

MOTIVATION AND VALUES OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION STAFF

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of public service motivation has been central to the discussion of motivation in the field of public management but has never been studied in international organizations. This paper reports on a preliminary study of motivational issues within the European Commission, including motivation for entry and public service motivation. Based on a survey distributed to the entire staff of the European Commission, supplemented by personal interviews, we demonstrate the importance of public service motivation within the Commission and explore the antecedents of public service motivation, including socio-demographic variables, organizational position, and entry motivation. Results have significant implications for human resources management policy and efforts aimed at motivating staff.

## INTRODUCTION

Research on the European Commission has evolved as the organization itself has grown and changed. But only in this decade has the Commission itself focused seriously on its own management, as it put in place a major reform of its management systems and attempted to change the culture of management within the Commission, an effort that has not been without problems (Bauer, 2008). Students of the EU have

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followed that process, but primarily from a political science perspective, as an example of a successful reform process. (Kassim, 2004 and 2008).

What has been missing until lately is the perspective of public management theory. EU specialists are only recently starting to apply both public management and administrative science approaches (Bauer, 2007), and public management scholars have, until very recently, inexplicably, ignored the existence of international organizations, focusing exclusively on national and subnational governments . This research is an attempt to bridge that gap by examining the issue of motivation of EC staff.

Motivation is, of course, a complex and multidimensional concept. In this paper, we focus on two related perspectives on motivation: motivation for entry (what motivates people to seek out and accept a position within the organization) and public service motivation. Public service motivation research posits that the choice to work in the public or non-profit sectors reflects a set of values, a desire to do work that is socially meaningful and that allows the individual to serve a broader public interest.

While the specific concept of public service motivation has not previously been applied to the European Commission, some scholars have applied closely-related concepts. For example, Hooghe (2001) describes the process of self-selection, sometimes based on a strong personal attraction to “European integration as a momentous and positive development” (52). She also recognizes the tension between more idealistic and instrumental motives of senior Commission officials.

The goals of our research were threefold. First, we aimed to develop a basic measure of public service motivation to ascertain whether this concept was meaningful within the context of the European Commission. Second, we examined

two separate but related measures, entry motivation and public service motivation, as dependent variables and analyzed demographic factors that might predict both entry motivation and public service motivation in individuals. Finally, we used these findings to test some of the conventional wisdom – stereotypes about motivation held broadly both external to and within the EC.

## THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION

Public service motivation refers to the motivation to contribute to society and to the general interest. It has been described as one of the big questions of public management (Behn, 1995). In their seminal piece, Perry and Wise (1990 : 368) for the first time defined public service motivation formally as ‘an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations’. This definition focuses on the unique features of government that might drive individuals perform public service. Brewer and Selden (1998) defined public service motivation as ‘the motivating force that makes individuals deliver significant public service’, whereas Rainey and Steinbauer (1999), who see public service motivation as an important determinant of organizational performance, defined public service motivation as a ‘general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation or humanity’.

A number of authors (mostly non-American) have studied similar motivational concepts without specifically applying the term ‘public service motivation’. While Chanlat (2003) writes about ‘l’*éthique du bien commun* (the common interest ethic)’ in a Canadian context, British scholars talk about the ‘public service ethos’ (Woodhouse 1997; Pratchett and Wingfield 1996). Also in France ( Bodiguel 1986; Kessler 1985), Germany (Hattenhauer 1993), and the Netherlands (van Raaij, Vinken and van Dun 2002), a set of public values has been shown to motivate public servants.

Based on rational, norm-based and affective grounds, Perry (1996) detected four dimensions of public service motivation: attraction to policy making, commitment to the public interest and civic duty, compassion and self-sacrifice. These are general public values that have been corroborated as a basis for public service motivation throughout the Western world (Camilleri 2006; Vandenabeele 2008a), as these cultures share, to some extent, a common Greco-Judean background and have developed similar political cultures and public institutions (Raadschelders 2003). However, Vandenabeele (2008a), has demonstrated another public service motivation dimension, democratic governance, which refers to administrative values in democratic governance systems.<sup>2</sup>

Public service motivation has been shown to relate to job and organizational performance (Naff and Crum 1999; Lewis and Alonso 2001, Kim 2005; Vandenabeele 2009), sectoral and employer preference ( Lewis and Frank 2002; Vandenabeele 2008b), decreased turnover and increased job satisfaction (Naff and Crum 1999), incentive preferences (Rainey 1982) and whistle-blowing (Brewer and Selden 1998).

As this list demonstrates, most of the empirical work on public service motivation has been concerned with the outcomes of public sector motivation, while only a few authors have addressed its origins. The available empirical (Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Perry et al. 2008) and theoretical work (Perry 2000; Vandenabeele 2007; Perry and Vandenabeele 2008) suggest that institutions play an important role in public service motivation development. An institution is defined as ‘a formal or informal, structural, societal or political phenomenon that transcends the individual

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<sup>2</sup> However, due to a different societal evolution, even when translated properly, some items have a different connotation on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, the concept of ‘communities’, at least in the American sense, is unknown in some European countries, because of the religious and political ‘pillarization’ of society. Therefore, the content of public service motivation may differ across regional settings.

level, that is based on more or less common values, has a certain degree of stability and influences behavior' (Peters 2000: 18). Institutions are seen as responsible for the transmission of (public service) values to the individual's identity as a member of the institution. These can include, for example, family, school, or religious influences.

In addition to institutional (and organizational) antecedents, Pandey and Stazyk (2008) also distinguish socio-demographic antecedents. These have been used as control variables in multivariate studies (see for an overview, Pandey and Stazyk 2008) or as independent variables ( DeHart-Davis et al. 2006; Perry 1997; Camilleri 2007; Bright 2005). Gender, age, education, minority status or political affiliation have been among the most frequently-cited demographic characteristics which are related to individual public service motivation levels. Education has probably the most robust correlation with public service motivation (Pandey and Stazyk 2008). Education, as an important social institution, plays an important socializing role in public service motivation (Perry 1997 & 2000). Age is also an important demographic antecedent of public service motivation, with older employees generally showing a higher level of public service motivation. Concerning the influence of gender on public service motivation, the current evidence is mixed, according to Pandey and Stazyk (2008). Only with regard to one dimension, compassion, do women consistently report higher compassion levels.

Public service motivation is, of course, not the sole motivation of employees working in the public sector. It is only one of the multiple motives that explain organizational behavior in public service or governmental organizations. The other components of public sector motivation include, among others, job security, retirement pay or pension rights, salary, promotion opportunities and work-family balance. (Lewis and Frank 2002).

Further, an individual's motivations may shift over time or in relation to different behaviors. As Herbert Simon (1976) noted, the motivation to accept a job can be quite different than the motivation that is evoked on a day-to-day basis. However, based upon institutional and identity-based approaches of public service motivation, one can assume that the initial motivation to join affects the motivation for other types of behavior and that the underlying variable is a stable 'public service identity'. This is also related to the discussion of whether public service motivation is something one brings to the organization or whether this type of motivation develops over the course of employment in the organization (Vandenabeele 2008b).

Although there is now a quite large body of research on public service motivation in both the United States and Western European contexts, (Perry and Hondeghem 2008), the focus has remained at the level of national, state or local governments. To date, no research on public service motivation has been done within an international organization. On the one hand, international organizations share many of the characteristics that are found within national or local public organizations, not in the least a mission that is aimed at creating public value. This particular element makes it intuitively easy to relate public service motivation to the work environment of an international organization. On the other hand, there are some characteristics of international organizations which make them markedly different from the typical governance structures found at the national, state or local level, in particular the lack of direct contact with the citizens served or affected by policy. Therefore, although public service motivation can be conceptually linked to international organizations, it is an interesting empirical question whether and how public service motivation is found to operate within this environment.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The data used for this paper were gathered by means of a survey (distributed as a web-based survey) to all employees of the European Commission by DG Personnel and Administration, as part of their annual satisfaction survey. The response rate was 28 percent, resulting in 6950 usable forms. The authors of this paper provided the questions on motivation for this survey.

Public service motivation is one of the main variables of this study. It was operationalized by means of a set of items derived from the instrument developed by Vandenberghe (2008a). Due to space constraints as well as the need to tailor the questions to the work environment of the European Commission, only eight questions could be selected from the 18-item instrument originally developed. Thus, rather than a questionnaire exploring in detail all of the five dimensions developed by Vandenberghe (2008a), we have constructed a composite public service motivation - scale by averaging the score on a select set of public service motivation items in the dataset. Such an approach has been frequently applied in public service motivation research.. Brewer and Selden (2000), Naff and Crum (1999) and Kim (2005) used similar instruments, with one item representing each dimension of public service motivation, apart from the dimension 'politics and policies' (only measured in Naff and Crum 1999). Lewis and Frank (2002) averaged the score of two items ('A job that allows to help other people' and 'A job that is useful to society') to construct a measure of public service motivation.

In our instrument, six items were used to measure public service motivation. However, as the instrument had to fit the reality of an international organization, the dimension 'interest in politics and policy-making' and 'compassion' were not included in this instrument. Questions 1 through 3 measure general public interest, questions 4 and 5 address the dimension of self-sacrifice, and question 6 focuses on

democratic governance. With a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .71, this instrument is sufficiently internally consistent and therefore methodologically sound.

TABLE 1. : Measurement instrument for public service motivation

Items	
Q1.	Serving the European public interest is an important drive in my daily life (at work or outside work)
Q2.	What I do should contribute to the welfare of European citizens
Q3.	To me, serving the European public interest is more important than helping individual persons
Q4.	I am prepared to make important sacrifices for the good of the European Union
Q5.	Making a difference in European society means more to me than personal achievements
Q6.	It is important that officials account for the resources that are used

In addition to public service motivation, a number of variables were included as possible antecedents of public service motivation or control variables. These include gender, age (measured in categories, due to Commission anonymity requirements), nationality (grouped, for the regression analysis, by region in the EU), DG (grouped for analysis into a policy-coordinating group and an internally oriented group as two extremes and a residual group) and some individual work position characteristics. These were status (type of employment), function group (position within the organization) and whether or not people were in a management position.

TABLE 2 : Demographic characteristics of the sample

Gender	Male	3351	Directorate-general grouping	Internally oriented	1078
	Female	3425		Policy-coordinating	297
				Other	4843
Age group	Up to 29	409	Status	Permanent civil servant	5193
	30 to 39	2037		Contract agent	1034
	40 to 49	2572		Temporary	324
	50 to 59	1438		Seconded national expert	175
	60 and older	197		Trainee	50
Region	North	3284	Function group	AD	2877
	South	2099		AST	2580
	CEE1*	517		CA FG I	92
	CEE2	102		CA FG II	281
	CEE3	149		CA FG III	230
				CA FG IV	353
Management position	Non-management position	6081	Other	124	
	Management position	695			

\* CEE1 countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia; CEE2 countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania; CEE3 countries: Romania, Bulgaria.

Finally, a question was included that inquired about people's initial motivations to join the European Commission. Three of the responses provided for this closed-ended question can be conceptually linked to public service motivation ('I am committed to building Europe', 'I wanted to be able to shape European policy' and 'I had strong interest in a specific policy area'), whereas one was of interest because it was, as a self-interested motive, the opposite of public service motivation ('The remuneration and the benefits are good'). These items will be able to cast a light on the stability of public service motivation throughout time and the debate on whether public service motivation originates from pre- or after entry processes.

Although the survey items are ordinal in nature, the data will be analyzed by means of OLS regression. This is a common practice, as OLS is robust when sufficient categories are used (which is the case for the composite public service motivation instrument) and even preferable, as OLS results are easier to interpret. Also, it is easier to develop a hierarchical regression model with OLS.<sup>3</sup>

A hierarchical regression analysis enables to assess the effect of the independent variables which are entered in each step of the analysis. In order to do so, the additional  $R^2$  found above the  $R^2$  of the previous step is statistically tested by means of an F-ratio (Hatcher and Stepanski 1994). At each step of the analysis, independent variables are entered in sets. These sets are based upon their relation to a particular conceptual variable. The order in which the sets are entered in the analysis should reflect the presumed causal priority (in particular the temporal ordering) and the research relevance (Cohen and Cohen 1983).

The analysis of the survey data is supplemented, where appropriate, with responses to open-ended questions in face-to-face interviews conducted by one of the

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<sup>3</sup> Moreover, a test where the final step (step 3) of the hierarchical regression was tested in a logistic regression model revealed no substantial differences with regard to the conceptual variables. However, for temporary employees, the p-value was slightly above the .05 threshold (.079).

authors with 70 staff members of the European Commission in three DGs, Environment, Regional Policy, and Single Market and Services, from 2006 through 2008 as part of a research project focusing on the impacts of enlargement and of the Kinnock reforms on organizational culture and management style in the Commission.<sup>4</sup>

We begin our analysis with an examination of the motivation for entry and then turn to the analysis of public service motivation.

#### MOTIVATION FOR ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Research on the recruitment and hiring process makes clear the importance of values and motivation for actors on both sides of employment relationship; employers seek new staff who not only bring needed skills and experience but who also share a commitment to organizational values, while individuals seek out organizations with values congruent with their own (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The degree of person-organization fit on values is therefore seen as affecting both the organization's ability to attract desirable candidates and successful outcomes for those hired (Leisink and Steijn, 2008).

TABLE 3 MOTIVATION TO WORK FOR THE COMMISSION

Entry motivation	N	Percent
1 Build Europe	2743	39.5
2 Shape Eur. Policy	795	11.4
3 Specific policy area	622	8.9
4 Work in int'l org.	4148	59.7
5 Work is challenging and interesting	2310	33.2
6 Career enhancement	2203	31.7
7 Natural progression	687	9.9
8 Salary/benefits	3472	50
9 Personal/family	1378	19.8
N= 6950		

<sup>4</sup> More information on this research can be found at <http://carolynban.net>.

As table 3 shows, employees of the EC (including both permanent officials, temporary staff and contract agents, and detached national experts), report a range of motivations. As respondents could choose up to three responses, the responses total well over 100 percent. Motivations for entry can be seen as more altruistic or more instrumental. A response such as “I am committed to building Europe” would be classed as highly altruistic, while responses such as “the remuneration and benefits are good,” or “for personal or family reasons” are clearly more instrumental.

Some responses are difficult to categorize in this way. While the desire for interesting and challenging work is not specifically altruistic, it can be considered an intrinsic motivation, unlike a focus on salary and benefits. Similarly, almost two-thirds of those responding to the survey cited the desire to work in an international organization as one of their reasons for entering, a finding that is hardly surprising, since someone who did not find such a work environment appealing would not have been likely to self-select (i.e., to apply), and since the *concours* (the test for entry), which is highly competitive, clearly favors individuals who already have international experience and will thus adapt easily to the EC’s work environment (Ban,2008). But without context, this response is difficult to categorize as either altruistic or instrumental.

If we combine the first three responses, we see that almost 60 percent of respondents gave as one of their choices a more altruistic reason for entering, while 42% saw working for the EC as a way of advancing their career, or as a natural progression from their studies, and half identified the salary and benefits as one of the attractions. Finally, about 20 percent came for personal or family reasons. In sum, more people identified either altruistic motives or the desire to work in an international environment than salary or benefits. This sheds light on the debate over

whether people develop a public service motivation through earlier socialization or whether it is nurtured within the organization. It is clear that, for many of those working within the EC, these values contributed to their desire to work within the European institutions.

An examination of the responses to an open-ended question in personal interviews provides us with a more nuanced view of the dynamics and interrelationships of these motivations. First, when responding to an open-ended question, a smaller percentage of people volunteered that salary and benefits were an important motivation for them. This may, of course, be a social desirability bias, i.e., some people may see this as an inappropriate response. Second, most people had mixed motives, even those who entered with strongly altruistic values. In the following, we see, in fact, an interplay of virtually the full range of responses:

[I entered for] several reasons. One, I think it's typical of the people I would characterize as of the old guard, because actually I still believe in the European ideal., but secondly, there are not many departments where I could have worked, from the point of view of my background. And Environment was *the* place I wanted to be. And thirdly, once you are in here, it is one of the most stimulating places you could possibly work in the world. And I think if any commission official doesn't also mention the salary, then they are lying. I think that still is my motivation. I think [for] a significant number of the colleagues I meet in the commission and from other DGs, there is still a high degree of idealism and motivation in the commission services. [entry date 1986.]

Age and length of service both have some effect on entry motivation. It is not uncommon to hear within the Commission that the younger generation is just not as

idealistic as the old-timers, a stereotype that is shared by the respondent quoted above. Since some quite senior people are recent arrivals, as a result of enlargement, length of service should be the better measure of whether the “old guard” holds different values, but the measure used by the Commission uses categories that are not ideal for this analysis, as they end at “more than 15 years” of service,” so we have also included here the analysis by age, which breaks out those older than 60. An examination of the two helps shed light on changing motivation.

Table 4a: Entry level motivation by years of service

Entry motivation	TOTAL	< 1yr	<2 yrs	2-4 yrs	5-7 yrs	8-10 yr	11-15	>15
1 Build Europe	39.5	36	36	39	39	38	42	42
2 Shape Eur. policy	11.4	12	13	12	12	13	12	9
3 Specific policy area	8.9	12	12	10	8	10	9	6
4 Work in int'l org.	59.7	55	61	60	35	38	64	56
5 Work is challenging	33.2	37	32	35	35	32	33	32
6 Career enhancement	31.7	43	40	32	29	28	28	29
7 Natural progression	9.9	13	11	11	10	10	9	7
8 Salary/benefits	50	40	42	47	49	52	53	41
9 Personal/family	19.8	22	24	21	23	20	16	18

Table 4b: Entry motivation by age

Entry motivation	TOTAL	to 29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
1 Build Europe	39.5	36	38	39	41	51
2 Shape Eur. policy	11.4	12	12	11	11	12
3 Specific policy area	8.9	11	9	9	9	14
4 Work in int'l org.	59.7	53	62	62	56	48
5 Work is challenging and interesting	33.2	33	32	34	33	32
6 Career enhancement	31.7	45	34	30	29	27
7 Natural progression	9.9	21	14	8	5	8
8 Salary/benefits	50	45	48	51	56	48
9 Personal/family	19.8	11	20	21	22	24

First, an examination of the number saying that they entered because they

wanted to participate in building Europe finds a moderate difference by years of service, but a much sharper difference by age, especially among the oldest group; among those over 60 still working, over half identify building Europe as a reason for joining. On the other hand, those who are younger and recently hired are more likely to say that career enhancement was a motive for joining the European Commission. Of course, one needs to be aware of the questionable accuracy of recall data, especially over a long period of time, but, taken together, this is moderate support for the hypothesis that entry motivation of new staff has changed over time. But we should be careful about interpreting it in this way because in virtually every study of motivation, there is a generational effect, with older employees identifying with more idealistic values. Whether this is a natural function of aging or a generational effect is not clear, but the findings in the Commission are in line with previous research in national governments. It is also interesting to note that salary and benefits were not ranked higher by younger or newer staff, who were much more likely than older staff to value working in an international environment.

There is one pattern that emerges, both in the survey results and in the interviews, one that reflects the changing nature of the EU itself. Far from a new experiment, it has become an established organization, the importance of which is well-understood. And this has led to an increasing number of academic programs focusing specifically on EU law, politics and policy, and economics. These programs spread rapidly in the new member states, attracting a significant number of students even before accession and providing a natural feeder group ready to apply for positions in the European institutions (Ban, 2008). In addition, the new member states of central and eastern Europe had large staffs within their governments working specifically on the complex negotiations necessary for admission. So the younger

entrants are more likely to specify that they see working within the Commission as a natural progression, either from their studies or from their working within their government. As one explained:

Well, one thing was the studies. I mean I always wanted to work for the European Union because of languages, because I learned two languages, I wanted to use them and practice; that was when I was smaller. So the idea was already there but for different reasons maybe, and then, well, having studied European politics I was obviously very interested. I did a research thesis on Polish accession negotiations and obviously for a Pole, as for all the new member states, it is a very exciting period of time because it is entering the European and we come as a new wave; and obviously for us being the right age and right situation it was just a great opportunity. So that's why I took the *concours* and that's why I wanted to work in Brussels.

There was a small group (both among those entering before 2004 and, in a very few cases, among newer entrants) who seemed to have fallen into their positions more or less by accident. In fact, one person told me he had entered "By chance. I saw the ads and said "OK, let's try it." Another described this process at more length (both the pull of interesting work and the push of wanting to leave his current job):

It was like many such decisions taken a little bit -- there was a series of events: I wanted to make a move, I knew some people who were working here, and I thought it sounded interesting, and I just happened to see an advertisement for a *concours* for lawyers to come to the Commission. So I thought I would have a go at it, and then it just went on from there really. It's a slow process, and eventually I passed the *concours*, and I wasn't so happy in my job, and we decided to make the move.

TABLE 5 ENTRY-LEVEL MOTIVATION BY FUNCTION GROUP

Entry motivation	TOTAL	AD	AST
1 Build Europe	39.5	46	35
2 Shape Eur. Policy	11.4	19	4
3 Specific policy area	8.9	13	3
4 Work in int'l org.	59.7	58	63
5 Work is challenging and interesting	33.2	37	27
6 Career enhancement	31.7	25	36
7 Natural progression	9.9	14	5
8 Salary/benefits	50	48	58
9 Personal/family	19.8	14	26

Reported reasons for entry vary by function group. This is quite logical, as those in assistant or secretarial positions (AST) will, in reality, have much less direct impact on policy than administrators (AD), who report a higher interest in building Europe, although it is important to note that over one-third of AST do see building Europe as part of the reason for working in the EC. AST, predictably, don't see their roles as shaping policy or working in a specific policy area but, on the other hand, place a higher value on the tangible rewards of salary and benefits. Women also report more instrumental reasons for joining, but this is entirely a function of their organizational role, i.e., of the fact that far more women are in AST positions, where they have little direct policy responsibility.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION

The overall level of public service motivation among European Commission staff is moderately high. The mean score of 3.91 is very similar to or even higher than that found in many national governments (Vandenabeele 2009; Brewer and Selden 2000; Naff and Crum 1999).

*Table 6. Mean scores of PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION (general, gender, age)*

General		3,91
Gender	Male	3,96
	Female	3,87

Age	Up to 29	3,83
	30 to 39	3,86
	40 to 49	3,93
	50 to 59	3,97
	60 and older	3,99

*Table 7. Mean score of PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION (status, function)*

Status	Permanent Official	3,92
	Contract Agent	3,89
	Temporary	3,89
	Seconded National Expert	4,05
	Trainee	3,91
Function	AD	4,04
	AST	3,79
	CA FGI	3,81
	CA FGII	3,79
	CA FGIII	3,87
	CA FGIV	4,00

The differences in the level of public service motivation across different types of positions in the Commission (both the status and the function group) are not large, and they are in the expected direction. As with entry motivation, administrators, as well as contract agents at function group IV (who do work comparable to that of administrators) show higher levels of public service motivation than do those with technical or support staff roles.

*Table 8. Mean scores of PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION (DG)*

OIL	3,67	EAC	3,89	SANCO	3,94
PMO	3,72	ESTAT	3,89	COMP	3,95
TAXUD	3,75	TEN-T EA	3,89	ENTR	3,95
DIGIT	3,77	MARE	3,90	RELEX	3,96
BUDG	3,79	JRC	3,90	MARKT	3,96
DGT	3,79	TREN	3,91	AGRI	3,96
EPSO	3,82	SCIC	3,91	EACEA	3,98
OPOCE	3,83	OIB	3,91	JLS	3,98
ECHO	3,84	AIDCO	3,93	ENV	3,99
IAS	3,85	REGIO	3,94	SG	3,99
EMPL	3,87	COMM	3,94	RTD	4,00
ADMIN	3,88	ELARG	3,94	OLAF	4,02
ECFIN	3,88	INFSO	3,94	SJ	4,03
DEV	3,89	EACI	3,94	TRADE	4,03

There is a moderately high range in responses by DG, with a low of 3,72 and a high of 4,03. DGs and services with internal administrative functions score, on average, somewhat lower than policy-oriented DGs, This may be evidence that public service motivation is inculcated within the organization, as a result of a strong commitment to the mission. This supports previous research , which has shown that organizational culture reflects the mission of the individual DG (Cini, 1997).

*Table 9. Mean scores of PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION (nationality, country grouping)*

Czech	3,60	Estonian	3,85	Italian	3,98	EU-15	3,92
Slovenian	3,63	Hungarian	3,86	Slovakian	4,00	EU-10	3,80
Lithuanian	3,67	Irish	3,91	Swedish	4,00	EU-2	3,92
Finnish	3,71	Romanian	3,91	Portuguese	4,01		
Latvian	3,76	Dutch	3,91	German	4,02		
Polish	3,79	French	3,93	Greek	4,02		
Luxembourgian	3,82	Spanish	3,93	Austrian	4,03		
Belgian	3,83	Bulgarian	3,93	Maltese	4,14		
Danish	3,84	British	3,94	Cypriot	4,24		

If the differences across DGs indicate a socialization effect within the organization, differences by nationality may reflect early learning and differences at the level of national culture, as there is a relatively high range in public service motivation across nationalities, from a low of 3,60 to a high of 4,26. But discerning the patterns here are not easy, given the large number of current member states. There is no clear north-south split on public service motivation. There is, however, some confirmation of the perception that the new staff coming from the Central and Eastern European countries have lower levels of public service motivation, but this is true only for the EU-10 countries (those that entered in 2004), while the new staff from Romania and Bulgaria, the EU-2 countries that joined only in 2007, show responses at the same level as EU-15.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The material above on public service motivation is adapted from the analysis done by the authors for the report on the 2008 Annual Staff Opinion Survey among Commission Staff, forthcoming, European Commission Directorate-General Personnel and Administration.

To gain a more sophisticated picture of the dynamics of public service motivation, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis (see table 10), which enables us to look at the total effect of a range of possible antecedents of public service motivation. A three-step hierarchical model is applied, where in the first step demographic variables are entered, in the second step organizational variables are entered and in third step the motivation for entry is entered.

The results of the analysis in step 1 demonstrate that although the model is significant, the explanatory power of the analysis is very weak, with an  $R^2$  of .01. There are small effects for gender (females tend to score lower), age (older employees tend to score higher) and region (compared to citizens of Northern and Western European countries, inhabitants of the CEE1-countries, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia, score lower).

In step 2, where organizational variables are added, the  $R^2$  is increased to .05. The F-ratio indicates that this is a significant increase in explained variance. Employees who occupy a management position tend to score higher on public service motivation. With regard to the DG in which one is employed, the analysis shows that those employed in an internally oriented DG score lower, whereas employees of policy-coordinating DG's tend to score higher. None of the contract statuses seem to have an influence on public service motivation levels, but compared to the AD staff,

TABLE 10 : Hierarchical regression of public service motivation

Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	$\beta$ (St. err.)	B (St. err.)	$\beta$ (St. err.)
Gender (female)	-0,078 *** 0,017	-0,009 0,018	-0,002 0,017
Age group	0,038 *** 0,010	0,040 *** 0,010	0,040 *** 0,010
South	0,055 ** 0,019	0,041 * 0,019	0,012 0,018
CEE1	-0,084 * 0,034	-0,116 *** 0,034	-0,082 * 0,032
CEE2	-0,115 0,070	-0,157 * 0,070	-0,115 0,066
CEE3	0,069 0,059	0,048 0,059	0,069 0,056
Management position		0,093 *** 0,028	0,071 ** 0,027
Internally oriented DG		-0,119 *** 0,023	-0,079 *** 0,022
Policy coordinating DG		0,081 * 0,041	0,062 0,039
Contract agent		0,001 0,054	0,021 0,051
Seconded national expert		0,078 0,054	0,044 0,051
Temporary		0,044 0,041	0,066 * 0,040
Trainee		0,152 0,105	0,138 0,100
AST		-0,238 *** 0,020	-0,153 *** 0,019
CA_I		-0,182 * 0,084	-0,084 0,080
CA_II		-0,202 ** 0,064	-0,130 * 0,061
CA_III		-0,125 0,068	-0,113 0,065
CA_IV		-0,010 0,064	-0,028 0,061
FG_Other		-0,309 *** 0,059	-0,256 *** 0,057
Building Europe			0,341 *** 0,017
Shape European Policy			0,225 *** 0,026
Interest in specific policy			0,133 *** 0,028
Pay and benefits			-0,121 *** 0,017
N	6485	6485	6485
F	12,82 ***	17,38 ***	46,16 ***
R <sup>2</sup>	0,012	0,049	0,141
Adj, R <sup>2</sup>	0,011	0,046	0,138
F-ratio	-	19,29 ***	173,96 ***

AST, CA I and CAII employees and a residual category score significantly lower. An interesting finding is that the effect of region is enhanced in this step, as CEE2 nations (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) also tend to score lower on public service motivation. The third and last step of the hierarchical model adds an additional .10 to the  $R^2$ , resulting in an explained variance of .14, which is, according to the F-ratio, a significant increase. In this step, the motivation for entry is incorporated in the model. The findings demonstrate that those entering for reasons that are associated with 'Building Europe', 'Shaping European policy' and 'Interest in a particular policy-field' score higher on public service motivation, whereas those who enter for the salary and benefits tend to score lower on public service motivation. Some of the previous effects are controlled for when these variables are entered into the regression, which could point to a mediation effect.

## DISCUSSION

### *Testing the conventional wisdom:*

Conversation between Carolyn Ban and a staff person at the Catholic University of Leuven:

*Ban:* I am here in Belgium studying the motivation of staff within the European Commission:

*Staff member:* (with a sniff) Eh, they make so much money, do they need to be motivated?

As the small interaction reported above exemplifies, the perception among many EU citizens is that the staff of the EC are well paid, probably overly so, and that, of course, it is the salary and benefits that drive people to work for the EC. As we have seen, in all measures of entry motivation, both qualitative and quantitative, salary and benefits are recognized as good, but they are hardly the only reason or even a main reason for coming to work at the EC. Further, if EC staff were primarily "in it for the money," one would expect their levels of public service motivation to be lower

than that of civil servants in national or regional governments, who are paid relatively less, but that is not the case. EC staff show levels of public service motivation that are quite comparable to, or even higher than, those found in governments. As we have seen, many do see coming to the EC as a good career move, but within that broad category are those who are motivated by the challenge of the work and by an interest in taking their work on specific policy issues to a higher level.

There are also two related pieces of conventional wisdom held by many within the Commission itself. The first is that the founders, the early pioneers, were really committed to building Europe, while those entering later are careerists, who don't have the same kind of passion for the institution. Of course, the real pioneers, who entered within the first ten or fifteen years, have all retired and will not show up in this study, but the very oldest group still working, those over 60, have higher levels of public service motivation and are more likely to report that they entered because they wanted to participate in building Europe (although that number is still only barely over 50 percent). But since age has been positively correlated with public service motivation in previous studies, this may not necessarily indicate a serious problem for the organization, as it may indicate that the organization can successfully reinforce public service motivation through socialization that extends through the staff member's career.

The second item of folk wisdom is that salaries are so low in the new member states, especially those in Central and Eastern Europe, that, of course, most people entering as a result of the recent enlargements are, indeed, motivated by the money. This attitude is fairly wide-spread and not at all appreciated, as this senior manager who had recently joined the Commission from a new member state made clear:

The whole sort of unstated attitude is “Oh, you guys are living on 200 Euros a month and so you should be so incredibly happy and lucky, and put up with any administrative abuse because we are so well compensated.” Well, I took a pay cut to come here, and from a long-term perspective, a very significant cut. So there is no sugarcoating of that for me... This whole sort of attitude, you hear it from my people day in and day out; they have all been brainwashed into it.

In fact, our data do not support the hypothesis that those entering from the new member states are attracted primarily by the high salaries.. While more recent entrants are more likely to report that they entered to enhance their careers, they are not more likely than earlier entrants to focus specifically on salary and benefits. And they are clearly more likely than those with longer seniority to be motivated by the desire to work in an international organization.

An understanding of public service motivation is useful not only for testing some of the “conventional wisdom” within the Commission but, more importantly, for enhancing its management. Over the past five years, the Commission has undergone a major reform of its management systems (Hussein 2008), and the European Personnel Selection Office is currently making significant changes in the competition, i.e., the testing process used to select staff for the European institutions (Ban, 2008a ). And the Secretary General recently appointed three committees to examine further modernization of the management of the Commission, one of which, headed by Jörgen Homquist, Director General of DG Single Market and Services, was charged with looking at issues of motivation in the Commission. While the report of the committee has never been released, a summary of the three reports was recently published by *Graspe* (2009) An understanding of public service motivation can lead

to better selection processes that can identify the candidates with desired values and to a more effective approach to both feedback and incentive systems.

In sum, public service motivation is a useful conceptual tool in international settings as well as in national and subnational governments and NGOs. In future research, we will examine public service motivation as an independent variable, looking at its effects on such attitudes and values as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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