

MOTIVATING BUREAUCRATS: EVIDENCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

James L. Perry, Indiana University, Bloomington
Innovating Bureaucracy Conference, World Bank
November 8, 2017



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

PREVIEW

- Motivation challenges in government
- Infusion of research on public service and prosocial motivation and altruism
- Implications for developing countries

MOTIVATIONAL IMPERATIVES FOR EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Motivation: The forces that *energize, direct*
and *sustain* behaviors

Behaviors

- Membership
- Role compliance
- High performance



UNIQUE MOTIVATIONAL CHALLENGES IN GOVERNMENT

- Complexity of the motivational imperative for organizational effectiveness
- Principal-agent issues (Perry 1986)
- Goal ambiguity (Chun and Rainey 2005)
- Constraints of public institutions (Perry, Engbers and Jun 2009)



THE CASE OF PUBLIC MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES

- Jobs are more complex and uncertain than non-managerial jobs
- Task goals are therefore less specific and more difficult to monitor
- More difficult to develop complex contracts and incentivize them
- Goal displacement
- Intrinsic rewards crowded out by extrinsic rewards

INFUSION OF NEW RESEARCH SINCE 1990

- **Public Service Motivation (Perry & Wise, 1990)**
An individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations
- **Altruism (Frey 1997; Le Grand 2003)**
Motivations based on consideration of another's needs rather than one's own
- **Prosocial Motivation (Grant 2008)**
Desire to have a positive impact on other people, groups, and organizations



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

- Predisposition-opportunity theory (Knobe and Wright-Isak, 1982)
- Self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2004)
- Motivation-crowding theory (Frey, 1997)
- Institutions, public identity and self-regulation (Perry and Vandenabeele, 2008)



FIVE LESSONS FROM RESEARCH RESULTS

1. Select for high public service and prosocial motivation
2. Create a supportive work environment that models and reinforces public service and prosocial motivations
3. Leverage employee-service beneficiary ties
4. Provide opportunities for newcomers to learn public service values
5. Develop leaders who communicate and model public service values

(Christensen, Paarlberg & Perry 2017)



WHAT ARE PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPING MORE EVIDENCE?

- Better data and longitudinal, comparative research
- Research on multiple incentives/behaviors
- Experimental research
- Grounded research in different regimes and cultures

RESOURCES

Public Service Motivation Research Bibliography

<http://www.indiana.edu/~psm/home.php>

Communications: perry@indiana.edu