

The Motivational Patterns of Civil Servants

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Motivation is believed to be one of the most important variables in contemporary human resource management, both in the private and the public sector. In this paper we try to give a review of different theories of work motivation. We also provide empirical testing for the hypotheses which can be derived from these theories. The data for these tests are based on two surveys concerning motivational factors in the Belgian public sector. These data have been collected by researchers at the Public Management Institute of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven over the past ten years.

Raktažodžiai: *motyvacija, motyvacijos veiksniai, valstybės tarnyba, valstybės tarnybos motyvacija.*
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Introduction

Motivation has always been an essential factor in managing personnel. It is a crucial variable in creating a high performance organization. Both private and public sector scholars are convinced of this relationship [1; 2; 3; 4]. Therefore, motivation has become one of the big questions in public administration [5], as it already has been for a long time in private sector management [6].

However, the attention devoted to this big question of motivation brought forth little public administration research [7]. Contrary to research of private sector management, public administration research has largely ignored motivation as a topic. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the bulk of our knowledge concerning moti-

vation in the public sector is in fact theories that originate from private sector management research.

This interdisciplinary approach of borrowing theoretical insights from neighbouring scientific domains should not pose much problems in itself, as it is commonplace in scientific research. However, these theories of private sector motivation fail to recognize the particularities of the public sector [8]. Because of this, we should apply these theoretical insights with great care in a public administration setting. After all, the lack of empirical testing might cast doubt over the suggested relations. Furthermore, the literature suggests that public servants are less motivated by private sector incentives such as pay and promotion [9]. This leads some practitioners to voice concern over the application of these techniques within the public sector.

For these reasons, further research on the motivational patterns of civil servants is imperative. This need for research leads us towards our first research question: to what extent are private sector patterns of motivation, that are so widely referred to in daily life, valid within a public sector environment? Our second research question goes beyond private sector management theories: which motivational factors are specific for the public sector? By combining both questions, we would like to get an overview of motivational patterns of civil servants, without claiming to be exhaustive in any way.

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1. Data and Methodology

1.1. Data Collection

To answer our research questions, two sets of empirical data will be used. Together these datasets constitute the result of ten years of research on motivation of civil servants. They give an overview of the motivational studies that we have conducted so far.

First, in the period 1993-1995 a research was performed on motivational factors within the Belgian ministry of finance [10]. This study was focused on general motivational patterns and was theoretically based on general theories of work motivation. Only little attention was devoted to specific public administration issues. It was a postal survey oriented towards a sample of 1565 civil servants of all levels. In the end, 1158 respondents returned their questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 74 %.

Second, in 2002 a websurvey was conducted with 1714 final year students participating in a whole range of masters' programs at four universities and five colleges situated in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium [11]. The survey intended to describe the attractiveness of the civil service as an employer. Every student that was eligible at that time was contacted, but as we have no exact student numbers, no exact response rate can be given.

In both studies, respondents were asked to fill out questionnaire items that reflected their attitudes towards work and government as an employer. Therefore, although the latter study was initially oriented towards employer attractiveness and there is an obvious variation in the questions, comparing between the different studies should be done with great caution. Nevertheless, we contend that data of both surveys have the same focus.

1.2. Statistical Methodology

The main statistical methodology that we use to test our hypotheses is multiple regression analysis¹⁹. This technique enables us to assess whether there are causal relationships between several independent variables and a single dependent variable [12]. This will result in a regression equation $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \varepsilon$, where Y is the dependent variable and every X is an independent variable, with β its parameter estimate and ε an error term. In our analysis, this β parameter estimate is the unstandardized coefficient b [13].

¹⁹ When interpreting the analysis, statistical significance is shown by means of an asterisk coding: '*' denotes a 1 significance, '**' denotes a .01 significance and '***' denotes < .001 significance.

In order to apply multiple regression analysis, all variables concerned should be metric. However, it is common practice to do regression analysis on ordinal variables. This practice is legitimized by assuming that the ordinal values de facto are on an interval base, meaning that the distance between the subsequent values is more or less equal. Whether or not this reasoning is applicable, depends on the response scale. For the surveys and response scale we use in this article, we contend that this is the case for every variable. Therefore, it is justified to use metric regression on our originally ordinal data.

However, in a number of cases, nominal variables are used in a multiple regression. In order to assess the effect of nominal variables, dummy variables provide a solution. Nominal variables are coded in quantitative terms and entered into the regression equation [14]. When interpreting this equation, one should be aware of the fact that there are nominal variables present.

Our collection of data sets consists of several hundred variables. As some of them measure the same concept, we are able to construct scales to measure these concepts. This increases the reliability of our measurements. However, in order to construct a reliable and valid scale, there has to be a certain amount of correlation between the individual variables. The most widely used measure of scale reliability is Cronbach's alpha [15]. In order to be reliable, a scale should yield an alpha coefficient of .6 or more [16]. Analysis shows that every scale that is used in this article well exceeds this lower boundary.

Our independent variables consist of scales or individual variables, depending on which hypothesis is being tested. Therefore, there is a wide variety in the independent variables that are being used. However, as we study the effect of motivational factors on the motivation of civil servants, we only use a few variables as dependent variables. In every case, these are measures of motivation, which we define as that which "energizes, directs and sustains behaviour" [17, p. 89]. Because motivation is a hypothetical variable [17, 18], it is very difficult to measure motivation directly. Therefore, in most cases, we use a scale of motivation, which measures motivation indirectly. However, in some cases, we use a proxy for motivation (usually some kind of organizational behaviour) instead of a variable that measures motivation indirectly. This practice is commonplace in management research [19; 20]. For an analysis of data from the 2002 survey, our dependent variable is a single variable proxy for

motivation. Whenever the 1993-1995 data set is used, our dependent variable is a more elaborate scale of employee motivation, constructed from a set of motivation proxies.

2. Theory on Work Motivation, Analysis and Results

Numerous researchers have tried to untangle the questions concerning work motivation. Already in early management research, around the beginning of the 20th century, work motivation was an important aspect of management theory. Frederick W. Taylor argued that simplified, specialized tasks and monetary rewards were prime motivators for employees [2; 21]. Other theories on work motivation were developed in the years to follow. This resulted in an extensive body of research on work motivation, each with its own theoretical insights and focus, although focused mainly on a private sector environment.

In these developments, we discover two different approaches. First, there are ‘need theories’ [2] that Rainey describes. Need theories or content theories are concerned with the particular needs, motives or rewards that affect motivation. They are opposed to process theories, which are more concerned with the psychological process behind motivation. However, in our review we will only focus on need or content theories, because we would like to describe motivational factors and not so much motivational processes. Therefore, we will not discuss process theories.

2.1. Job Characteristics

Job characteristics are an important element of employee motivation. Scott and Cummings [22] predicted that significant behavioural consequences may be attributable to variations in task design. Later, Perry and Porter [17] suggested that the nature of a job can influence work motivation.

However, the most coherent theory of job design is the Job Characteristics Model of Hackman and Oldham [23]. They contend that employees are motivated whenever the following critical psychological states are present: meaningfulness of work, responsibility for the work outcomes and knowledge of the results. These critical psychological states depend on the job characteristics. Meaningfulness of work would occur whenever a task demands a variety of skills, has a certain coherent identity and is significant to others as it has an impact on their work or lives. The state of responsibility depends on the degree of autonomy and employee experiences. Knowledge of the result is related to the feedback one receives.

In line with the theory of Hackman and Oldham, we formulate the following hypotheses:

- H1a: High levels of task variety, task identity and task significance will cause a high level of employee motivation, through a critical psychological state of meaningfulness of the work;
- H1b: A high degree of autonomy will cause high employee motivation, through a critical psychological state of responsibility for the work outcomes;
- H1c: A high degree of feedback will cause high employee motivation, through the critical state of knowledge of the results.

To test these hypotheses, we can use our data from the 1993-1995 survey and apply regression analysis to it. For each hypothesis, we develop a new model. For each model, our scale of motivation is the dependent variable. The independent variables are operationalized by different sets of scales and individual variables (Table 1).

Table 1. Motivational impact of job characteristics

Model 1a			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Task variety	.201	.023	8.83 ***
Task identity	.013	.179	.74
Task significance	.194	.024	8.09 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.2186	
	Adj. R ²	.2165	
Model 1b			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Degree of autonomy	.180	.020	9.10 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.0674	
	Adj. R ²	.0666	
Model 1c			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Feedback from job	.260	.021	12.1 ***
Feedback from colleagues	-.009	.0158	-.56
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.1308	
	Adj. R ²	.1292	

Overall, all three hypothesis are corroborated. With two exceptions, we can observe that every variable has a significant positive impact on the motivation of individual civil servants.

A first exception is task identity. Although this scale has been translated from the Job Diagnostic Survey from Hackman and Oldham, we should ask ourselves whether it has been adequately translated. Another possible explanation for the non-significant regression could be that it is very difficult to obtain a high level of task identity within a bureaucratic environment, where division of labour is a common practice. Therefore, even when people score high on task identity, the actual degree of task identity in a bureaucracy would be very low, compared to other environments.

A second scale that has been falsified as a motivational factor is feedback from colleagues. Contrary to the other variables, this is a single item variable: only one question was asked. However, there could be other elements of feedback from colleagues that were not measured. Combined with the negative phrasing, this could have influenced the responses by not measuring a general response pattern. However, as it was adapted from the Hackman and Olham scales, this is a puzzling observation.

2.2. Organizational Structure

Next to job characteristics, organizational elements play also an important role in determining employee motivation. Organizational structure, and especially the presence of a bureaucratic structure, is said to be one of the crucial factors of employee motivation and task performance. Early management researchers already stated bureaucracy to have a negative impact on motivation [24].

The Aston studies, conducted by Pugh and his associates, describe organizations by two dimensions of organizational structure: 'structuring of activities' and 'concentration of authority' [25]. 'Structuring of activities' refers to the specialization, standardization and formalization of tasks within the organization. An organization with highly structured activities has many specialized sections which have many routine procedures. 'Concentration of authority' refers to the centralization of decision making and the degree of autonomy within the organization. When authority is concentrated, many decisions are taken at the top level of the organization or even outside the organization (in the case of divisions of multinationals or politically directed bureaucracies). Based on these two dimensions, Pugh and others develop a typology of bureaucracies.

Research suggests that both dimensions of this bureaucratic structure have an influence on the motivation and performance of employees. Scott, Mitchell and Birnbaum [26] contend that employees in a highly structured environment are less motivated

than employees in an environment that is less structured. Next to this, Cummings and Berger [27] found decentralization to relate with increased performance and decreased alienation.

Although the research evidence is circumstantial and scarce, we state the following hypotheses concerning organizational structure and motivation:

- H2a: A highly structured set of activities leads to a decrease in employee motivation;
- H2b: A high concentration of authority leads to a decrease in employee motivation.

To test our hypotheses, we have again developed different models. Model 2a tests the impact of 'structuring of activities' on motivation, whereas model 2b assesses the impact of 'concentration of authority'. The independent variables of model 2a are a measure of routine, a measure of fixedness of procedures and a scale of specialization, whereas the independent variables of model 2b are a scale of hierarchy and a scale of (lack of) participation. Again, our scale of motivation is the dependent variable in both models (Table 2).

Table 2. Motivational impact of organizational structure

Model 2a			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Routine	-.084	.023	-3.70 **
Fixed procedures	.011	.014	.74
Specialization	-.237	.027	-8.64 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.1932	
	Adj. R ²	.1909	
Model 2b			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Hierarchy	.021	.023	.91
Lack of participation	-.128	.017	-7.08 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.0457	
	Adj. R ²	.0440	

Model 2a shows that it is the perception of the structuring of activities that has a significant impact, rather than the structuring itself. The mere fact that there are fixed procedures does not seem to bother public employees, as it has no independent impact on employee motivation. However, when employees perceive activities as being affected by those structures, measured by a scale of routine on the job and a scale of specialization on the job, this decreases their motivation. In fact, this is in line

with our observations concerning autonomy in the previous section.

Similar, for model 2b, the existence of hierarchy, as an element of ‘concentration of authority’, does not influence motivation negatively. It is only when employees are confronted with the results of this hierarchy by means of a lack of participation that motivation slacks.

Our regression analysis therefore confirms only partly our hypotheses that both ‘structuring of activities’ and ‘concentration of authority’ have a negative impact on motivation. It is only when employees are confronted with the negative effects of these phenomena that they have a negative impact on motivation. Nevertheless, both models are significant. Another thing is that it is remarkable that the explained variance (R^2) for ‘structuring of activities’ is substantially higher than the explained variance of ‘concentration of authority’. For this observation, no clear explanation is available, so further research is needed.

2.3. Career

A career is a very important notion within public human resource management. A civil service career has always been a crucial element of in most civil service systems. Within this career, tenure is probably the most distinguishing element. Early public administration scholars such as Weber [28] described a civil service career as something permanent. Civil servants have tenure to protect them from the arbitrariness of their political masters. This tenure enables them also to develop a career within the civil service, starting from relatively unimportant positions towards more important positions.

Hondeghem [29] finds several purposes for establishing a career system. Continuity, stabilization, selection, control, socialization, development, change and motivation are all functions of a career system. It is the latter that is the most interesting with regard to the subject of this article. According to Mayntz [30] and Luhman [31], employee motivation can be generated by linking career positions to performance. Good performance will result in upward mobility, whereas bad performance will result in downward mobility or career stagnation. However, in order to act as a motivational factor, certain conditions have to be fulfilled. First, promotion has to be desired by employees. Second, opportunities for promotion should be available. Third, there has to be a clear link between promotion and performance.

From these theoretical propositions, we can derive the following hypothesis concerning career and employee motivation:

- H3: Promotion will lead to increased employee motivation whenever promotion is desired, whenever promotion is available and whenever a clear link is established between performance and promotion.

To test this hypothesis, four independent variables are entered into the regression equation. The prospects of promotion are operationalized by the length of the career path (number of previous promotions). As it only refers to past promotion experiences, it is not a perfect measure of promotion. However, it is the only variable that is available within this data set. Desire for promotion is operationalized by a single variable measuring the degree to which a respondent looks forward to his or her next promotion. The availability of promotion is measured by a nominal variable that assesses whether or not an individual is on a career plateau. The last independent variable, the performance-promotion link, is operationalized by a single variable measuring the quality of the appraisal system. Within the Belgian federal civil service, a good appraisal was a condition sine qua non for receiving promotion at the time of the survey. Anyone who did not receive an excellent appraisal was not considered for promotion.

Table 3. Motivational impact of career

Model 3			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Length of career path	0.018	0.006	2.78 **
Promotion desire	0.159	0.018	8.97 ***
Career plateau	-0.099	0.055	-1.81 *
Perception of the appraisal system	0.040	0.016	2.41 *
Model F		<.0001	
R ²		0.0986	
Adj. R ²		0.0952	

The independent variables are operationalized by single metric and ordinal variables (length of career path, promotion desire and perception of the appraisal system) or as nominal variables (career plateau is a dummy), whereas a scale of motivation is the dependent variable. Because the fact that a dummy variable is used, the interpretation of model 3 changes slightly compared to the other models. For what career plateau is concerned, we have to interpret the model as referring to those who do not experience a career plateau. When a respondent does not belong to this group, his or her motivation decreases on average with the value of

the β -parameter estimate. The interpretation of the other variables remains the same.

The analysis shows that every independent variable has a significant impact, with desire for promotion, length of career path and perception of appraisal system having a positive impact and being on a career plateau having a negative impact. The combination of these four independent variables accounts for an R^2 of .0986, which is substantial.

Another important element is the significance of all four variables, independently from each other, albeit our hypothesis was stated in interactive terms. The absence of this interaction effect in our model alters the status of our independent variables. Promotion desire, promotion availability and a performance-promotion link are additional motivational factors. However, there still may be an additional interaction effect, but in a regression environment it is not easy to assess it²⁰. This would cause substantial multicollinearity which would disrupt our analysis and would prevent a sound interpretation of the parameter estimates [32].

2.4. Leadership

In addition to the factors already mentioned, leadership has historically also been an important factor of employee motivation. Leadership has a direct impact on how an employee performs a given task. The Ohio State Leadership Studies have been a landmark in leadership research. As an interdisciplinary research project, it meant a significant contribution to both public and private sector management theory development [2; 33; 34].

It discerned two important dimensions in leadership that were important when considering employee motivation: ‘initiating structure’ (IS) and ‘consideration’ (CS) [2]. ‘Initiating structure’ refers to a leader’s emphasis on setting standards and pressing for performance, whereas ‘consideration’ refers to a leader’s concerns for relationships with his or her subordinates. Both are said to be motivational factors for employee motivation. In a meta-analysis reviewing 130 studies on the IS- CS topic, this hypothesis was confirmed [35]

Fiedler has put these propositions in a contingency framework [25]. He proclaims there is no single way of effective leadership. Depending on the quality of leader-member relation, the task structure and the power associated with the leader’s

position, IS or CS will turn out to be the most motivating leadership style.

This results in the following hypotheses:

- H4a: Both IS and CS leadership styles act as motivational for employee motivation;
- H4b: It depends on the quality of leader-member relations, the task structure and the power associated with the leader’s position whether IS or CS will act as a stronger motivational factor.

Table 4. Motivational impact of leadership style

Model 4a			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Initiating structure	.057	.028	2.02 *
Consideration	.106	.019	5.36 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.0412	
	Adj. R ²	.0395	
Model 4b			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Initiating structure	.143	.052	2.74 *
Consideration	.223	.046	4.81 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.0869	
	Adj. R ²	.0830	
Model 4c			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Initiating structure	.116	.043	2.66 **
Consideration	.092	.030	3.04 **
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.0595	
	Adj. R ²	.0550	

Hypothesis H4a is confirmed by model 4a in table 4. Both IS and CS have an impact on the motivation of civil servants. However, the explained variance is rather low with an R^2 of around 4%. Models 4b and 4c develop hypothesis 4a further into hypothesis 4b²¹, where regressions were applied to the observations which reported to have good leader-member relations (4b) and to be in a simple task structure (4c). CS, as well as IS maintained their significance as a factor of influence, but the explained variance increased. More-over, in

²⁰ Applying product terms in our regression to assess interaction would turn out to be a case of severe multicollinearity. In order to determine interaction effects, more advanced methods should be used [53], but these do not fit within the scope of this article.

²¹ Because the survey took place within one organization, we assumed that the leader position’s power was the same in every observation. This lack of variation prevented us from entering it in a third model to test hypothesis 4b.

a situation with good leader-member-ship relations, CS has the biggest semi-partial R^2 , compared to IS (not shown in the analysis), indicating a larger impact of CS. In a simple task structure however, IS proves to have a bigger semi-partial R^2 than CS. Both findings confirm Fiedler's model [25] and show the contingent impact leader-ship has on employee motivation in the public sector.

2.5. Work Conditions

Maslow [36] was the first to systematically link work conditions to motivation. He described the fulfillment of physiological needs as the primary human motive. In a work environment, work conditions correspond with these primary human needs. Until these needs are satisfied, no other needs can act as a motivational force. However, this theory of the hierarchy of needs has been criticized by numerous other researchers. It was said not to be an adequate theory to explain work motivation and empirical testing did not confirm Maslow's model [2]. Nevertheless, several of his concepts are still of particular interest in public administration and motivational theory nowadays.

Herzberg looked at matters from a different point of view. He distinguished between motivators and hygiene factors. Whereas motivators are said to generate motivation and satisfaction, lack of hygiene factors is said to cause dissatisfaction (which is not the same as a lack of satisfaction). Herzberg [37; 38] essentially got rid of the continuum dissatisfaction-satisfaction and replaced it by two continua: dissatisfaction – no dissatisfaction and no satisfaction – satisfaction. In his view, work conditions are hygiene factors rather than motivators and therefore good work conditions will lead to lack of dissatisfaction instead of an increase in what is generally considered to be motivation. In line with Herzberg's statements, our hypo-thesis is:

- H5: Good work conditions do not lead to an increase in employee motivation

We measured good work conditions by means of three variables: ergonomics, material infrastructure and IT-infrastructure. Contrary to our hypothesis, we find one of the variables measuring work conditions to be significant. Whereas ergonomics and material infrastructure demonstrate no significant impact (and thus corroborating our hypothesis), the presence of a good IT-infrastructure clearly has an impact on employee motivation. Two possible explanations for this observation present themselves. First, Herzberg [37; 38] already recognized that sometimes, under certain circumstances, hygiene factors could act as motivators. But in this case, the two other variables

Table 5: Motivational impact of work conditions

Model 5			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Ergonomics	.033	.02	1.64
Material infrastructure	.018	.022	.80
IT infrastructure	.094	.022	4.21 ***
Model F		<.0001	
R ²		.0332	
Adj. R ²		.0304	

measuring work conditions also should have demonstrated significance. However, another explanation is more feasible. The variable IT-infrastructure is not so much a measure of work conditions as it is a measure of an innovating nature of a job. Certainly in the first half of the 1990's, when IT-infrastructure was not omnipresent (especially within the public service), working with personal computers could be considered as a case of job enrichment. Therefore, it could have acted more as motivator than as a hygiene factor. The question remains whether this is still the case, ten years after the collection of the data.

2.6. Salary

Salary is probably the most frequently used incentive to increase employee motivation. Taylor [cited in 2] already believed there was a link between pay and performance and therefore advised employers to pay their employees according to their productivity. This would increase their performance. Adams [39] elaborated this principle into his equity theory. There he proclaimed that employees have a sense of equity in contributions to the organization on the one hand and personal rewards on the other hand. Whenever inequity occurs, people seek to reduce it by adjusting their contributions to the organization. Inequity is assessed by comparing one's personal input-reward ratio with those from colleagues and peers. According to Adams, inequity will cause motivation or demotivation, depending on the type of inequity.

However, the works of Herzberg [37; 38] challenged these hypotheses. According to his motivator hygiene-theory, salary was not so much a motivator as it was a hygiene factor. Therefore, salary would not cause motivation. Instead, lack of a good salary would cause dissatisfaction.

In line with Herzberg and contrary to the hypothesis of Adams, our hypothesis concerning salary and motivation is:

- H6: A good salary does not contribute to employee motivation.

Table 6: Motivational impact of salary

Model 6			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Equity in pay	.002	.023	.10
Model F	.9174		
R ²	.0000		
Adj. R ²	.0000		

In the model that tests hypothesis 6, a good salary is measured by a scale, consisting of a set of variables that determines a sense of equity in pay. This concept offers to our opinion the best measure for the perception of a good salary, as it is derived from Adams equity theory. Conform our hypothesis, the perception of salary had no influence whatsoever on civil servants' motivation. This does not mean that salary is not important in the civil service. Indeed, it is not considered as a motivator, but no judgement is made on its role as a hygiene factor. However, one should proceed with caution when generalizing this hypothesis. Herzberg [37] contended that salary, because of its ubiquitous nature, could under certain conditions act as a motivator, although its role is primarily hygienic.

2.7. Need for Affiliation

The need for affiliation is another element in our review of work motivation theories. A task can generate a sense of belonging with other people as an extrinsic benefit. Therefore, it could act as a motivational factor.

Elton Mayo was the first to discover the need for affiliation as a motivator. In the Hawthorne experiments, he came upon the effect of the informal organization and stable social relationships in a work environment [25]. He found that the existence of an informal organization can set production standards. He also discovered that the establishment of a stable social relationship (in this case with the researchers) increased performance. Both elements thus have a significant impact on motivating employees towards productive behaviour.

Later, this was recognized in the needs hierarchy of Maslow, which stated that the social needs are an important human need. In his hierarchy of needs, they are preceded by physiological and safety needs and thus of a higher order, to be followed by self-esteem needs and self actualization needs. However, it is not the hierarchy that interests us so much as the concept in itself. The theory has been heavily challenged, as previously mentioned, but the concept still bears importance [2].

McClelland [40, p.160] described the need for affiliation as one of the major human motives, next to the need for achievement and the need for power. McClelland defines affiliation as establishing, maintaining or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person. He found managers throughout the world to be motivated by a need for affiliation. Furthermore, in the public sector in some countries, he found high levels for the need for affiliation, whereas in the private sector, he found lower levels for the need of affiliation. He therefore suggests that, especially in an environment where the public sector is not primarily focused on achievement, the need for affiliation will be higher. Need for affiliation thus can be a motivational factor, especially within the public sector.

In the light of these different experiences and theories, our hypothesis concerning the need for affiliation and employee motivation is:

- H7: Affiliation leads to an increase in employee motivation.

Table 7: Motivational impact of need for affiliation

Model 7			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Affiliation with colleagues	.064	.028	2.27 *
Affiliation with customers	.279	.032	8.78 ***
Model F	<.000		
		1	
R ²	.1099		
Adj. R ²	.1079		

Two scales were used to measure affiliation, one directed towards colleagues and another directed towards customers. Model 7 demonstrated that both types of affiliation significantly increase employee motivation with the respondents and thus confirm our hypothesis. However, the semi-partial R² for the affiliation with colleagues is substantially smaller than the semi-partial R² for affiliation with customers (not shown in the analysis). This observation leads us to the conclusion that with respect to motivation, customers are more important than colleagues. However, we can not conclude that affiliation with colleagues therefore is less important within an organization. According to Herzberg [37, 38], affiliation with colleagues is less important as a motivator, as it acts mainly as a hygiene factor. His findings can explain that affiliation with colleagues has less impact on motivation

compared to affiliation with customers (although colleagues still have a motivational impact).

2.8. Public Service Motivation

Finally, we will discuss a different kind of motivational factor than the ones that have been discussed so far, public service motivation. Contrary to the previous motivational factors, this factor is largely unique to the public sector.

Although public service motivation has always been an element of public administration, it has only been recently described by Perry [41], who was the first to operationalize it. He found public service motivation to exist out of four dimensions: ‘attraction to politics and policy making’, ‘self-sacrifice’, ‘attraction to the public interest’ and ‘compassion’. Rainey and Steinbauer [3, p. 23] for their part, describe public service motivation as ‘a general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a nation or humankind’.

Interestingly, the operationalisation is not in terms of motivation but in terms of motives or values. From this, we can derive that public service motivation is essentially the presence of certain public service values within a person. Due to this focus on values, a cultural element is added. Public service motivation is not universal but can differ across regional settings or institutional environments, because values are not everywhere institutionalized in the same manner and to the same extent [42]. This approach enables public service motivation research to supplement its knowledge of the topic with research on public service values and to introduce new dimensions. The Canadian concept of ‘l’éthique du bien commun’ [43] or the British ‘Public Service Ethos’ [44, 45] therefore can be considered as particular instances of a general concept of public service motivation. In Germany or France, research observed similar related concepts [46, 47; 48].

Research on the impact of public service motivation is abound. Research describes public service motivation having an impact on various human resource processes : recruitment and turnover, but also performance, job satisfaction and even whistleblowing and positive attitudes towards reform [49; 50; 51; 52]. Public service motivation clearly is an important element when considering public employee behaviour. Therefore our hypothesis concerning public service motivation is:

- H8: the presence of public service values increases individual employee motivation

For the analysis of this hypothesis, we can work with both the 1993-1995 survey and the 2002

survey. In the 1993-1995 survey, we have a single item (‘I try to do my job as good as possible because it is my duty as a civil servant’). This is only a part of the multidimensional concept that PSM in reality is. Therefore, next to the 1993-1995 survey, we applied the analysis to the 2002 survey. In this latter survey, we have a multi-dimensional measure of PSM at our disposal. Here, our independent variable was based on the results of a confirmatory factor analysis on the items of Perry’s measurement scale, collected in 2002 [11]. Instead of four dimensions, as found by Perry [41], this resulted in three dimensions, ‘self-sacrifice and public interest’, ‘compassion’ and ‘attraction to policy-making’. These scales were entered into the regression analysis as independent variables.

Consequently, because of using two datasets, our dependent variables are also different (Table 8). In the 1993-1995 dataset, we use the scale of motivation, whereas the dependent variable in the 2002 survey is operationalized as a proxy of

Table 8: Motivational impact of public service motivation

Model 8a			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
My duty as a civil servant	.165	.017	9.46 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.0725	
	Adj. R ²	.0717	
Model 8b			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Self-sacrifice and public interest	.156	.059	2.65 **
Compassion	.112	.049	2.29 *
Attraction to policy-making	.416	.032	13.16 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.1190	
	Adj. R ²	.1175	
Model 8c			
Independent variable	b	SE	t-value
Self-sacrifice and public interest	.201	.059	3.43 **
Compassion	.069	.049	1.40
Attraction to policy-making	.423	.032	13.37 ***
	Model F	<.0001	
	R ²	.1211	
	Adj. R ²	.1195	

motivation. In model 8b, the dependent variable is the willingness to work for the Belgian federal government, while the independent variable in model 8c is the willingness to work for the Flemish state government.

All three models are statistically significant and models 8b and 8c, which have identical independent variables, display a more or less equal R^2 .

Model 8a has a lower R^2 , but as it has only one independent variable, this is no surprise. We see a clearly positive impact of public service values on the individual motivation of civil servants, and therefore we are not able to falsify hypothesis 8.

Concerning model 8b and 8c, two variables, self-sacrifice and public interest and attraction to policy-making, demonstrate a significant positive impact in both analyses, with attraction to policy-making showing the biggest semi-partial R^2 (not shown). Compassion only has an impact on the motivation for the federal government. But overall, we can state that in both cases the presence of public service values has a significant influence on motivation, thus corroborating hypothesis 8. Confirmation of this hypothesis provides evidence of a different motivational pattern for civil service jobs, as public service motivation is characteristic, although not unique, of the civil service.

3. Conclusions and Further Research

3.1 Conclusions

This article tackles the question whether private sector theories of employee motivation are a valid approach in determining and influencing public sector employee motivation. Furthermore, the article discusses whether there is evidence of some kind of typical motivation when considering public sector employment.

In concluding this article, we can state that private sector management theories of employee motivation indeed are to a great extent applicable on civil servants. Motivational factors that play a part in private sector employee motivation, have as well a significant impact on the motivation of civil servants. Hypotheses 1 to 7 were all confirmed to some extent. Job characteristics, leadership, career and affiliation all had a positive correlation with individual civil servant motivation. Concentration of authority and structuring of activities had a negative impact on employee motivation within the public sector. Pay in itself cannot be considered as a source of motivation. Borrowing theoretical approaches from private sector management research for application in a public sector environment all in all seems a legitimate practice.

However, the research discussed in this paper provides evidence that the motivational pattern of civil servants does not stop with these motivational factors. Confirmation of hypothesis 8 proves that there is more to employee motivation in the public sector than meets the private sector eye. Public service motivation demonstrates itself as an important element within the motivational pattern in public sector employment. Public service motivation is therefore an important supplement in handling motivational aspects of public sector jobs. Students, policy-makers and consultants should be aware of this, whenever tackling motivational problems in the civil service.

Nevertheless, one should be aware of the limitations of these results whenever applying them. Because of the scattered data collection, no internal comparison between factors could be made. This study is limited to describing and explaining the effect of individual motivational factors. Therefore, no statements can be made on the combined impact of motivational factors.

Also, the study does not enable us to estimate whether we have created an exhaustive image of motivation in the public sector. We have no general R^2 that can assess the total explained variance. Based on this article we cannot contend to cover all aspects of motivation of civil servants. Tenure, pension schemes or other intrinsic or extrinsic job elements could prove of significant importance in public employment.

Finally, the results provide no comparison of private sector employment motivation versus public sector employment motivation. We cannot assess whether some mutual important factors have more impact in the one sector compared to another. We have no reason to assume that they are equally important, nor that one factor is more important than another.

3.2. Avenues for Further Research

Although this article provides support for a varied approach of employee motivation in the public sector, we are only at the beginning. As the research in this article was done over a course of several years and in two distinct surveys, we should look at opportunities for integrating the different approaches in the future. This would give us the opportunity to assess the relative impact of the individual motivational factors and to sort out the contradictions we have found in this research. If private sector employees were to be included in a future survey, it would also enable us to determine whether some factors are more important in the private sector than in the public sector or the other way around.

Next to this, future research should also address the nature of public service motivation. As stated in paragraph 3.8, there appears to be a cultural component in the operationalization of public service motivation. Not all public service values are present to the same extent when comparing different societies or communities. Norris [42] finds significant differences between various regional settings. Therefore, another valuable direction for further research is determining to what extent these differences amount and whether there are common aspects. This would be a great asset to our knowledge on public service motivation.

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Valstybės tarnautojų motyvacijos bruožai

Reziumė

Straipsnyje teigiama, kad motyvacija yra vienas svarbiausių šiuolaikinės žmogiškųjų išteklių vadybos veiksnių tiek viešajame, tiek ir privačiajame sektoriuose. Pateikiama trumpa darbo motyvacijos apžvalga ir bandoma patikrinti teorijų pagrindu suformuluotą hipotezę. Remiamasi dviejų Belgijos valdžios įstaigose atliktų tyrimų duomenimis. Tyrimus per 10 metų atliko Liuvono katalikiškojo universiteto Viešosios vadybos institutas.