CHAPTER 11

Public Personnel Motivation: The Concept of the Public Service Culture

. . . We must wonder why the nurturing of a public service culture has received so little attention in government organizations, society, or the research community. Public service motives are the underpinnings for the uniqueness that defines the public service culture. They provide the basis for activities that educate and empower the citizens as members of a democratic state. They are the platform from which public servants bring values and engagement to their work. They fortify public servants to overcome self-serving interests, moral inertia, and risk avoidance.

—Lois Recascino Wise

READING 11

Introduction

The emphasis on contemporary research in personnel motivation has resulted in an impressive subfield of public administration that deals with the many ramifications of the individual in public organizations. Today, most scholars and practitioners of public administration are aware that the handling of personnel motivational issues can be one critical key to the successful management of any public agency.

Chapter 6 explored how our important understanding of the role of the informal group within organizations began. Though concerned primarily with business organizations, Elton Mayo's discoveries in the field of human relations at Western Electric in the 1920s expanded the traditional theories of public administration by showing how critical an impact the human group had on the management process.

However, early researchers in the personnel field tended to accept the basic goals of increased efficiency in organizational activities and actually sought ways by which management could obtain greater productivity from workers. Initially, monotony, alienation, and worker fatigue frequently were problems focused upon in personnel studies. These studies often recommended a restructuring of the formal or procedural aspects of the institution to achieve greater or improved efficiency.

The second-generation personnel specialists like Chris Argyris, Warren Bennis, Rensis Likert, and Douglas McGregor have continued to stress the significance of the problems of the

individual in organizations, but frequently with less concern about organizational performance and more careful attention toward helping to achieve worker satisfaction and personal growth on the job. Such writers de-emphasized traditional administrative goals such as efficiency and, instead, stressed support of individual values and a humanistic environment within organizations.

In the following essay, "The Public Service Culture," written especially for this text, Lois Recascino Wise offers a unique assessment of the current state of motivational research as it pertains to the public service. She begins her essay with a review of the current research literature in this field, but as Dr. Wise suggests, her aim more involves conceptualizing and "enriching understanding of the construct of public service motives, the process of public service motivation, and its implications for democratic governance." Her argument is premised on the assumption that "a public service motive is a type of human need" that is "stronger for some people than others." Professor Wise defines "public motives" as "the process that causes individuals to perform acts that contribute to the public good as a way of satisfying their personal needs." Substantively, such motives entail "affective, norm-based and rational attributes" that the author discusses in some depth. Not everyone in government, of course, is disposed toward public service motivations, nor are they necessarily absent in other organizations, even in McDonald's, argues Dr. Wise. She says, however, that "public service motivation is more prevalent in government than in business or industry" because of "the nature and mission (of) government organizations."

Above all, Dr. Wise believes, "Public service motives are significant because they provide a value basis for governance," especially in three ways: by (1) fostering "citizenry educated in the issues and processes of government"; (2) incorporating values, and not merely facts or analytical techniques, into administrative decision-making; and (3) encouraging commitment and responsibility for the work of government and its consequences. Professor Wise concludes by suggesting that public managers should make a conscious effort to develop a culture of public service throughout the workplace, for "if managers do nothing to promote and reward people who display public service motives, we should not expect those motives to be important in the organizations they lead."

Briefly, a word about Dr. Wise's academic background. Her research interests center on the broad areas of employment and management, with special focus on the public sector, especially civil service systems, administrative reforms, attitudes toward change and innovation, performance motivation in the public and private sectors, and systems for distributing organizational rewards and determining status in the bureaucracy. Dr. Wise teaches primarily in the areas of public management and human resource management, and her works have appeared in the major scholarly and professional journals. She is the author of *Labor Market Policies and Employment Policies in the United States* and is one of the most respected international scholars in this field of study. Dr. Wise serves as a consultant to public- and private-sector organizations in the United States and Europe and was recently awarded one of the highest prizes in Sweden for her research contributions to that nation's public administration development.

As you review her thoughtful exploratory essay on the "state of the art" of this subject, you might consider the following questions:

How does Dr. Wise define the term "public service motivation"?

Where does the author argue that most of our understanding of personnel motivation derives from?

Do you agree with her fundamental idea that public service motivation is more prevalent in government?

What does the author mean by the terms "rational," "norm-based," and "affective"? How do these concepts shape public service motivation?

How can "the public service culture" concept specifically help practicing public administrators in motivating their employees? Is it a pragmatic *and* valid conceptual framework, in your view, that can apply to all levels of public service—local, state, and federal? If so, explain how you would use her concept to motivate employees in the public sector.

The Public Service Culture

LOIS RECASCINO WISE

In 1961 President Kennedy issued the challenge "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." The call inspired a generation of Americans to government service. Thousands joined the newly created Peace Corps and its domestic counterpart, Volunteers in Service to America, but interest in working for the state overall was also high during the 1960s and 1970s. This was a generation that not only believed it could make the world a better place to live but also believed that it had a responsibility to shoulder the burden. In those days, college graduates who chose their first full-time job based on the size of the salary offered were seen as odd and were perhaps even stigmatized by their peers (Orloff 1978; Johnson and Prieve 1975).

Times have changed. In response to flight from government by officials who converted their knowledge into private sector expertise for higher pay, President Bush asserted, "Government should be an opportunity for public service, not private gain" (Waldman 1989: 16). More recent evidence suggests that high pay lures graduates from programs in public affairs into private sector consulting (Barrett and Greene 1998). Graduates are more likely to look with a jaundiced eye at the notion of employment as a form of personal sacrifice. At the same time, public management practices seem to be increasingly grounded in the assumption that monetary rewards, rather than purposive or social rewards, are the principal incentives for organizational membership and job performance among government employees. We can see this underlying belief in the use of special salary allowances for recruiting certain occupational groups, for example, and in continuing efforts to find an effective way to link performance to pay.

It was in this context that at the beginning of the 1990s Perry and Wise (1990) called for a renewed interest in studying and testing the propositions of public service motivation. Drawing on previous research, including work focused on voluntary organizations (Knoke and Wright-Isak 1982), they attempted to identify a theoretical framework for public service motivation. They identified three categories of public service motives and put forward a set of research propositions about the process of public service motivation. They called for research examining the behavioral implications of those propositions, for research developing new

"The Public Service Culture," by Lois Recascino Wise. This essay was written especially for this volume.

methods to operationalize and measure public service motivation, and for research that would refine the theoretical framework and research hypotheses pertaining to the motivational bases of public service.

Over the last two decades, using various definitions of the construct, a number of researchers have examined public service motivation. These empirical studies can be mainly placed in two different categories. The first set focuses on finding evidence of whether or not a public service motivation exists (Rainey 1982; 1976, 1991; Crewson 1995, 1997, Jurkiewicz et al. 1998; Gabris and Simo 1995; Brewer 1998; Vinzant 1998). The second set attempts to develop more sophisticated measurements for operationalizing the public service motivation construct (Perry 1996, 1997). Research is still limited, however, regarding the development of a theoretical framework for how public service motives affect behavior or for exploring the implications of public service motivation for bureaucratic outputs.

The contributions that contemporary studies have made to our ability to measure and compile evidence of public service motivation, however, are not the focus of this essay. Our interest lies more in elaborating and enriching understanding of the construct of public service motives, the process of public service motivation, and its implications for democratic governance. To this end the essay turns to a discussion of public service motives and the operating conditions of public service motivation. It then considers the linkages and tensions between public service motives and attributes of bureaucracy in a democracy. Some management implications for developing a public service work culture are discussed in the conclusions.

What Do We Know?

In this section we review literature regarding public service motivation and address four key questions. The first asks what public service motives are, and the second, what the operating conditions of public service motivation are. Under the second question we consider whether public service motives are constant and exclusive to the public sector. The third question pertains to whether public service motivation is more prevalent in the public sector, and the fourth seeks to explore the significance of public service motives.

What Are Public Service Motives?

A public service motive is a type of human need. The desire to fulfill human needs influences behavior. People have many different competing needs. Both theorists and empirical researchers have attempted to define human need structures and explain the way they affect behavior in various situations, including the workplace. Not all motives for work are identified by these content theories of human needs (Georgiou 1973; Perrow 1978). None of these theories, for example, identifies human spiritual needs as having implications for work motivation, but there are many people whose spiritual needs are so strong that they choose a career in a church, synagogue, or other religious organization. By the same token, individuals may have such strong needs to perform acts of public service and to contribute to the advancement of the quality of life in society that they may choose a career of public service. Like spiritual needs, public service motives will be stronger for some people than they are for others.

Behavior that contributes to the public good fulfills a human need among those with public service needs or motives. We believe that these motives are primarily addressed in the public sector because government work focuses on public service, because it is in the interest of public sector organizations to promote and cultivate these values and motives, and because the public sector is larger than the nonprofit sector. This is not to say that everyone working in the public sector is predisposed to public service motives, nor is it to say that people who are stimulated by public service motives do not have other needs that are responsive to the incentives that their organizations offer. In the same way, people working for the church, temple, or mosque are not motivated by their spiritual needs alone.

Public service motivation pertains to the process that causes individuals to perform acts that contribute to the public good as a way of satisfying their personal needs. Acts rooted in the desire to fulfill a public

service need can involve the decision to pursue public administration as a field of study, and the decision to join an organization that provides opportunities to fulfill public service needs, as well as the performance of a set of responsibilities and tasks related to one's status as an employee or volunteer in an organization. As a form of intrinsic motivation, the potential gain from public service motivation is a function of how individuals expect to feel as a consequence of performing acts of public service.

Based on previous theoretical work, Perry and Wise (1990) organized public service motives into three broad categories. These are affective, norm-based, and rational motives. The same act can be motivated by various public service needs. For example, one individual may join the military service based on a love of country, while another joins because of a sense of duty and responsibility.

Normative orientations are based on social values and norms of what is proper and appropriate and include a desire to serve the public interest; to fulfill a sense of duty to the community; and to express a unique sense of loyalty to the government (Downs 1967; Karl 1979; Buchanan 1975; Knoke and Wright-Isak 1982). Frederickson (1970) argues that the pursuit of social equity is a primary obligation of public servants.

Affective motives are rooted in an individual's emotions. Affective motives would include a deep belief in the importance of a particular program to society. Gulick referred to this sort of commitment as anchored in a nobility of the great objectives of public service (Blumberg 1981), distinguishing it from public service acts based on a personal identification with a public program. For example, person A is motivated to join public service to advance the goals of the War on Poverty because she experienced poverty and deprivation as a child. Person B is motivated to join the War on Poverty because he abhors starvation in a rich society. Person A's behavior is rooted in rational motives while Person B's behavior is affective. An affective love of nature and a desire to protect the environment draws individuals into public sector employment. Frederickson and Hart (1985) contend that a primary motive for public servants is a patriotism of benevolence, which they define as an encompassing love of and desire to protect the people within a political jurisdiction. This love of humanity provides opportunities for moral heroism and personal sacrifice for others.

Perry and Wise (1990) include rational motives as a basis for public service behavior. The underlying premise is that individual choice among a set of possible alternatives is motivated by an assessment of the potential utility maximization from each option. Rational motives would include a desire to represent some special interest and a personal identification with a program or policy goal, as well as desires for personal gain and personal need fulfillment (Downs 1967). The opportunity to participate in policy formulation or program implementation may be anchored in needs for power, esteem from others, and self-esteem. According to Rawls (1971:84), public service enables individuals to experience ". . . the realization of self which comes from a skillful and devoted exercise of social duties."

This third category of public service motives is not universally accepted. Some argue that public service can be rooted only in prosocial behavior (Rainey 1982). According to this school of thought, rational, self-serving motives by definition are not public service motives regardless of the social or public good they produce. We take the perspective here that human beings are complex and contradictory and indeed may embark on public service careers or perform acts of significant public service primarily based on their own human needs and self-interest. These motives may mature and develop into normative or affective bases for behavior. If this is so, then how members of a society prioritize their needs and interests becomes increasingly important for the furtherance of the public good.

What Are the Operating Conditions of Public Service Motivation?

Are Public Service Motives Constant?

Human behavior is based on a mix of motives, and motives vary over time in their salience to single

individuals and to society as a whole. By extension, the motives for public service employment should vary among countries and geographic regions and also among units of government that have separate purposes and client groups. Not only can individuals switch among the categories of public service motives that they identify as important, but individuals may also turn away from these motives altogether as their needs are fulfilled, as their beliefs are proven wrong, or as other needs become more dominant (Homans 1961; Clark and Wilson 1961; Opsahl and Dunnette 1970; Deci and Ryan 1987). If the underlying assumptions for management practice and administrative policy in an organization change, we should expect shifts in the priority attached to different motivational bases for work (March and Simon 1958).

Individuals with public service motives are not by definition devoid of other motives and human needs. Concerns for basic human needs may be central for a Peace Corps worker in a primitive setting. Worries about job security may preoccupy public service–oriented workers during a reduction in force. Concerns for personal safety and career advancement are also important motivators for individuals dedicated to law enforcement, for example. In the same vein, persons pursuing religious careers have needs for personal development and growth that motivate their job-related behavior.

Contextual factors may also be significant in explaining trends in public sector employment. For example, the availability of government jobs affects the likelihood that a particular individual will find employment in the public sector regardless of the strength of her public service needs. If government jobs are clustered in some distant central location, such as a capital city, or if government imposes a hiring freeze, individuals will turn to other sectors. When government organizations undergo a reduction in force or pay cuts, human needs for job security and monetary reward may gain importance over public service motives for incumbent employees. If bureaucratic red tape prevents action or change for the public good, the strength of public service motivation among individuals will be negatively affected (Buchanan 1975). The perception that effort exerted to create change inside the bureaucracy amounts to "pushing Jell-O" reduces the likelihood that individuals will be motivated to participate in innovation and reform activities in the future. The rational person acts under the belief that effort produces some result. When environmental forces inhibit goal achievement, motivation is reduced (Luthans and Kreitner 1975; Pfeffner and Salancik 1978).

Situational factors play a role in explaining when public service motives surface and dominate individual behavior and when behavior occurs as a consequence of other motives. Public service motives may be dominant, for example, when an individual embarks on a career or makes similar life choices. Public service motives may dominate in certain situational contexts on the job that trigger deeply held values and beliefs and call for acts of moral heroism. For example, Brewer (1998) reports that fraud and abuse account for whistle-blowing behavior among individuals with public service motives. Public service motives may anchor individual discretion and judgment and decisions to depart from established practice. The strength of public service motives may give individuals the courage to resist organizational norms and peer pressure that are in conflict with the way they interpret the public good. These tensions between self-serving interests and interests that serve the public good may occur in the daily performance of their work. They may develop into a habitual behavior in which public servants increasingly lean toward the end of the continuum that represents their own interests rather than the end that represents the public good (Gawthrop 1998b: 134).

As Gawthrop (1998b: 139) notes:

> Public managers must recover the truly authentic and creative freedom to decide what they should do ethically in resolving the daily conflicts and challenges that confront them. Until they are capable of freeing themselves from the bondage of habit, any attempt to define professional behavior as truly ethical is an exercise in futility that can only result in a pathetic self-deception. The habits of the self-serving good allow public servants to pursue procedural quasi-ethical life. The net result, to paraphrase H. Richard Niebuhr, is a government of

persons without fault, operating in a society without judgment, through the ministrations of a Constitution without purpose.

Are Public Service Motives Exclusive to the Public Sector?

We know by deduction that that public service motives cannot be found exclusively in the public sector. There is no mechanism to test and sort individuals in the labor market to identify and steer those with certain motives into one sector or another. Many people do not consciously choose a sector of employment and may not be fully aware of their own motives for joining a particular organization (Oldham 1976; Orloff 1978; Soelberg 1967; Wanous 1972, 1979, 1980). Individuals in the labor market rely on imperfect information and assumptions about employers in choosing organizations. Public sector employers may send conflicting signals to potential employees by emphasizing high pay and monetary benefits in their recruitment programs, thereby attracting and recruiting individuals whose motives for work are met by monetary rewards rather than the intrinsic returns from acts of public service. By the same token, we know that individuals with strong spiritual motives for work can fulfill these needs in other sectors. A priest or rabbi, for example, can work in the military as a chaplain. A deeply religious person can find rewarding secular employment in health care, counseling, or the arts, for example.

Another reason that public service motives cannot be exclusive to the public sector is that boundaries between sectors of employment are vague and organizational purposes and tasks overlap between sectors. The health care industry in the United States, for example, is found in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The opportunity to serve the public interest or to advance the public good is not exclusively limited to public sector employment. This is not to say that there are not unique motives that pertain to public service, but rather to acknowledge that public service can occur in many forums. Many corporations have public policy programs. An individual working for the McDonald's Corporation, for example, could fulfill strong affective needs for public service by being involved in the Ronald McDonald House Program.

Is Public Service Motivation More Prevalent in the Public Sector?

If public service motives are not exclusively found in the public sector, is public service motivation prevalent in government organizations (Brewer 1998)? The question has two meanings. One is whether public service motivation is more prevalent than other types of motivation in government. To grant this premise, we would have to assume that public service motives are so strong that they always dominate human needs for growth, social contact, and physical and security-related needs, for example. Those public servants that Downs (1967) refers to as zealots may meet this assumption, but it does not seem a reasonable expectation for most.

The other interpretation is whether public service motivation is *more prevalent* in government than it is in other sectors of employment. There is a logic for thinking that public service motivation is less prevalent in business and industry, as Brewer (1998) demonstrates. One reason would be that by the nature of their mission and purpose, government organizations overall provide more opportunities for individuals to fulfill public service needs and thus would attract more of those individuals who prioritize their public service motives than would business or industry. Further, if government employers value public service motivation, then it should be expected that the work culture in public sector organizations cultivates and reinforces public service motives more than organizations in business or industry, as some research suggests (Romzek 1990).

If we posit that public service motivation is more prevalent in government than in business or industry, we acknowledge that systemic and organizational factors contribute to an organization's value orientation, and in turn, that public organizations must have separate value orientations. Consequently, the extent to which agencies or firms are able to recruit people with public service motives and are able to maintain and strengthen those human needs should also vary. We should also expect variations within organizations

in the extent to which public service motivation accounts for behavior. Individuals will adapt to the operating incentive structure (Deci 1975; Wanous 1972; Clary and Miller 1986). For different reasons, certain branches or divisions might be less likely to recruit or nurture public service motives. Individuals working in certain occupational groups or professional areas may be more or less likely to be motivated by public service needs than others. Vinzant (1998), for example, contends that public service motivation enables protective services workers to cope with the particularly difficult stresses of their occupation.

In defining public service motivation, we have given examples of various categories of public service motives, identified factors in the public service motivation process, and identified some contextual factors important in the process of public service motivation. Public service motives are at the root of the behaviors and actions taken to achieve outcomes that serve the public good. The performance of public service acts and the attainment of public good outcomes are both dependent upon the strength and nature of an individual's public service motives and needs. But the public service motivation process is affected by individual and contextual factors, as motivation theories indicate. For example, an individual may have a strong desire to work for the state but believe that some personal attribute or characteristic makes such employment unlikely. The expectancy theory of motivation would posit that such an individual would have low motivation to apply for a government job, despite the high value she or he attaches to it as a vehicle of public service. Recruitment agents of the state could reinforce or counter the belief of low probability. The mission, policies, administrative structure, and culture of organizations can promote or dampen an individual's belief that the workplace provides an opportunity to fulfill public service needs. At the same time, an individual might think that even if the public service act were performed, factors affecting political, economic, or social capital would make goal achievement unlikely, and this in turn can reduce the amount of motivation an individual would have. These expectations might vary at times, depending on factors such as leadership support or available resources.

Of What Significance Are Public Service Motives?

If public service motives can exist in any sector and may appear in varying degrees of strength within public organizations, what significance does the construct have for public administration or more generally for the advancement of democratic and social values? Public service motives are significant because they provide a value basis for governance.

In developing the notion of the human side of public administration, Gawthrop (1998a) argues that members of the public service must act from a personal commitment to a public problem and an allegiance to the community. Public service motives anchor bureaucratic behavior and action, a connection that becomes increasingly significant as prevailing ideas about the role and status of public servants are rejected, and calls for responsibility, courage, flexibility, and proactive behavior are continually heard. Three ideas are central to these writings. These are the responsibility for educating the public in democratic issues and processes, the importance of individual values in administrative life, and the responsibility for engaging the citizenry in the administrative process.

Education

An important output of bureaucracy is a citizenry educated in the issues and processes of government (Gaus 1947; Gawthrop 1998a). Gaus (1947) sees education as a way of enhancing human growth and the value of human worth. Gawthrop (1998a) describes the responsibility for educating the citizenry as rooted in affective motives and based on a love of humanity. Education of the citizenry contributes to the bureaucracy's responsibility for engaging the public in the democratic and administrative process and achievement of an enriched sense of community. Education empowers the citizenry. It balances bureaucratic values and engagement as inputs in the administrative process because an educated citizenry is an empowered partner in governance.

Educating the public is in tension with both the tenets of efficiency and professionalism. The norm of professionalism means that individuals should use their professional expertise to make the best judgment based on the facts of the case (Mosher 1978). The tenet of efficiency means that tasks should be performed with the least use of resources and in the least amount of time. Educating the public would slow down the process, increase costs related to educational activities themselves, and occupy greater numbers of public servants in the education process itself.

Values

Gawthrop (1998a) contends that there is an integral relationship between administration and democratic values. In arguing for the appropriateness of values in public administration, he contends that an emphasis on facts and evidence in decision making does not mean that values must be excluded from the equation. Both facts and values contribute to solutions of public administration questions, but the public servant must weigh the consequences of both in making a decision. Frederickson (1971) also makes a strong case for incorporating values into public administration when he asserts "Administrators are not neutral, they should be committed to both good management and social equity as values. . . ." If we are concerned about justice and equity in the outcomes of government, value judgments are an integral part of the administrative process.

Shared values may be the cornerstone of a cohesive public organization (Meier 1997: 73, 74). To the extent that shared values facilitate achieving a common goal among members of an organization, they may be associated with greater commitment to organizational purposes, and consequently to higher levels of motivation and performance related to achieving those goals (Meier 1997). Individuals with congruent values are more able to anticipate each other's actions and are more likely to have the same assessments regarding which workplace behavior is important (Schein 1985; Kluckhohn 1951). Empirical studies show that especially when an individual public servant's values are like those held by the work group or organization, personal values are more likely to be reflected in decisions involving discretion (Meier 1997:74). But at the same time, shared values may limit the range of problem solutions considered and may function as a form of peer pressure. The strength of individual public service motives may counter the possibility of "group think" and other conformist behavior when they challenge the public interest.

In direct conflict with the notion of introducing individual values to administrative behavior is the prevailing administrative norm of neutrality. The norm of neutrality means that bureaucrats should remain emotionally disaffected by the problems they face and detached from the clients they serve. Thompson (1985) captures the kernel of the neutrality ethic:

> The use of discretion . . . can never be the occasion for applying any moral principles other than those implicit in the orders and policies of the superiors to whom one is responsible in the organization. The ethic of neutrality portrays the ideal administrator as a completely reliable instrument of the goals of the organization, never injecting personal values into the process of furthering these goals.

Many years ago Herbert Simon (1945: 2) posited and Blau's (1955: 30) pioneering work demonstrated that even lower-level public servants make discretionary decisions that modify public policy outcomes and have significant consequences for agency clientele—for example, in determining eligibility for benefits or opportunities for employment. Neiderhoffer (1967: 10) similarly found that police officers may decide if and how the law should be applied. These decisions may be turning points in the lives of young offenders, for example. Some research suggests that police discretion is bounded by organizational norms and values (Jones 1977: 300–301; 200). Vinzant (1998) argues that public servants who clearly articulate value conflicts in their work demonstrate higher job satisfaction and greater motivation even in a highly stressful work situation.

Engagement

A concern for engagement focuses on securing greater personal involvement from public servants for their

work and its consequences. Many scholars think that bureaucrats mainly try to limit their responsibility and risk in discretionary situations and that this behavior reduces the quality of government outputs for target citizens and undermines an organization's ability to achieve its primary mission (Jones 1977: 301; Blau 1955: 50).

Engagement means that public servants should not take a passive role in the policy implementation process, for example, but should be fully engaged in the event and able to identify pitfalls and problems that can undermine program success. In defining the philosophy of a New Public Administration, Frederickson (1971), for example, calls for public servants to become engaged in change. New Public Administration means "changing those policies and structures that inhibit social equity."

Engagement also means that public servants should ". . . think of what ought to be done instead of merely doing that which must be done" (Gawthrop 1998a). They cannot seek refuge within the boundaries of their job description and assigned responsibilities when presented with professional dilemmas. Gawthrop (1998a) submits that both moral inertia and unimaginative performance on the part of public servants are unacceptable. In this sense, the demand for engagement challenges the morality of rule-following behavior. A religious leader may perform the forms and rituals of the sacrament without engaging an internal spiritual emotion that creates an affective bond with the congregation. Similarly, a bureaucrat may go through the routines and motions of a job following the forms and rules prescribed but never engaging an affective emotion for the citizen clients he or she is positioned to serve, or in turn, feeling any concern for the outcome of their interaction.

The call for greater engagement is similar to what Carnevale (1995: 38) calls "working beyond contract." Working beyond contract means that job performance includes moral involvement, innovative behavior, spontaneity, and prosocial behavior. Working beyond contract means doing more than meeting minimum job performance standards or even meeting satisfactory standards. Similarly, Wise (1999) describes as outmoded the notion that a civil servant's tasks and responsibilities can be defined and contained in a box, arguing that civil servants must step outside the box and anticipate the work that needs to be done, contributing their creativity and problem-solving ability to the organization.

This call for engagement is in tension with what Thompson (1985) refers to as the tenet of structure. That is the notion that a person's position and status in an organization determines his or her responsibility.

> The ethic of structure asserts that, even if administrators may have some scope for independent moral judgment, they cannot be held morally responsible for most of the decisions and policies of government. Their personal moral responsibility extends only to the specific duties of their own office for which they are legally liable.

This means that the policies of an organization can be morally wrong, but individual employees can be held harmless if they perform the duties and routines of their jobs and follow existing rules and regulations. Such thinking inhibits democratic accountability (Thompson 1985). Public servants must assume the moral responsibility for their work. By engaging in questions of public administration, we require public servants to accept accountability for the full consequences of public administration activities. Good intention does not absolve public servants of responsibility for their actions; administrators must demonstrate that they were fully engaged in the issue and that they attempted to foresee possible negative consequences (Thompson 1985). Individuals need to bring imagination and creativity to their work (Gawthrop 1998a).

Conclusions

Public service motives have the potential for advancing the democratic state, but they also are at the heart of a fundamental tension with key tenets of administrative behavior. These ideas run counter to a large body of work and thinking in public administration that rests on a different set of notions about what should be prioritized in bureaucratic conduct. If "good" public administration means rule-based,

efficient, economical, and professional management, then it is incompatible with an emphasis on values, education, and engagement. Efficiency, for example, is clearly at odds with the slow task of engaging and educating the citizenry so that people can participate in the administrative process. Similarly, if professional management means reliance on expert advice and knowledge, it too is at odds with education and engagement. Likewise, rule-following behavior is in tension with the tenets of moral responsibility and individual courage. It may fail to deliver socially equitable public outcomes and may cloak acts of moral cowardice.

Public service motivation does not occur in a vacuum. We have argued that contextual factors related to individual actors, situations, events, and the organizations in which behavior occurs influence the strength of public service motivation. This means that to some significant degree both organizations and societies can enhance or reduce the prevalence of public service motivation, and in turn, the performance of acts that serve the public good and represent the public interest.

Organizational policies and practices may account for variations within the public sector in the strength of public service motives. If managers do nothing to promote and reward people who display public service motives, we should not expect those motives to be important in the organizations they lead. Without evidence that the administrative policies and management practices of a particular organization reward and promote public service motivation, we cannot expect to find public service the motivational basis for behavior.

Steven Kelman (1987: 94) remarked that "if the norm of public spirit dies, our society would look bleaker and our lives as individuals would be more impoverished." In that spirit we must wonder why the nurturing of a public service culture has received so little attention in government organizations, society, or the research community. Public service motives are the underpinning for the uniqueness that defines the public service culture. They provide the basis for activities that educate and empower the citizens as members of a democratic state. They are the platform from which public servants bring values and engagement to their work. They fortify public servants to overcome self-serving interests, moral inertia, and risk avoidance. They anchor acts of judgment and discretion in a concern for the common good. It is for these reasons that public service motives are significant.

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