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A NEED FOR RICHER PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION

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A NEED FOR RICHER PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Public Administration

by
Adam Dallas Levitus
March 2020

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A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

While there are many outstanding questions surrounding the motivations of employees, a key problem is that there is not a defining construct to explain why public employees behave as they do. Although the concept of Public Service Motivation (PSM) has developed over the past three decades to help explain these motivations, there are still disagreements as to the definition, characteristics, and value of PSM. Moreover, this lack of congruity in the literature suggests that the underlying components of PSM, historically studied via cross-sectional quantitative surveys, have not yet been well-defined via rigorous theory-building. Accordingly, this study looks at PSM from a more fundamental level of motivation – basic human needs – to study how need-based motivations might affect the relationship between PSM and public employee behaviors. To obtain context-rich data on employee’s emotions, perceptions, and feelings toward work and public service, 30 semi-structured interviews of existing public servants were conducted in Monterey County, California. Utilizing grounded theory principles, a theoretical framework emerged that describes how temporally-specific circumstances influence an individual employee’s sector choice, person-sector fit, and the development of PSM behaviors as moderated by their identity-based motivations. Based on this framework and the interview data, recommendations for future PSM research and strategies / tactics for public sector managers are presented.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

If we wish to improve the practice of public administration, we must develop a better understanding how employees behave. Managers should endeavor to understand the motivations of public sector employees (Behn, 1995) as government employees have a profound impact on the citizenry and the world at large. However, the task of understanding motivations is not simple, and is complicated further by the appearance of unique motivations within the public sector as compared with the private and non-profit sectors. For example, while the private sector deals with an identity crisis of purpose (e.g., profits vs. mission; Hollensbe, Wookey, Hickey, George, & Nichols, 2014), and the nonprofit sector has an identity crisis of focus (e.g., market versus mission; Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000), the public sector has a seeming clarity on purpose and focus (e.g., the public good) with a crisis of defined individual motivation.

While there are still many outstanding questions surrounding the motivations of public employees, a key problem is that there is not a defining construct researchers and practitioners can rely on to explain why public workers make certain decisions or are motivated to behave a certain way. To help explain the public worker motivation phenomenon, an extensive body of research literature has developed over the past three decades: Public Service Motivation (PSM). However, notwithstanding the academic interest in PSM and the effort to

study its effects, there are still fundamental disagreements as to the definition of PSM as well as its antecedents, effects, and how much value the PSM construct has in influencing managerial outcomes (Bozeman & Su, 2015; Mann, 2006; Prebble, 2016; Ritz, Brewer, & Neumann, 2016). Moreover, this lack of congruity between study results suggests that the underlying components of PSM have not yet been well-defined via rigorous theory-building (as opposed to cross-sectional surveys; Ritz et al., 2016).

To help resolve these disagreements, this study took a step back from the existing research trends and findings and looked at PSM from a more fundamental level of motivation - basic human needs. Accordingly, the initial research question for this study was: *How do need-based motivations affect the relationship between PSM and public employee behavior?* However, in accordance with the spirit of theory building, the research question was only a 'jumping off' point and the study evolved as initial concepts became apparent (i.e., concepts and frameworks emerged from the data - discussed further in Chapter Four).

Overall, the purpose of this study was to learn about the motivations and feelings of public servants toward public service. This study was intended to be exploratory in nature with an intended deliverable of context-rich data and theories on the fundamental nature of public service motivation. Key objectives of this study included:

- Advance the study of public service motivation by providing richer, more contextual information to empirical observations (via qualitative research) than has historically been provided via cross-sectional survey studies
- Advance the study of public administration by constructing a theoretical framework that might inform future research
- Improve the practice of public sector management by providing managers with insights and/or frameworks by which they might more effectively motivate their staffs

To achieve the objective of theory development, grounded theory methodology and analysis was utilized to help foster emergent frameworks and constructs rather than the prescriptive / hypothetical alternatives produced by quantitative or non-grounded qualitative methods. In order to obtain the desired context-rich data, the study was designed to use semi-structured interview methods for 30 existing public servants in Monterey County, California. The interview questions were designed to obtain information about the participant's needs and how those needs might impact their thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward public service. Upon completion of each interview, the data was reviewed and ultimately compared with responses from other interviewees to observe any emergent frameworks (methodology reviewed further in Chapter Three).

Accordingly, this study reports the results of the interviews and data analysis (along with a proposed framework for PSM) in Chapter Four and discusses the overall findings in Chapter Five. However, although grounded theory refrains

from heavily focusing on existing concepts, a deeper review of the existing PSM literature is first presented in Chapter Two in order to provide a comprehensive background for how this study and its findings play into the overall goal of improved public administration.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have spent the better part of a century delving into the inner workings of public organizations and the employees that comprise these organizations. Seminal works such as Chester Barnard's 'Functions of the Executive' (1938) laid the groundwork for the study of worker behaviors and motivations within the framework of their organization. Beyond organizational and work-group related functions, however, it is important to also study behaviors peculiar to the individual worker. To that end, an overwhelming amount of research has been done on individual decision-making, job performance, and similar behaviors. However, the motivations driving these behaviors are the focus of this study.

Within the context of employee motivation, the public sector is of particular importance given its ubiquity and impact on society (United States governments employ more workers than the professional services, manufacturing, and retail industries; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Moreover, the public sector has a unique relationship with motivation. While the private sector deals with an identity crisis of purpose (e.g., profits vs. mission; Hollensbe, Wookey, Hickey, George, & Nichols, 2014), and the nonprofit sector has an identity crisis of focus (e.g., market versus mission; Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000), the public sector has a seeming clarity on purpose and focus (public good) with a crisis of defined

individual motivation. Historical perception in the United States has been that public institutions do not instill confidence in the citizenry (Perry & Wise, 1990) and public sector employees at the heart of these institutions are lazy, incompetent, motivated only by self-interest, or otherwise inferior to their private sector counterparts (Delfgaauw & Dur, 2008; Wright, 2001). Moreover, perception has been that the poor image of public service, coupled with reduced economic benefits and inefficient bureaucratic processes, has led to reduced motivation for capable employees to seek out public service (Naff & Crum, 1999). However, multiple academic studies have indicated that the differences between public and private employees' motivations are either unsubstantial (Baldwin, 1987) or that public employees can be more motivated to achieve than their private-sector counterparts (Guyot, 1962).

As evidenced by the conflict in public employee research, there is not a defining construct that we can affirmatively rely on to tell us why public workers act as they do. Understanding public employee motivation, particularly towards public goals, needs to be a key focus for managers (Behn, 1995). Accordingly, the subject of Public Service Motivation (PSM) has developed over the past 30 years to help explain the motivations of public workers. Interest in PSM research has grown exponentially since Perry and Wise's (1990) seminal work, as have the number of authors contributing to the field (Ritz et al., 2016). However, despite the extensive amount of PSM research, there are still basic disagreements as to how it is defined, formed, and acts, as well as whether it has

utility in guiding managerial practice (Bozeman & Su, 2015; Mann, 2006; Prebble, 2016; Ritz et al., 2016). Furthermore, this pervasive disagreement between studies and researchers indicates that the core tenets of PSM have not yet been well-defined (Ritz et al., 2016), suggesting that PSM should be studied further in the context of more fundamental motivational factors. In the canon of motivational research, arguably the most ‘fundamental’ causes are basic goals and needs (Maslow, 1943).

As previously mentioned, this study aims to answer the question: How do need-based motivations affect the relationship between PSM and public employee behavior? To address this inquiry, this chapter delves into the existing literature surrounding PSM and need-based motivations. Because the study was conducted in utilizing a grounded methodology, the existing literature for both PSM and need-based theories is broadly reviewed (rather than targeting support for a preconceived theory or hypothesis). Accordingly, what follows is a review of the history of PSM research, issues within the PSM literature, a general review of need-based motivations, and an identification of gaps in the literature that serve as a foundation for this study.

What Have We Learned About Public Service Motivation?

In the pursuit of enhancing worker performance in the public sector, the essential question is: Why do public workers behave as they do? The answer to this question lies at the heart of public service motivation. In their seminal work

on the topic, Perry and Wise (1990) defined Public Service Motivation as a “predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions” (p. 368). In a later publication, Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise (2010) further posited that “PSM originates from beliefs that unique motives are found among public servants that are different from those of their private sector counterparts.” (p. 681). As discussed later, there are several disagreements on the specific breadth and scope of PSM (definitions of PSM, measurable dimensions of PSM, etc.). However, as evidenced by its name, serving the public interest is at the core of PSM.

Antecedents and Correlates

While an exhaustive review of the PSM literature is outside the scope of this study, it is important to develop an understanding of the existing research landscape in order to understand the precursors of, implications for, and influences on PSM. There have been a fair number of studies to delve into the sources and potential causes of PSM. Several scholars focusing on antecedents have included insights into demographic and behavioral contributors to PSM, including: gender (women positively correlated per Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Naff & Crum, 1999; Pandey & Stazyk, 2008; Taylor, 2008), education (positive correlation per Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Naff & Crum, 1999; Pandey & Stazyk, 2008; Perry, 1997; Taylor, 2008), race (minorities positively correlated per Battaglio & French, 2016; Naff & Crum, 1999), and religious background/practice

(surprisingly, negatively correlated with PSM per Charbonneau & Van Ryzin, 2017; Perry, 1997).

Insofar as practice is concerned, the implications of PSM are more interesting and applicable than merely its antecedents. In general, a number of studies show positive correlations between PSM and beneficial work behaviors and outcomes (Ritz et al., 2016). The most directly-significant findings indicate a positive correlation between PSM and job performance (Miao, Eva, Newman, & Schwarz, 2018; Naff & Crum, 1999; Pedersen, 2015; J. Taylor, 2008). This increase in performance via PSM has manifested in a number of ways, including increased extra-role behaviors such as unpaid overtime (Koumenta, 2015; Van Loon, Vandenabeele, & Leisink, 2017) and a reduction in negative work behaviors such as deviance and absenteeism (Koumenta, 2015). In a more supportive role, PSM has also been found to correlate with higher job satisfaction (Liu & Tang, 2011; Naff & Crum, 1999; J. Taylor, 2008; Wright, Christensen, & Pandey, 2013), organizational commitment (Potipiroon & Ford, 2017; J. Taylor, 2008), and higher levels of overall motivation (Anderfuhren-biget, Giauque, & Ritz, 2010).

Influencing Variables

If PSM correlates to behavioral outcomes of employees, then items that facilitate or impact the value of PSM would also be of value to research and practice. Accordingly, several studies shed light on perceived mediating and moderating variables affecting PSM's relationships. Perhaps the most noted

influencing variable is the mediating effect of person-organization fit on PSM (Bright, 2008; Gould-Williams, Mostafa, & Bottomley, 2013; Jin, McDonald, & Park, 2018). Public service motivation's relationship with organizational outcomes was also found to be mediated by organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) by way of employee turnover intentions (Im, Campbell, & Jeong, 2016) and overall organizational performance (Mostafa & Leon-Cazares, 2016). In an interesting recent study with potential impacts on customer-facing public servants, Potipiroon, Srisuthisa-ard, and Faerman (2018) found that emotional labor - specifically deep acting - mediated the relationship between PSM and customer service behaviors.

In addition to mediating relationships, multiple variables have also been identified as moderators of PSM relationships with employee behaviors. A key component for practice is that PSM can be changed by organizational practices (Christensen, Paarlberg, & Perry, 2017). Elements such as at-will employment status (Battaglio & French, 2016), level of hierarchy within the organization (Kjeldsen, 2012; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Prebble, 2016), and levels of autonomy (Lynggaard, Pedersen, & Andersen, 2018) were all observed to impact the relationship between PSM and employee behaviors and performance. Leadership styles within the organization can also impact PSM levels, as both servant leadership (Liu, Perry, Tan, & Zhou, 2017) and transformational leadership (Prebble, 2016) were cited as positive moderators of PSM relationships.

Service values, societal impact, and other elements beyond the organization may also play a role in affecting PSM relationships. For example, Van Loon, Kjeldsen, Andersen, Vandenabeele, and Leisink (2018) found that the relationship between PSM and performance is only strong when employees think their jobs help them contribute to society. Ritz and Brewer (2013) provide an interesting corollary to this society-based finding, as they found PSM to depend on cultural influences peculiar to the employee. The notion of environmental factors affecting PSM was corroborated by Taylor and Taylor's (2015) study, suggesting that employee PSM levels were sensitive to the economy.

Finally, although many academic studies have focused on bolstering PSM and its impact, several studies identify variables that diminish PSM's influence. In a summary of their findings, Quratulain and Khan (2015) indicated that "Bureaucratic red tape, lack of autonomy, rigid organizational culture, traditional management practices, and maintenance of status quo as significant predictors of low levels of their PSM" (p. 280). This notion was supported by Moynihan and Pandey (2007), who found red tape to have a negative impact on PSM. Work pressure and/or job stress were also found to reduce levels of PSM and/or PSM's ability to drive behaviors (Hebson, Grimshaw, & Marchington, 2003; Quratulain & Khan, 2015).

As evidenced by the existing research, having a sound understanding of public service motivation and what impacts PSM could enable increases in public service productivity, efficacy, and success. Accordingly, effective development

and management of PSM would have enormous implications for public sector management practices. However, much work still needs to be done with PSM, as illustrated by the host of discrepancies that arise in the existing literature.

Issues with Public Service Motivation

Despite the flood of interest into PSM in the past few decades, there remains a great deal of disagreement between study findings regarding the form and function of PSM (Harari, Herst, Parola, & Carmona, 2017). Perhaps most disconcerting, on multiple occasions PSM's relationship with job performance has been found to either have no correlation (Petrovsky & Ritz, 2014; Wright, Hassan, & Christensen, 2017), or questionable causal effects on job performance (Wright & Grant, 2010). These examples of disagreement suggest that more nuanced assessment of PSM is prudent, and that we cannot simply conclude that PSM has a positive relationship with performance (Van Loon, 2017). Similarly, an organization's ability to influence PSM has been called into question (Taylor, 2008). A particularly interesting pool of discrepancies comes in the form of PSM's evolution over the length of a staff's career. As reviewed by (Schott, Steen, & Kleef, 2018), both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies have conflicted, showing PSM to increase, remain stable, or decrease over time. These findings are further complicated by studies showing staff age as either positively correlated with PSM (Pandey & Stazyk, 2008) or having no effect on PSM (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Naff & Crum, 1999).

Discrepancy by Way of Definition

Many of the discrepancies in existing study results might be attributable to the various definitions of PSM used by researchers. Recall that an initial baseline for the definition of PSM might be: “motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions” (Perry & Wise, 1990, p. 368). However, as Bozeman and Su (2015) identified, the ensuing decades have yielded other definitions of PSM that bounded the construct in various ways. For example, a focal shift towards altruism and other pro-social behaviors has gained strength over the past 20 years, as evidenced by PSM definitions by Bright (2007), Vandenabeele (2007), Zhu, Liu, & Tang (2008), and numerous others. Similarly, some researchers emphasized intrinsic rewards over extrinsic rewards as the defining notion of PSM (Kim, 2006; Steijn, 2008). Still other studies have focused on the sector, with some suggesting a public-sector-specific motivation (Perry et al., 2010; Perry & Wise, 1990; Ritz, 2009) and others defining PSM as sector-independent (Kjeldsen, 2012; Mann, 2006). Overall the lack of cohesiveness in the definition of PSM suggests a lack of solid foundation in PSM theory.

Public Service Motivation’s Impact on Practice

By and large, the utility of research might be called into question if the ultimate sum effort does little to inform practice. Accordingly, another common criticism of PSM is that it does not do enough to improve the behaviors and strategies of public managers (Prebble, 2016; Ritz et al., 2016; Wright & Grant,

2010). While there are certainly recommendations for practitioners in the literature, they are often limited in their scope and/or actionability.

For example, several studies posit that managers should create a working environment that aligns organizational values and employee values, or otherwise provide opportunities for employees to feel as though they contribute to society (Christensen et al., 2017; Gould-Williams et al., 2013; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; J. Taylor, 2008). Although these recommendations certainly pass logical tests, specifics of implementing them is less clear. How does a manager create a congruent, meaningful environment if the inherent job is not well-tied to the public good or the employee's values? Similarly, existing work on PSM's antecedents might refer to family, schooling, or similar factors (Perry, 1997); however, these variables are hardly within the control of a professional manager.

Even studies that attempt to provide more actionable tactics frequently rely on the notion of high levels of existing PSM (rather than influencing or managing the existing motivations of employees). The most common recommendation of research is the recruitment of job candidates with high levels of PSM (Christensen et al., 2017; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Ritz et al., 2016; Van Loon et al., 2017). While some have identified tactics for PSM-based hiring (e.g., job descriptions and recruiting framework; Asseburg, Homberg, & Vogel, 2018; Koumenta, 2015) the practice is still limited to a pre-existing disposition for PSM. This dependence on pre-existing PSM leads to a

more logistical criticism in the ability to find enough candidates to fill open positions.

Moreover, favoring antecedents of PSM or existing levels of PSM over influencing factors in managerial recommendations does little to further situational management tactics. Although some studies have developed managerial techniques such as contact with beneficiaries (Bellé, 2013) and managerial interventions (e.g., weekly newsletters; Pedersen, 2015) to help enhance PSM and performance, these are not without their limitations. Similarly, utilizing techniques such as transformational leadership may influence PSM and/or outcomes; however, it isn't clear that PSM is necessary in deriving the value of these techniques (Prebble, 2016). In general, there appears to be lack of consistent guidance for managers with regard to instilling greater levels of PSM in employees, or otherwise motivating employees with existing high levels of PSM (Mann, 2006). Considering the difficulties with impacting practice, as well as the discrepancies in the way PSM fundamentally operates, it is clear that more work needs to be done to better understand how other motivations and variables drive PSM. In that vein, this study now turns to a review of some of the most fundamental motivations behind employee behavior: need-based motivations.

Need-Based Motivation in the Public Sector

It is not difficult to see the logical link between an individual's needs and their inherent motivations to fulfill said needs. The concept of 'need' mandates an essential goal that a person is compelled, obligated, and otherwise required to resolve. Accordingly, it logically follows that a relationship may exist between these essential needs and the more nuanced theory of public service motivation.

A Brief History of Need

While it may be difficult to pinpoint the inception of needs as a distinct motivation construct, Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs provides one seminal foundation. More specific to management of employees, McGregor's (1960) Theory X (authoritarian, external rewards) versus Theory Y (humanist, internal rewards) management styles has also become part of the common lexicon for trained managers. McClelland's (1961) needs of achievement, power, and affiliation are also relevant to the workforce, and additionally identify the notion that needs are dependent not just on the environment, but on the employee's individual disposition.

Stemming off the work of Maslow, Herzberg's Two-factor Theory (1968) posited that job satisfaction (intrinsic motivation, long duration, high-level needs) is not the opposite of job dissatisfaction (extrinsic hygiene, short duration, low-level needs). It is insufficient for managers to simply focus on solving either motivation or hygiene, but true motivation comes from increasing job satisfaction.

Also derivative of Maslow, Aldefer (1969) established a three-tiered system of needs (existence, relatedness, and growth) that can act simultaneously and better fit research data with workers.

Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Rewards in Public Service

Although rewards may be directly or indirectly related to a wide spectrum of lower and higher-order needs, they have been a focus for public administration scholars. However, as with many variables in public service motivation research, there is disagreement as to the type of rewards preferred by public employees. In the typical canon of PSM research, public employees are more likely to value intrinsic rewards over extrinsic rewards (Anderfuhren-biget et al., 2010; Crewson, 1997; Houston, 2000; Lewis & Frank, 2002; J. Taylor, 2008). Some studies have even gone so far as to suggest that increasing extrinsic motivators would 'crowd-out' the benefits of intrinsic motivation - explaining the failure of some performance-related payment systems (Anderfuhren-biget et al., 2010).

However, despite the heavy emphasis on intrinsic motivation's superiority, some existing data suggest extrinsic motivations play a substantial role in guiding the behaviors of public sector employees. For example, multiple studies indicate that pay and other economic rewards are important factors in motivating and satisfying public servants (Battaglio & French, 2016; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Liu & Tang, 2011; J. Taylor, 2005; Wittmer, 1991). Davis and Gabris (2008) even showed that increasing the wage ratio between current public employee wages and market value wages resulted in an increase in service

quality. This was later supported by Taylor and Taylor (2011) who found a positive correlation between wages and public sector employee effort. Job security has also been a popular topic of research in the public sector, with the majority of research pointing to a strong link between public service and the desire for job security and stability (Houston, 2000; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Van De Walle, Steijn, & Jilke, 2015; Yung, 2014).

Higher-Order Needs

A review of need-based motivation's impact on public service motivation would not be complete without a review of higher-order needs. In fact, some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that in the context of need theory, PSM aims to fulfill higher-order needs (Anderfuhren-biget et al., 2010). While reviewing PSM in public employees, Taylor (2008) corroborated the findings of Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2003) that organizational commitment among employees was, in part, dependent on their perception that their organization reciprocates their needs for esteem, affiliation, and approval. In one of the few PSM studies to utilize interviews, Quratulain and Khan, (2015) noted that one of the driving factors behind workers joining the public sector was prestige. Regarding the work undertaken by public employees, some scholars suggest that employees question the meaning of their work and seek opportunities for increased fulfillment where their efforts make a difference (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006).

A final element to consider within the realm of higher-order needs is self-determination theory (SDT) within public administration. SDT is a motivational

construct concerned with a person's self-motivation to satisfy the psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Moreover, SDT concerns itself with the degree to which a person associates an element with their own internal values and is accordingly motivated – regardless of whether that element may be stereotypically 'extrinsic' or 'intrinsic'. Some researchers have even gone so far as to consider PSM and SDT to be interchangeable in the public sector given the emphasis on a person's values - for example, compassion and self-sacrifice (Breugh, Ritz, & Alfes, 2018).

Filling Gaps in the Research

To assist with advancing the field, scholars have identified several gaps in the PSM research. For example, much of the existing PSM research has focused on the antecedents, effects, or study-dependent moderators/mediators of PSM. While these efforts may be valuable, they provide a very narrow view of how PSM truly manifests in the workplace. Accordingly, multiple scholars have identified the need for continued studies of other factors that affect PSM (Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Van Loon et al., 2018; Wright, 2008). Similarly, scholars have called for a focus on mixed/composite motives and multiple incentives in public service including job security and financial compensation (Perry, 2014; Perry et al., 2010; Ritz et al., 2016; Wise, 2004) as well as studies that provide context to PSM research (Lynggaard et al., 2018; Wright et al., 2017).

To address this notion of context, qualitative studies have the ability to create context and account for a holistic view of variables affecting PSM (Kjeldsen, 2012; Schott et al., 2018; Wright, 2008). As suggested by Wright and Grant (2010) in their call for qualitative research: “qualitative methods can be quite powerful in providing rich examples, creating contextual realism to make research findings more credible and persuasive for practitioners.” (p. 697). However, although some PSM studies use more contextual or qualitative research methods (e.g., Davis, 2011; Schott et al., 2018; Yung, 2014), the preponderance of research consists of quantitative, cross-sectional survey studies (81.3 percent cross-sectional design, 77.3 percent survey data; Ritz et al., 2016). While this may seem innocuous, an over-reliance on cross-sectional studies makes it difficult to determine/confirm causality (Wright, 2008; Wright & Grant, 2010). Another extension is that PSM studies have tended to move past foundational theory and simply address theory post-hoc via empirical analysis; sometimes incorrectly or inappropriately applying methods or a spectrum of methods in order to make sense of data (Davis & Stazyk, 2017). Ritz et al. (2016) went so far as to say they were surprised by the preponderance of surveys and cross-sectional sampling given that “qualitative methods are often used for concept development and theory building before large-scale quantitative work is undertaken.” (p. 421). Perry and Vandenabeele (2015) were more specific, identifying a need for grounded theory to help identify the nature of public service motives and how they manifest in the real world.

There are also multiple articles that specifically call for review of PSM and associated variables directly related to need-based motivations. Thompson & Christensen (2018) call for a view on privilege (suggesting lower-order needs had been previously satisfied) as a function of calling (an unsatisfied higher-order need), and calling's relationship with PSM. In more explicit terms, Van De Walle et al. (2015) call for future research to contemplate that "people want to work in the public sector not only to serve the public good, but that factors such as money or job security also play a role." (p. 850). Van De Walle et al. (2015) also identify the situational dependency of an individual's motivations, which is supported by Kjeldsen's (2012) findings that some nursing assistants simply worked in the public service because they identified with the need to have a job.

Conclusion

Based on her support of a more comprehensive view of PSM research, it is appropriate to note Wise's (2004) definition of PSM: "Public service motivation, as it is used here, pertains to the process that causes individuals to perform acts that contribute to the public good as a way of satisfying their personal needs." (p. 674). Given the prevalence of discrepancies in the PSM data, it is prudent to conduct a study that delves into the nuance and context of employee needs and how they influence work behaviors. This study aimed to provide this contextually-rich qualitative data via interviews of public servants that specifically targeted their perceptions of their needs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study was intended to be exploratory in nature. By utilizing a qualitative design, the researcher set out to obtain context-rich data on the fundamental nature of public service motivation as a potential function of employee needs. However, the overarching objective was not just to gather and convey context-rich data, but to generate theory pertaining to the impact of need on public service motivation. In its simplest form, theory can be generated by anyone based on their own musings and anecdotal evidence. However, a scientifically-constructed theory should be derived from a formal process of observation and be rooted in the data gathered.

With this notion of data-first theory generation in mind, grounded theory was selected as the primary data collection and analytical methodology. In their seminal work on grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) went so far as to say that grounded theory was simply the name used to describe the “discovery of theory from data” (p. 1). It is with this overall methodological framework in mind that this study aimed to foster emergent frameworks and constructs rather than the prescriptive/hypothetical alternatives produced by quantitative or non-grounded qualitative methods.

Description of the Study and Participants

In order to obtain the desired context-rich data, the study was developed to gather perceptions, quotes, and stories via interviews. The interview questions were designed to obtain information about the participant's needs and how they might impact their thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward public service. To help potentially tie the study results to prior research, the interview questions were linked to the four principal dimensions of PSM as defined by Kim et al. (2013): Attraction to Public Service, Commitment to Public Values, Compassion, and Self-Sacrifice. The questions used during the interviews are provided in the Appendix.

To study the concept of public service, individuals employed in the public sector were recruited for participation. To ensure participants had some tangible experience in the public sector, only individuals with one or more years of public service were asked to be interviewed. Years of public service was verified via a pre-participation screening survey issued to the individual via Qualtrics.

Participants were all adult men and women of varying racial/ethnic backgrounds. No vulnerable populations, institutionalized individuals (i.e., prisoners, patients), or anyone in apparent physical or mental distress were recruited or interviewed.

To facilitate the actual logistics of conducting interviews, participants were recruited via email from public sector organizations in Monterey County in California. Note that the basis for this study was theoretical exploration rather than description of a population. Accordingly, the study did not explicitly seek to

generate a representative sampling of a given agency, jurisdiction, or employee type. Instead, purposive sampling was used to ensure coverage of theories/ideas. The primary initial criterion for selecting potential participants was rank (e.g., staff vs. manager vs. executive). However, in accordance with the principle of theoretical sampling through grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), data was reviewed throughout the interview and recruitment process in order to inform future participant selection. Accordingly, selection criteria shifted during the study to target more early-career/low-salary individuals (i.e., fewer executives/manager with commensurate compensation) to help explain the concept of temporally-driven motivations. Additionally, more public-facing employees were sought to provide a more well-rounded perspective on emotions in the face of serving the public (contrasted with executives who may largely deal with policy and/or other department heads). Theoretical sampling within the context of specific codes and constructs is discussed further in Chapter Four.

In the end, 30 participants were interviewed in order to ensure saturation of concepts and information (i.e., no new theoretical links were observed, nor were additional data desired to explain/test concepts). The primary source of data for this study was the individual responses provided by participants during the interviews. However, existing information about the participant's work history collected via online Qualtrics survey during the recruitment/screening process was also generally reviewed to provide context to the interview response data. This screening information included the name of the participant's organization,

their title, their total years of employment, their total years employed with the current organization, their total years employed in the public sector, and their rank in the organization (staff/manager/executive). A summary of these descriptive statistics is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Interviewees

Current Interviewee Rank	Number of Interviews	Years ^a Employed	Years ^a With Current Organization	Years ^a in Public Sector
Executive (Manager of Managers)	8	Min: 17 Max: 42 Avg: 30.9 Std: 8.9	Min: 2 Max: 7 Avg: 4.0 Std: 1.7	Min: 3 Max: 27 Avg: 16.4 Std: 7.6
Manager (Manager of Staff)	12	Min: 8 Max: 41 Avg: 23.4 Std: 10.5	Min: 0 Max: 29 Avg: 10.2 Std: 8.5	Min: 5.75 Max: 40 Avg: 16.9 Std: 9.5
Staff (Do not Manage Employees)	10	Min: 3 Max: 32 Avg: 15.0 Std: 9.6	Min: 2 Max: 10 Avg: 4.5 Std: 2.1	Min: 2 Max: 10 Avg: 5.7 Std: 2.3

^aYears of full-time employment

Data Collection

To help preserve confidentiality, interviews were conducted in-person by the principal investigator at a location and time of the interviewee's choosing

(typically at the interviewee's office). A semi-structured, conversational interview style was selected to help elicit insightful, latent data via open-ended responses. Ultimately, the researcher desired to obtain impactful quotations to help guide researchers and practitioners alike. In general, conversational interviewing allows the researcher to increase accuracy of responses by providing the flexibility for clarifying statements and unscripted feedback, whereby increasing alignment between question intent and interviewee responses (Lavrakas, 2008). Moreover, the intent was to encourage natural responses from the interviewees while enabling the ability to dive deeper into topics as they arose.

The main method of data collection during the interviews was audio recording; however, written field notes were also taken by the researcher. In general, the interview process consisted of introductions and obtaining informed consent, starting the audio recording, reminding the participant to refrain from providing personally-identifiable information, and proceeding with the interview. The full interview protocol, including questions discussed during the interview, is included in the Appendix.

Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 87 minutes. After completion of each interview, both the field notes and the digital audio recordings were digitally processed and organized to maintain confidentiality (this included redacting the audio file to remove personally-identifiable information that may have accidentally be stated during the interview). Audio files were transcribed verbatim and the

resulting transcript ultimately served as the basis for the subsequent coding analysis.

Analysis Methodology

Although the transcripts were recorded via standard office productivity software, coding and management of analyses was conducted via qualitative analysis database software (NVivo). The qualitative analysis database software was used in order to facilitate cross-referencing of files and increase the consistency of coding between interviewees, concepts, and anecdotes. Within the data itself, coding was conducted at the level of individual sentences to ensure that ideas could emerge from the granularity of a single response. However, individual code associations were not limited to the sentence level if additional context was needed to represent a cohesive idea or multiple ideas. For example, a single sentence might express multiple concepts and motivations all requiring a separate code, and a single multi-sentence anecdote might be kept in-tact for a single code in order to not lose essential context across multiple sentences.

The analysis of the open-ended interview response data via transcriptions was conducted via the prototypical grounded theory process of developing codes, concepts, categories, and theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This was broadly accomplished through the broad processes of open coding (identifying concepts directly from transcripts), axial coding (identifying links and interactions

between coded elements), and selective coding (identifying coding links and categories after the main theoretical core construct was established; Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Overall, the concept of 'Constant Comparative' coding was the essential methodological construct guiding the coding and analysis process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To that end, the literal concept of constantly comparing codes and data was embraced throughout coding to ensure both consistency and parsimony in the coding scheme. Constant comparison also helped identify deviant cases that might serve as either new codes or tests for prior concepts and categories. Accordingly, the comparison process resulted in frequent re-evaluations of prior coding assignments, combining and splitting of codes, and cross-referencing similar responses to increase consistency and foster the emergence of concepts, categories, and theories.

In alignment with the principle of grounded theory, analysis and theorizing started after the first interview and was continued throughout the interviewing process. As recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (1990), written memos were utilized to document the real-time perceptions and thoughts of the principal investigator during coding and between interviews (with the written field notes capturing interviewer thoughts during any given interview). From these memos, an evolution of concepts was captured and utilized for both theoretical sampling and the evolution of the coding process

itself. During this process, memos linked one emerging idea to another as codes/concepts coalesced into categories and theory.

Several other notions specific to grounded theory 'schools of thought' were deemed appropriate for this study. The notion of 'all is data' by Glaser (2002) appropriately described the consideration of other data into the analysis. For example, overall career tenure data was useful in providing context to the current life-state of interviewees and how that might impact their motivations. Additionally, the deduction/validation/induction analysis framework prescribed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and diagrammed by Heath and Cowley (2004) was a useful construct for providing structure to the overall emergence of concepts and theories (see Figure 1).

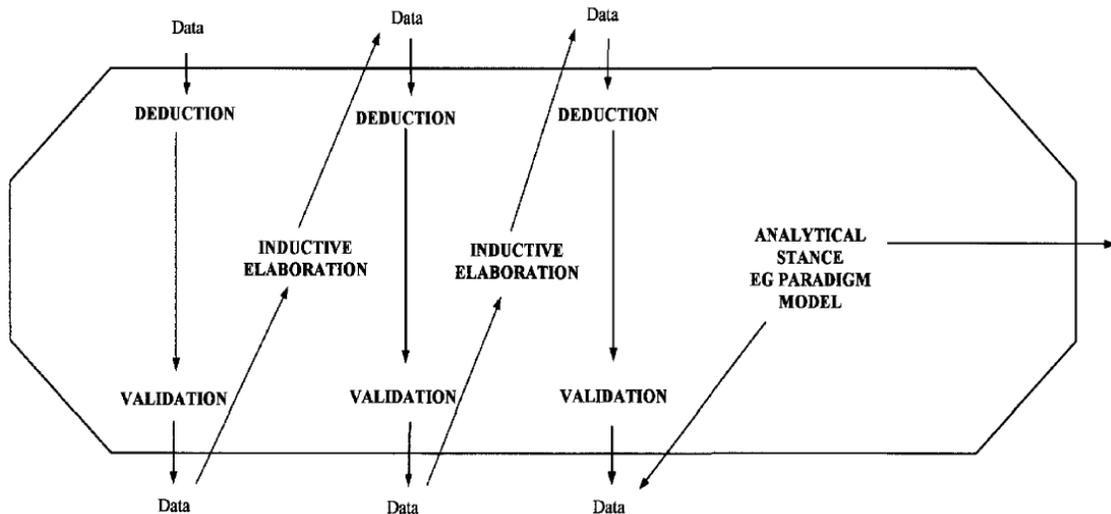


Figure 1

Grounded Theory Deduction, Validation, and Induction

From: Heath, H., & Cowley, S. (2004). Developing a grounded theory approach: a comparison of Glaser and Strauss. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 41(2), 141–150. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0020-7489\(03\)00113-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0020-7489(03)00113-5)

However, note that the aim of this study’s methodology was not to litigate the peculiarities of “pure” Glaserian versus Straussian grounded theory. Rather, the intent of the researcher was to let the data express itself naturally via ideas and stories rather than letting a specific methodological set of rules dictate the manifestation of the data. As suggested by Heath and Cowley (2004), the focus instead was on adhering to principles of constant comparison, emergence, and theoretical sampling. By keeping to those broad notions, the final results and proposed framework would be grounded in the interview data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data analysis process within grounded theory begins with coding the first line of the first interview and continues throughout the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Although over 300 base-level codes were developed from the open coding process, several quickly asserted themselves as prominent elements within the study. Accordingly, a discussion of the early-phase codes and concepts developed through the open coding of the transcripts serves as a solid foundation for later discussions in this chapter of emerging concepts and over-arching categories and theory. Ultimately, a theoretical framework is proposed that describes an evolution of PSM as a function of temporally-specific circumstances contingent upon the individual public employee being observed.

Open Coding and Early Concepts

Emotions

As might be expected from interviews pertaining to work situations and service, emotions were specifically solicited by the interview questions and expressed by the interviewees. From the standpoint of positive emotions, expressions of luck / fortune and pride were most common among interviewees. A comparable positive externalizing emotion was a sense of positivity / trust for coworkers with whom interviewees had good relationships. Not unsurprisingly,

the converse feelings of negativity towards difficult / subpar coworkers were equally as prevalent. Similar to the emotions felt regarding coworkers, numerous interviewees explicitly identified issues with difficult citizens. Although specific expressions varied depending on the participant, the general feeling linking this grouping of difficult interactions revolved around unfairness and unfair criticism towards the interviewee.

However, the most overwhelmingly-cited emotion throughout the interview process was one of frustration. Although frustration was linked to coworker/citizen behavior, it also extended to a variety of other subjects including policy outcomes and red tape. As will be discussed further in relationship to identities and motivations, the specific wording of 'frustration' was also interesting given the lack of its presence in the wording of the questions (whereby eliminating the possibility of the emotion simply being parroted back by interviewees in an attempt to mirror questioning).

Identities and Personalities

Unlike the emotions explicitly sought after by the interview questions, the notion of identities and personalities was something unexpected that emerged from the analysis of the interview data. In some instances, identities and personalities manifested through explicit acknowledgement by the interviewee. For example, several individuals identified themselves as being empathetic people. More often, identities and personalities manifested through the recounting of actions. Frequently-recurring identities and personalities included

pragmatism, empathy, self-sacrificing/altruistic tendencies, and the role of providing for one's family. Similarly, the notion of being hard working and getting things done was prevalent throughout the interviews.

Beyond individual codes, however, were several higher-order concepts for identities and personalities that rapidly emerged from the interview data. For example, anecdotes of dealing with difficult coworkers and citizens yielded notions of having to work with difficult people. When combined with more explicit practices of suspending one's personal emotions, the concept of having to work with difficult people lead to an overall identity concept of professionalism. Similarly, accounts of being responsible for public funds and needing to listen to citizens coalesced into an identity concept of stewardship. However, the most prolific identity / personality concept that emerged was a notion of integrity. Comprised of sub elements including doing's one job (well) and one's work product serving as a reflection of identity, the notion of integrity was common to all interviewees in one form or another.

Motivations

One might notice that a discussion of specific 'motivations' is conspicuously absent from the initial listing of prominent/popular open codes. Although explicit motivations were certainly identified, during initial open coding they were too numerous and far ranging in substance to be of much standalone value. Moreover, several popular motivations were heavily dependent on context. For example, compensation / income was cited as a desirable element

and motivator for work in nearly all interviews. However, presenting income as a widespread motivator would be disingenuous given the context that an interview question specifically asked about compensation (“If your pay, job security, or other benefits were changed for the worse, how would you feel?”).

Moreover, and more interestingly, there was a wide spectrum of conflicting motivations across interviewees. For example, multiple participants expressed a desire to be challenged in their work – directly contrasting those who were motivated to seek easy work and avoid challenges. This lack of consistency suggested that there was not a single / prominent motivation that could stand on its own to serve as the kernel for coalescing concepts. However, the seeming incongruent nature of motivation codes eventually served as a strength for theory-building through the process of axial coding.

Axial Coding and Emergent Concepts

It is important to note that axial coding was not a discrete step taken after all open coding was complete. Rather, induction to higher levels of conceptualization and theory occurred throughout the research process (again, refer to Figure 1 for the continual deduction, validation, induction cycle suggested by Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Within that methodological framework, data from initial / additional interviews serve as the base data for deduction as well as the data used for validation (with memos serving as the inductive ‘link’). However,

prior to the final framework coalescing, the 'outputs' of inductive processes were the over-arching concepts and categories associated with axial coding.

Several examples of this iterative induction process through axial coding may help to shed light on the interplay between observed employee emotions, motivations, identities, personalities, and circumstances. For instance, one interview question asking about entry into the public sector yielded a spectrum of results ranging from seeking out job security and benefits, to seeking out service, to sheer serendipity. To quote one creative-field staffer: "I fell into this job... it wasn't that I was looking for a job in the public sector when I graduated" (Interviewee 11). While this initially materialized as a broad concept of 'Introduction to the Public Sector', comparison of the concept with the ubiquity (all interviewees) of positive emotions and desires to serve others shed light on seeking service as a new dimension relevant to sector selection. Accordingly, a category of 'Introduction to the Public Sector' emerged with sub-concepts of 'Sought out Service' and 'Non-Service Reasons' as the driving factors leading the interviewee to the public sector.

Similarly, the amalgam of disparate emotions and motivations began to materialize into functional working categories when viewed through the lens of participant identities and personalities. A key example of this was the heavily-reported negative emotion of 'frustration'. Although exhaustive study of interviewee diction was not the focus of the analysis, there was interest in the popularity of 'frustration' when examining both negative work experiences and

demotivators. In the case of the motivation, the prevalence of frustration aligns well with the overwhelming popularity of 'getting things done' as a motivation. In all, those who saw themselves as hard working or who otherwise desired to get things done might be best aligned to serve the public when they are free from obstacles (i.e., their efforts are not being 'frustrated'). As perhaps best stated by an early-career staffer: "And so, that can be sort of frustrating, sort of tedious sometimes and you just feel like you really did a good thing and it didn't matter" (Interviewee 15). Accordingly, the concept of identities and personalities emerged as key category worthy of focus.

Deviant Case Analysis

In addition to validating concepts and categories via additional interview data, specific and pointed exploration of deviant cases (cases that seem to contradict each other or the current theoretical thinking) was used. Glaser and Strauss (1967) warn against zealotry in seeking out deviant (also called negative) cases. Specifically, they warn that it could be a symptom of prematurely seeking to prove a theory rather than have the theory emerge. However, as Corbin and Strauss (2015) point out, looking for deviant cases can provide "a fuller exploration of a concept" and "add richness to findings" (p. 101).

The utility of deviant cases can be seen in samples gleaned from the axial coding process. To begin, the myriad of conflicting emotions and motivations was mentioned as a challenge during the open coding process. The prior example of seeking easy work versus challenging work certainly speaks to motivational

differences, as does the stark contrast between those who would put work before their family's needs and those that put their family before work needs. However, the conflicting nature of codes also extended to elements such as personality and identity (e.g., Type A/competitive versus Type B/non-confrontational). The critical issue with these conflicting cases is that a theoretical acceptance of any one concept immediately suggests a negative case in the other that 'breaks the mold'.

While these contradictions might seem to be theoretical impasses, instead they lead to embracing unique perspectives among interviewees rather than a litigation of their preferences, drives, and personalities. Perhaps the most interesting and informative deviant cases were the seeming contradictions within a single interviewee's responses. For example, any viable theoretical framework would need to reconcile how a late-career professional initially driven to the public sector by service and currently driven by health benefits still appreciates serving others (see Table 2).

Table 2

Seemingly Conflicting Quotations from an Interviewee

Code / Context	Interviewee 87 Quote
Introduction to the Public Sector – Sought out Service	And it was just because of that one job program...job fair thing where the teacher had people come in and talk about their work. And that interested me. I was always the kind of person...I took care of a lot of kids...I was from a big family. I was a babysitter. I took care of kids. So, I loved kids. So, that kind of work appealed to me.
Physiological Needs – Health Benefits	I mean, there's only one reason why I work right now is for health insurance.
Desire to do Important Work / Serve the Community	So, I feel like I want to have some impact on the world, on my community. And that's how I work too. That's how I value work, as well.

The discrepancies in interviewee responses could certainly be the result of cognitive dissonance (discussed more in Chapter Five). However, interviewees of all different personalities, backgrounds, et cetera frequently exhibited discrepancies to some degree in their responses. Accordingly, the researcher realized that the core theme of a theoretical framework for this study would need to result from a common thread that tied together both the individual interviewees and seemingly conflicting answers from the same interviewee.

Core Theme and Category Integration

A review of the principal high-level concepts and categories from the open and axial coding processes shows several themes that generally represent the spectrum of interview responses. See Figure 2 for an overview of these categories and the principal concepts and codes within them.

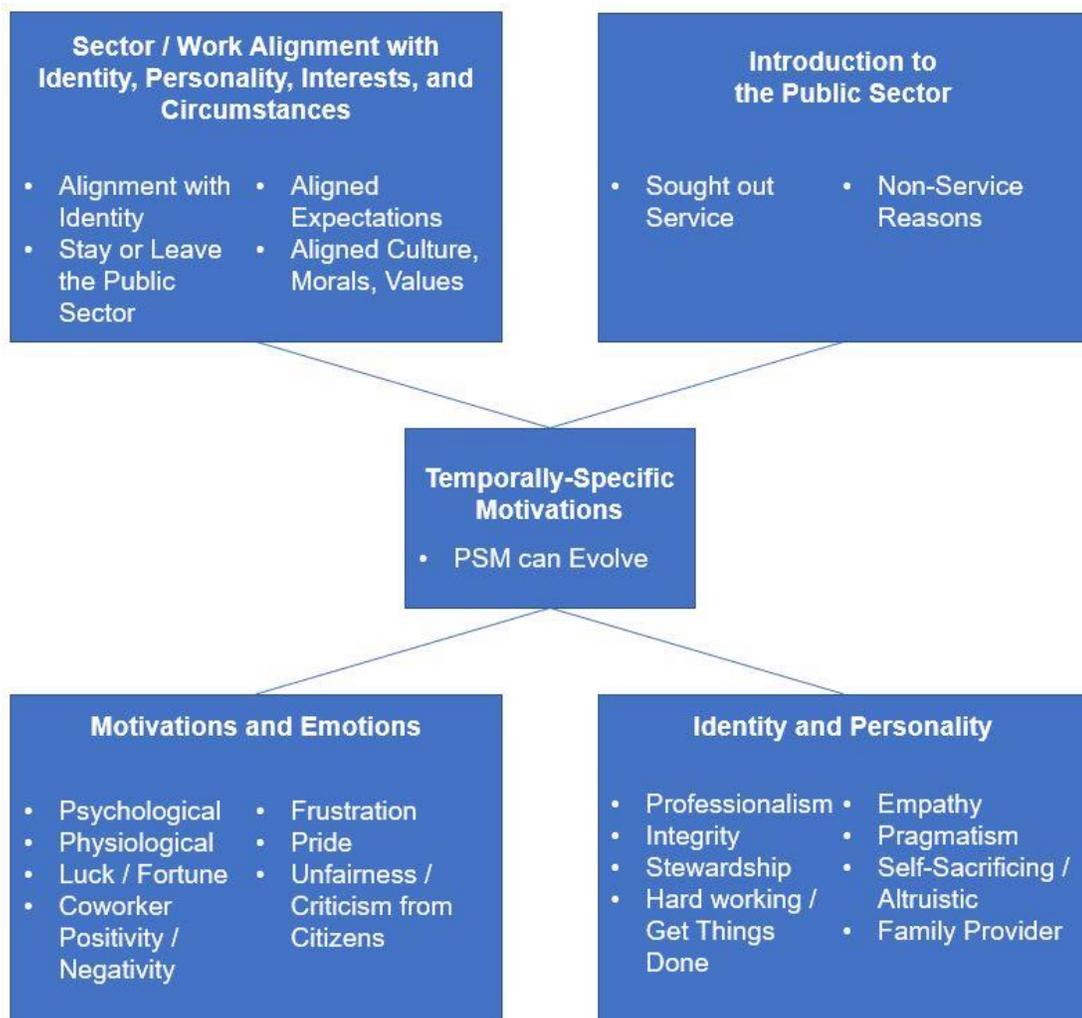


Figure 2

Overview of Core Theme and Principle Coding Categories

Core Theme

As identified in Figure 2, several categories emerged that touched all interviewees. However, several categories were either too broad / generic to be a useful main theoretical thread or too weak to serve as the main thread on its own (e.g., all people have identities / personalities). Moreover, the category of sector/work alignment did touch all participants; however, on its own, it did not pass a test of evolving needs and desires (as suggested by Interviewee 87's responses in Table 2 and the sheer existence of the temporally-specific motivations category).

Not surprisingly, the ability of the temporally-specific motivations' category to flexibly incorporate the wide array of individually-specific responses and adroitly integrate other key concepts / categories made it emerge above the others as the core theme. Note that the idea that people behave differently at different points in their lives is not exactly a novel concept. However, the point of a core theme is not necessarily to be particularly unique or impactful on its own; instead, a core theme should be universal in its applicability and broad enough such that other ideas and concepts can be successfully built around it via reliable foundations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In particular, the ability for temporally-specific motivations to resolve the conflicts between other motivations, emotions, et cetera is what gave it such prominence as the guiding thread explaining the actions and motivations of the interviewees.

As previously mentioned, a key methodological imperative within grounded theory is the practice of theoretical sampling to help develop and confirm emergent theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Accordingly, after the core theme was identified the lead researcher shifted the solicitation of candidates to focus on interviewees at the lower end of salary spectrum / early portion of career development. This was done to help develop and validate the observation of life changes impacting motivations and actions. For example, an early interview with a high-level, well-compensated executive presented a notion of income, security, and decision-making evolving over time:

I think that it's somewhat of a challenging question to answer now only because I have the security of a second income. So, if any of those things were to change, my husband can support our family. I go back to decisions I made...so, when I was younger, I was a single mom of one child, on my own. Had any of those things changed, like, my need to provide for my family probably would have overridden that. And I would have made other decisions. Right now, I'm comfortable enough...

(Interviewee 25).

A subsequent interview with an early-career technical expert provided a complementary view on decisions driven by temporal circumstances:

But I was a grad student fresh out of grad school. I was going to take any job that I could get. But I was glad to see this opportunity because I thought...just something attracted me more to it. But all the positive

aspects, like helping the public, it's just something that I knew would be pros or benefits. But now that I'm in the day-to-day, I'm like, "This is really...this is a good fit."

[Interviewer] So, that's an interesting sentence, "I was in grad school so I was going to take any job." Why?

Student debt...debt or just experience too, just I want to get out there and just see what I can get, experience in and see what is feasible with my degrees and backgrounds and level of experience. (Interviewee 27).

Accordingly, these additional interviews with lower-level staff helped support and validate the theory of a temporally-based framework.

Selective Coding and Integration with the Core Theme

Obviously, the core theme is singularly presented with the benefit of hindsight – the utilization of temporal-specificity as the core theme did not come after a sterile, linear evaluation of all categories. Rather, the concept of temporally-specific motivations was identified early in the analysis process and the other categories listed in Figure 2 coalesced around it to form a more cohesive theory. Through the process of selective coding, the other principal categories emerged in conjunction with the nascent idea of temporally-specific motivations.

Sector / Work Alignment and Motivations / Emotions. As previously identified, the category of sector and work alignment with identity, personality, interests, and circumstances was an interesting motivational category from the perspective of theory building. However, this category better fit the data if one acknowledges that an early-career professional with a family to support may be different than an end-of-career technical executive who makes sufficient money and wants to make more of an impact with their knowledge and experience. In similar fashion, the discrepancies between an interviewee's own responses for both psychological and physiological motivations and emotions can be integrated into a time-sensitive model where people can change.

Introduction to the Public Sector. During the interviewing, coding, and analysis processes, interest began to form around the circumstances in which individuals found their way into the public service. All told, only four interviewees identified a drive to the public sector because of service itself. The rest entered due to some combination of seeking benefits, serendipity, et cetera. Sample quotes that illustrate competing reasons for entering the public sector are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Quotations Exemplifying Differences for Entering the Public Sector

Reason for Entry into Public Sector	Interviewee Quote
Sought Out Service	I started...when I first started my career, I started with a non-profit organization more geared towards focusing on drug and alcohol prevention surrounding youth in our community. And I'm home-grown too, so I'm a local from this jurisdiction. And I think I've always had just that passion of public service to some degree. (Interviewee 84)
Benefits	So that played out because my husband already worked in the public sector and I was in the private sector in kind of a rut. And he said, 'Why don't you get a job where you'll get a pension some day?' And I said, 'Oh, that sounds like a good idea!' (Interviewee 91)
Serendipity	I needed a job. They hired me here. My original intention had been to do it short term while I looked for something else. But turned out, I actually really enjoyed it. I was surprised as anybody, I guess. (Interviewee 46)

As previously mentioned, inductive theorizing combined with a review of positive service emotions and motivations yielded concepts of seeking out the public sector for service and non-service reasons. Accordingly, these concepts then needed to integrate within the context of temporally-situational circumstances all the while acknowledging and reconciling the eventual positivity for service expressed by all interviewees. To accomplish this, data was triangulated from several interviewees who identified a growth and/or realization of PSM simply by being in the public sector over time:

Honestly...my first job in the public sector, I took because it was sports oriented. I didn't plan necessarily...I mean, I didn't have a negative opinion about the public sector. I just didn't plan on it. The areas I was looking into were more private mainly because I had a desire to work in sports and the private side of sports is a lot bigger entity than public side of sports. But when I struggled to find the right position in the private side and an opportunity came for me to get a job in sports, the public/private side really didn't matter because I was doing something that I enjoy doing. The growth and the appreciation for the public side of the job kind of has come through my career and working within the public side of things.

(Interviewee 55).

This triangulation ultimately resulted in the category of public sector introduction being integrated into the temporal core theme via the concept that PSM may evolve over time. In this arrangement, PSM evolution provides a reconciliation for the wide spread of initial desires to serve the public and the later unanimity of interviewees in having positive emotions / motivations for helping and serving others.

Identity and Personality. As with the other categories, the notion of identity / personality needed to be integrated with the core theme. By and large, an interviewee's identity and personality seemed to largely follow the concept of temporally-specific motivations in the sense that identity and personality are very broad and applicable. Moreover, identity and personality permeate throughout an

employee's existence and interactions. Accordingly, the emergent framework would need to incorporate personality and interest throughout.

Proposed Framework

The proposed framework incorporating the core theme and other key categories / concepts is presented in Figure 3.

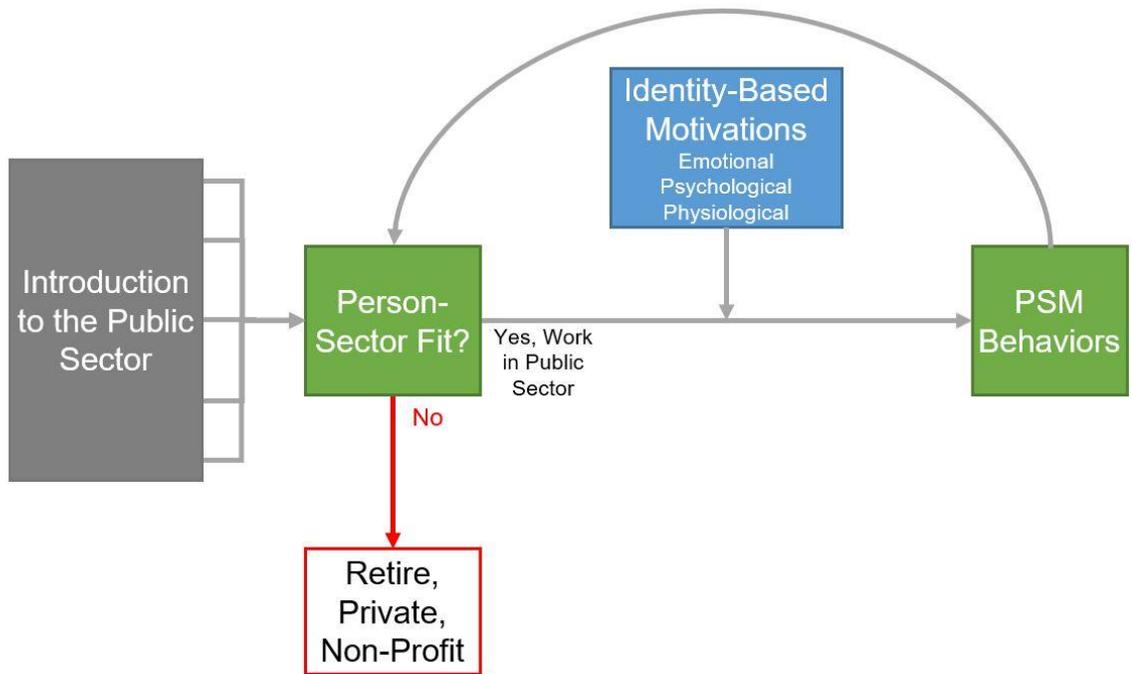


Figure 3

Proposed Temporally-Specific Framework of PSM

In effect, the framework describes how temporally-specific circumstances influence both sector choice and the development of PSM behaviors as moderated by an individual's identity-based motivations. However, it is important to recognize that it is not just a raw combination of disparate categories under the core theme. Rather, the interplay and inter-dependence of time, individuality, circumstance, emotions, motivations, and the public sector are crucial for a model that is representative of the ephemeral and varied characteristics of human nature.

Temporally-Specific Motivations

As the core theme, the notion of temporally-specific motivations is not a specific point or process within the model. Rather, the concept of time and change over time is pervasive throughout the model. For example, a 'snapshot' of a potential public sector employee's identity, circumstances, et cetera are relevant when first considering employment in the public sector. Similarly, PSM is expected to change just as the employee changes as an individual. Ultimately, the relationship between the employee and the public sector might change as the employee and their motivation to serve the public evolves.

Introduction to the Public Sector

Although seemingly different from the rest of the model (due to its fleeting nature), the initial circumstances and ultimate decision leading to the public sector is a critical element of the model because it sets a theoretical 'benchmark' for the evolution of PSM. Without the introduction, the accounts of public

servants typically just become a collection of emotions and motivations dissociated from development or regression of PSM. While there is value to these individual emotions and motivations, by themselves they do little to advance the literature and study of PSM beyond the types of studies already conducted by others.

Person-Sector Fit

In conjunction with the 'Introduction to the Public Sector', the notion of the public sector aligning with the individual's identity, personality, interests, and circumstances is crucial to understanding why public sector employees chose their path. However, it is also important to recognize the ongoing nature of the relationship between the employee and the public sector. The inputs from evolving PSM, coupled with the changing characteristics/circumstances of the individual lead to a continued 'evaluation' of whether the work (and public sector by extension) still aligns with the employee.

Evidence for this 'leave or stay' process comes from the spectrum of interviewee responses regarding potential future job prospects and career plans. In fact, the schism between those that would leave the public sector and those that would not is often dependent on things like time to retirement, financial ability to retire, family/health needs, et cetera. For example, multiple end-of-career managers/executives were looking forward to retirement or utilized retirement as a coping mechanism for work stressors:

I'm at the end of my career, so I'm trying to put in perspective that I want to retire soon, so sometimes work is stressful and I keep telling myself, 'I only have a short amount of time to do it.' (Interviewee 87).

Contrast that desire to leave the workplace with the mentality of a well-compensated, mid-career professional with a strong connection to the community:

But I think if we were put in that situation...you have to have, I guess, the will to continue doing your job, whether it's in public service regardless of what the pay may be. I mean, now, if you're talking they're going to cut our pay by 10%, 20%, whatever it is, it's not going to be the end of the world. I always tell my supervisors and managers, "You know what? I'm blessed that I have a job, an eight to five job. I have good health for the most part. And we get compensated pretty damned well. So, if they're going to ask us, through a negotiation process, for concessions of some sort, then I'm not going to fight it. There may be areas that we disagree in. But you have to have the will to still continue to do what you do regardless of the pay. (Interviewee 84).

Similarly, contrast the motivation to retire with that of an early-career family provider who is nowhere near being able to retire (and might therefore make a career change in order to resolve problems):

Because sometimes, there is a public perception that public employees are paid too much or have too generous of benefits. And I disagree with

that perception as someone who I feel makes a modest wage. So that public perception is frustrating sometimes but I wouldn't say that's unmotivating to do a good job. But maybe sometimes it can be unmotivating in terms of thinking about whether I want to stay.

(Interviewee 11).

In general, this notion of the public sector aligning with the current identity, circumstances, et cetera of the individual helps explain the variances in why people would or would not leave the public sector (and therefore stop serving the public).

Identity-Based Motivations

At the center of the framework lies the 'heart' of the temporally-specific model: the motivations driven by an employee's individual identity, personality, interests, and circumstances. Again, the interview data shed light as to how this individually-specific element could be applied to a more generic view of public service motivation. Namely, the particulars of a given employee's personality, et cetera serve as a moderator between the work encountered in the public sector (i.e., public service) and their evolution of public service motivation.

Support for this moderating effect comes through the high prevalence of identity to impact emotions. For example, it logically follows that an employee might experience negative emotions and or demotivation from an adverse work situation. However, their lack of demotivation appears to depend on how much they identify with acting professionally. As exemplified by a public-facing project

manager dealing with a difficult citizen: “Yeah. I was really detached with his anger and I didn't take it personally.” (Interviewee 6). When comparing the response of Interviewee 6 with an interviewee that was less able to separate personal emotions from professional situations, one can see the moderating effect in action (where PSM is potentially reduced in the former but unchanged in the latter): “Or you feel personally attacked, like your worth isn't worth the company's salary they want to pay you or whatever it is, for whatever reason it might be.” (Interviewee 40).

Psychological, Physiological, and Emotional Motivations. As with the other components of this framework, the emotions and motivations felt by an employee as a result of working in the public sector are expected to change over time (just as their work circumstances and their own characteristics evolve over time). Accordingly, the emotions and motivations felt by the employee are expected to have a changing impact on the levels of public service put into practice by the employee. This seems logically obvious; however, the definition and separation of physiological and psychological factors was important given the aforementioned lack of physiological motivations in much of the research base.

From a psychological standpoint, and interviewees often spoke of the psychological rewards that would increase their desire to serve the public. For example, a mid-career manager stated: “And so, there's a real impact that this provides for the local community. So, something like that is what motivates me. I didn't have to do it but I know that there's a benefit for this.” (Interviewee 21).

Similarly, interviewees expressed psychological demotivators that might decrease their desire to serve the public:

I think it's just sort of that frustration and then it's kind of like...not 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em' kind of mentality but a little bit like, 'Ugh. Nobody else seems to care as much as I do. Why do I care so much?' (Interviewee 70)

However, it is also useful to recognize that the physiological needs of employees – separate from psychological needs – can impact their satisfaction at work. Since work in public sector is directly tied to service, negative physiological motivations in the workplace are directly tied to motivation to serve the public. For example, an early-career staffer identified income as a reason for working, and since working in the public sector is tied directly to public, if they were paid less they'd be less motivated to work and serve the public as well as they used to:

But I think at some point, and at some level of monetary cut, it would be really disheartening...but would it make me lose motivation if I got a huge paycut? Yes, huge and I don't know what that huge means but yeah, I'd lose some motivation. That'd be hard to be working at a certain level for certain pay where you give it your all from eight to five every day. And then all of a sudden, the reason why you do that gets cut. Or the pay that you receive for working at that level gets cut and you're making a certain

amount less, whatever that may be and still expected to perform at the same level.” (Interviewee 15).

Public Service Motivation Behaviors

The evolution of PSM was previously described as a theoretical element of the framework. Moreover, a prior sample quotation from Interviewee 55 explicitly stated a seeming evolution of PSM after entry into the public sector. However, this concept of evolving PSM also presented itself via the anecdotes of some interviewees. For example, one executive (Interviewee 28) recounted a hostile work environment in another public sector job where their helping others was punished (interviewee perceived they were a scapegoat for the mistakes of others they helped). However, the interviewee wouldn't leave work environment due to desire for job security and to maintain their pension (so called 'golden handcuffs'). So, they reported a regression in practiced PSM (helped coworkers less) while they were working in that difficult environment. However, once they left that position and the risks to their job security/pension were lifted, they started to help a co-worker at the prior organization that they had previously refused to help:

I felt like I was going to get...somebody had to get in trouble for it. So, it was going to be me, kind of a thing.

[Interviewer] 'Stop sticking my neck out.'

Yeah. It wasn't...I didn't want to help them because...so, this boss I was under that I just couldn't work with...she still calls me all the time because she doesn't know what she's doing, so she calls me all the time and I help her and it's a little frustrating because she gets so wound up when she doesn't understand something. But I still help and I still offer suggestions and half the time, she gets mad at me after we talk about it for a little while just because it's just who she is. But I still do it. (Interviewee 28).

This excerpt from Interviewee 28's responses is a particularly powerful piece of evidence for an evolution (in this case a regression) of PSM. By not helping their coworker, the interviewee was reducing the ability of the organization to meet public goals. However, the later manifestation of PSM after key needs were met shows how the timing and individuality of a situation can truly manifest in changes to public-serving behaviors.

Conclusion

As demonstrated via the components of the model, the temporally-specific framework that emerged from the interview data provides a robust, adaptable way to explain the various motivations and actions of public sector employees. In fact, this flexibility in concept and application is crucial for accounting for the various person-specific traits and circumstances that emerge and change throughout an individual's life and career. As will be reviewed further in the Discussion, it is hoped that such flexibility will enable both researchers and practitioners alike to further the study and use of Public Service Motivation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A theory or framework, no matter how well grounded or constructed, is limited in value if not placed in proper context. Accordingly, a discussion of the proposed framework in the context of existing research follows. Moreover, recommendations for future research, public administration in practice, and the limitations of this study (to help inform applicability and validity) are discussed in this chapter.

Ties to Existing Research

Existing Public Service Motivation Study Results

As identified in the literature review, much of the existing research focused on cross-sectional survey data. Although this framework would not invalidate or supersede prior research into PSM (particularly those involving moderators), it does suggest that additional context is needed for those results pertaining to temporally-specific physiological and psychological needs. For example, a number of prior studies suggest that extrinsic benefits (such as income) may be less valued than intrinsic benefits to public sector employees (Anderfuhren-biget et al., 2010; Crewson, 1997; Houston, 2000; Lewis & Frank, 2002; J. Taylor, 2008). While this finding is hardly irrelevant to the practice of public administration, the extrapolated notion that managers simply aim to hire

individuals with intrinsically 'high PSM' and can focus less on compensation may be inaccurate (at best) depending on the individual (think back to Interviewee 27's reference of student debt). At worst, such a finding may lead to disingenuous practices if overzealous managers interpret this finding as a wholesale lack of employee desire for competitive or reliable compensation. Consider what impact such a policy might have on a multi-decade public servant with the mindset; "I could understand the salary cut more easily than the benefit cut just because...it's more of a security blanket for me which is why I stayed in public sector for as long as I have. It's that promise." (Interviewee 74).

Another major concern with past study results was the prevalence of discrepancies among study results. Deviant cases within this study's data appears to explain the prevalence of deviations in existing literature results and conclusions. For example, conflicts in survey data on PSM are resolved by this framework considering that 'deviant' examples are natively incorporated in the development of PSM (via the presupposition that individuality exists, and that an evolution of priorities may occur).

Accordingly, the pursuit of a 'one-size-fits-all' model of PSM among all possible variations of public servants is abandoned in favor of a more realistic, adaptive model. For example, the four individuals (of 30 total) that sought out the public sector for service-related motives would appear to be a deviant case within this study. Moreover, the preponderance of interviewees indicating non-service motives for entry into the public sector seems to represent a deviation from the

notion that PSM is intrinsic to an individual regardless of sector alignment (Kjeldsen, 2013). However, recall that the currently proposed framework emerged from evidence of evolving PSM:

I think it came as I grew with the position because I don't think you really realize what you're walking into when you first take the job, how large it is, how much it encompasses. You have a general idea but until you actually get out to some of the sites and are able to walk through it and see what students we help, it doesn't give you the appreciation until then.

(Interviewee 76).

Accordingly, the potential 'deviation' from the model of those that did seek out service via the public sector simply manifests as another case study rather than an unresolvable discrepancy among survey results.

Defining Public Service Motivation

One of the critical issues in the development of PSM research has been the variations in how each study defines PSM. As identified by Bozeman and Su (2015), a wide spectrum of definitions for PSM have been utilized – many conflicting in their assumptions and scope. For the purposes of this study, grounded theory might command that the original seminal definition provided by Perry and Wise (1990) would be most prudent: “predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions” (p. 368). However, one cannot ignore the obvious conflicts that many of the definitions of PSM have

with this original definition - particularly regarding the limitation of PSM to the public sector.

It is because of this apparent conflict of PSM defined by sector that the proposed framework utilizes 'PSM Behaviors' (rather than generic/intrinsic PSM) as the focus of analysis. Since the public sector is uniquely and intrinsically tied to public service, the proposed framework accordingly links public service motivation to public sector employment and the attendant manifestation of public service in the real world. Support for this specific focus on the public sector/PSM in practice came from interviewee reports of discovering a desire to serve the public only after they entered the public sector:

Which I do have very strong feelings about the importance of public service, so it's not that I don't want to serve the public because that's probably the main driving force why I enjoy my job is the fact that it does serve the public....And so, it happened to be the pension that brought me to this kind of work. But then, it's not like it turned on this switch but it's like it opened the curtain or something. I don't know. I just could be more of myself in...because this is so much more what I'm suited for. (Interviewee 91)

The proposed framework from this study does not care about what service attitudes or motivations may or may not be latently hidden within an individual. There may be value in exploring that notion, however, the more relevant and

useful unit of analysis appears to be the manifestation (or not) of PSM in practice.

Accordingly, while the litigation of PSM by sector is not the specific focus of this discussion, there appears to be support for shifting the focus of PSM research back to the public sector. Recognizing the link between practiced public service (via employment) and the public sector may help to increase theoretical parsimony and ease of explanation within PSM studies. If employees leave the public sector, they aren't flexing the muscle of public service as part of the core tenet of their work (and therefore cannot have much motivation to serve the public). If employees wish to serve others in the private or non-profit sectors, that might be more parsimoniously studied as simple prosocial behaviors or altruism rather than PSM augmented by sector choice.

Also regarding PSM definition, the general coding of the interview data from this study suggests that a re-examination of the dimensions of PSM may be in order. To be fair, Attraction to Public Service, Commitment to Public Values, and elements of Self-Sacrifice were widely observed in interviewee responses - aligning with the literal translations of those dimensions from Kim et al. (2013). However, none of the interviewee responses to questions geared towards potential acts of Compassion (e.g., volunteering, helping struggling coworkers, managing difficult interactions) resembled the concept of 'compassion'. Instead, elements of Stewardship / Professionalism (have to work with difficult people and listen to citizen demands) as well as giving back to the community and self-

interest were observed. This latter concept of self-interest was particularly fascinating in response to helping individuals who were struggling (reciprocity – someday they will need help) and volunteering (many participants would only volunteer if personally interested/invested in the cause).

Person-Sector / Organization / Job Fit

The proposed framework recognizes a continued ‘evaluation’ of whether public sector work aligns with the employee. Existing PSM research into the ‘fit’ between an individual and their work has largely focused on person-organization (P-O) and person-job fit (Leisink & Steijn, 2008), with suggestions that better understanding those two constructs might help to define an understanding of person-sector fit (Christensen & Wright, 2011). In the context of P-O fit, the literature begins to shed light on how fit affects employee decision-making for retirement or leaving the public sector (e.g., P-O fit mediates the relationship between PSM, stress, and quit intentions; Gould-Williams et al., 2013). While P-O fit might begin to approximate the requisite ties between the public sector and PSM behavior proposed by this study, its granularity and the spectrum of public service organization types starts to detract from the overall concept of public service equating the public sector. Moreover, focusing on the job or organization begins to miss some of the broader concepts cited by interviewees as motivations (e.g., public sector pension as ‘golden handcuffs’, higher pay in the private sector). Accordingly, additional study specifically targeting person-sector fit in the public sector would be worthwhile.

Self-Determination Theory

One final discussion of existing research in relation to this study's results includes a review of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). In general, SDT is a motivational construct concerned with a person's self-motivation to satisfy the psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Moreover, SDT concerns itself with the degree to which a person associates an element with their own internal values and is accordingly motivated. However, unlike other need-based theories and frameworks, SDT might be a valuable construct for explaining some of the observations within this study and processes within the proposed framework.

For example, although multiple existing theories of need-based motivation might initially appear relevant to the study findings (e.g., income desires as function of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, upon more detailed examination they suffer from the same discrepancy issues as prior PSM survey studies. In the case of Maslow, simply claiming that individuals will always seek income to resolve base-level physiological needs first would conflict with those interviewees who would take substantial pay cuts to remain in the public sector and serve the public to fulfill higher-order psychological desires:

During the economic crisis in 2010, my job was eliminated. My pay was cut by 50%. My job opportunities were completely limited. But I still stayed because I still found working in an organization, working for my community that I lived in, I found that very important to me. I could have left. I have

had so many opportunities to leave and work for different kinds of organizations for more money, more glory, more everything. And it's just...I do it because I want to not because I have to.

[Interviewer] Is “not because I have to”...is that sort of the driving factor where you didn't have to, therefore, you could do it because you wanted to?

No, I was a single mom with two kids. I still had to work. But I'm not going to work in an organization that I don't agree with. (Interviewee 82)

Although some researchers have considered PSM and SDT to be interchangeable in the public sector (Breugh et al., 2018), it would initially appear that SDT's utility in this model is more compartmentalized to the processes for initial job selection and eventual exits from the public sector. The framework proposed by this study hinges upon the initial and ongoing decisions to stay in the private sector based on alignment with current employee identities, personalities, interests, and circumstances. Within these 'decisions' ('Person-Sector Fit' in the model), SDT might serve as the most parsimonious way of explaining the decision-making process.

However, in terms of 'day-to-day' actions taken by the interviewees that influence incremental changes in PSM, SDT does not necessarily appear to govern principal motivations. The evidence for this lies in frequent accounts of

small-scale behavior seemingly contradicting over-arching identity values. For example, one manager identified that their need to support their family overruled their desire to serve the public: “as much as you like to serve and you like to volunteer, you also got to...your number one priority is your family at home.” (Interviewee 20). However, that same manager cited stewardship and integrity motivations as reasons for working overtime – necessarily taking them away from the family they so highly value:

So, we need coverage like that, so then those are days I work overtime...if it's something I can do at home, I'd rather take it home and do it. But if I have to stay here because the information's here or the resources are here, then I'll stay that extra...maybe once in a while. (Interviewee 20).

More simply put: in a framework that centers on temporally-specific elements, SDT is less able to concisely and uniquely describe short-term motivations and decision-making than long-term motivations and decision-making.

Recommendations

Future Research

There is a wide spectrum of potential research lines that could follow this study. As previously mentioned, further study into the definition of PSM, its dimensions, and person-sector fit (rather than person-organization/job fit) would be prudent. However, several other areas of research and targets of studies would appear to be more useful than others. Based on the proposed framework

and the data that generated it, it would appear prudent for scholars to conduct further research into moderating effects, explore and generate public sector employee archetypes, and recreate the current study with ex-public-sector employees.

To begin, the alignment is clear between prior research efforts on PSM moderators and the currently-proposed framework that relies upon moderating emotions and motivations to explain the changes of PSM in practice. However, although much of the existing literature has tackled this topic, further research into understanding the moderating effects of personality, interests, identity, and circumstances on PSM would be useful. Recommended areas for specific focus include further qualitative and quantitative study of temporal effects on moderators, a focused set of studies on physiological and extrinsic motivators, and mixed-method or experimental studies that attempt to capture and measure the moderating effects that emotions/motivations have in response to public sector work stimuli (e.g., how much does a strong identification with professionalism and/or empathetic character traits moderate the negative impact dealing with difficult citizens has on employee PSM?).

Another area of recommended research is the development of public sector employee archetypes. While some existing research has been conducted on archetypes in the public sector (Dawson & Watson, 2011; Hernandez, 2008; A. Taylor, 2018), they appear to be highly specialized and not focused on the decision to enter, stay, or leave the public sector due to alignment with identity.

Accordingly, a potential study should focus on researcher-identified core motivations and identities of employees (both prior to and during work in the public sector). The utility of such research would be to help develop managerial tactics for improving environments, motivations, and outcomes for wide swaths of employee classifications. Anticipated archetypes that are expected to provide utility include a description of entry-level / recent graduates, professionals and technical subject-matter-experts, and soon-to-be retirees.

A final recommendation for future research is to recreate the current study with individuals who have left the public sector at some point in their career. The goal of this recommendation is simple: help confirm the specific motivations and circumstances of public sector employees that lead to the ultimate devolution of PSM in practice (i.e., ceasing to serve the public). Although participant recruitment may be difficult for this proposed line of research, the benefits would be substantial to the development of PSM research.

Recommendations for Practice

Although any theoretical framework may be useful for academia, the relevance of said framework to the everyday practice of public administration is just as critical. History shows that motivational theories, not necessarily the findings of more granular studies, are what dominate the teachings of managerial textbooks and headspace of managers in practice (evidenced by the widespread recognition of Maslow's Hierarchy, 1943; McGregor's Theory X and Y

management styles, 1960; et cetera). Accordingly, a brief discussion of this framework's potential impact on the practice of public administration is in order.

Broad Focus – Improving Public Sector Experience. As previously suggested by the framework, the development of PSM occurs while in the public sector. Accordingly, a very simple high-level PSM growth strategy for managers should be to recruit and keep good employees in the public sector. While this may not seem earth-shattering, there is utility in aligning the foundations of PSM research with extremely clear strategies for practice (rather than creating a complex menagerie of disjointed tactics). At its core, developing a sense of public service within public sector employees is not more complicated than basic, sound managerial practices.

With this notion in mind, a more detailed analysis bridging managerial strategies and tactics would touch on the concept of creating positive work environments. The idea behind this recommendation is that employees can associate positive emotions with the work itself and help align their identity / circumstances with the public sector. Note that the literature review for this study was critical of generic calls for improving work environments and aligning values. Accordingly, the specific recommendation for managers is to keep the temporally-specific theme of this study's proposed framework in mind as they navigate the individual circumstances of their employees. For example, a younger staff may crave exposure to a variety of tasks as part of their desire to advance their career. However, as that staff ages and changes (e.g., they might

start a family), a manager should communicate with the staff about their needs and desires to see if the situation has changed (e.g., the stress and exhaustion from raising a young child might turn a previously-welcomed variety of tasks into a loathsome chaotic burden).

Additional means and methods of accomplishing improvement of work experiences are exceedingly numerous; however, several other tactics might be ripe for improving PSM outcomes. For example, effective job analysis methods might be utilized prior to creating job descriptions that help align expected employee identities with work functions. The preference of several interviewees with technical subject matter expertise to avoid political environments comes to mind:

When I lose that motivation...when I see that I give individuals or groups the information and they do nothing with it or it goes a different direction because of politics...self-interest, or special interests, type of thing. It's like, "Wow, okay." What's the point of asking me in the first place? (Interviewee 10).

Moreover, while it may be difficult and/or impossible to substantially augment roles once established (due to union rules, et cetera), simply keeping awareness of staff needs, interests, and circumstances may be far more effective than trying to be rigid in employee considerations. For example, a creative manager might be able to swap or cycle work tasks between roles to avoid build-up of negative

emotions and to help foster positive growth and development experiences (when desired by the employee).

Despite the need for attention to the individual needs and drivers of staff, managers can still pick 'low-hanging fruit' by targeting common threads of emotion and motivation. For example, administrators might aim to reduce 'frustration' by improving / removing negative coworker influences (as suggested by this study's results) or by studying the moderators presented by other PSM researchers (e.g., negative impact of red tape as suggested by Quratulain and Khan, 2015 and Moynihan and Pandey, 2007). Through this broader approach, managers can still make productive gains in motivational increases (by studying the research) while allowing for more widespread / sustainable initiatives across departments and organizations.

Tactic – Early-Life Public Sector Outreach. Throughout the study, multiple individuals indicated a complete lack of awareness of the public sector as a viable career alternative: "Seriously, because I feel that I had no idea what you could do in the public sector and that it was such a thing." (Interviewee 91). This becomes a particularly important idea considering the importance of initial alignment with the public sector with developing PSM in this study's proposed framework ('Introduction to the Public Sector' cannot occur if there's no awareness of the sector to begin with). Naturally, then, it would be obvious to target this lack of awareness to maximize the potential candidate pool when hiring for new positions.

For the local government manager, however, this would seem to beg the question: “how would I even go about spreading awareness to the masses?”. Again, turning to this study’s data sheds some light as to locally-focused resolutions to the problem:

So, not that I want to blame my educators because I went to great schools, but sometimes I hear about programs for high schools, for example...in other cities that engage high school students or other kinds of students...youth. And they have whole summer programs, bring them to city halls, teaching them all about the different kinds of jobs you can have. And I think that's such an important idea. (Interviewee 91)

If this notion of youth education is coupled with the strength of local community engagement as a source of motivation, a manager would have a powerful tactic for developing a long-term recruitment pool by developing awareness programs for the local schools:

And this is where I felt like I found my home. Because to me, the most important thing about public service...and I'm not going to lie because there is definitely...I have a vested interest. This is my community and my home. So, hiring the best streets guys is important to me because my dad drives these streets. So, it is very important to me. (Interviewee 70).

Overall, this tactic of creating ‘home-grown’ potential government employees with strong intrinsic ties to the organization would seem far more proactive than simply following the prevailing PSM recommendation of recruiting individuals with

'high PSM' (Christensen et al., 2017; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Ritz et al., 2016; Van Loon et al., 2017).

Limitations and Biases

As with any piece of research, this study is not immune to limitations and biases intrinsic to its design, execution, and synthesis. To begin, the problems previously attributed to quantitative surveys (limited context with self-reported answers to limited options) are replaced in this study by potential issue of data validity from self-reported, open-ended responses. Although the researcher took care to resolve potential instances of cognitive dissonance (either by excluding conflicting responses or emphasizing the response that aligned with the interviewee's reported actions), there is no guarantee that interviewee responses (dissonant or not) were truly representative of the emotions and motivations that drove reported actions. In that sense, even the reported events could be scrutinized given their self-reported nature.

On a similar, and likely more important note, the responses in this interview might be scrutinized from the standpoint of social-desirability bias (van de Mortel, 2008). For example, when asked about their motivation to serve the public, participants are not incentivized (under pain of social scrutiny) to state they feel nothing for fellow humans – even if that were true. Accordingly, respondents are more likely to respond in socially-desirable ways than might otherwise be true.

Additional limitations of this study come from the sampling and selection of the participants. Although the study did not aim to accurately recreate the population of public sector employees within the boundaries of the study (Monterey County, California), there are characteristics of the region (e.g., high cost of living) that could have potentially influenced the results of respondents as compared to their counterparts in other regions. Similarly, the structure of the study (requiring approximately 1 hour of participant time) may have caused issues of self-selection bias. More simply put, those who participated in the study might be expected to have higher levels of prosocial behavior / helping others (and accordingly, higher tendencies for PSM) than those who did not wish to volunteer their time to participate in this study.

Lastly, any qualitative study should acknowledge the potential of researcher bias. At a basic level, the researcher's understanding and interpretation of interviewee responses during the coding process may have resulted in data being misinterpreted. Similarly, the researcher's own perceptions of public employees and knowledge of the subject prior to starting the study could have influenced the flow of discussion during interviews. Similarly, the process of constructing the theory and analyzing the data could have been influenced by the researcher's own motivations for entering the public sector and continuing to serve the public. Although care was taken to allow the framework to emerge from the data (rather than to 'prove' preconceived notions), a recreation

of the study by others would help to ensure researcher biases did not influence the results.

Conclusion

In general, this study and the proposed grounded framework do not presume to 'solve' the motivations behind public service or public sector employees. In fact, much of its utility lies in its ability to serve as a high-level perspective and reminder of the comprehensive and temporally-dependent way in which humans make any decision – let alone a decision so prominent as where/how they make their living. Although the proposed framework has many constituent components, the key takeaway (for both academia and practice) appears to be that we should not forget the very real, visceral, and ever-changing impacts that individual characteristics and circumstances have on an employee's motivation to serve the public. With this simple notion in mind, future endeavors should be able to provide more actionable data and more responsive practices that consider the needs of public sector employees.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for agreeing to meet for this interview. Over the next 45 minutes or so, I will be asking you some questions about your experience with work, specifically regarding your work in the public sector and serving the public. I will not use your name and I ask that you try not to use any names, including the name of your employer, in your responses to these questions. However, any names you do use will be removed from the audio recording so that those identities can be kept private in the final publication.

You do not have to participate in this interview if you do not wish to, and there is no penalty for stopping the interview at any time. If you choose to be interviewed, you can skip any question that you do not wish to respond to without penalty. Do you still agree to be interviewed (stop interview if no, continue interview if yes)? Are you OK with being recorded (stop interview if no, start audio recording if yes)?

Date:

Location:

Interviewer Name:

Interviewee ID#:

Begin interview by reviewing the informed consent forms with the interviewee and documenting informed consent. Specific focus will be placed on risks / benefits, and the interviewer will remind the interviewee not to mention the name of their employer or any other names to help maintain confidentiality.

Interview Questions

- To start off: I'm trying to study people's honest views on their experiences with work. With that in mind, how would you describe your general feelings towards work?

Order of remaining questions to fit conversational interview style, but otherwise to follow in order shown. The categories listed below are based on Kim et al (2013) dimensions of Public Service Motivation; however, the categories are strictly to assist with data organization and will not be read or identified for the interviewee.

- Category: Attraction to Public Service
 - Why did you take this job?
 - If you had to find another job, what would be important to you in the new job? What would be your dream job?
 - What attracted you to employment in the public sector? How does working in the public sector make you feel?
- Category: Commitment to Public Values
 - When do you feel a strong motivation to serve the [public, students, etc.?] in your job? What causes you to lose that motivation?
 - How connected do you feel to the community you serve at work? Please share an example of when you felt connected to the community.
 - How does this connection influence your motivation to serve the [public, students, etc.]
- Category: Compassion
 - How do you feel about volunteering - either in your personal life, or at work?
 - How does helping others fit within your role and duties at work?
 - Do you ever worry that helping coworkers that are struggling will affect your own ability to get things done? In which situations? What would be your motivation to either help, or not help, others with their work?
 - Can you share an example of a difficult interaction you had with a [citizen, student, etc.] at work? How does that interaction speak to your feelings toward [citizens, students, etc.]?
- Category: Self-Sacrifice
 - If your pay, job security, or other benefits were changed for the worse, how would you feel? How would those changes impact your life? Can you think of a specific scenario that would impact you the most?

- Can you describe a work situation in which you felt compelled to go above and beyond the requirements of your job? Why did you do so? How did it feel to you?
- How would you describe your work ethic? In what situations would you work overtime or on weekends? Why would you do it?
- Do you have any questions for me or any questions regarding the study?

APPENDIX B

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



June 25, 2019

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Expedited Review

IRB-FY2019-189

Status: Approved

Mr. Adam Levitus and Prof. Anthony Silard
CBPA - Pub Admin
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Mr. Levitus and Prof. Silard:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Need-based Framework of Public Service Motivation" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The informed consent document you submitted is the official version for your study and cannot be changed without prior IRB approval. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended using the IRB Cayuse system protocol change form.

Your application is approved for one year from June 25, 2019 through June 25, 2020.

Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is up for renewal and ensure you file it before your protocol study end date.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following four requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following by submitting the appropriate form (modification, unanticipated/adverse event, renewal, study closure) through the online Cayuse IRB Submission System.

- 1. If you need to make any changes/modifications to your protocol submit a modification form as the IRB must review all changes before implementing in your study to ensure the degree of risk has not changed.**
- 2. If any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research study or project.**
- 3. If your study has not been completed submit a renewal to the IRB.**
- 4. If you are no longer conducting the study or project submit a study closure.**

Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Donna Garcia

Donna Garcia, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

DG/MG

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