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## QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO PSM MEASUREMENT

### ATTRACTION TO PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO IMPROVEMENTS IN PSM MEASUREMENT

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This article presents improvements for the dimension of 'Attraction to Public Policy-making' within the Public Service Motivation measurement scale. The literature concerning the theory behind this and a large number of empirical studies point out the shortcomings of this dimension with regard to both the contents and the methodology employed. This article deals in depth with the aspect of 'Attraction to Public Policy-making' and, in contrast to the work carried out to date, tackles the open questions using a qualitative research strategy. The analysis of 21 partially structured interviews, which were conducted with administrative employees at the local government level, demonstrates that, while the empirical findings confirm the contents of the original dimension, the items selected for this in previous research are insufficient and can lead to measurement problems. This article suggests specific items for validation and improved measurement to be applied in future research. </abs>

## INTRODUCTION

The image of humankind as 'homo oeconomicus' as put forward by the rational choice theory in the 1960s set the stage for an image of public administration and employees in that sector that dominated discussion for many years. According to this image, people behave rationally and based on self-interest. This also applies to civil servants within the public administration who attempt to derive personal benefits from their working life, thereby losing sight of the objectives of the body politic, 'the State'. It was against the background of this one-sided view of the behavioural motivation of public sector employees that the research area 'Public Service Motivation' (PSM) developed in the 1980s. PSM research proceeds from the assumption that there are forms of motivation that are defined more by altruistic than self-serving motives and that these are found more often in the public sector than in the private sector (Horton 2008; Perry *et al.* 2010). Research by Rainey (1982), Kelman (1987) and Perry and Wise (1990) was seminal for this avenue of research.

In a simplified form, the work on PSM can be allocated to one of three branches of research. First, explanation and validation of the PSM construct (for example, Perry 1996, 1997, 2000; Brewer *et al.* 2000; Vandenabeele and Hondeghem 2005; Bright 2005, 2008; Coursey *et al.* 2008; Kim 2008; Perry *et al.* 2008). Secondly, integrating of PSM into other organization-dependent variables (for example, Crewson 1997; Alonso and Lewis 2001; Scott and Pandey 2005; Horton and Hondeghem 2006; Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006; Park and Rainey 2007; Moynihan 2008). And thirdly, PSM as a concept that can be applied in practice (for example, Le Grand 2006; Leisink and Steijn 2008; Paarlberg *et al.* 2008).

This paper provides a contribution towards the better understanding of PSM as a model, placing it in the first research area – 'creation and validation of the PSM construct'. Due to the call of several studies for a more valid sub-dimension covering the attraction to politics and policy-making this study uses a qualitative approach to create new directions for the sub-scale. In 1996, Perry developed a psychometric testing instrument for PSM (Perry 1996) and depicted 'Attraction to Public Policy-making' (APM) as a rational dimension, 'Commitment to

the Public Interest' as a normative dimension, 'Compassion' as an affective dimension and 'Self-Sacrifice', which Perry (1996) calls an independent dimension due to its historical connection with the perception of the public service. Although various adapted forms of the Perry's 24-item Likert scale measurement instrument has, in general, proved to be reliable and relevant for issues in PSM research (Coursey and Pandey 2007a; Coursey *et al.* 2008; Kim 2008; Vandenabeele 2008b; Wright 2008), several studies report either the conceptually underdeveloped or statistically not satisfactory corroborated dimension of APM within the PSM construct (Alonso and Lewis 2001; Bright 2007; Camilleri 2006b; Coursey and Pandey 2007a; Coursey *et al.* 2008; Kim 2008; Kim 2009; Perry 1996; Wright and Pandey 2008). The criticism relates to non appropriate measurement items, missing rational motives within PSM, low factor loadings and to the lack of a dimension discriminating attraction to policy-making, professional rule-making and administration versus the dislike of politicians, cynicism or negative affect towards politics (Perry 1996; Coursey *et al.* 2008; Kim 2008, 2009). All authors call for more valid measures of APM which overcome the shortcomings of the present scale. This is the starting point for the present article, which investigates the core of the APM dimension. Whereas several studies omitted APM as part of the PSM construct, this study wants to strengthen the importance of APM while shedding light on its contents and components. Policy-making and the political environment are inherent conditions of administrative behaviour. Therefore, the research questions of this article are as follows: First, to what extent is the measurement of APM applied in quantitative studies consistent with the contents identified in a qualitative inquiry? Second, are there other components of this dimension which are not covered in present research? Therefore, the goal of this article is to thoroughly identify APM's core contents and to develop measurement indicators for future quantitative research. As Wright (2008) demanded, we will explore the question of the possible content of an APM dimension in PSM research by using a qualitative research method. It is the first time that this has been done. In quantitative studies and in the psychometric literature there often is a lack of attention about item generation and the origin of questionnaire items are not relevant (Rowan and Wulff 2007). Qualitative studies are an appropriate method to develop a

scale in a first step which afterwards has to be quantitatively tested (Padgett 2008). Therefore, qualitative research can enhance the validity of the PSM concept and its inquiries in quantitative research. With this we want to make a vital contribution to the further development of the measurement construct PSM.

At the beginning, the article discusses the APM dimension and examines its content and existing measurement instruments critically. In the next section, the methodological approach as well as the data analysis of this study are explained. In the following section, the content characteristics of APM are analysed using a qualitative research method and, based on this, suggestions on how to develop the dimension APM within future PSM measurement are presented. The last part of the article features a discussion of the results and future research directions.

#### <A>CONTENT OF 'ATTRACTION TO PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING'

APM can be seen to be a fundamental component of PSM, since work in public organizations is set in a political environment (Rainey and Steinbauer 1999; Vandenabeele *et al.* 2006, 2008a). While other incentives – remuneration or working time models for instance – can be motivational factors for employees both in the public and in the private sector, involvement in the creation of public policy is an incentive largely confined to the public sector and therefore a unique trigger for employee motivation in public administration. Against the background of Weber's (1978) ideal type of bureaucracy, an understanding of public managers' role as neutral servants to the public without being involved in decision-making is changing in direction of a more partnership oriented role which motivates administrators due to the blending of politics and administration (Dunn and Legge Jr 2002). Nevertheless, APM as dimension also tackles the 'acceptance, or at least the desire for, the traditional "politics versus administration" dichotomy' (Coursey *et al.* 2008, p. 88).

Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) point out the altruistic component of PSM. But PSM is not determined solely by altruistic motives. Perry and Wise (1990, p. 368) make a distinction be-

tween rational, normative and affective motives and noticed that '[...] public service motivation is sometimes grounded in individual utility maximization'. Rational motives are based on a calculative, intellectual assessment of situations and consequent actions (Knoke and Wright-Isak 1982). Following Kelman (1987), Perry and Wise (1990, p. 368) see a specific rational employment benefit in the public sector first in the fact that for many 'participation in the process of policy formulation can be exciting, dramatic, and reinforcing of an individual's image of self importance.' Second, in accord with Downs (1966) they consider the possibility of being able to influence public policy and thereby facilitate the interest of a special group to be a central motive. Boosting self-esteem and exerting a targeted influence on the formulation of a policy for personal gain can be seen as rational motives which serve as selective incentives for public employees and these incentives motivate them more than other situations assessed by them (Knoke and Wright-Isak 1982; Perry and Wise 1990). This relates to Niskanen's (1971) economic perspective of self-interested behaviour of bureaucrats in contrast to the above mentioned Weberian view of public employees who are expected to be objective (Jensen *et al.* 2009). According to this view bureaucrats are primarily self-interested and the 'climbers' and 'conservers' of Down's (1966) well-know typology are the typical self-interested officials who seek status, power, income as well as their own security and convenience. These theoretical considerations are concretized by Perry (1996) in the rational dimension of 'Attraction to Public Policy-making'.

As a multifaceted term 'Attraction to Policy-making' is related to 'politics' and can be traced back to Aristotle (Leonhard 2007). The term 'politics' nowadays encompasses the two opposing common good-based (Aristotelian) and power-based (Machiavellian) understandings of politics (Steinmetz 2007). Perry (1996) tackles this twofold meaning in his measurement instrument. However, by defining APM as a rational dimension that maximizes personal gain, he emphasizes the power-based understanding. This notion is reinforced by the use of the term 'making' with its connotations of 'having an influence on'. This in turn relates to 'power' (Weber 1992). In this context, 'Attraction to Public Policy-making' comprises both the power-

related components of 'proximity to the political process' ('politics') and of 'participation in the process of policy formulation' ('public policy').

Perry (1996) further underlines the power-oriented element by the way he phrases the items used to measure APM. Politicians are generally considered to be focused on power. Studies on PSM and APM, however, generally discuss the motivation of public sector employees, not of politicians. Therefore, Kim (2008) proposes another element of the APM dimension which is based more on an affective than a rational motive due to its interpersonal and relational characteristics (Knoke and Wright-Isak 1982). He proceeds from the assumption that APM also appeals to people who see themselves as 'political' and who enjoy discussing politics. Work in the public administration, by means of its exclusive connection to 'politics' is well equipped to satisfy this interest whereas the original scale does not contain the aspect of sharing views on policy-making as a more developed element of interest. Vandenabeele and Van de Walle (2008) include this facet by integrating the extent of activity in social or political associations in their sub-dimension 'Policy and Politics'.

'Boosting self-esteem', 'pursuing personal goals', 'seeking power and influence', and 'having a say as a political person' are the pivotal motives of APM according to the literature. These mutually non-exclusive motives can be satisfied through various characteristics and context of public jobs like, for example, 'proximity to politicians', 'involvement in the design of policies', 'influencing the contents of policies', 'knowing the important politicians', 'opportunities to speak directly to and discuss with politicians', and 'politics and policy as important spheres that are discussed in daily life'. Summarizing the present literature, APM consists of a main motive which is satisfied by the exertion of influence on people, institutions and policies leading to a higher self-esteem, individual satisfaction and to the achievement of personal goals.

#### <A>MEASUREMENT OF 'ATTRACTION TO PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING'

Perry (1996) initially developed five items to measure APM, three of which proved statistically reliable in his evaluation **<table 1>**(see table 1). It is striking that in the statistical analysis of

the data collected from the original five items, of which two were formulated in a positive and three in a negative way, only the three negatively worded items could be confirmed.

Perry (1996) underlines the attitude to the political process, viz. 'politics', in the way he formulates the items PSM 11, 27 and 31 as incorporated into his measurement instrument.

Both PSM 11 and PSM 31 relate to attitude towards 'politics' and 'politicians' respectively.

The wording used in PSM 27 also emphasizes the political game. The emphasis in these items lies on the term 'making' in 'Attraction to Public Policy-making'. Thus, the proximity to power and the opportunity to influence the power process can act as incentives, the satisfaction of which boosts self-esteem.

As outlined above, the opportunity to become involved in the formulation of public policy also encompasses the opportunity to pursue concrete personal interests. If we follow Coursey and Pandey (2007a), in PSM 27 the emphasis is placed on the opportunity to influence the formulation of a policy. However, on account of the simultaneous inclusion of the political game ('the give and take') in the item, it can be questioned whether this emphasizes the opportunity to influence the political process in the sense of 'pursuing specific personal interest' (Scott and Pandey 2005) or in the sense of 'proximity to the power process' (Camilleri 2006a). PSM 27 rather features facets which induce either positive or negative feelings towards politics in general.

APM is the second least frequently examined dimension in the studies to date and has not been proved to be valid (Wright 2008). Perry et al. point this out: 'Also, in the few PSM confirmatory studies to date, this dimension [that is, APM] has not fared as well as others' (Perry *et al.* 2008, p. 450). The terms employed in Perry's (1996) items relating to APM are thus ambiguous and value-laden (Coursey and Pandey 2007a). As a result of these findings, Coursey and Pandey (2007a) emphasize the importance of the development of additional items, in order to be able to record this dimension better.

Besides the criticism about unsatisfactory wording and negative response reactions to the APM subscale, Kim (2009) shows in his Korean study the insufficient representation of APM within a PSM second-order construct due to very low loadings of APM compared to the other three PSM dimensions. Kim (2008, 2009) considers Perry's (1996) items relating to APM insufficient to render the rational dimension of PSM in Korea and calls for more valid measures which reflect '[...] participation in the process of policy formulation, commitment to a public program because of personal identification with it, and advocacy for special or private interests' (Kim 2008, p. 6). In his analysis he confirms the three APM items listed in **<table 2>**table 2 (Kim 2008, p. 6).

The translation of the items is a very important issue (Vandenabeele 2008b). Translations always – intentionally or unintentionally – incorporate culture-dependent connotations. In the case of literal translations in particular, the various connotations of the terms may not be sufficiently taken into account. Current international research, for instance, no longer refers to the rational dimension of PSM as 'Attraction to Public Policy-making', but instead chooses the wording 'Politics and Policy' (Vandenabeele and Van de Walle 2008: 228). This wording takes better account of the contents of a comprehensive APM dimension. It broadens the horizons of APM, while simultaneously restricting it by omitting the word 'attraction', an important element from the perspective of motivation theory (Schneider *et al.* 2001). Meanwhile, the term 'Interest in Politics and Policies' used by Vandenabeele (2008b) reflects the links with incentive and motivation better. This shows the extent to which APM can be described as a dimension within PSM that is still at the development stage.

#### **<A>QUALITATIVE STUDY TO RECORD 'ATTRACTION TO PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING'**

The content and origin of APM as a dimension of PSM has not reached a sufficient explanation and understanding in quantitative studies so far. Qualitative research allows a more in-depth and inner perspective of the object of interest than quantitative research and is especially suitable in order to 'discover rather than test variables' (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 12).



Item generation is often neglected in quantitative studies and in the psychometric literature.

'From a quantitative or statistical point-of-view, the origins of questionnaire items are not significant. The key is whether or not the items represent the construct or variable in question as measured by reliability and validity scores; not where the items came from' (Rowan and Wulff 2007, p. 450). But, as mentioned at the outset, several PSM researchers are concerned about the origin and content of APM. Therefore, the validity of the PSM concept and its inquiries in quantitative research can be enhanced by first being grounded in real life situations and observations through interviews from a broader perspective. Qualitative methods are essential to inform quantitative efforts in scale development and come before quantitative scale testing (Padgett 2008).

#### **<B>Methodological approach**

Based on the research interest of identification and categorization this study wants to discover regularities of elements of APM and can therefore be characterized as a type of research following grounded theory (Tesch 1990). The method of analysis chosen for this study was a hybrid approach of qualitative methods incorporating both a deductive a priori template of codes approach (Crabtree and Miller 1999) and a data-driven inductive approach (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Thus, in a first step, the general criteria for coding and categorization were defined in accordance with the results from literature analysis. In a second step, the data material was analysed and the template of codes of the first step was applied. In addition, new codes and categories were identified.

In contrast to the very controlled situation in surveys with standardized questionnaires, dialogic in-depth interviews were chosen. The semi-structured interviews were minimally guided by the interviewer using an interview guide with open-ended questions which underwent a pilot test with two interviewees. The interviewer introduced the study's categories and informational needs while letting the interviewees speak as freely as possible. The terms were to be given content not by the interviewer, but by the interviewee. This enables aspects to come

to the fore or leads to topics of interest that had not been considered so far (Maxwell 2005). At the early stages of scale development this serves as a vehicle to see if there are some yet unexplored or untapped areas of the topic in question [...] that could yield specific new items or entire new contexts for questions' (Rowan and Wulff 2007, p. 451).

The interviewees were selected in connection with a national science foundation research project about PSM in Switzerland. In the quantitative study 600 of the 3,754 respondents from Swiss local governments agreed to take part in an in-depth interview. As sampling strategy purposive sampling was used on the one hand, and theoretical sampling on the other hand (Padgett 2008). Purposive sampling looks for respondents who are able to provide the needed information. Therefore, the interview sample was selected from the quantitative survey population in order to prevent interviews with people with low levels of PSM because 'interviews that produce sketchy answers from disinterested respondents are poor substance for a study' (Padgett 2008, p. 53). Theoretical sampling as method of data collection is based on themes derived from data and allows to develop a dimension which responds to the data in an open and flexible way (Corbin and Strauss 2008). First, theoretical sampling was undertaken at the level of data collection; after each interview the interview guide was adapted to define the incidents that should be observed during the next step of data gathering. Second, at the level of data analysis, the researchers returned several times to previously analysed data and found new incidents which let them draw new insights about the dimension under study.

From the overall survey population, 24 people were selected and asked to give an interview. Of these, 21 employees from 15 local authorities agreed and were interviewed from May to July 2009 (see Appendix table A1). The collection and analysis of this amount of data lead to saturation of the investigated categories. In this study saturation was reached after no new data emerged and no new codes were developed as well as categories and subcategories were fleshed out. Because description and interpretation rather than theory building was the goal of this study the delineation of relationships between different theoretical concepts was not used as a criteria of saturation (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

All interviews were conducted by the same person, recorded digitally, transcribed word by word, and given to the interviewees for feedback on the recording so that descriptive and interpretive validity could be ensured. Peer reviewing and peer debriefing after a set of interviews and parallel data analysis by a second researcher provided reflexivity as well as descriptive and interpretive validity. Interpretive validity was further enhanced by using verbatim quotes as lowest inference descriptors in the results section (Johnson 1997).

### <B>Analysis of interviews

In order to analyse the rich volume of data (312 pages of transcription), each interview was fully reviewed statement by statement at least twice and the statements were coded in order to describe and dimensionalize the properties of each category. Repeated readings of the coded transcripts lead to changes and verification of the a priori template of codes and to further selection and synthesis of the categories developed. A system of codes and categories, however, simplifies reality. Codes and categories are created and sections of text allocated on the basis of the author's decisions. Therefore, in order to achieve a higher level of intersubjective verifiability, the creation of the APM categories is also based on the pivotal motives of APM which were identified in the literature analysis. In a first step of the categorization process, three general categories were created which cover all motivation related topics reported by the interviewees (see Appendix table A2): M-categories examine what constitutes motivation in the workplace, P-categories focus on the understanding of politics and policy-making, and APM-categories explore links between motivation and politics as well as policy-making. In a second step of categorization the system of categories had to be refined by defining and allocating sub-categories to reduce the material to what was really important. Therefore, the creation of the APM sub-categories is based on the motives identified in the literature analysis: 'boosting self-esteem', 'seeking power and influence', 'pursuing personal goals', and 'having a say as a political person'. Four main sub-categories resulted at the end of the analysis based on this a priori approach and the inductive approach covering the rele-

vant contents reported by the interviewees: 'Boosting self-esteem' and 'seeking power and influence' were transformed into two new categories 'dealing with political rationality' and 'participation in policy-making'. The need to have a say as political person was reformulated into the third category 'political interest'. The fourth category 'pursuing personal goals' was maintained as identified in the literature.

Several items were deduced at the end of each category to condense the core statements of our analysis. The intention behind this was to illustrate the many facets in terms of the contents of this dimension. Further, the qualitative process selected here facilitates a more reliable recording and validation of APM in future quantitative studies. Against the backdrop of the Perry's (1996) 24-items-scale, the large number of suggested indicators does not intend to enlarge the original scale and also not to further differentiate the APM dimension. They merely pick up on the various facets of the contents and they are intended to help develop an internally more consistent APM dimension. However, to this end, statistical analysis using a large number of items is necessary as an interim step in order to be able to validate both the APM dimension and the PSM construct as a whole. The section on results that follows summarizes the texts that were analysed, exemplifies the results with verbatim quotes, and suggests new measurement items.

## <A>FINDINGS

Since the volume of data to be processed was extremely large, the following chapter will focus primarily on the results pertaining to APM, which are of primary interest in this article. Only the most relevant results relating to M- and P-categories, which actually only concern the M-category, will be summarized briefly at the start.

### <B>M-categories

It is striking that the respondents named first only aspects based in the work itself as general motivational factors. This can be clearly seen in a statement by a senior executive:

<ext>Basically, my work motivates me. In my opinion, working in administration, you have to be able to identify with your work to some degree. If you are doing work that you don't enjoy, you are unlikely to have much personal motivation [...]. (Male, senior executive, management) </ext>

<FL>Examined in more detail, the main motivational factors include new challenges, the opportunity to take on responsibility, being able to exercise discretion, having influence, successfully completing work and receiving positive feedback for that work from internal (colleagues, superiors) or external players (clients, partners) and working in a team. Conditions of work environment (clear structures, remuneration, models of working hours) are only cited by some as additional, secondary motivational factors in addition to other statements in the aforementioned categories.

Only two factors among all of the motivating factors relate to politics and policy-making or specifically to the current positive collaboration with government politicians. This must be emphasized also because these kinds of aspects are mentioned more often among the demotivating factors. Thus, APM is almost never spontaneously cited as a primary motivating factor.

However, the influence of 'politics', in contrast to the motivating factors, becomes clear when interviewees talked about demotivating situations. Demotivating factors are the flip-side of motivating factors, such as unjustified criticism, for example, lack of interest in specialized knowledge of administrative staff or lack of scope for discretion. (Lack of) extrinsic incentives are completely absent in this list. Disproportionate amounts of administrative work made necessary by political moves, lack of recognition for expert knowledge within policy-making, or the administration being used as a 'pawn' of 'political interests' were cited as other main factors.

#### <B>APM categories

The discussion of the analysis of the statements regarding APM will be carried out in line with the four categories described in the section 'analysis of interviews'.

### <C>Dealing with political rationality

This category looks at the proximity to politics and to politicians' way of thinking and behaving as a motivating factor which influences administrative employees' motivation, both positively and negatively. Regarding politics, some interviewees spontaneously find the insight into political goings-on and the resulting challenges to be motivating, while others are positively influenced by the opportunity to be involved in the design of policies, particularly when they gain obvious recognition for this from the politicians. The flip-side of this is that it is demotivating if the professional skills of the administration are not sufficiently acknowledged in the political process. For one employee in social services this would even, if it went on for too long, constitute grounds for resignation:

<ext>There have been times when I felt like my opinion wasn't respected at all. In the long term, that would be grounds to hand in my resignation. (Female, employee, implementation of policy) </ext>

<NP>The cumbersome nature of politics, 'the difficulties in implementing changes', the large amount of administration involved which are triggered by political action ('red tape') and the all-too-frequent failure on the part of politicians to appreciate the administration can all have a demotivating effect. For the most part, however, the proximity to politics is part of the system administrators see their work is placed in and it affects their motivation as much as another superstructure would, as the following quote points out:

<ext>In my case at least the demotivating facts in particular, as well as the motivating facts, do not lie in politics itself. It is, so to speak, the incidental superstructure or substructure, however you want to look at it, which does not have that much direct influence. If it weren't politics, it would be some other body that I cannot directly control making decisions that please me or not, depending on the case. I have the feeling that wouldn't really change anything. (Male, executive staff, Internal Service Provision) </ext>

<NP>If one examines the influence of politicians on the interviewees' motivation, again, the demotivating factors are cited more often than the motivating factors. From the point of view of the interviewees, politicians are caught in a conflict between representing the public good, the interests of the party to which they belong and their personal goals. For the most part, the statements about political rationality are critical but express the need to be able to deal with it, as the following example shows:

<ext>I have to be able to get along with the politicians, I have to be able to understand, [...] One can't take the things they decide [...] too personally, because often these are purely political decisions. For myself, I could never be a politician. [...] I would find it difficult to deal with manipulation, if I couldn't say what my fundamental belief is. (Female, senior executive, management) </ext>

<FL>Working directly with the current superior politician is stated to be a motivating factor. It is also considered to be motivating if one's own idea is implemented, even if it is later passed off as the executive's idea. Through this proximity to the politicians, the people who 'exert influence', a person feels like they have their 'finger on the pulse of what is happening'.

The cumbersome nature and the indecisiveness of politicians, which inhibits the innovative powers of the administration, meanwhile, are perceived as demotivating factors. Coupled with the image attributed by politicians to administrative employees as being all 'fuddy-duddies', this can, at times, considerably deflate motivation. Administrative employees would like politicians to show an interest in and acknowledge their expert knowledge. Distrust and pedantic checks by the politicians *vis-à-vis* the administration are also counterproductive.

<C>Measurement items for 'dealing with political rationality'

With regard to dealing with politics and politicians interviewees were either attracted or repelled by political rationality. An increase in motivation or higher self-esteem results primarily from how administrative employees deal with the conflict between professional rationality and political rationality, how their proximity to politicians and politics makes work exciting, and

how much administrators can support politicians with their expert knowledge. Thus, the suggested items are:

<list>

1. My work is very exciting because I have my fingers on the pulse of what is happening in politics.
2. Although rationalities of politicians and administrators are different I can understand the way politicians think.
3. It frustrates me when politicians fail to take into account my expert knowledge because of political considerations. (Reversed)
4. I find it satisfying to be able to support politicians with my expertise. </list>

#### <C>Participation in policy-making

All respondents reported in one way or another to have an influence on the policy process. This influence is perceived as being more or less extensive depending on position and department. The management staff, whose day-to-day work involves a great deal of policy planning, experience a different reality from those working in policy implementation. Furthermore, employees in management roles were more likely to think about distinguishing their role from that of the politicians. The work of policy planning for them entails, 'not overstepping the boundary' and loyally following the views of members of the official body, while at the same time 'not allowing the official body to run headlong into disaster'. The administration designs policies, but does not itself decide about it.

It is very important to those interviewed that they are able to contribute their expert knowledge to the improvement of policy-making. Furthermore, they want to be recognized 'as competent discussion partners'. In this context the contrast between political rationality and the expert knowledge of the administration is frequently cited. Some of the interviewees have developed specific methods of bringing their expert view closer to the politicians without



overstepping the boundaries. They try to 'think like' their superior and to provide alternatives; in addition to 'expert knowledge', a special 'style of communication' and 'persistence' are necessary if someone wants to have influence.

<ext>

I am happy to take a stance and to justify it. . . I enjoy that. That means one always has to make a distinction between the expert opinion and one's own personal opinion and the political opinion. In some cases, these might be three completely different opinions. In that case, one has to put one's personal opinion to one side, put forward the expert opinion and one can outline the political opinion and then say to the politician: you say what you would like [...] I try to outline the facts in various phases and then say to my superior, now you have to tell me politically how you would like it to be worded. Because he can say which political direction it is to take and then I write it.

(Female, executive staff, policy planning) </ext>

<FL>It takes understanding and tactics, since politicians decide according to their own priorities and not necessarily in accordance with the expert knowledge of the administrative employees, and this can even go so far that the administrative experts have to remind the politicians of the legal boundaries of their intended action.

Being able to structure political transactions is one of several factors, an interesting supplement to daily work which ultimately is motivating if the employee's suggestions are accepted or had an impact in the long run.

<ext>Being able to have influence within policy-making is a motivating factor, or at least having experienced that it has worked this way in the past. And the fact that you can make a difference and implement something is clearly a major motivational factor. It is not the main motivation for my work, but it is a motivational factor nonetheless.

(Male, executive position, policy implementation) </ext>

<NP>However, the opportunity to play an active role in policy-making was a reason for selecting their current position for only two persons working in social services. For some of the others it either came as a surprise or did not influence their job decision. While the participation in policy-making grew more attractive for some over time, for others it continues to be of little importance.

<C>Measurement items for 'participation in policy-making'

The analysis shows that the participation in the formulation and implementation of issue-related policy and being able to use one's own expertise to make policies more effective in the long run is a substantial element of APM. Moreover, having an influence results from the ability to bring one's knowledge into the policy process and shows the power to participate in policy-making. The items consciously avoid the words 'politics' or 'politician'. The respondents should focus on their opinion regarding the processing of substantive political transactions ('policies'). The following items are suggested for future measurement:

<list>

1. I know what it takes to bring my expert view into the policy process.
2. It is very important to me to see that the policy I have been involved in is effective in the long run.
3. It makes me happy when my ideas are taken into account in public policy-making. </list>

<C>Political interest

The administrative employees interviewed displayed varying degrees of interest in politics and policy-making but the need to have a say as a political person is observed to be a typical facet of motivation. While for some their political involvement was limited more or less to taking part in votes, others considered an interest in politics and policy-making to be a prerequisite of their profession. But political interest is not synonymous with active (party-) political

involvement. Some of the interviewees rejected personal political activity in parallel to their administrative work, despite the fact that – as a female manager put it – it would by all means be appealing to be able to actually take decisions, rather than just prepare them. For others, political involvement is by all means conceivable and can be reconciled with their professional work. However, here, too, professional rationality and the feeling of having to be neutral are again in opposition to political rationality and often inhibit political activity outside of the workplace.

<ext>I really don't want to be unable to take up left-wing issues, just because I happen to be in the right-wing, and vice versa [...]. (Male, senior executive, management)

</ext>

<NP>Political discussion in the workplace sometimes occurs in an institutionalized manner, as elements of the culture, and sometimes by chance. According to their staff, management has a lot of control here and can involve their staff in discussions. These political discussions and arguments are not, however, as important to everyone as to the following interviewee:

<ext>I enjoy discussing political subjects, it is important to me and I find it exciting. It enables you to hear the opinions of those people you hadn't taken into account, which is very valuable. In principle, I think it is a positive thing if as many people as possible discuss politics and policies, after all, we work in a political environment. We have to know what's going on, which issues are important and which are less important [...].

(Male, executive, internal service provision) </ext>

<FL>Political discussions are more important to those closer to politics or those who are involved in designing policy ('we work in a political environment, we have to know what's going on') than for those who are farther removed from the process ('there really isn't terribly much discussion').

The interviewees did not agree as to whether their own political beliefs should colour their work. For a few it is motivating, indeed, it is a *conditio sine qua non* ('I wouldn't be me, if I

had to stifle that'), the others set aside their personal beliefs in the interests of loyalty to the system and their superiors.

<ext>Of course, if I have to prepare something for the local council, I have to distance myself from my own personal opinion. Then, I have to clearly evaluate the direction our local council might take. In that regard, I really need to have a split personality.

(Female, senior executive, management) </ext>

<FL>It is more important to employees that their professional input rather than their political opinion is heard ('I can't politically manipulate a technical system'). One senior staff member, himself a member of a political party, even thought it would be 'unprofessional and unethical' if his political opinion were to affect his work. In his opinion, it is not important that one's political opinion be supported by one's (political) superior, since this could lead to 'friction' or even 'lead to conflict'.

The statements described here, in summary, lead to the assumption that administrative employees developed a basic interest in politics and policy-making and that there is a desire to be able to have a say as a political person, but this is perceived differently in day-to-day working life depending on the position. Generally, there are many doors open to those who wish to be politically active outside of the administrative body. However, based on the interviews, personal political opinion does not dominate daily work. As a rule, administrative employees see their professional role as separate from their political opinion. They are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of this and a clear awareness of their role makes their daily work easier.

<C>Measurement items for 'political interest'

In order to record this motivational facet, the items must be tailored to reflect the corresponding communication behaviour and the political interests to which this is linked. This is connected to the desire of politically interested individuals that their political beliefs be reflected in their professional activity. Thus, the items record a multi-layered image of political interests that appeals to the interviewees both as private individuals and as professionals:

<list>

1. It is important to me that I can discuss political issues with others in the work-place.
2. I enjoy having political discussions in my private life.
3. It is important to me that I am abreast of the latest political developments at all times.
4. Having a personal opinion on political issues is very important to me, but it has to be clearly separated from my work as a public employee.
5. It is important to me that my work reflects my political beliefs. </list>

#### <C>Pursuing personal goals

Interviewees did not bring up this topic by themselves. In order not to embarrass anyone, the issue of whether employees achieved or hoped to achieve personal advantages through the design of policies or through their proximity to politicians, had to be introduced indirectly. This was achieved by asking questions about the pursuit of personal goals through other people or colleagues. Several of the interviewees could easily imagine politicians striving to achieve personal gain; with regard to administrative employees, however, this issue often triggered irritation. For some, the achievement of personal goals by influencing policies or politicians would contradict their ethical beliefs. By means of an example, here is a quote from a manager active in the sphere of policy planning.

<ext>[...] I think I can make a clear distinction and set boundaries. But I do think, well I know my employees, and I think you can control it somewhat [...] I mean, my working ethic is for that not to happen. [...] But the influence of the administration, particularly on weak politicians, can of course be huge. (Male, senior executive, management) </ext>

<FL>While this issue went too far for some, others could easily imagine that administrative employees also derive personal gain from their job. Some gave specific examples, while others could only speculate. One concrete example given was that, through their proximity to politicians, administrative employees can build a network and gain knowledge that can be advantageous when planning their own (political or professional) career. An employee in the field of social services was also said to use her network to gain approval for her professional concerns. It was also by all means conceivable, in the construction sector for instance, in road planning or in the development of childcare services. However, the irritation was big and the strong commitment to a bureaucratic work ethos which highly values democratic governance principles shows the respondents' sensitivity to the legitimate role of public employment, like in the following statement:

<ext>Regarding traffic issues in a neighbourhood where I know the people very well [...] they often say I should support them. Then you have to decide by yourself if you lean too far [...] Do I participate or not [...] No, that's going too far for me, I want to separate this issues clearly and stay clean. (Male, executive position, policy implementation) </ext>

#### <C>Measurement items for 'pursuing personal goals'

Work in the field of politics may become motivating because it can be used to pursue personal goals. Although this issue met with resistance from the interviewees, several examples were given that proximity to politicians can lead to individual gain. However, to pursue personal goals is not at the fore and even more there is a high commitment to legitimate administrative processes based on public service principles. Possible items for this category are:

<list>

1. I don't mind if administrative employees use their relationship with politicians for their own career.
2. It is important to me that my personal view has an influence on policy-making.

3. I am very concerned that my personal interests are clearly separated from my work. (Reversed)
4. For me it is of major concern not to overstep any boundary of my task and duties. (Reversed) </list>

## <A>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By linking theory and practice, this paper has discussed a range of suggestions as to how APM as a dimension of PSM could be made more reliable for future research. To this end, statements from 21 people recorded in in-depth interviews were used and interpreted to further develop quantitative measurement of APM.

Before summarizing the results of this study the limitations have to be discussed. The preceding conclusions are based on the database of 21 interviews, which were limited to the administrative level of local government. Accordingly, caution must be used when generalizing the results. On the one hand, it cannot without further ado be assumed that APM will be the same at all levels of government or in specific public organizations like, for example, public schools or hospitals. On the other hand, Switzerland's distinct form of direct democracy and its inherent educational effect on participation in political life and on political attitudes might have an influence on employees' APM. While Crewson (1997) found in his study that policy attitudes in general have no significant impact on PSM, Perry (1997) showed that political ideology has an impact on APM. But according to the study of Ritz and Brewer (2010) the intense political socialization of citizens within a direct-democratic context might affect the level of APM rather than its content. However, 'sample-to-population' statements are not possible in qualitative research and 'generalizability is the purpose of quantitative, not qualitative research' (Newman and Benz 1998: 54). But regarding the criteria of applicability and context limit for our sample a comparable historically developed legal and socio-cultural background of public administrative bodies can generally be assumed for Switzerland. Furthermore, at least at the local level the sample should be comparable to public organizations

in other nations. From a methodological perspective the selection of the interviewees in advance constrains theoretical sampling at the stage of data collection because the sample could not be changed or expanded on an inductive basis. However, theoretical sampling was still possible at this stage although it is done within data analysis (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

Generally, the qualitative study confirmed the APM factors developed by Perry (1996). The participation in the process of policy formulation is a reinforcing factor of an individual's self-esteem. And being able to influence public policy is a central motive within APM. But the analysis showed less evidence that APM is a dramatic motivation factor or that a public employee uses his or her role to facilitate the interest of a special group. APM is mainly determined by proximity to policy-making and administrators' way of dealing with political rationality, by co-operation with politicians, by using expert knowledge to improve the political process and policies, by having a say as a political person and by personal political interest. The typical rational component of APM of achieving personal goals also showed to be a facet of the dimension. However, a strong commitment to a bureaucratic work ethos, which highly values democratic governance principles, prevents misuse of an administrators' role and shows a general understanding of a dichotomy which interviewees believe not only to apply to politics and administration, but also to policy and administration.

This study shows that APM is not the dominant motivating factor when public employees are asked about their work motivation. The work itself or factors of an individual's very close work environment like new job challenges, taking on responsibility, and feedback from the immediate work team is predominant. This result supports other research which shows that motivation is strongly enhanced by factors that are directly related to the employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities or the internal social structure among co-workers (Combs *et al.* 2006).

While originally the rational and self-interest oriented side of PSM was emphasized using the dimension of APM, we assume on the basis of our results, that the original items selected by Perry (1996) do not reflect a rational motive, but rather are capable of triggering an affective



response reaction. While a theoretical view can lead to the conclusion that APM as a rational dimension is needed to fit PSM into the three-dimensional classification of motives of Knoke and Wright-Isak (1982) (Coursey and Pandey 2007b), this inductive empirical approach sheds light on a facet of APM which is perhaps more at the fore of administrators' daily work. The desire to influence policy-making and politics based on expert knowledge and not wanting to overstep the boundaries of tasks and duties is more relevant than to obtain some form of personal gain. Thus, APM might also reflect normative (e.g. separation of role and personal interest) and affective (e.g. enjoyment of discussions about politics) motives. This supports other research doubting the rational choice interpretation of bureaucrat's primary behaviour (Brewer 2003; Jensen *et al.* 2009; Kim 2009). Therefore, we conclude that the rational, self-oriented motive is not the primary content of APM of typical public employees working at the local level in Switzerland. However, it cannot be excluded that there are public employees who seek to rationally influence policy-making in a self-oriented way.

In contrast to the importance of APM as a factor that attracts people to work in public administration (Perry and Wise 1990), these results show that administrative employees were less attracted by politics or policy-making at the time they chose the profession. This is not to say that there are not some people who choose to pursue a profession in the administration because of its proximity to politics or due to interest in public policies, but several statements suggested that people chose their current position for very different reasons and that the 'attraction to public policy-making' developed over time. The assumption that APM could be a motivational factor developing over the years – particularly for people who have little personal interest in politics – would thus also be an interesting area to explore and the results could even be used to benefit human resource management in public organizations. This raises the interesting research avenue of the internal dynamics within APM and within the dimensionality of the PSM construct which has not been investigated yet. The data of this study cannot provide evidence of these questions because there were no incidents concerning temporal priority of the motives investigated. However, it appears to be beyond dispute that people who work in the public sector are primarily motivated by more general job characteris-

tics and the close work environment as mentioned above. Depending on the individual's position these factors vary, but overall the employees interviewed need scope for individual discretion. In administrative work this is manifested as the opportunity to design and implement policy, which is also likely to appeal to the employees' political interests, as proven at various junctures and substantiated by the category of political interest.

Against this background this study shows the importance of professional knowledge, individual discretion as well as individual ideas for policy development. While Kim (2008) accentuates the interest in influencing policies for the benefit of others and sharing views on policies our study adds the importance of exerting influence and dealing with politics based on professional knowledge. Thus, professional norms resulting from an institutionalized ethic (Roberts and Dietrich 1999) or at least some degree of professional identification with one's own job can be seen as a main driver for public employees' motivation. These results contribute to the open research question about the relationships between PSM and professionalism which has not been analysed yet (Andersen 2009).

Finally, let us return to the description of the dimension under examination. As this analysis shows, the basic direction of APM is covered in terms of its contents. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that the political interest and in particular the proximity to politics is barely expressed in the selected term. These factors play an important role for the motivation of administrative employees and they gain significance during the course of socialization in public organizations. Following Vandenabeele (2008b) the expanded contents of the dimension describes a 'Interest in Politics and Policy' corresponds better with our results. The word 'attraction' places more emphasis on the importance of the appeal to the individual and, thus, to personal gain. However, our results show that APM does not have a high impact on choice of employment of most public employees and the attraction of working within a political environment usually develops over time. This study concludes that the term 'Interest in Politics and Public Policy-making' best reflects the contents of this dimension of PSM as identified in our study because it stresses both the interest in politics as well as the influence on policies and politics exemplified by the term 'making'.

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