

## Public Values and Public Service Motivation:

How Do Public Values Relate to Patterns of Public Service Motivation?

By Hal G. Rainey, Mike Koehler, and Chansu Jung  
The University of Georgia  
May 21, 2008

A paper proposed for the workshop on  
**Public Values and Public Interest - Normative Questions in the  
Evaluation and Development of the Public Sector**  
Convened by Torben Beck Jørgensen, Barry Bozeman, Mark R. Rutgers

What is the connection between “public values” and the characteristics of organizations and people who produce outcomes that represent those values?

Government organizations, as well as other types of organizations, seek to produce goods and services of public value that maximize or foster “public values.” Some scholars claim that pursuit of public values, or production of them, has significant influences on structures, processes, and behaviors in the organizations that do so. This paper will address one aspect of this topic by considering the relations between public values and public service motivation. First we examine several important contributions to the literature on public values (Bozeman, 2007; Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007; Moore, 1995). Among other points, we show that these authors offer valuable insights about defining and identifying public values. They pay little direct attention to public service motivation (PSM), however. Then we discuss two important streams of activity in research on PSM: the development of the Perry PSM scale, and research findings that relate PSM to important organizational and individual variables. We point out that the Perry scale and variations of it assume a general, broadly applicable construct of PSM. We conclude with a set of statements about public values and public service motivation (PSM). These include propositions contending that PSM appears to follow general, broadly applicable patterns as suggested by the Perry measure, but that individuals also vary in their patterns of PSM. These variations can relate to individual level public values, and to differences among organizations in the public values to which they contribute. As a specific example, military personnel may have similar general patterns of PSM to social workers, but they will also have different PSM profiles on such dimensions as compassion for the economically disadvantaged.

## Public Values

### Moore's *Creating Public Value*

The publication about public values most frequently-cited by other authors is Mark Moore's *Creating Public Value*. In his discussion of public values, Moore offers no explicit definition of them. Through discussion of differences between public and private production processes, circumstances justifying public production, and many examples, he offers an implicit definition. Public value consists of what governmental activities produce, with due authorization through representative government, and taking into consideration the efficiency and effectiveness with which the public outputs are produced. Public managers create public value when they produce outputs for which citizens express a desire:

Value is rooted in the desires and perceptions of individuals - not necessarily in physical transformations, and not in abstractions called societies...Citizens' aspirations, expressed through representative government, are the central concerns of public management...Every time the organization deploys public authority directly to oblige individuals to contribute to the public good, or uses money raised through the coercive power of taxation to pursue a purpose that has been authorized by citizens and representative government, the value of that enterprise must be judged against citizens' expectations for justice and fairness as well as efficiency and effectiveness. (Moore, 1995, p. 52)

Similarly, Moore contends that managers can create public value in two ways (p. 52). They can "deploy the money and authority entrusted to them to produce things of value to particular clients and beneficiaries." They can also create public value by "establishing and operating an institution that meets citizens' (and their representatives') desires for properly ordered and productive public institutions." Public managers can behave proactively in this process. "They satisfy these desires when they represent the past and future performance of their organization to citizens and representatives for continued authorization through established mechanisms of accountability." Public

managers, Moore argues, "...must produce something whose benefits to specific clients outweigh the costs of production."

Moore thus advances a conception of public value that one can describe as a "publicly authorized production" conception. (These quotations marks are ours, and do not indicate a quotation from Moore). Public value derives from what governmental activities produce, with authorization from citizens and their representatives. Public value increases when the outcomes are produced with more efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, Moore offers no explicit definition of "public value" except that it derives from citizen desires, and offers no definitive or explicit list of public values.

#### The Accenture Public Sector Value Model

One finds a similar perspective in the "Accenture Public Sector Value Model" (Jupp and Younger, 2004), whose authors cite Moore as a source of the concept of public value. Similarly to Moore, the Accenture model never defines public values explicitly. The authors of the model explain that public value emerges from the production of outcomes of governmental activities, considered together with the cost-effectiveness of producing those outcomes:

"Outcomes" are a weighted basket of social achievements. "Cost-effectiveness" is defined as annual expenditure minus capital expenditure, plus capital charge. (p. 18).

Other descriptions of the model indicate that those applying the model will develop the outcomes through examination of the agency's purposes and citizen expectations:

Outcomes are based on an agency's reason for being as well as on citizen's expectations of that agency. Public services should be of value to the public, or at least to specific members of the public at whom they are targeted. It is both appropriate and helpful to focus on 'the citizen' as the primary recipient of public sector value creation. (Accenture, No date).

Without considering the merits of the model, one can point out that the model and its authors do not undertake to define public values explicitly. Public values consist of

outcomes based on what a government entity is supposed to be doing, and based on what citizens want it to do, taking into account . As with Moore’s conception, which influenced the accenture model, the authors of this model offer no explicit or independent definition of public value, except as outcomes that citizens want. They, too, offer no list of public values.

*Bozeman’s Public Values and Public Interest*

Bozeman, in *Public Values and Public Interest* (2007) advances a conception of public values with similarities to that of Moore, but with very important differences. Bozeman (2007, p. 13) offers an explicit definition of public values: “A society’s ‘public values’ are those providing normative consensus about (a) the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (b) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and (c) the principles on which governments and policies should be based.” He also conceives of public values as existing at the individual level. He defines individual public values as “the content-specific preferences of individuals concerning, on the one hand, the rights, obligations, and benefits to which citizens are entitled and, on the other hand, the obligations expected of citizens and their designated representatives” (14). In other words, he appears to assert that in societies one can discern patterns of consensus about what everyone should get, what they owe back to society, and how government should work. Individuals have their own values in relation to such matters, and the patterns of consensus consist of aggregations of those individuals who agree with each other about such matters.

This perspective resembles Moore’s in various ways. Both perspectives locate value in the preferences of the citizenry, for example. Both emphasize the production of outputs and outcomes as sources of public value. Bozeman at certain points emphasizes public value “failure,” when neither the market nor the public sector provides goods and

services that achieve public values. Moore emphasizes positive production of outcomes that enhance public value, but by implication, failure to produce such outcomes fails to create or increase public value.

Differences between the two perspectives involve matters of emphasis and explicit versus implicit expression. There are important differences, however, that have implications for the relation between this discussion and public service motivation. One way of expressing some of these differences would contend that Moore emphasizes production while Bozeman more heavily emphasizes the demand side of the production process. As his title implies, Moore focuses on the public manager's production of public value, by identifying outcomes that will increase it, developing strategy for producing those outcomes, managing the political context, and designing effective and efficient operational management processes for producing the outcomes. In Moore's analysis, public value refers generally to outcomes of value to citizens and clients, with the public value increasing as the efficiency and effectiveness of production increases. He identifies outcomes only through some examples but not through an explicit listing, definition, or typology. Bozeman's perspective more heavily emphasizes the existence of public values, independently of production processes but obviously enhanced or diminished by production processes. Moore discussed how the public manager and others (such as political authorities) decide whether government can justify producing outcomes, rather than leaving the production to the private sector. Bozeman (2007), and Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) do not restrict the production of goods and services that affect public values to government. Public and private organizations produce goods and services that achieve or fail to achieve public values. Hence, public values represent a psychological and sociologic construct referring to values that persons and social aggregates hold, independently of production of goods and services that fulfill those values or violate them.

## Identifying Public Values

This consideration of public values as psychological and social constructs that exist independently of production processes for outcomes that influence public values has a very significant implication. It draws Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007; Bozeman, 2007) into an effort to identify public values. They point out that public administration scholars examining public values take a variety of approaches. One approach is to posit public values, making no pretense of deriving them. One can conduct public opinion polls, survey public managers, or locate public values statements in government agencies' strategic planning documents and mission statements, and sometimes in budget justification documents. Another approach (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2008) involves developing an inventory of public values from public administration and political science literature. Predictably and unavoidably, when Jørgensen and Bozeman undertake to develop such an inventory, the list of public values becomes complex, multileveled, and sometimes mutually conflicting. The inventory includes seven major "value constellations" (Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007) or "value categories," (Bozeman, 2007, pp. 140-141), each containing a set of values. The Appendix summarizes these categories and their contents.

The complex results of the inventory hardly justify surprise. As many authors have pointed out many times, the values that organizations pursue are diverse, multiple, and conflicting, and the values that government organizations pursue are usually more so. Bozeman (p. 143) contends that lack of complete consensus about public values should not prevent progress in analyzing public interest considerations. He proposes a public value mapping model that includes criteria for use in analyzing public values and public value failure. For purposes of the present discussion, however, the absence of a compact, definitive list of public values has implications for the discussion of public service

motivation (PSM) to follow below. As described later, much of the PSM research has pursued a conception of PSM that involves only a few references to any public values that might appear on any list or inventory. In addition, much of the PSM research has treated PSM as a general, unitary construct, of which individuals have more or less. The complexity of the public values inventory, however, coupled with Bozeman's assertion that public values also exist at the individual level, suggests that individuals might vary widely in their conceptions of PSM.

Whence the Heroes?

Both of the perspectives on public values – Moore's and the Bozeman/Jørgensen conceptions – have another implication for the discussion of public service motivation (PSM). The two analyses of public values do not delve very deeply into the motivation to produce them. Moore describes highly motivated public managers and their efforts to create public value, but the examples and descriptions essentially treat the nature and level of their motivation as a pre-existing condition. Bozeman (2007), and Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) concentrate primarily on identifying and analyzing public values, without much attention to why and how individuals are motivated to produce them. Bozeman discusses the need to “manage publicness” (Chapter 10) that briefly addresses PSM (pp. 181ff), but mainly to point out that privatization by contracting out may discourage public employees and managers with high PSM.

To point to their limited attention to individual motivation is not to fault these authors. They had other fish to fry. In fact, moreover, they have a lot of company. Discussions of public management and public sector performance frequently emphasize individual and group efforts, without explaining the motivation for those efforts. Reviews of the literature on effective leadership and organizational performance in government and the nonprofit sector find a frequent emphasis on the role of leadership

(e.g., Rainey and Ryu, 2004). Numerous authors conclude that highly motivated leaders, including not just persons in formal leadership positions but also dedicated employees taking initiative and otherwise exerting leadership, make the difference. Analyses of administrative leadership in government typically note that the effective, innovative leaders have a fundamental drive to “make a difference” (e.g., Doig and Hargrove, 1990), to serve as an unsung hero (Ricucci, 1995), or to be “committed to a cause” (Moore, 1995, p. 308). Analysts of innovation in government find that career civil servants enact many of the important innovations (Borins, 1998). Those careerists, widely stereotyped as change-resistant in popular commentary and by some who claim status as scholars, somehow overcome those influences that supposedly constrain innovative leadership and proceed to innovate.

While these authors point to the important role of human agency in creating public value, they do not make clear where those humans attain this impulse to produce public services and enhance public value? Why do they feel strongly motivated to produce public and communal benefits, and without the material returns to themselves that comparable achievements in a profit-making activity would earn? The literature relevant to public management abounds with discussions of its difficulty and potential for discouragement – the multiple authorities that oversee, the multiple and conflicting interests that make demands, the vague and value-laden purposes, the legal and administrative constraints, the public scrutiny. Why try? In addition, motivation theorists point out that motivation refers to the arousal of effort – the level of trying – but also to the direction of effort – what one tries. This raises another question: try what? Why do individuals try to produce public value? Why are they motivated to produce different public values, in different ways? The following sections consider whether the literature on public service motivation helps with these questions.

## Public Service Motivation

In recent years, research on public service motivation has developed in promising ways. In spite of recent attention to the relations between public service motivation (PSM) and public values (Vandenabeele, 2008b), however, researchers have only begun to elaborate those relations. One can argue that public values and PSM are integral to one another, but that would simply be a matter of definition. One can define PSM, for example, as the motivation to provide public values, and the most prominent measure of PSM does that, in a sense, as described below. Still, most theorists treat motivation and values as separate concepts. Values refer to conceptions of desirable end-states (that Rokeach calls “terminal values”) or instrumental means to those ends (that Rokeach refers to as “instrumental values”). The concept of motivation is so fraught with complications that organizational psychologists have essentially abandoned research on it (with prominent exceptions, such as the highly successful goal-setting theory of task motivation). Motivation refers to the arousal and direction of effort. To have a value is not the same as exerting effort to fulfill it. A public service *motive* may target public values and hence be indistinguishable from public values in certain senses. To analyze PSM, we need to think in terms of effort and action, as reflected in such behaviors as choosing to work for one organization rather than another, and choosing to exert high levels of effort. To analyze relations between PSM and public values, we need to find ways to verify the existence of public values, and to observe behaviors aimed at fulfilling them.

The constraints on such an analysis include the absence of a definitive listing of public values, that is both conclusive as to what public values are and include, but also that includes a set of values not so large as to be unmanageable. Other constraints

include the problems in the basic literature on work motivation, mentioned above. On the other hand, researchers again and again have found differences in the values expressed by employees in government, as compared to employees in business, and by students who intend to seek employment in government, as compared to those headed for business jobs. To these encouraging developments, the recent research on PSM adds further encouragement.

Two important streams of activity in the research on public service motivation (PSM) indicate progress in that research, but also point to questions that remain open. One of these streams involves development of Perry's PSM scale. That scale includes questions about the respondent's interest in public policy processes, compassion (especially for the economically disadvantaged), self-sacrifice (for society or causes larger than oneself), and concern for the public interest. Albeit with some variations, researchers have generally confirmed the viability and the conceptual structure of this measure with various samples, including respondents from different nations (e.g., Vandenberg, 2008a, 2008b; Coursey and Pandey, 2008; Coursey, Perry, Brudney, and Littlepage, 2008). A very important aspect of this measure, however, is that it essentially posits a general, broadly applicable pattern of dispositions that we can call public service motivation. That is, individuals have more or less of this form of PSM, and individuals do not vary widely in such patterns of motivations. A military officer will not differ significantly from a social worker in their patterns of PSM. It overstates the case to impute such assumptions to those who use the scale, since they often look for variations. The assumption is inherent in the nature of the scale, however. While researchers have confirmed the factor structure of this scale and related results with the scale meaningfully to other important variables, there is still an open question as to how much individuals might vary in their patterns of PSM. For example, Brewer, Selden, and Facer used

another method to analyze PSM, and found variations in PSM profiles. More research on variations in patterns of PSM will thus be valuable, and the concept of public values can be useful in such research. While the Perry PSM scale and variations in it (i.e., Vandenberg, 2008a) can be considered to refer to public values, it refers to very general conceptions of them. This leaves open questions about whether different types of organizations produce outputs and outcomes that relate to different patterns of PSM among their employees.

Another important stream of activity has involved research that relates the Perry measure, as well as other measures of PSM, to other important variables. These include work satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g., Park and Rainey, 2008; Taylor, 2008), ethical behavior and whistle-blowing (Brewer and Selden, 1998), interpersonal citizenship behavior (Pandey, Wright, and Moynihan, 2008), perceived and actual performance (e.g., Bright, 2007; Grant, 2008; Vandenberg, 2008b). Other research has shown evidence of antecedents of PSM, such as age, gender, and education (Perry and Hondeghem, 2008). While valuable, many of these findings do not necessarily help directly with analysis of public values and their relations to PSM. With some exceptions, they tend to involve little specific reference to public values.

To move in the direction of research on relations between public values and PSM, at this point we will simply advance statements and propositions that draw on the discussion to this point:

Public values are end-states considered desirable by large groups of people, concerning the rights and benefits everyone in a social collectivity should have, and the obligations individuals have to the collectivity, and how the collectivity should be governed. A “social collectivity” here refers to a unit of government and its citizens, such as a local government and its citizens, or a national government and its citizens. Public values also include preferences for instrumental values that lead to such end states.

All types of organizations produce outcomes that increase or decrease levels of public values. Some organizations influence public values through market-based exchanges involving sales of discrete goods and services at a price (e.g., a profitable

business firm contributes to general prosperity). (Bozeman, 2007, and Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007, contend that production of outcomes related to public values is not restricted to government). Government organizations typically produce goods and services that are not sold on markets at discrete prices, and/or which a dominant coalition in the social collectivity regards as inadequately provided by markets. We can arbitrarily restrict our definition of public values to the effects of outcomes of this latter sort.

Public values can refer to very general end states (e.g., a just and fair society) and to more specific end states (justice in the criminal justice system), and to instrumental values (due process of law) believed to lead to preferred end-states.

Public values exist at collective levels reflected in consensus within large groups or dominant coalitions, and at the individual level. (Bozeman, 2007).

Individuals and groups have both more general and more specific public values, and vary in their instrumental values. Individuals have general patterns of public service motivation that relate their motivation to more general public values, as well as more specific patterns of PSM. An individual can be motivated in a general, widely applicable pattern such as that measured by the Perry PSM scale, as reflected in such expressions as “serving my country” (e.g., Vandenberg, 2008b, concludes that PSM represents a universal, internationally applicable pattern of motivation). Individuals also have more specific, proximal, and instrumental values such as those expressed in organizational mission statements (e.g., Wright, 2008).

These broad statements and propositions relate to more specific research propositions:

Employees of business firms will have different patterns of public values than employees of government agencies. Employees of government organizations will express higher levels of PSM than employees of business organizations. Employees of government organizations will express higher levels of PSM related to general, more specific, and instrumental public values. (This is actually a contestable proposition. Consider the value placed on customer service in many business firms, and other forms of general social and public service to which business firms contribute—curing diseases, providing products to purify water supplied in economically less developed nations).

Employees of government corporations and state-owned enterprises will express lower levels of PSM than employees of general purpose government agencies. Employees of government agencies will espouse values related to public values influenced by their organizations. For example, military and public security personnel will place lower value on compassion for the economically disadvantaged than will employees in a human service agency with a mission of aiding the economically disadvantaged.

Individuals will self-select into government agencies that serve public values that correspond to their own. For example, members of disadvantaged groups will tend to work in agencies that provide benefits to those groups. In the U.S., the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Department of Education will have higher percentages of African-American employees than the Department of State. (This is an absolute fact, not a hypothetical statement).

## References

- Accenture, "The Accenture Public Sector Value Model." No date. [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)
- Bozeman, B. 2007. *Public Values and Public Interest*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Borins, S. 1998. *Innovating with Integrity: How Local Heroes are Transforming American Government*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Brewer, G. A. and S. C. Selden. 1998. Whistle blowers in the federal civil service: new evidence of the public service ethic. *Journal of public administration research and theory*. 8 (3): 413-439.
- Brewer, G. A., Selden, S. C., and Facer, R. L. 2000. "Individual Conceptions of Public Service Motivation." *Public Administration Review*. 60: 254-264.
- Bright, L. 2007. Service Motivation and the Job Performance of Public Employees? Does Person-Organization Fit Mediate the Relationship Between Public. *Review of public personnel administration*. 27 (4) : 361-379
- Coursey, D. and Pandey, S. 2007. Public service motivation measurement : testing an abridged version of Perry's proposed measurement scale. *Administration and Society*. 39 (5) : 547-568
- Coursey, D. and Perry, J. L., Brudney, J. L. Littlepage, L. 2008. Psychometric verification of Perry's public service motivation instrument : results for volunteer exemplars. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*. 28 (1) : 79-90
- DeHart-Davis, L., Marlowe, J. and Pandey, S. J. 2006. Gender dimensions of public service motivation. *Public Administration Review*. 66 (6) : 873-887
- Doig, J. and E. Hargrove. 1990. *Leadership and Innovation*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Grant, A. M. 2008. Employees without a cause: The motivational effects of pro-social impact in public service. *International Public Management Journal*, 11(1):48-66.
- Jørgensen, T. B., and B.Bozeman. 2007. Public values: an inventory. *Administration & Society*, 39 (3): 354-381.
- Jupp, V. and M. P. Younger. "A value model for the public sector. *Accenture Outlook*, no. 1, 2004. [www.accenture.com/Outlook](http://www.accenture.com/Outlook)
- Moore, M. H. 1995. *Creating Public Value*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pandey, S. K., B. E. Wright, and D. P. 2008. Public service motivation and interpersonal citizenship behavior in public organizations: Testing a preliminary model. *International Public Management Journal*, 11(1):89-108.

- Park, S. M., and Rainey, H. G. 2008. Leadership and public service motivation in U.S. federal agencies. *International Public Management Journal*, 11(1): 109-142.
- Perry, J. L., Brudney, J., Coursey, D. and Littlepage, L. 2008. What drives morally committed citizens ? A study of antecedents of public service motivation. *Public Administration Review*. 68 (3): 445-458.
- Perry, J. L. and A. Hondeghem. 2008. Building theory and empirical evidence about public service motivation. *International Public Management Journal*, 11(1):3-12.
- Rainey, H. G., and J. E. Ryu. 2004. Framing high performance and innovativeness in government: a review and assessment of Research." In Laurence E Lynn, Jr. and Patricia W. Ingraham, (Eds.), *Governance and Performance*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004: 20-46.
- Riccucci, N. 1995. *Unsung Heroes*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Taylor, J. 2008. Organizational influences, public service motivation and work outcomes: an Australian study. *International Public Management Journal*, 11(1):67-88.
- Vandenabeele, W. 2008a. Development of a public service motivation measurement scale: Corroborating and extending Perry's measurement instrument. *International Public Management Journal*, 11(1):143-167.
- Vandenabeele, W. 2008b. Demography, perception of public values and degree of publicness as antecedents and correlates of individual public service motivation in Flemish government. Paper presented at the workshop on Public Values and Public Interest - Normative Questions in the Evaluation and Development of the Public Sector Copenhagen, 28 - 31 May.
- Wright, B. E. 2008. Public service and motivation: Does mission matter? *Public Administration Review*, 67(1): 54-64.

## **Appendix**

### **Public Value Categories from Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007**

#### **1. Constellation 1: Values Associated With the Public Sector's Contribution to Society**

- Group 1: Common good, Public interest, Social cohesion
- Group 2: Altruism, Human dignity
- Group 3: Sustainability, Voice of the future
- Group 4: Regime dignity, Regime stability

#### **2. Constellation 2: Values Associated With Transformation of Interests to Decisions**

This group of values is predominantly associated with how opinions should be channeled from society into the public sector.

- Group 1: Majority rule, Democracy, Will of the people, Collective choice
- Group 2: User democracy, Local governance, Citizen involvement
- Group 3: Protection of minorities, Protection of individual rights

#### **3. Constellation 3: Values Associated With the Relationship Between the Public Administration and Politicians**

- Group 1: Political loyalty, Accountability, Responsiveness

#### **4. Constellation 4: Values Associated With the Relationship Between Public Administration and Its Environment**

- Group 1: Openness–secrecy, Responsiveness, Listening to public opinion
- Group 2: Advocacy–neutrality, Compromise, Balancing of interests
- Group 3: Competitiveness–cooperativeness, Stakeholder or shareholder value

#### **5. Constellation 5: Values Associated With Intra-organizational Aspects of Public Administration**

- Group 1: Robustness, Adaptability, Stability, Reliability, Timeliness
- Group 2: Innovation, Enthusiasm, Risk readiness
- Group 3: Productivity, Effectiveness, Parsimony, Business-like approach (typical NPM values)
- Group 4: Self-development of employees, Good working environment

#### **6. Constellation 6: Values Associated With the Behavior of Public-Sector Employees**

- Group 1: Accountability, Professionalism, Honesty, Moral standards, Ethical consciousness, Integrity

Values such as honesty, moral standards, and ethical consciousness are associated quite directly with the individual. It seems, however, that the central value in this group is integrity.

#### **7. Constellation 7: Values Associated With the Relationship Between Public Administration and the Citizens**

- Group 1: Legality, Protection of rights of the individual, Equal treatment, Rule of law, Justice
- Group 2: Equity, Reasonableness, Fairness, Professionalism
- Group 3: Dialogue, Responsiveness, User democracy, Citizen involvement, Citizen's self-development
- Group 4: User orientation, Timeliness, Friendliness