All motivated by public service? The links between hierarchical position and public service motivation

Céline Desmarais, Claire Edey Gamassou

All motivated by public service?

The links between hierarchical position and public service motivation

Céline Desmarais (University of Savoie, France) and Claire Edey Gamassou (University Paris-Est, France)

Summary
Research into public service motivation is currently witnessing exponential growth. However, the universal application of the concept to all categories of public employees raises questions. Indeed, the origins of the concept, which can be traced back to political science studies in the United States, may suggest that the concept applies mainly to senior management but much less to operatives of various types, whose motivations seem more instrumental . Research into the antecedents of PSM has thus shown that high hierarchical levels were associated with employee profiles with a high level of PSM (Bright, 2005; Camilleri, 2007). Some authors go as far as to consider that the concept does not apply at all to operative jobs (Gabris and Simo, 1995). The purpose of this article is therefore to analyse the differences between the public service motivation of operatives and that of other categories of employees. To do so, we draw on two empirical studies, one quantitative (n = 2 868), conducted among the public employees of cities in 12 countries, and the other qualitative, conducted among public employees working in the technical service of a French town. Our results show that the level of PSM is not lower among operatives but that, on the other hand, it is different in its nature and dimensions.

Notes to practitioners
The issue of the PSM of operative public employees takes on a managerial dimension. Indeed, it has potential policy implications for human resource management policies to be implemented and on the segmentation of the public employees in the light of these policies. Our results thus argue for the mainstreaming of the public service dimension in the management of executives and would suggest that it is in the interest of public organisations to encourage the public service motivation of their employees by designing tasks in such a way that public employees can better appreciate the result of their work among customers and users.

Keywords
Public service motivation, human resources management, managers, operatives, measurement scale of public service motivation.

Biographical note
Céline Desmarais is a HDR lecturer at the University of Savoie. She is vice president of the International Association for Research in Public Management (AIRMAP). Her research

focuses on the management of human resources in the public sphere, public service values and motivation, as well as the roles of managers and management development.

Claire Edey Gamassou is a lecturer at the University Paris-Est Créteil Val de Marne (UPEC). Her research focuses on the field of organizational behaviour and public management, with particular focus on workplace suffering (stress, burnout) in the territorial public service and care professions. She is a board member of the "Study Group on Labour and Suffering at Work" (GESTES).

Introduction

Unlike the Public Choice theories, which focus on the instrumental motivations of individuals in the workplace, the public service motivation (PSM) current affords a value-based conception of the motivation of public sector employees (Perry, 1996). The outcome of research into administrative science in the United States, the concept of PSM focuses on the attitude, initially observed in the senior civil service, that geared towards working in the interests of general welfare. This observation is widely accepted as regards the senior management of public organizations (Hondeghem and Vandenabeele, 2005, however there is less certainty about its application to other hierarchical levels. Research into the antecedents of PSM show that high hierarchical levels are associated with high PSM and lower hierarchical levels to lower levels of PSM (Bright, 2005; Camilleri, 2007). Some authors go as far as to consider that PSM does not apply at all to operative jobs (Gabris and Simo, 1995).

The purpose of this paper is therefore to examine the diversity of forms of PSM according to hierarchical position. To this end, we draw on two empirical studies: a study measuring the PSM of public employees in towns in twelve countries on four continents, on the one hand, and a qualitative study among members of the technical department of a French town, on the other. We will start off by presenting the contributions of literature on the antecedents of public service motivation, before then unveiling the method of quantitative and qualitative studies that have been conducted, followed by the main results, which will be discussed in the last part.

1. PSM and its antecedents

1.1. PSM: a driver that is universally shared?

The concept of PSM first saw the light of day in the United States in response to the decline of public confidence in American institutions. This decline, observed in the sixties, triggered a need to reactivate the importance of a public service ethic and a sense of public duty (Perry and Wise, 1990). The expression Public Service Motivation was used for the first time in 1982 (Rainey, 1982; Perry and Porter, 1982) to describe the motivation of stakeholders with regard to public policy. This concept assumes that the individual behaviour of public sector employees is not only guided by the maximization of personal interest but also by norm-based factors (values) and emotional factors (feelings) prompted by altruistic behaviour (Perry, 2000). Studies into PSM thus emphasize the importance of beliefs and behaviours shaped by social processes.

PSM is subject to many definitions. Among them, that of Vandenabeele (2007, p 547) as "*a belief, values and attitudes that are beyond self-interest, concern a wider political entity and*

motivates individuals to act appropriately" makes it possible to take into account both the fundamentally altruistic nature of PSM and its propensity to be a driver of the action.

PSM was operationalized, in the United States initially, by rather heterogeneous measurement tools (Wright, 2008). Some of them focused on the stakeholders' preferences in terms of rewards (Gabris and Simo, 1995), others inferred PSM from employee behaviour (Brewer and Selden 1998). But the most common measures come from the work of Perry (1996), whose conceptualization, stemming from a series of studies in the field of administrative science, is at the origin of the multidimensional concept of PSM. Indeed, a distinction is usually made between four dimensions (or facets) of the concept:

- The attraction for politics has a rational basis
- The public interest undertaking relates to norm-based reasons around the idea of civic duty and social justice.
- Compassion refers to emotional reasons, referring to the patriotism of benevolence, defined as love towards and a desire to protect fellow citizens.
- To these three dimensions is added that of self-sacrifice, which refers to the desire to replace the intangible rewards, consecutive to a service rendered to another person, with tangible rewards. This can be seen as having components that are both emotional and norm-based and refers to altruism, which lies at the heart of the concept of PSM.

These dimensions, whose characterization was then simplified by Kim (2009), have provided the basis for many international investigations. However, this measurement tool has revealed its limits, both in its ability to allow a cumulative research at international level and in its psychometric properties (Kim et al., 2013).

In its initial conceptualization, PSM thus finds its origin in the observations of the senior civil service conducted in the United States. While the different studies that validated and refined the knowledge on this concept were based on samples of different types, this special attachment of the concept to representations of the senior civil service seems to persist in part. For instance, more recently Hondeghem and Vandenabeele (2005) established a comparison of PSM between France, the Netherlands and the United States based on analyses of the senior civil service provided by research in the fields of political science and administrative science.

This origin raises questions about the ability of the concept to relevantly describe the attitudes of public employees in junior positions. Indeed, the idea that public sector employees place more value on the general interest and on the significance of their work than on monetary aspects could be inaccurate as regards the operatives (Gabris and Simo, 1995). It would therefore be idealistic to think that the public sector is exclusively composed of individuals who are deeply concerned with the preservation of the public interest (Bright, 2005). In 1995, Gabris and Simo questioned the concept of PSM, considering that the altruistic motives mainly concerned people working at the apex of the public organisations, while most public sector employees, especially those who work in operative positions are not prompted by any attraction for the public sector but, first and foremost, by the need to earn a living. According to them, the concept of PSM has a social function rather than a function of knowledge production: by affirming the specificity of the public workforce, it justifies in fact the existence of diplomas, charters, university departments, training programmes, etc. that are specific to the public sector.

It is therefore necessary to further analyse any differences between the categories of public

sector employees in terms of PSM in the light of their position in the hierarchy. Apart from contributing to the debate on the nature of PSM, this kind of analysis also raises managerial issues. Indeed, it is necessary to understand the diversity of motivations of the employees (Bright, 2005) in order to be able to put together adapted human resources management policies.

1.2. The impact of the hierarchical position on PSM : from the individual factors to the organisational factors

The literature does not provide perfectly stable results for the antecedents of PSM (Camilleri, 2007) even though some of them are beginning to be established. The first studies on the antecedents of PSM were carried out by Perry (1997, 2000), who focused on the socio-historical and institutional antecedents (religion, education). Recently, researchers have shown a growing interest in organizational determinants. This article focuses on specific antecedents: the ***hierarchical position*** of public employees, considered not only according to a vertical scale but through four organisational positions: those of operative, direct supervisor, manager or expert.

The few studies that have examined this issue affirm the existence of a positive relationship between the hierarchical position and PSM. Bright (2005) has thus observed a significant relationship between the level of management and the level of PSM. Camilleri (2007) also noted a moderate positive relationship between grade and PSM. The results of Manolopulos (2008), drawn from a measurement of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, are more ambiguous.

These studies, few and far between, deal with the hierarchical level among a set of variables, and are based on a quantitative assessment of the hierarchical level. It is therefore important to bring into play the other antecedents of PSM to understand the relationship between hierarchical position and PSM. Individual and organisational factors have indeed an impact on the organisational position and PSM.

a. PSM, hierarchical position and individual factors

The definition of PSM by Perry and Wise (1990, p 368) as an "*individual predisposition to respond to motives primarily or only prevalent in public institutions or organizations*", emphasised the importance of the primary socialization process in the construction of PSM. In this context, many studies have investigated the effects of relationships with parents, religion or membership of a minority group (Blank, 1985, Bright, 2005) on PSM. Higher levels of education have been consistently associated with high PSM (Bright, 2005; Moynihan and Pandey, 2007; Camilleri, 2007 Perry, 1997). As far as gender socialization is concerned, the existence of the higher level of "compassion" dimension in women seems established (DeHart et al. 2006, Pandey and Stazyk, 2009). Finally, age has a modest positive effect on PSM (Perry, 1997; Naff and Crum, 1999).

Differences related to socio-biographical factors may well encourage a diversity of PSM according to hierarchical position. Indeed, organizational careers are the result of choices made under duress. Managers, experts, direct supervisors and operatives may differ in terms of their social origin, gender, level of education or training. Presumably some people, due to their personal background, feel more concerned by the defence of the general interest and are

more likely to value careers in public service. This conception, which considers PSM to be present before entering public service, predominated at the genesis of the concept in the studies developed by Perry and Wise (1990). Contemporary research is, however, turning more towards the influence of organizational socialization on PSM (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007; Camilleri, 2007).

b. PSM, hierarchical position and organizational factors

Research into PSM shows in fact that it is influenced by certain organizational factors. In addition to the hierarchical level described above, research has focused on the effects of management and procedures, including the negative impact of the cumbersome administrative procedures (red tape) and the positive impact of changes in favour of employees (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007). There is, however, little research on the impact of the position in the organization. Only Camilleri (2007) analyses the links between the characteristics of the job held (defined through the following variables: range of skills, autonomy, task identity, feedback on tasks, opportunities for positive interactions, relationships with others and the importance of the task[1]) and PSM. His findings support the hypothesis of the primacy of organizational determinants on PSM.

It seems thus that hierarchical position can influence PSM. Bright (2005), agreeing with the presuppositions of Gabris and Simo (1995), explains it with the theory of Maslow (1943), putting forward the hypothesis that the individual can only develop secondary needs (to which the reasons at the heart of PSM relate) once the basic needs are met (by a job that provides a certain level of income).

While the personal background of individuals can favour their ability to access certain organisational positions, it is clear that there is also an opposite effect, by which organizational socialization influences PSM.

The proven links between age and high PSM follow this direction. Thus, Steyn (2006) believes that age is associated with hierarchical positions that promote responsibility, participation in decision making and therefore a commitment to serving the public interest. When an individual is promoted within the organisation, this strengthens their relationship with public service (Camilleri, 2007, Bright, 2005). Organizational socialization does not take place in the same way for operatives and managers (Desmarais, 2011). Hierarchical position thus plays a role on the values on the basis of which employees define themselves and act.

However, according to Moynihan and Pandey (2007), seniority in the organisation is negatively related to PSM. This result, which appears to contradict the positive impact of age on PSM, suggests that longevity in a given organizational context may create a certain degree of frustration among public sector employees faced with conflicting orders and frequent reforms (Emery and Giauque, 2012). This calls in any case for care when analysing the potential effects of organizational socialization.

Thus, while certain organizational positions can foster high PSM, it is either because the employees with a strong PSM tend to pursue careers in public organizations, or because public careers and certain positions favour the emergence and reinforcement of PSM. The

[1] Scale used by Sims, Szilagyi and Keller (1976)

literature offers little more evidence on this issue. There is in particular little research available on the preponderant dimensions of PSM according to organizational positions.

That is why we conducted our research in two stages. After conducting a quantitative analysis of the differences in PSM based on organizational position, we tried to understand their origin through a qualitative approach.

2. Research Methodology

In this section we present the methodology of two surveys conducted in the towns, one quantitative and the other qualitative. The quantitative approach made use of a standardised scale to produce comparable and cumulative results. However, the goal of our work is to better understand the links between organisational position and PSM, an aspect that has been widely neglected in the literature. That is why we have completed this approach with a qualitative analysis to ensure the richness of the interpretation.

2.1. Analysis of quantitative data obtained from an international survey.

a. Scope of the survey

To compare PSM based on organizational positions, we used data from a quantitative research to validate a universal measurement scale of PSM (Kim et al., 2013). It set out to determine to what extent the PSM has the same theoretical structure and the same psychological meaning in different languages and cultures.

The international survey was fielded from March to September 2010. Data were collected from public employees in local governments in the following twelve countries: Australia, Belgium, China, South Korea, Denmark, United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Switzerland. So that the samples are comparable, the public services at national and federal level were ruled out. The sample is composed of public employees of municipal public services (with the exception of police officers, medical services, firefighters, school teachers and public transport workers). Depending on the country, the data collection tool used was either a paper questionnaire, a web survey, or both. At the end of September 2010, a total of 2,868 responses were received, representing a total of approximately 250 respondents per country.

b. The measurements

Public service motivation

The design of a new scale of PSM began with the construction of items between researchers from different countries in 2009 and until the end of January 2010. The 35 items thus produced were submitted to researchers from 12 different countries, invited to verify that each item effectively reflected the desired dimension and made sense in its national context. They were also invited to propose reformulations or new items. The final questionnaire was completed in February 2010 and consisted of 33 items, measured on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was translated independently by two researchers for each country, who then analysed and reduced the differences, and then tested it with native respondents.

After confirmatory factor analysis, Kim et al. (2013) validated a 4-dimensional structure of PSM from these data. These dimensions partly overlap those of Perry's scale but with significant differences. These are the following dimensions:

- Attraction for Public Service (APS): this dimension focuses on the disposition to serve the public, to work for the common good and to participate in the process of developing and implementing public policies.
- Commitment to Public Values (CPV): this dimension assesses the extent to which individuals share a set of public values (equity, continuous provision of public services, concern for ethics and future generations).
- Compassion (COM): this dimension is based on that which existed in Perry's scale but the items take into account more specifically the identification with the suffering of others.
- Self-Sacrifice (SS): this dimension is quite similar to that existing in Perry's scale.

The final structure with 16 validated items (see Appendix 1) was used in this work. The use of this scale certainly poses a problem of overlapping with previous work on PSM (mainly related to Perry's scale), but the authors will draw on the use of this new scale in future work on PSM.

The scale has good level of reliability with a Cronbach alpha greater than 0.850 (see Table 1 below). Its four subscales themselves have acceptable levels of reliability (over 0,640).

Table 1 : the composition of the indicators of each dimension and the Cronbach alphas

	APS	**CPV**	**COM**	**SS**
Cronbach Alpha	,722	,665	,645	,788

It is on the basis of this structure that we conducted our first analyses that set out to identify whether the Operatives differ from other public employees in terms of PSM.

Hierarchical position

We identified four categories of respondents, taking into consideration two descriptive data collected: the level of education and whether or not they supervise public employees.

The level of education was coded according to whether the employee had a university level education or not. We then crossed this variable with status (supervises/does not supervise public employees). The distribution of employees according to these two criteria is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 : Level of education of the respondents according to criteria of level of studies and supervisory position

Education	Does not supervise a team	Supervises a team	Total
Not educated to higher level	Operatives (n=760)	Direct supervisors (n=408)	1168

Educated to higher level	Experts (n=600)	Executives Managers (n=580)	1180
Total	1360	988	2348

Some national samples are not included in this analysis due to the lack of information on the level of education (UK and Netherlands). Thus, only 2,348 respondents (of the original 2868) of 10 national samples (of the original 12) were studied. We also note that in the Chinese and Lithuanian samples, no respondents reported to be educated to higher level.

It should be noted that people who have no education and who do not supervise public employees may have followed a career and find themselves at a relatively high level in the organization. The available data do not allow us to identify these situations. Nor do they make it possible to know how many people are supervised.
.

2.2. Analysis of qualitative data in an average town.

We conducted interviews with public employees in the operational technical services of a French town of 16,500 inhabitants. The town employs 254 public employees, including 71 in the technical services responsible for maintenance of municipal roads, the design and maintenance of green spaces and the maintenance of municipal buildings.

The survey was conducted between April and May 2011. Located in a working class suburb of a city of 140 000 inhabitants, the town, on the whole, manages its services directly, with little delegation of public services. However, due to a high ratio of staff costs to operating expenses, this situation is changing. One project involves downsizing and increased private delegations. During the study, the delegation of the cleaning of certain premises was underway.

The study focused globally on the relationship with work, satisfaction with work, interpersonal relations in the service, the psychosocial risks and the motivation factors linked to the public service.

The questions on PSM were organised in a semi-directive manner. In fact, the questions that make up the PSM questionnaire induce a bias of desirability that the qualitative approach set out to avoid. Thus, the interview guide does not have a question as such that relates to the compassionate dimension of PSM. This theme emerged spontaneously in the course of the interviews.

Table 3 : Questions of the interview guide relating to PSM

Theme	Questions	Prompts
Global public service motivation	Is the fact that you work in a public service important to you?	Why? Does that motivate you? How?
Self-sacrifice	Would you mind doing the same work in the private sector for the same salary?	Why?
Commitment to public values	Do you grant any importance to the fact that your work is useful to the community?	Why ? How is the quality of

	Is it important for you to deliver quality work?	your work visible?
Attraction for public policies	Do you feel concerned by the orientations taken by the town hall?	

The sample consisted of 44 individuals (out of a total of 71 service public employees), representing all categories of service public employees (engineer in charge of the service, technicians responsible for units, supervisors, maintenance workers and public employees maintaining green spaces). The interviews lasted from 25 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes. The interviews were held mainly with men (only 10 women, mainly in the "maintenance" services, that is to say, in charge of cleaning). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Some of the public employees interviewed refused the recording of the interview: these interviews are not used here.

Table 4 : Hierarchical position of the persons interviewed

	Number of public employees
Operators (technical public employee, cleaning public employees, etc.)	33
First level supervision (team manager, supervisor)	6
Middle management (head of service, deputy, manager of operational technical services)	5

Table 5 : Field of activity of the persons interviewed.

	Number of public employees
Maintenance service (cleaning)	13
Building service (electricians, plumber, carpenter, etc.)	9
Green spaces service	9
Highways/urban electricity service	11
Mechanical workshop	2

The interviews were analysed according to an analysis grid centred on the dimensions of PSM.

Table 6 : Extracts from the analysis grid of the interviews

Compassion	Emotion when faced with distress, Compassion when faced with the underprivileged, concern for the welfare of others, affective approach.
Self-Sacrifice	Acceptance of the idea that collective welfare is more important that personal welfare. Construct on the idea that we are ready to accept personal losses for the sake of the common weal.
Commitment to public values	Importance of public service values, equal treatment, service continuity,… norm-based approach
Attraction for public policies	Importance of the PS, of the quality of the PS, desire to contribute to the common weal, rational approach.

3. The main results.

3.1. Analysis of the data obtained from the international survey.

We compared the hierarchical positions of the public employees in relation to the whole construct of PSM and also each of the dimensions of PSM. We started by looking at the averages for each dimension and the aggregate indicator of PSM (table 7 below) and comparing them across the confidence interval of the average.

Table 7 : Averages of PSM and of the 4 dimensions of PSM for the 4 statutory categories of respondents for the 10 national samples

		APS	CPV	COM	SS	PSM
Operatives	Average	16,53	17,08	**15,72**	**13,39**	**62,82**
	Standard deviation	2,154	2,116	2,269	2,996	7,565
Experts	Average	16,57	**17,30**	15,41	13,32	62,56
	Standard deviation	2,118	1,843	2,239	2,814	6,982
Direct Supervisors	Average	16,62	**17,41**	**15,69**	13,29	**63,03**
	Standard deviation	1,977	1,965	2,332	2,926	7,390
Executives Managers	Average	16,67	17,07	***14,84***	***12,81***	***61,40***
	Standard deviation	1,907	1,832	2,242	3,002	6,937
Total	Average	16,59	17,19	15,42	13,21	62,43
	Standard deviation	2,055	1,956	2,292	2,946	7,251
Lower limit of the CI at 99%		**16,49**	**17,03**	**15,33**	**13,05**	**62,02**
Higher limit of the CI at 99%		**16,68**	**17,22**	**15,55**	**13,33**	**62,72**

In the table above, we mentioned in bold the indicators that are above the upper limit of the confidence interval and in bold and italic those below the lower limit of the confidence interval.

The two categories that hold a higher PSM (above the upper limit of the confidence interval) are the Operatives and Direct Supervisors. The high level of their PSM can be explained however through different dimensions.

The Operatives obtain higher averages on the compassion (COM) and self-sacrifice (SS) dimensions. They therefore have a greater sensitivity to the emotional dimension of this construct.

The Direct Supervisors are in turn characterized by the high level of the Commitment to Public Values (CPV) and compassion (COM) dimensions.

Experts have an overall level of PSM included in the confidence interval. However, they have a high level of Commitment to public values (CPV).

Executive managers are characterized by lower overall PSM (below the lower limit of the confidence interval) explained by a lower sensitivity to the emotional dimensions of PSM (COM & SS).

We also conducted an analysis of variance with a factor (with SPSS 15.0) (see Table 8 in appendix). This ANOVA allowed us to observe that only the Compassion (COM) dimension seems to be significantly influenced by the status of the respondent with a risk of error of 0.0001. The overall PSM is influenced by a risk of error of 0.001.

Two key points emerge from these analyses:

Firstly the idea of a higher PSM among public employees with the highest hierarchical levels does not seem to be validated. Indeed, in our sample, the Direct Supervisors and the Operatives are those that notch up the highest PSM scores.

On the other hand, there is a significant gap around the affective PSM dimensions, including the compassion dimension. Attention to the suffering of others and consideration for the situation of the weakest plays a central role in this dimension. The Direct Supervisors and Operatives have a high level of PSM due to a high level of indicators characterizing this dimension. However, the affective dimensions are lower for Executive managers, explaining a lower PSM.

The hierarchical position thus seems to influence the levels and dimensions of PSM. It is necessary, however, to clarify the differences recorded by the results of the qualitative analysis.

3.2. Analysis resulting from the interviews with public employees of a technical service of a French town.

The results of the qualitative analysis highlight the specific characteristics of PSM based on the hierarchical position. Given the characteristics of the qualitative sample, we can distinguish two types of attitudes in this regard: that of the operatives and direct supervisors (supervisors and team leaders from the ranks) and those of middle management (managers and technicians).

a. PSM among operatives and direct supervisors.

The operatives and direct supervisors affirm that they have a high degree of PSM. A very large majority say that they would not want to work in the private sector for the same pay. This PSM has three essential characteristics: the importance of the need to be useful, a relative lack of interest in public policy and the joint desire to enjoy good working conditions and deliver quality work.

This category attaches great importance to the usefulness of their work and its impact on users. The local nature of the organization promotes the pride felt by the public employees working at the service of the environment that concerns them directly. "*I live in my city, and when I see the result of my work I am happy*" (C8).

The desire to be helpful enters into several dimensions of PSM: it can refer to an overall desire to contribute to public service (APS), the importance of shared values for the individual (CPV), or even the desire improve the living conditions of its citizens (COM). In some cases, it can also refer to self-sacrifice (SS) because it leads to sacrificing elements of personal comfort to enhance user satisfaction. Thus, in the service covered by our study, snow clearance is a very special time when everyone pulls out all the stops, as illustrated by the following quote from the Director of Operational Technical Services: "*In winter, they can't wait to see the snow, it's amazing! That's when they feel really useful*! ". In some cases, public employees are willing to take risks to ensure this public service. Employees with the most menial jobs tend to refer to the life-threatening risks (illness, death, disability) to discuss their interest in their work and the importance to them of the public service. For example, one public employee explains that by clearing snow, he allows a disabled woman to leave her home, a public employee working for the urban furniture service evokes the social usefulness of his work to ensure the safety of the frail ... Conversely, negative feedback from users is taken badly. It is referred to collectively to create a distance.

However, most operatives and direct supervisors expressed little interest in public policy, including at town hall level. A majority expressed significant distrust towards national and local politics.

While operatives and direct supervisors seem extremely sensitive to the impact of their actions on others, it remains that their commitment to public service is also linked to the search for good working conditions. They often feel that they could enjoy higher wages in the private sector but that in their town (and the public sector in general), what they are looking for are better working conditions. They tend to refer to the private sector as a "foil" where the increasing pressure justifies opting for the public sector. Many people have applied to the town hall to escape poor working conditions in the private sector, a pressure that is deemed excessive, heavy working hours or hours ill-suited to family life, a directive management, the urgency of the work (done quickly but badly) ... This search for better working conditions is inseparable from a commitment to a job 'well done'. "*They call me the king of the broom, I hate leaving a site dirty, it's my calling card in a way*" (C 11). "*It would upset me to do this work in the private sector because there would be no sense of quality behind it*" (C16).

The operatives and direct supervisors thus massively express the desire to produce quality work at the service of identified users with whom they wish to maintain a close relationship, while considering that it goes hand in hand with the search for a working situation that is more comfortable than that offered by the private sector. On the other hand, they generally express disinterest and ignorance of policy issues.

b. PSM of middle management

Middle management has quite different attitudes to those of the operatives and direct supervisors.

As is the case for the other two categories analysed, the desire to be helpful and to work to serve the public is strongly affirmed by middle management. However, for the latter, this commitment is less focused on direct relationships with identifiable people and more on an abstract "citizen", the theoretical recipient of the actions.

This more distanced concept of public service goes hand in hand with a much stronger interest in public policy issues, both local and national. The discrepancy on this point between operatives and management can be explained by the fact that management must be a carrier of public policy. The issue of the reduction of human and financial resources, in particular, has concrete consequences on the organization of services and prompts management to focus on more macro political issues. Managers are less immediately driven by the service to users and bring in various issues to their vision of public service.

In addition, the search for better working conditions than those that they could find in the private sector is not a motivation claimed by the group of middle management.

4. Discussion

The results of the two research projects show that PSM is effectively expressed differently according to the hierarchical position, that, among the operatives, it coexists with the search for good working conditions and that the interpretation of the overall levels of PSM should be handled with care.

a. The various dimensions of PSM according to hierarchical levels

These quantitative and qualitative results confirm that the expressions of PSM may be dissimilar for different hierarchical categories. The literature has mainly set out to characterize the differences in national cultures and institutions (Kim et al., 2013). However, it seems that the hierarchical position also has a significant impact on the nature of the relationship to public service. The PSM of Operatives and that of middle management seems to differ in terms of the concern to contribute to the welfare of others, on the one hand, and the commitment to public values, on the other.

Operatives and direct supervisors working in the field thus develop a specific vision of public service as a service "to the public" (people identified) more than to an abstract entity. It is a vision driven more by compassion. It refers to the deep desire of the public service operatives to "make a difference to others" (Grants, 2007). The "pro-social impact" concept developed by Grants (2007) thus postulates that altruistic individuals tend to be motivated by the idea of carrying out actions that have a positive impact on the lives of others including in contexts outside public services. This can be explained by organizational and personal factors.

In the exercise of their duties, the operatives and direct supervisors are more exposed to users and their problems, while respondents in our qualitative study work mainly in technical positions (they are not confronted with the difficulties of users). However, even when the nature of the work does not warrant it specifically, these public employees tend to evoke situations in which their work can save lives and help people in trouble.

Beyond the experiences in the course of their duties, the mobilization of the register of compassion and self-sacrifice can also be explained by the personal stories of the operatives

and their families, as they are more likely than other categories to face social problems and poverty.

Moreover, while the Anglo-Saxon literature addresses the affective dimensions of PSM as related to an altruistic attitude, French sociology (Cartier, Retière and Siblot, 2010) develops the idea that the contact with the public also has a rewarding dimension for employees, especially if they work in occupations with a low social value. For example, the bin men of the city of Paris, defining their profession as "a service to the public," distance themselves from the image of "dirty work" (Hughes, 1996), subject to social stigma (Corteel, 2010). This orientation thus raises the status of these public employees from a domestic activity widely regarded as degrading to a task in connection with the management of the "City", which, as Hannah Arendt (1983) points out, was the only activity considered noble by the Greeks.

Conversely, for middle management, the vision of public service is less focused on individuals. As the social origins of the operatives and middle management of the qualitative sample is not fundamentally different, this change in perspective is mainly due to the functions and their environment. Managers tend to be the carriers of collective issues and their role requires a change in the level of representation of organisational and strategic realities (Desmarais, 2011). The results of our research thus lead us to assume that the public service that is at the heart of the PSM acquires an increasingly abstract aura as the public employees rise in the hierarchy, and this by virtue of their personal background as well as their professional experience.

b. The coexistence of a high PSM with instrumental motives among operatives

The results of our investigations are not in contradiction with the assumptions of Gabris and Simo (1995) on the instrumental dimension of the motivations of the operatives. In contrast to middle management, the operatives of the qualitative sample claim instrumental motives. However, these are not incompatible with a strong PSM. The instrumentality goes hand in hand with a desire to work on behalf of others, a desire that sometimes goes as far as self-sacrifice in services whose primary purpose is not focused on helping others.

This apparent contradiction is explained by the importance of a job well done for the public employees. In this sense, our analysis concurs with the work of Yves Clot (2010) who considers that the well-being of employees is inseparable from "doing things properly". Thus, these results encourage us to break with the bi-polarity that characterises approaches to the motivation of civil servants (on the one hand, PSM and values and, on the other, personal interest) because it impoverishes our understanding of the dynamics of motivation in the public sector (Emery, 2012). This analysis is convergent with studies showing the existence of inter-connected extrinsic and intrinsic motivation levels and advocating the simultaneous use of financial incentives and elements of intrinsic motivation (responsibilities, autonomy, values ...) (Manolopoulos, 2008).

c. The relativisation of overall levels of PSM

The last result that deserves discussion concerns the overall levels of PSM. Contrary to the assumption that PSM mainly concerns the senior civil service (Gabris and Simo, 1995), the operatives and direct supervisors of the international sample quantitatively analysed are those who are characterised by high levels of PSM, because of the extent of the affective dimensions, in particular the dimension of compassion.

This observation may seem contradictory with the results of the literature on the relationship between level of education and level of PSM (Bright, 2005; Moynihan and Pandey, 2007; Camilleri, 2007 Perry, 1997). However, the dichotomous treatment of the data we have used and the use of a new scale do not really allow a comparison of the overall level of PSM.

In addition, it seems that the analysis of this level is not necessarily very enlightening. The construct of PSM, such as that of the organizational commitment, is divided into affective, rational, and norm-based dimensions that refer to very different realities. Our results argue for the development of research on the expressions and differentiated effects of these dimensions.

Conclusion

By comparing qualitative and quantitative data, this research allowed us to clarify the complex situation of different types of employees of municipalities with regard to PSM.

These results provide theoretical validation elements of the concept of PSM by showing that it is indeed capable of explaining the pro-social behaviour of employees with various hierarchical positions. They also indicate that different hierarchical levels refer to specific configurations of PSM. These results show the complexity of the motivations of public sector employees, like the work on organizational commitment, whose multi-dimensional and multi-target character (employment, organisation, team, business ...) are the result of complex and ambiguous relationships with work.

These results also have a managerial dimension. By showing differences in motivation according to hierarchical position, they argue for a segmentation of human resources management policies in public organizations. They also show the importance of relying on the sense of public service of public employees at all levels of the organization and therefore of devising mechanisms to manage human resources along these lines. On the whole, the literature is poor in comparison with regard to behavioural differences based on hierarchical positions or the manager/non-manager distinction (some exceptions: McMahon & Ivancevich, 1976; Campbell & Campbell, 2003; Siu & Lam, 2009; Murphy, Gisbon and Greenwood, 2010). This is doubtlessly due to the "academic division" that has long led sociologists of work to focus on surveys on populations at the bottom of the social ladder, while management researchers concentrate more on the expectations and attitudes of managers.

However, the limits of this work also need to be pointed out. One of the limitations of our study lies in the intercultural differences of the conceptualisation of the status of manager, and in particular, in the criteria for determining category membership. In addition, certain aspects of PSM (mainly affective dimensions) have a structurally strong bias towards social desirability. It should be possible to assess the extent to which the different categories of public employees are sensitive to this bias in the way they respond to a questionnaire and an interview. Finally, the analysis of PSM was performed only in the context of towns. These results could usefully be compared with those of research conducted in contexts closer to the heart of public service model, such as the State Civil Service

REFERENCES

Arendt, H., (1983) *Condition de l'homme moderne*, Calmann-Lévy, 1961, 1983.

Blank, R. (1985). "An analysis of workers' choice between employment in the public and private sectors", *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, *38*, 11-19.

Bright, L. (2005). « Public Employees With High Level of Public Service Motivation. Who are they, Where are They, and What do They Want? » *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 25(2): 138-154.

Camilleri, E. (2007). « Antecedents affecting public service motivation», *Personnel Review* 36(3): 356-377.

Campbell, D.J. et Campbell, K.M. (2003), « Global versus facet predictors of intention to quit: differences in a sample of male and female Singaporean managers and non managers » , *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol 14(7), 1152-1177

Cartier M., Retière J. N. et Siblot Y (2010), *Le salariat à statut,* Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 326 p.

Clot Y. (2010), Le travail à cœur, pour en finir avec les risques psychosociaux, La Découverte.

Corteel D. (2010), « Devenir éboueur à la ville de Paris et s'en accommoder. Eléments d'analyse des combinaisons possibles du métier et du statut », dans Cartier M., Retière J. N. et Siblot Y (2010), *Le salariat à statut,* Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 326 p.

DeHart-Davis, L., Marlowe, J. et Pandey, K.S. (2006), « Gender Dimensions of Public Service Motivation », *Public Administration Review*, vol. 66, n° 6, p. 873-887.

Desmarais C. (2011), *La naissance du manager*, rapport de recherche pour l'agence d'objectif de l'IRES, CFE-CGC, janvier 2011.

Emery Y (2012), « La diversité des motivations des employés du public », *RFAP*, n°142, p 491-515.

Emery Y. et Giauque D. (2012), *Motivations et valeurs des agents publics à l'épreuve des réformes*, Presses de l'université de Laval, 298 p.

Gabris G.T. and Simo G. (1995), «Public sector motivation as an independent variable affecting career decisions», *Public Personnel Management*, 24, 35-51.

Giauque, D., Ritz, A., Varone, F., Anderfuhren-Biget & Waldner, C., 2011, La mise en contexte de la motivation à l'égard du service public. Comment concilier universalisme et particularisme, *Revue Internationale des Sciences Administratives*, Vol. 77(2), p. 223-249

Grants A. (2007), « Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference», *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 393–417.

Hondeghem, A. et Vandenabeele, W. (2005), Valeurs et Motivations dans le service public, Perspective comparative, *RFAP*, n°115, p 463-480.

Hugues E. C. (1996), *Le regard sociologique*, Collection Essais.

Kim, S. (2009), "Revising Perry's Measurement Scale of Public Service Motivation", *American Review of Public Administration* 39: 149-163.

Kim S., Vandenabeele W., Wright B. E., Andersen L.B., Cerase F.P., Christensen R. K, Desmarais C**.,** Koumenta M., Leisink P., Palidauskaite J., Pedersen L. H., Perry J. L., Ritz A.,

Taylor J., De Vivo P. (2013), "Investigating the Structure and Meaning of Public Service Motivation across Populations: Developing an International Instrument and Addressing Issues of Measurement Invariance", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART)*, Jan, Vol. 23 Issue 1, p79-102.

Manolopoulos D. (2008), "Work motivation in the Hellenic extended public sector: an empirical investigation", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* Vol. 19, No. 9, September, 1738–1762.

Maslow, A. H. (1943), "A theory of human motivation", *Psychological Review,* Vol 50(4), Jul.

McMahon, J.T. & Ivancevich,J.M. (1976), « A Study of Control in a Manufacturing Organization: Managers and Nonmanagers », *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol 21, 66-83

Moynihan D. P. & Pandey S. K. (2007), «The Role of Organizations in Fostering Public Service Motivation». *Public Administration Review*. 67(1): 40-53.

Murphy E.F., Gisbon, J.W. & Greenwood, R.A. (2010), « Analyzing Generational Values Among Managers and Non-Managers for Sustainable Organizational Effectiveness », *SAM Advanced Manager Journal*, Winter 2010, 33-55

Naff, K.C. and Crum, J. (1999), «Working for America: does public service motivation make a difference? », *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 5-16.

Pandey S. K. et Stazyk E. C. (2009), « antecedents and correlates of Public Service Motivation », dans Perry J. et Hondeghem, A. (2009), *Motivation in public management. The call of public service*, Oxford University Press.

Perry, 1996, Measuring Public Service Motivation: An Assessment of Construct Reliability and Validity, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 6(1) : 5-22

Perry, J. (1997). «Antecedents of public service motivation». *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 2, 181-197.

Perry, J.L. and Porter, L.W. (1982), "Factors affecting the context for motivation in public organizations", Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 89-98.

Perry, J.,&Wise, L. (1990). "The motivational basis of public service". *Public Administration Review*, *50*, 367-373.

Rainey, H.G., 1982, «Reward Preferences Among Public and Private Managers: In Search of a Service Ethic», *American Review of Public Administration* , 16 : 288-302

Siu, N.Y.M. & Lam, K-C.J., (2009), « A Comparative Study of Ethical Perceptions of Managers and Non-Managers » *Journal of Business Ethics*, (167-183).

Steijn B. (2006), *Over ambetenaren en hun arbeidsmotivatie, Bestuurswetenschappen*, 60 (6), 444-466.

Vandenabeele, W. (2007), "Towards a public administration theory of public service motivation : An institutional approach", *Public Management Review*, 9 (4), 545-556.

Wright, Bradley E. 2008. Methodological Challenges associated with Public Service Motivation Research. In *Motivation in Public Management*, edited by James L. Perry and Annie Hondeghem, 80-98. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix:

Box n°1 : Scale used in the quantitative study

APS 1. I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community 2. It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems 3. Meaningful public service is very important to me 4. It is important for me to contribute to the common good
CPV 1. I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important 2. It is important that citizens can rely on the continuous provision of public services 3. It is fundamental that the interests of future generations are taken into account when developing public policies 4. To act ethically is essential for public servants
COM 1. I feel sympathetic to the plight of the underprivileged 2. I empathize with other people who face difficulties 3. I get very upset when I see other people being treated unfairly 4. Considering the welfare of others is very important
SS 1. I am willing to risk personal loss to help society 2. I believe in putting civic duty before self 3. I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society 4. I would agree to a good plan to make a better life for the poor even if it costs me money.

Table 8 : ANOVA with one factor (Status) for PSM and its 4 dimensions (aggregated variables) for the 10 national samples

		Total of the squares	Ddl	Average of the squares	F	Meaning
APS	Inter-groups	7,005	3	2,335	,553	,646
	Intra-groups	9785,972	2317	4,224		
	Total	9792,977	2320			
CPV	Inter-groups	44,043	3	14,681	3,852	,009
	Intra-groups	8827,602	2316	3,812		
	Total	8871,644	2319			
COM	**Inter-groups**	**287,991**	**3**	**95,997**	**18,700**	**,000**
	Intra-groups	11817,668	2302	5,134		
	Total	12105,658	2305			
SS	Inter-groups	122,018	3	40,673	4,708	,003
	Intra-groups	19998,383	2315	8,639		
	Total	20120,401	2318			
PSM	Inter-groups	856,495	3	285,498	5,463	,001
	Intra-groups	117063,381	2240	52,260		
	Total	117919,875	2243			