employees focus more on wage and security, while employees that have been with the organization for an extended period of time are more concerned with job challenge.

The Federal Employee Attitude Survey asked newly hired employees to rate the importance of various factors in their decision to work for the federal government. Virtually all of the executive-level employees rated "challenging work" as the most important factor (97 percent of GS 16 and above). Employees at lower GS levels rated job security and fringe benefits more highly than did the executives, but about 60 percent of them also rated challenging work as the most important factor.⁵¹

Reasons given for remaining with their respective agencies often related to areas that are frequently present in retention literature, including challenging work and the chance to have an impact. At both organizations, one of the most frequent responses to current motivation related to organization advancement or promotion, which for many was tied with their public service orientation. Many saw the opportunity for promotion as a chance to have a greater public service impact through the opportunities available at higher organizational level.⁵²

Public Service Motivation

Although consistently not thought of as a primary motivator in their original decisions to take their jobs or explanations for why they stayed, in both the IRS and the USPTO, employees expressed a general belief that public service was important to them. As one IRS employee noted:

I really enjoy public service. As I said, part of my personal motivators is making a difference and feeling that I'm contributing to society and doing something that I consider worthwhile. And ... that's a strong motivator for me. I have very much a service mentality.

Another respondent places the role he plays into a greater historical and societal context:

I think public service is a noble profession. If you think about Plato's guardian class and the fact that there is a duty that you have when you engage in public service which is beyond that of self but, rather, you're really a trustee or a fiduciary for the public in everything you do. So, I think public service is a noble, noble calling, an interesting profession.

Several respondents discussed the importance of seeing the contributions that they are making to the organization and to society.

It's [orientation to public service] there, it's always there. Ever since I figured out that this was how I could help my country the best, it's always been there. I love this country. I want to help out.

One respondent summed it up, including a willingness to give up money to perform a public duty, a notion that has long been associated with the trade-offs made by public servants:⁵³

I would gladly give up making bigger bucks to do that [serve the public], and in that sense, I feel satisfied working over here and helping the U.S. economy, helping the U.S. industry in this position.

The research on how individuals create self-conceptualization, which in turn influences how they act and work, may help to explain some of these findings. Recognition of their work as important and as having an impact at a public level helps them remain consistent with how they define themselves.⁵⁴ Brewer et al. support the importance of self-concept in their work that examines the different manners in which individuals conceptualize PSM in relation to themselves.⁵⁵ Variation in self-concept in turn has large implications for motivational consequences. Some respondents related PSM as important for the sake of service, some seeing it as having a larger societal impact, and some linking it with specific elements or aspects of the job.

A recurring theme was the recognition that they “worked for” the taxpayers, this was mentioned as an important influence on how respondents approached and thought about their work. Boas Shamir is critical that values and moral obligation are excluded from conceptions of intrinsic motivation in current theories of work motivation.⁵⁶ He observes that theories of work motivation in current theories give little recognition to either moral obligations or to values as conceptions of the desirable. Results here support Shamir’s critique as the notion of an obligation to do a good job because “tax payers are paying your salary” was a clear belief amongst many respondents. Self-monitoring can be gained from organizational cues to employers as well as from one’s self-concept.

Interestingly despite the many individuals who indicated that service was part of who they were (and in turn how they defined themselves) they recognized that their public focus was not at the forefront for them in a daily type of way:

Does that dawn on me [that I am serving a public function]? I don’t know if I actually think about it all of the time, but I understand that’s what my role is. And that I understand that I am to conduct myself as an IRS employee when I’m out in public.

The respondent goes on to say:

Is it immediate that I'm constantly all the time working for the taxpayers? Probably not. I mean, I know what I'm doing ultimately impacts them, but every day, with the twenty million things that you have to do, employee issues, getting things out, this out—I mean do I know what it's for? Yeah. But is that my immediate motivator? Probably not.

In both organizations, a majority of respondents indicated that they had developed an increased sense of public service later in their careers. As one IRS respondent colorfully put it:

The higher you go in the organization, the more you see how our organization interacts with the public. And at the various levels I think you see more expression of that dedication. I don't think the dedication is any less. It's just...the old adage, you know, when you're up to your ass in alligators, it's hard to remember that your initial plan was to drain the swamp. And that's what the people on the front line are faced with. I don't question their dedication or their motivation or their ability to do their job, or their understanding of what their role is. It's just sometimes the day-to-day stuff gets in your way.

This was not a unanimous feeling but was identified by a majority of respondents. A minority of dissenters felt differently, as the following IRS response demonstrates:

I don't think it's [public service motivation] developed the longer you stay. I think either you have that motivation and that motivation is what causes you to try to have more and more of an impact and move up in the organization or you don't.

Despite the comment above the bulk of the results indicate that the concept of public service motivation is dynamic and changes over the course of an employee's career. Research has demonstrated that over the course of tenure within a position organizational loyalty and commitment is strengthened as a result of organizational membership.⁵⁷

A key difference was that individual IRS respondents not only cited the contributions of their own personal development efforts in developing greater PSM but also gave credit to organizational actions, with one person commenting: "I think in one sense the organization does instill it, but it's instilled by history, a lot by history, and a lot by personal process."

Efforts to help develop organizational loyalty and team orientation were important, as the following comment reflects:

There's a lot of pride in what we do—pride in serving the public. I think that's probably of the greatest significance in the IRS. When you become an IRS employee, you begin to take pride in what you do in serving the public.

At the USPTO, respondents indicated that organizational actions had no impact on increasing their orientation toward public service.

One USPTO respondent noted:

I think there has to be some sort of interest so people come here and find it, and some people do not care for it [a public service orientation]. I think you can develop it over time. Certainly I have developed it over time, but if you do not come here looking for it, you are not going to. The office does not do anything to boost it.

Despite the previous respondent's sentiment, others at the USPTO identified the public service orientation was "ingrained," so that, although the agency may not have recognizable practices to develop it, the culture indirectly contributes to its development.

As I've gotten older, there's this thing about public service [that] has really been something [important]...I know it sounds totally corny, but it's something that's been ingrained in me as I've worked here. When you work with the inventors, you really feel like you're helping them out and you really feel like you're helping out basically society as you advance technology and you find patentable inventions and that allows commerce to go forward and the whole deal.

Practices and work environment at the IRS were identified as creating a setting where public service orientation can be cultivated. With the advantages that have been attributed to a higher level of PSM, such practices could be seen as potentially having great positive organizational impact. The USPTO, as indicated by respondents, had a production-oriented and isolating culture, which may help to explain why feelings and opinions about public service were not as consistently attributed to organizational factors or norms.

One USPTO respondent stated it this way:

I get very annoyed these days because I have come to the realization that what we don't teach our people from the get-go [is] the importance of this system—and where we fit into the grander scheme in the company and the importance of what we do, the importance of doing it well.

The importance of values, norms, and moral obligation play an important role in motivation research, and their role in shaping individual perspectives, is supported by the findings of the research reported here. Perry⁵⁸ provides the premise that preferences are learned in social processes (he looks at social influence on identity formation) as well as noting that norms that influence behavior are learned.⁵⁹ Given that motivational situations or contexts are often embedded in institutions and help

individuals understand and respond to events and actions. For example, many authors point to the centrality of institutions in defining social norms.⁶⁰

Though specific organizational actions were recognized as significant by IRS participants and not identified by participants at the USPTO, still it was clear that culture and the organizational setting had some impact at both institutions. The finding in this study that PSM develops over time contradicts some earlier work that indicated PSM declines over the course of employment.⁶

In line with development of PSM later in someone's career, at both agencies the desire to have a serious impact in the manager's roles was a crucial motivator for a significant number of respondents. The transition to management was consistently given as the point at which individuals' developed increased levels of public service motivation; this is consistent with Bright who finds that management level is a strong predictor of level of PSM.⁶² Bright gives two alternative explanations of why this might be, the first argues that managers might have higher levels of public service motivation because their tangible needs are satisfied by their higher salaries. This argument is based on Maslowian principles of higher level needs. Bright's second explanation focuses on manager versus non-manager socialization--namely the understanding that managers may have higher levels of PSM because they are socialized through their years of public sector experience to value public service work highly. The research here supports that managers are socialized over the course of time. At the USPTO respondents seemed less likely to recognize active socialization, yet their comments still reflected the impact. It appears that a public service commitment was, at least in part, cognitively developed. Within their managerial capacity respondents were able to have a better vantage point to understand the contributions that they were making and that became important to them.

Respondents at both organizations recognized the importance that the organizations' missions had on their own development of a stronger public service orientation:

We know that we perform probably one of the most critical jobs in the federal government. We generate the revenue for the treasury. We put the money there to fund about every government—federal government—program in the country, whether it be defense, roads, forestry, Social Security, all those things. And that money comes from you and I. We're proud of the fact that we help to make that happen.

Another adds to this:

When you sit and realize the amount of money this agency collects, I'm not one to wave the flag, but we are where we are because of this agency. We are where we are as a country because of this agency. Every other country of the world comes to the IRS to get training, to see how we do things. It's very rewarding to realize as little as we are in this little agency and as little as I am in this country, that I can make a difference.

A USPTO respondent notes how the mission draws people together:

I really think all of us [have], everyone working in the patent office has, a strong tie with the patent office because of our mission. We are in the business of granting a product, and at the same time rendering services. Everyone, like I said, when a patent is granted, everybody feels a sense of accomplishment. When a patent is not granted, we all kind feel like, what could we have done, could we have done something at a different state, to ensure that this person received what he had requested. So the service is also there; you know, we're always performing services but the end result is the product. I think we all feel it; I don't think you can work here without feeling some kind of close binding either with the internal employees or the external customers. There is a strong bind, or bonding between both internal and external.

The statement above supports previous research regarding task specific motivation, namely that tasks can lead to meaning for the individual that can contribute to the affirmation of identify and collective affiliation.⁶³ Recognizing the contribution of their work was also crucial to USPTO respondents, nearly one-half of the USPTO respondents commented that they had developed an increased orientation toward public service over time at the agency. As noted earlier, most of these individuals indicated that they began to really understand the importance of their contribution when they got into management positions.⁶⁴

Although individuals were placed into broad categories regarding their feelings of public service, each person ultimately presented a distinct and unique representation of exactly what public service meant to him or her and how it impacted his or her thinking and motivation. This research supports several previous researchers findings and underscores the importance of individual conceptions of self and their jobs as well as efforts to develop culture, mission, and connection between jobs and outcomes.

Conclusion

Mann asks the question of whether organizations should recruit for PSM,⁶⁵ given the positive outcomes such as being more willing to engage in whistle-blowing,⁶⁶ to protect the public interest exhibiting higher levels of organizational commitment,⁶⁷ a greater belief in the importance of their jobs leading to greater effort,⁶⁸ higher likelihood that they are high performers and enjoy higher job satisfaction; and a lower probability that they will leave their jobs⁶⁹ selection based on higher levels of PSM is an appealing concept. Still, with competition for strong candidates, recruiting and selecting based on PSM levels appear to be daunting tasks at best. This exploratory study offers an alternative strategy—the development of PSM. Consistent with Perry⁷⁰ and Moynihan and Pandey⁷¹ this research finds that organizations can play an important role in the development of PSM amongst its employees. One such way is in helping develop commitment but also helping individuals understand the link

between their actions and the mission and contribution of the agency. As an IRS respondent commented:

One of the problems I see overall in the organization [is that] people that are actually doing the work...probably don't know how much they're impacting for the government. And that's one thing we try to do, let them know what's going on.

A majority of respondents in this study indicated that initial acceptance of their current positions was not driven by the need to serve the public or fulfill a personal public orientation, respondents indicated that they had developed a strong commitment to their organizations and the recognition that public service motivates them after several years of employment. As one USPTO respondent noted, "I didn't come because of it [public service motivation]; I stayed because of it." This link can act as an important retention mechanism.

Although PSM was developed in both cases, the potential to contribute to the development of PSM that is associated with a list of positive outcomes seems a worthy goal for an organization to undertake. When questioned about what led to the increased levels of focus on public service, individuals at the IRS were more likely to attribute the change to a combination of organizational and individual influences. Although individuals at the USPTO gave the most credit to their own personal development or the influence of one or two key supervisors or mentors they still noted that the organization played an important role particularly through communicating and demonstrating the mission and how they impact organizational outcomes.

Recommendations

If employers were able to recruit employees with higher levels of PSM as Mann suggests it would be of great benefit to public institutions yet it seems unlikely that this would be feasible for all public sector positions. The large majority of employees in this study have an average tenure of 19 years of service, they are in training to take on more leadership responsibilities, and they have high levels of dedication yet few would have identified PSM as a factor in selection. The results indicate that an increased sense of public service motivation can be developed for current employees. Still respondents saw communication of the possibility of having a public service career at these agencies as an important part of their recruitment responsibility. In addition, as we consider the recruitment of Generation Y who have a desire to be part of something meaningful, it may be worth adding a public service element as a recruitment strategy. Human resources departments may want to consider what role they can play in either directly marketing the public service aspects of positions and/or helping to develop materials and training to help hiring authorities within their organizations effectively market public service. Despite the potential advantage of marketing the service element it will remain important to market the more pragmatic advantages of government service given the high percentage of individuals indicating that these are the reasons they began public sector work.

Respondents highlight the importance of mentors in helping to socialize them and to communicate the public service aspects of their jobs. As more organizations consider how and if to establish mentorship programs, public service aspects may be as an important element to incorporate into program design. In addition to mentorship, including a discussion with new employees at orientation can help start the socialization process early for new employees and communicate that a public service focus is an organizational value and norm. Marketing of the public service aspects of the job may benefit current employees as well, impacting their retention and performance.

Many respondents spoke about the importance of seeing how their work fit into accomplishing an important public service mission. In addition to ensuring that the organization has a clear mission, it is important to make efforts to tie individuals' work to that mission.

As an IRS respondent notes:

The [mission] is internalized [for me]. [One] of the biggest things we are trying to do is to continually connect not just to our mission statement, but to [really connect] our mission statement to our strategies, businesses, goals, all the way down the line to the person on the front line working with the taxpayer[s] themselves.

Ensuring that employees have clear and accurate job descriptions and well articulated performance goals that make it clear how their work relates to broader departmental and organizational goals is important, and this research indicates that this clear link can have a positive impact on PSM levels. Therefore efforts to link performance measures and evaluations to clear and well understood goals could have a positive impact on individuals as well as the organization. Creating department performance measures can help departments, teams, and individuals better understand how they are contributing and having an impact.

Additionally, employee feedback and coaching sessions in which the link to public service contributions is made could help to develop this commitment among employees. Recognition programs that relate to service elements may also work to demonstrate an organization's value around this concept.

Orientation, training, and performance measures are all potential tools available to organizations interested in contributing to the further development of personal motivation driven by a desire to serve the public. These recommendations grow from the results of this specific research, which is limited in scope and sample, despite the limitation of a small sample there appears promise that such practices can have positive impacts for organizations working in the public (and possible nonprofit) arenas.

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

Limitations

This exploratory research examines individuals' perception and level of public service motivation as well as their employment choices. It contributes new insights on individuals' choices and motives related to job selection as well as subsequent performance and retention. The purpose of this exploratory research is not to produce results that are generalizable to a universal population but rather to develop insights from this select sample that can contribute to and be tested in future studies.⁷²

Future Research

Diverse streams of research are informed by this work, and it opens the door for future study. This research follows in an important line of motivation research and warrants further future investigation in such areas as selection, retention, training, and motivation. Questions remain about the interaction of culture and with PSM as well as leadership and how it shapes and is shaped by the change process.

These seminal topics were explored within a very select population of managers who were chosen for very specific reasons. Managers at this level of an organization can play an important role in the change process. As John Kotter, an oft-cited author in the area of organization change, notes: "the key to creating and sustaining the kind of successful twenty-first-century organization...is leadership—not only at the top of the hierarchy, with a capital L, but also in a more modest sense (l) throughout the enterprise."⁷³ Yet, while managers are an important and influential population to understand, it would be useful to also explore this topic throughout the different levels of the organization, including new hires. By following those entering the organization over time, one could learn more about how their initial motivations change over time and if they become more concerned with the public service aspect of the work, as was indicated by the respondents in this study.

Additionally, a number of recommendations have been provided that would benefit from empirical investigation to see if they have an impact and, if so, to what level they are able to influence the development or enhancement of PSM within employees.

This research was undertaken using only two case studies. Testing these findings at additional federal agencies as well as at different levels of government, such as at the state and local levels to see if the findings are consistent, would be extremely beneficial.

Notes

¹ Nigro, Lloyd G., & Nigro, Felix A. (1994). *The New Public Personnel Administration* (4th ed.). Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.

² Perry, James L., & Wise, Lois R. (1990). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review*, (May/June), 367–73. Quote from page 368.

- ³ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Brewer, Gene A., & Selden, Sally C. (1998). Whistleblowers in the federal civil service: New evidence of the public service ethic. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 8 (3), 413–39; Perry, James L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 6(1), 5–22; Crewson, Phillip. E. (1997). Public-service motivation: Building empirical evidence of incidence and effect. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 7(4), 499–518; DiIulio, J.J. (1994). Principled agents: The cultural bases of behavior in a federal government bureaucracy. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 4, 277– 320; Perry, James L., & Wise, Lois R. (1990). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review*, (May/June), 367–73; Wamsley, Gary L., Wamsley, Robert N., Bacher, Charles T., Goodsell, Philip S., Kronenberg, John A., Rohr, Orion F., et al. (1990). *Refounding Public Administration*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications; Staats, A. W. (1988). Skinner's theory and the emotion-behavior relationship: Incipient change with major implications. *American Psychologist*, 43 747–748; Kelman, Steven. (1998). Let me introduce you to the next-generation public servant. *Federal Computer Week*, 12, 21; Frederickson, H. George, & Hart, David K. (1985). The public service and the patriotism of benevolence. *Public Administration Review*, 45, 547–533; Rainey, Hal. (1982). Reward preferences among public and private managers. *American Review of Public Administration*, 16(4), 288–302.
- ⁴ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Perry, 1990, op. cit. Rainey, Hal G. (1997). *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers; Wright, Bradley E. (2001). Public-sector work motivation: A review of the current literature and a revised conceptual model. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 11(4), 559–86; Perry, James L. (1997). Antecedents of public service motivation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 7(2), 118–97. Buchanan, Bruce II. (1975). Red-tape and the service ethic: Some unexpected differences between public and private managers. *Administration and Society*, 6(4), 423–44; Rainey, 1982, op. cit. ; Brewer, Gene A., Selden, Sally C., & Facer II, Rex. (2000). Individual conceptions of public service motivation. *Public Administration Review*, 60(3), 254–64. Brewer, 1998, op. cit.; Gabris, Gerald T., & Simo, Gloria. (1995). Public sector motivation as an independent variable affecting career decisions. *Public Personnel Management*, 24(1), 33–47; Wittmer, Dennis. (1991). Serving the people or serving for pay: Reward preferences among government, hybrid sector, and business managers. *Public Productivity and Management Review*, 14(4), 369–83; Naff, Katherine C., & Crum, John. (1999). Working for America: Does public service motivation make a difference? *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, (Fall), 5–16.
- ⁵ Perry, 1997, op. cit.
- ⁶ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Brewer, 1998, op. cit.; Naff, 1999, op. cit.; Moynihan, Donald and Sanjay Pandey. 2007.” The Role of Organizations in Fostering Public Service Motivation” *Public Administration Review*. 67(1) 40-53
- ⁷ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Mann, Gregory. A. (2006). A motive to serve: Public service motivation in human resource management and the role of PSM in the nonprofit sector. *Public Personnel Management*, 35(1), 33-48; Bright, Leonard. (2005). Public employees with high levels of public service motivation: Who are they, where are they, and what do they want? *Review of Public Personnel Administration*. 25, 138-154; Scott, P.G., & Pandey, S.K. (2005). Red tape and public service motivation: Findings from a national survey of managers in state health and human services agencies. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 25(June), 155-180. Retrieved November 6, 2006, from <http://rop.sagepub.com>.
- ⁸ Perry, James L. 1997 . Antecedents of Public Service Motivation . *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 7 (2) : 181–97
- ⁹ Moynihan and Pandey, 2007, op. cit.

- ¹⁰ Mann, 2006, op. cit. Alonso, Pablo, & Lewis, Gregory B. (2001). Public service motivation and job performance: Evidence from the federal sector. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 31(4), 363-380.
- ¹¹ Perry, James L. (1995). Compensation, merit pay, and motivation. (Steven W. Hays and Richard C. Kearney, Eds.), *Public Personnel Administration: Problems and Prospects* (3d ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 121-32.
- ¹² Behn, R.D. (1995). The big questions of public management. *Public Administration Review*, 55, 313-24.
- ¹³ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Perry, 1996, op. cit.; Perry, 1990, op. cit.; Perry, 1997, op. cit.; Brewer, 2000, op. cit.; Rainey, 1982, op. cit.
- ¹⁴ Perry, 1990, op. cit.
- ¹⁵ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Buchanan, 1975, op. cit.; Rainey, 1982, op. cit.; Wittmer, 1991, op. cit.; Gabris, 1995, op. cit.; Perry, 1990, op. cit.
- ¹⁶ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Buchanan, 1975, op. cit.; Rainey, 1982, op. cit.; Wittmer, 1991, op. cit.; Gabris, 1995, op. cit.; Perry, 1990, op. cit.
- ¹⁷ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Wittmer, 1991, op. cit.; Perry, 1990, op. cit.; Rainey, 1982, op. cit.; Houston, David, J. (2000). Public-service motivation: A multivariate test. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 10(4), 713.
- ¹⁸ This concept is discussed in several works, including: Crewson, Phillip. E. (1997). Public-service motivation: Building empirical evidence of incidence and effect. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 7(4), 499-518; Brewer, 1998, op. cit.; Naff, 1999, op. cit.; Houston, 2000, op. cit.; Wright, Bradley E. (2003). Toward understanding task, mission, and public service motivation: A conceptual and empirical synthesis of goal theory and public service motivation. Paper presented at the 7th National Public Management Research Conference, Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Washington D.C., October 9-11; Scott, 2005, op. cit.; Mann, 2006, op. cit.
- ¹⁹ Brewer, 1998, op. cit.; Naff, 1999, op. cit.; Wright, 2003, op. cit.
- ²⁰ Brewer and Selden, 1998, op. cit.
- ²¹ Crewson, 1997, op. cit.
- ²² Naff, 1999, op. cit.
- ²³ Houston, 2000, op. cit.
- ²⁴ Perry, 1997, op. cit.
- ²⁵ Mann, 2006, op. cit.
- ²⁶ Bright, 2005, op. cit.
- ²⁷ Scott, 2005, op. cit.
- ²⁸ Perry, 2000, op. cit.
- ²⁹ Moynihan and Pandey 2007, op. cit.
- ³⁰ Perry, James L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 6(1), 5-22. In Perry's 1997 article, "Antecedents to Public Service," he offers additional empirical support for the validity of the PSM scale. Multiple studies have employed Perry's PSM instrument, or parts of it, including Brewer and Selden, 1998; Lewis and Alonso, 1999; Naff and Crum, 1999; Brewer, Selden and Facer 2000, and Moynihan and Pandey, 2007.
- ³¹ Brewer et al, 2000, op. cit. Page 262

- ³² Colby and Damon (1992) and Cooper and Wright (1992) also used interview and extensive life histories to identify patterns across cases. Additionally, Perry (2000) calls for observational and ethnographic work to help determine how the variables identified in his theory come together, specifically given his interest centers on better understanding the link between sociohistorical phenomena and organizational behavior.
- ³³ Miles, Mathew B., & Huberman, Michael A. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Page 6
- ³⁴ Miles, & Huberman 1994, op. cit. Page 10
- ³⁵ Results were analyzed for within-agency differences and between-agency differences. By undertaking within-agency comparison, organizational characteristics were controlled.
- ³⁶ For a portion of the analysis, the open-ended responses were coded and transformed into closed-ended responses that could be used to create categorical measures of public service motivation. A coding scheme designed to allow for the systematic conversion of the qualitative survey responses into quantified variables was used to convert the open-ended interview responses.
- ³⁷ In an attempt to avoid the common pitfalls of interview methodology—for example, responses that are potentially biased by a respondent’s desire to be seen in the best light—the researcher guaranteed subjects complete confidentiality. Additionally, to avoid problems connected with self-reporting bias, interviews were not limited to asking questions about the individuals’ own opinions but also included questions about respondents’ (“your colleagues”) attitudes and opinions (Golden 2000). To help overcome the concern that individuals might provide answers they believed were socially acceptable or would create a “party-line” bias, interviews were conducted one-on-one rather than in focus groups.
- ³⁸ www.uspto.gov/ last accessed on November 6, 2007.
- ³⁹ *The Agency, Its Mission and Statutory Authority*. Retrieved November 5, 2006, from <http://www.irs.gov>.
- ⁴⁰ Replication logic in multiple-case studies was the selection focus.
- ⁴¹ Golden, Marissa. (2000). *What motivates bureaucrats? Politics and administration during the Reagan years*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- ⁴² Perry’s (1996) scale has received extensive testing and validation across a number of studies.
- ⁴³ Rainey, 1997, op. cit. ;Wright, 2001, op. cit; Perry, 1997, op. cit.
- ⁴⁴ The Perry PSM measure has been shown to be valid and reliable in previous research. By using the same set of questions, this study could replicate the PSM measure results from earlier research for the participants in this research. The responses on PSM ranged from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 19. For the analysis, results were placed into categories of low (10.0–13.0), medium (13.1–16.0), and high PSM (16.1 and above) based on natural breaks in the results. Table 2 provides detail on each index of the scale for both groups, while Table 3 presents the results for the IRS and USPTO participants separately.
- ⁴⁵ In this research, the final scale has a Cronbach alpha (reliability measure) of 0.81 (a value of 0.70 or greater is suggested as an acceptable level). Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava, & Nachmias, David. (1996). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- ⁴⁶ When compared to results from other research, the assertion that these samples of respondents indicate relatively high levels of PSM is supported. The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board’s (MSPB) 1996 survey asked respondents a set of questions taken from Perry’s PSM scale. The 1996 MSPB survey asked a subset of the Perry questions that was argued to capture the general components of the PSM scale (Naff and Crum 1999). In the 1996 “Merit Principles Survey” questions 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39 were PSM related questions. An index of these questions was put together; question 34 was recoded because its response set was

reverse (negative). Survey sample responses from this research when compared to those reported by the MSPB demonstrated high levels of PSM at these two agencies. It should be recognized that this sample is made up of only mid-managers whereas the MSPB sample looked at individuals from throughout the organizations.

- ⁴⁷ Within the PSM literature there are very clear definitions and distinctions between public service motivation, PSM and public sector motivation. Within this research respondents were asked to opening respond to how they felt about public service motivation. Results indicate that respondents had varied interpretations of the meaning of public service motivation and, therefore, the term may lack some construct validity for comparison to other PSM studies. Brewer and Selden's (1998) important contribution to this area of research offered a clarification of what has long been a semantic puzzle: the dual meanings attributed to the term public service. Their work highlights the point that "public service denotes doing something valuable or worthwhile for society, and it refers to the public sector labor force" (4). They offer a clarification and reformulate the theory on the basis of two premises: "first, PSM is the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful public service (i.e., public, community and social service); second, PSM is prevalent in the public service (i.e., the public sector labor force)" (5).
- ⁴⁸ Within both agencies, the majority did not select the position because they were looking specifically at government or had the intent of being a government employee; rather, they found the position to fit their qualifications and personal needs at the time of entering. Several were out of a job or having a difficult time finding employment, either because of layoffs or a bad economy (many of the respondents began their government service in the 1980s), and these agencies were hiring. A majority of those that entered the USPTO did so with the intent that the position would only be short-term.
- ⁴⁹ Romzek, Barbara S. (1990). Employee investment and commitment: The ties that bind. *Public Administration Review*, (May/June), 374–82.
- ⁵⁰ Bright, 2005, op. cit.
- ⁵¹ Rainey 1997: page 215
- ⁵² Bright, 2005, op. cit.
- ⁵³ Wittmer, 1991, op. cit.; Perry, 1990, op. cit.; Rainey, 1982, op. cit.; Houston, 2000, op. cit.
- ⁵⁴ Perry, 2000, op. cit.
- ⁵⁵ Brewer et al. 1999, opt. cit.
- ⁵⁶ Sharmir, B. 1991" Meaning, Self and Motivation in Organizations" *Organizaiton Studies*. 12 (3): 405-24
- ⁵⁷ Romzek, Barbara S. (1990). Employee investment and commitment: The ties that bind. *Public Administration Review*, (May/June), 374–82.
- ⁵⁸ Perry, 2000, op. cit.
- ⁵⁹ Ostrom, E. 1998. "A Behavriosal Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." *American Political Science Review* 92(Mar.): 1-22; Schein, Edgar. 1992. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- ⁶⁰ Perry, James L. 2000 . Bringing Society In: Toward a Theory of Public Service Motivation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10 (2): 471 – 88.
- ⁶¹ Buchanan, 1975, op. cit.
- ⁶² Bright 2005, op. cit.
- ⁶³ Sharmir, 1991, op. cit.; Perry, 2000, op. cit.
- ⁶⁴ Bright, 2005, op. cit.

⁶⁵ Mann, 2006, op. cit.

⁶⁶ Brewer and Selden, 1998, op. cit.

⁶⁷ Crewson, 1997, op. cit.

⁶⁸ Wright, 2003, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Naff and Crum, 1999, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Perry, 2000, op. cit.

⁷¹ Moynihan and Pandey, 2007, op. cit.

⁷² This study employed a limited, nonrandomized sample drawn from a particular population at these two agencies. Because of the limited numbers and because the sample was not randomly selected, the results lack broad generalizability, underscoring a common concern about case studies: that they provide little basis for scientific generalization (Yin 1994:10).

⁷³ The fact that subjects volunteered to participate in the study introduced the potential for selection bias. Because the sample consisted only of self-selected volunteers, it may be that people with higher levels of PSM are over-represented. Future research would benefit from a broader sample.

⁷⁴ Another potential limitation of the research stems from the self-reported nature of the data and from the fact that individuals were asked to recall emotions they experienced in the past. Memories of past feelings and opinions can be difficult to capture perfectly, and using memories as research data introduces concerns about the accuracy of results. Steps were taken to control for this problem, primarily by asking an array of questions on the same topic in an effort to accurately capture the respondent's feelings at that time; nonetheless, the research acknowledges that current events and feelings can affect recollection of past feelings. In addition, many individuals find it difficult to accurately describe and characterize their own motivations and emotions. These are valid concerns, and actions were taken to compensate for them. Despite the efforts to counteract them, these problems remain and limit the research and its findings.

⁷⁵ Kotter, John P. (1996) *Leading Change*. Harvard Business School Press. Boston, MA.

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