4 The Art of Motivating Public Employees in Practice: Lessons from and for Public Administration Research

What can we learn from scholarly works about motivating public employees in practice? We address this question in two steps. Based on our systematic literature review, we, first, review lessons for practice from public administration scholarship. We focus on major lessons – that is, lessons which at least five studies have referred to. The review will lay out several lessons for practice *and* gaps in lessons for practice. On several motivators in our typology – in particular, non-pecuniary incentives, relatedness, task enjoyment and warm glow – public administration scholarship provides fewer insights to practitioners. In a second step, we thus draw selectively on lessons from studies in other disciplines – in particular, economics, psychology and business studies – to both flag lessons for practitioners for these remaining motivators and underscore missing areas of research in public administration scholarship.[15] To enable meaningful insights for practitioners, we discuss each lesson with an illustrative example which showcases how the lesson works in practice.

One important caveat is due. Our literature review revealed that the inferences scholars draw for practice do not always map onto their findings about the determinants of public sector work motivation. For instance, while a large number of studies underscore the importance of pay for attracting and retaining motivated staff, pay levels rarely feature in recommendations for practice by scholars. Readers interested in practitioner implications may thus wish to read this section in conjunction with the conclusion of Section 3.5 for a more complete understanding of the explicit *and* implicit lessons for practice from public administration research.

4.1 Lessons from Public Administration Scholarship

Lesson 1 Ensure that human resource management practices – including recruitment, pay, training and job design – foster public service motivation

Underlying motivator(s): PSM, plus organizational commitment and intrinsic enjoyment

Starting in 1987, one of Brazil's then-poorest regions – Ceara – hired 7,300 health workers to provide preventive health care to young families, including

[17] Given the magnitude of this literature in other disciplines, we, by necessity, limit ourselves to drawing on selective insights.

vaccinations, prenatal care and oral rehydration. On the face of it, the programme was a control nightmare: unskilled workers, spread across the countryside over a territory the size of France, were seemingly poorly incentivized, being paid minimum wages on temporary contracts. Shirking and moonlighting of workers was thus a natural expectation. Yet, the opposite occurred. Health workers visited 850,000 families every month (65 per cent of the state's population) and went above and beyond their job description, starting – for instance – health campaigns in their communities. The programme ended up winning Latin America's first UNICEF prize for child support programs. Why did hardly supervised temporary unskilled health workers on a limited pay in a region replete with poverty go above and beyond? One answer lies in how the programme staged the hiring process of workers to foster public service motivation. Workers were hired in town events with both individual interviews and group meetings. In these meetings – on which local citizens frequently eavesdropped – the state selection committee repeatedly told applicants that 'this program is yours, and it is you who will determine its success … [Y]our community does not have to lose so many of its babies'. They also signalled to applicants that being hired is an 'honour' which 'had proven their commitment to the community' (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994, p. 1777). In front of their whole communities, employees were thus socialized in public hiring events into PSM and public service prestige, motivating them to work hard for their communities.

This example underscores the first – and most frequently mentioned – lesson from public administration research about how to enhance work motivation in the public sector: ensure that human resource management practices foster public service motivation. The foremost recommendation (fifty-nine studies) is to ensure that public sector organizations attract and select candidates to the public sector with high public service motivation. This is followed by generic recommendations to incorporate PSM in human resource management practices (thirty-two studies); recommendations to rely on traditional – rather than performance-related – pay schemes to avoid crowding out PSM (thirty studies); recommendations to train employees in public service values and, more generally, create public service-oriented organizational cultures (eighteen studies each); recommendations to design jobs for public service-motivated employees (thirteen studies), including – in particular – enabling (street-level) bureaucrats to meet with beneficiaries of their work (twelve studies).

These recommendations are intuitive: individuals who are motivated to serve the public – because of selection, training or job design, for instance – are more motivated to work hard in the public sector. They are also aligned with the typology we developed in Section 2. More importantly, they matter for

practice: PSM often does not feature prominently in public sector human resource management practices, such as how governments recruit staff (Christensen et al., 2017).

While this lesson matters for practice, unfortunately, public administration research remains often vague about *how* public sector organizations can effectively incorporate PSM into human resource management practice. Robust evidence for *how* public sector organizations can effectively select candidates with high PSM, for instance, is largely missing. To attract high PSM applicants, organizations may project public service-oriented missions and images and advertise job descriptions which make these public service missions salient to applicants. In fact, eleven studies recommend stressing public service values in human resource marking and branding. As in the Ceara example, they may, of course, also seek more creative ways to attract and socialize candidates into PSM (Tendler & Freedheim, 1994). To select high PSM applicants in turn, organizations may score resumes based on PSM – for instance, by gauging extracurricular behaviour – and inquire in interviews about PSM-related critical incidents; they may try to also 'select out' low PSM applicants by trying to provide a realistic portrayal of the job and its public service nature in interviews (Christensen et al., 2017). Hard evidence that any of these practices are effective is limited, however. In a recent field experiment with the police in the United States, for instance, Linos (2018) found that job advertisements which emphasize PSM are *not* effective at attracting high PSM applicants – plausibly as prospective applicants are already aware of the public service-oriented nature of public sector jobs. Public administration scholarship thus provides stronger evidence on the importance of incorporating PSM into human resource management practices than on *how* organizations can do so effectively.

The same conclusion applies, with two important caveats, to other HRM practices as well. Robust evidence on how to train public servants to enhance their public service values or how to create high PSM organizational cultures, for instance, is largely lacking. Public administration scholarship is somewhat more explicit on pay: eschew pay-for-performance in favour of traditional or alternative reward systems. As noted in Section 3, however, empirical evidence on this lesson is more nuanced and pointing to trade-offs. Pay-for-performance may, for instance, curb PSM but nonetheless enhance overall work motivation where the increase in motivation from self-interested incentives outweighs the decrease in motivation from a reduction in PSM.

Lastly, job design is, perhaps, the practice for which public administration scholarship – building on findings in other disciplines (Grant, 2008) –

provides the most specific insights for practitioners. In a field experiment with nurses in a public hospital in Italy, Bellé (2013a) shows that nurses brought in contact with beneficiaries of their work are more motivated to work hard. This puts a premium on job designs which connect employees to their pro-social impact – and thus enhance the significance and meaningfulness employees attribute to their contribution to society. Public sector organizations would thus do well to identify beneficiaries of specific programmes or jobs and create opportunities for direct contact and channels of feedback between employees and beneficiaries – provided, of course, such employee–beneficiary relations may be expected to be positive (see Table 8).[16]

Table 8 Human resource management practices to foster PSM

Managerial action	Freq.
Consider a candidate's public service motivation in selection decisions	62
Use public service motivation-specific management practices	32
Eschew pay for performance in favour of traditional or alternative reward systems[17]	30
Create public service-oriented organizational cultures	18
Train staff in public service values	18
Design jobs for public service-motivated individuals and assign them to such jobs	15
Incorporate contact with beneficiaries in job design of street-level bureaucrats	13
Stress public service values in human resources marketing and branding	11
Inform job applicants about organizational culture, so they can assess a fit with their personal values	1
Assess compatibility of applicant beliefs and values with organization before hiring	1

* Multiple classifications per study were possible.

Sources: Our own review and Ritz et al. (2016).

[16] 'Beneficiary' contact with, for instance, tax frauds for tax officials or neighbourhoods disdaining the police for police officers may, of course, backfire and reduce PSM instead.

[17] As a caveat, ten studies also recommend implementing, in the broadest sense, NPM reforms to enhance PSM. Such reforms tend to comprise pay-for-performance schemes.

Lesson 2 Define and communicate a clear mission for your organization, set individual goals and tasks related to this mission, and show employees how their goals and tasks help mission attainment

Underlying motivator(s): organizational commitment, plus PSM and intrinsic enjoyment

In 1961, President Kennedy gave the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) one overarching mission: to put a man on the moon and return him safely to Earth before the end of the 1960s. When he visited NASA headquarters that year for the first time, he met a janitor who was mopping the floor late in the day. When asking him what was he doing mopping the floors so late, the employee replied that he was working late because he was helping to put a man on the moon. What NASA had thus achieved was that, down to the lowest levels of the organizational echelon, members of the organization understood the mission of their organization and how their own job tasks helped the organization attain it (Carton, 2018). The resulting greater commitment to their organization (and its goal to put a man on the moon), motivation to serve society (to put a man on the moon) and, potentially, intrinsic enjoyment (due to a greater sense of achievement) can all motivate employees to work harder.

This example illustrates the second lesson from public administration research for practice: define and communicate a clear mission for your organization, set individual goals and tasks related to this mission, and show employees how their goals and tasks help mission attainment. These sets of practices are, of course, central to transformational leadership. As noted in Section 3, transformational leaders create, communicate and instil a vision and sense of mission that helps employees transcend their own self-interests in favour of the organization's goals (Burns, 1978). In line with this reasoning, thirteen studies recommend the adoption of transformational leadership practices more generally. Other studies, instead, recommend specific practices associated with our overarching lesson – these being, sequentially: defining a clear and meaningful organizational mission (four studies recommend this practice); communicating this mission to your employees (twenty-seven studies emphasize the importance of communication); disaggregating this mission into a set of organizational goals and, based on these goals, setting clear individuals goals for employees linked to these organizational goals and mission (seven studies); thereby ensuring that these goals are specific and challenging but attainable (six studies); and, lastly, assigning job tasks which are both challenging and clearly linked to these goals (four studies).

Table 9 Managerial actions to define and communicate mission, goals and tasks for organization and employees

Managerial action	Freq.
Use communication to clarify goals, show how employees can benefit society and highlight organizational fit with the employee	27
Use transformational leadership	13
Set specific and doable but challenging job goals, linked to organizational goals	7
Define and communicate clear roles and goals	6
Assign variety of specific, clear and challenging tasks to employees	5
Set a clear, legitimate, important and feasible organizational mission to be able to align employee duties and values with mission	4

* Multiple classifications per study were possible.

Sources: Our own review and Ritz et al. (2016).

As a result of these steps – and coming back to the NASA example – 'when this connection [referring to the connection between employee tasks and organizational objectives] was strongest, employees construed their day-to-day work not as short-term tasks ("I'm building electrical circuits") but as the pursuit of NASA's long-term objective ("I'm putting a man on the moon") and the aspiration this objective symbolized ("I'm advancing science")' (Carton, 2018).

In public sectors with vague, conflicting and multiple goals, following this recommendation is, of course, easier said than done. The evidence does suggest that it is worthwhile trying, however (see Table 9).

Lesson 3 Provide feedback to employees on 1) performance, 2) opportunities for learning and 3) impact on beneficiaries

Underlying motivator(s): incentives, organizational commitment, PSM and intrinsic enjoyment

Despite being far from the richest area globally, Shanghai has, for several years, topped global rankings for educational attainment in reading, mathematics and science. Observers attribute this outcome in part to the 'Shanghai secrets': a meticulous focus on instructional excellence (World Bank, 2016). One important part of these secrets is constant feedback to help teachers improve. In weekly meetings with mentor teachers, teachers look at how to overcome challenges and improve on their teaching. Moreover, senior teachers frequently – often twenty to thirty times a year – observe junior teachers' lessons to provide feedback. On top, teachers teaching the same subject

observe each other to provide peer feedback (World Bank, 2016). As a result, teachers face both subtle evaluation pressures to improve and, more importantly, constant learning opportunities. This quest for teaching quality has, within a few decades, dramatically improved instructional excellence and student outcomes.

As this example illustrates, feedback can be a powerful tool for organizations to motivate employees in multiple ways. Most obviously, managers – and even peers, as in the Shanghai examples – can use feedback to indicate to employees the extent to which they are meeting or exceeding objectives. In our review of public administration studies, twelve studies explicitly recommend such performance feedback. When providing such feedback, managers should holistically cover the range of goals an employee is to achieve. When managers provide feedback on some goals but not others, employees have been found to improve their performance only on those goals for which feedback has been provided (Locke & Latham, 2002). Feedback can, of course, also enable employees to learn how to improve and grow in their skills and career – thus enhancing their sense of competence, commitment to the organization and intrinsic enjoyment of work. Twelve studies explicitly link feedback to supportive management or enabling leadership. In line with the previous two lessons, feedback can, lastly, also help employees understand their (positive) impact on users and society – thus potentially enhance PSM.

While feedback thus matters for a range of motivators in the public sector, it is not without challenges in the public sector. The aforementioned vague goals complicate numeric feedback on goal attainment. As the Shanghai example illustrates, however, it is far from infeasible. Public sector managers may focus their feedback on qualitative judgements about progress, for instance, together with granular assessments about how well employees are developing their tasks, how their work is impacting others and what they could do to improve further (see Table 10).

Table 10 Managerial actions to increase feedback towards employees

Managerial action	**Freq.**
Provide feedback on performance	12
Provide feedback as part of a supportive management philosophy	12
Provide feedback on how employees' work benefits users	2

* Multiple classifications per study were possible.

Sources: Our own review and Ritz et al. (2016).

Lesson 4 Empower employees by enhancing job autonomy and participation in organizational decision-making

Underlying motivator(s): incentives, organizational commitment, PSM and intrinsic enjoyment

When Beethoven, Mozart and other classical composers wrote their pieces, they sometimes left blank spaces in their scores. In these so-called cadenzas, they gave soloists autonomy to play and improvise as they please for part of the piece. With the passage of time, other composers started to fill in these gaps, and orchestras instructed their soloists to follow these scripted cadenzas instead of their own improvisation. As a result, orchestras and conductors gained greater control over the concert experience. At the same time, however, they deprived soloists of the arguably most important moment in a concert to express themselves and shape their orchestra's musical output – or, in other words, of potentially one of the most motivating aspects of their jobs. Orchestras are becoming increasingly cognizant of this and are going back to the roots to empower soloists to improvise as they please (Kramer, 1991; The *Telegraph, 2015*).

As this example underscores, empowering employees can be a powerful motivator, and this is the fourth broad lesson drawn in public administration studies. As detailed in Section 3, empowerment is an umbrella concept which encompasses involvement in decision-making, job autonomy and responsibility, skill development, and an ability to express initiative (Petter et al., 2002). Thirteen studies explicitly recommend promoting employee participation in either organizational decision-making as a whole or the setting of goals and strategies more particularly. Four studies recommend enhancing employees' job autonomy – that is, greater freedom and discretion over work method (procedures and methods of one's work), work scheduling (sequencing and timing of tasks), and, at times, even work criteria (indicators/standards used to gauge quality of work) (cf. Breaugh, 1985). Lastly, three studies explicitly refer to empowerment through skill development and coaching for performance – for instance, through leadership assignments.

While empowerment can thus powerfully shape motivation, it is often not easy to implement in public sectors. Job autonomy runs counter to requirements for procedural controls in public sector organizations. Employee participation in organizational decision-making in turn runs counter to traditional top-down hierarchical organizational structures. Managerial resistance to employee empowerment can also come from legitimate concerns with unintended consequences in contexts in which employee goals diverge from organizational goals. Greater autonomy for corrupt employees might, for instance, motivate

Table 11 Managerial actions to empower employees

Managerial action	Freq.
Promote employee participation in organizational decision-making	8
Promote employee participation in setting goals and standards	5
Enhance employee job autonomy	4
Create opportunities for advancement and skill development through, e.g., leadership placements and opportunities to share opinions	3

* Multiple classifications per study were possible.
Sources: Our own review and Ritz et al. (2016).

them to work hard towards private enrichment. Similarly, shared strategic decision-making might lead to courses of action which prioritize employee welfare over organizational goals. Employee empowerment may thus intuitively require concurrent or prior managerial actions to enhance PSM and organizational commitment in employees to avoid backfiring (see lessons 1 and 2). Public administration scholarship is largely mute on – and thus unable to provide guidance – these nuances (see Table 11).

Lesson 5 Ensure that rules and procedures are effective and have a clear purpose which employees are aware of

Underlying motivator(s): intrinsic enjoyment, organizational commitment, PSM

Police officers join the police to fight crime. In many jurisdictions, however, they – in fact – spend little time on that. One UK government report finds that one-third of the time of police officers is spent on excessive bureaucracy. To cite just a few examples: nine officers have to supervise when a student constable investigates a burglary. If officers need to watch a suspect through a window, they need to fill out a 16-page form. And whenever officers make arrests, they need to enter the suspect's details in four or more separate databases (*The Telegraph*, 2010). This level of red tape impairs police work, which 'had become risk-averse, record keeping too elaborate and officers had been put in a position where their roles were too rigid to respond – particularly to pleas for help from the public'. Unable to help citizens in need and spending significant time on paperwork, police officers become increasingly de-motivated. Some local police forces have responded by drastically cutting red tape. The Staffordshire police, for instance, gave much greater discretion – and fewer rules – to police officers dealing with anti-social behaviour. Rather than having to write detailed reports which were then sent on to court, police officers were

granted discretion to judge cases themselves. The result was a happier and more motivated workforce and a rise in the level of confidence in the police service by the general public (*The Guardian*, 2009).

As this example illustrates, and as detailed in Section 3, red tape – excessive levels of bureaucratic procedures which are redundant, time-consuming and/or hindering effective policies and management – can de-motivate public employees by hindering results achievement and requiring employees to make significant time and resource sacrifices to ensure compliance. Seven public administration studies thus explicitly recommend cutting red tape or clarifying rules which are perceived as unfair by public employees.

Note, though, that reducing red tape can, but need not, mean fewer rules. Rather, it means designing rules that are helpful – or what DeHart-Davis (2009a) calls green tape. Green tape means written rules which help attain desired outcomes (that is, they have valid means–ends relationships), employ optimal control (correctly balancing control and discretion), are consistently applied and have purposes which are clearly understood by employees. Green tape can motivate employees by enhancing perceived 'accountability and legitimate authority (promoted by written rules), the wise use of public resources (advanced by valid relationships between rule means and ends), managerial efficiency (facilitated by optimal control), fairness in the distribution of public resources (assisted by consistent rule application), and transparency (furthered by stakeholder understanding of rule purposes)' (DeHart-Davis, 2009a, p. 376).

In line with this logic, employees are more prone to follow 'green tape' rules (DeHart-Davis, 2009b) and more satisfied with their jobs in organizations with green tape rules (DeHart-Davis, Davis & Mohr, 2015). Motivating public employees thus does not require cutting rules. Rather, it requires managers to design rules that help employees undertake their jobs and, ultimately, the organization achieve its goals (see Table 12).

Table 12 Managerial actions to enhance the use of rules and procedures

Managerial action	Freq.
Reduce red tape	4
Enhance perceived fairness of organization by clarifying rules and procedures, including in appraisal systems	3

* Multiple classifications per study were possible.

Sources: Our own review and Ritz et al. (2016).

Lesson 6 Promote a supportive work environment and culture

Underlying motivator(s): organizational commitment, intrinsic enjoyment and relatedness

In any US Marine base, something curious happens in the lunch canteen: Marines line up in rank order to get food. This rank order, however, is reversed. The most junior Marines eat first; the most senior officials eat last. No rule or command imposes this. Rather, it is part of the Marines' culture. The welfare of the marines comes first. This matters as much in the canteen hall as on the battlefield: no man is left behind (Sinek, 2017).

Creating such supportive work environments which emphasize employee welfare is the final major lesson from public administration research. Eight studies recommend supportive work environments generally. Others recommend more specific management practices, including training programmes which recognize growth needs of staff (fifteen studies); work–life balance and family-friendly policies (seven studies); the promotion of supportive relationships and friendships among employees (three studies); and, lastly, treating employees with respect (two studies) and managing diversity (one study). A diverse range of managerial actions can thus foster supportive work environments, which can enhance employees' feelings of safety and relatedness, affective commitment to the organization and intrinsic enjoyment of work (see Table 13).

In sum, our review of recommendations from public administration scholarship underscores the importance of incorporating PSM in HRM decisions; defining, communicating and aligning clear organizational and individual goals; providing feedback; empowering employees; designing effective rules with a clearly communicated purpose; and promoting a supportive work environment.

Table 13 Managerial actions to promote a supportive work environment and culture

Managerial action	Freq.
Offer training programmes	15
Create a supportive work environment	8
Promote work–life balance and family-friendly policies	7
Foster supportive relationships and friendships among employees	3
Treat employees with respect and dignity	2
Promote diversity management	1

* Multiple classifications per study were possible.

Sources: Our own review and Ritz et al. (2016).

At the same time, public administration scholarship is virtually mute on lessons for practitioners on four other motivators in our typology: warm glow, relatedness at work, non-pecuniary incentives and, to a lesser extent, task enjoyment. In the next section, we draw selectively on illustrative examples from other disciplines – in particular, economics, organizational psychology and business studies – to demonstrate to public administration scholars that these neglected motivators are well worth studying. As a collateral benefit, this Element can thus also provide more holistic guidance to practitioners seeking to motivate public employees.

4.2 Lessons from Other Disciplines for Practitioners and Public Administration Scholars

To showcase the utility of studying practices to enhance the four neglected motivators in our typology – warm glow, relatedness at work, self-interested non-financial incentives and task enjoyment – we present in this last section a lesson on and illustrative example of each. Readers interested in more detail about practices to enhance these neglected motivators are encouraged to consult the cited references.

Lesson 7: Make work (more) fun

Underlying motivator(s): enjoyment

When Andrei Geim and Kostya Novoselov received the joint Nobel prize in physics in 2010, the Nobel Committee emphasized something rather peculiar: how playing in their laboratory at the University of Manchester had enabled the two to make their ground-breaking discovery of graphene. That play enabled this ground-breaking discovery was no coincidence. Their laboratory had an explicit policy to allow researchers to experiment with fun and crazy ideas on Friday evenings in a playful way. What started as a scheme to increase motivation and reduce stress ended up providing the scientific grounds for a Nobel prize (*The Independent, 2013*).

Task enjoyment – including having fun at work – is, as we had argued in our typology, an important motivator. It gives employees positive affective emotions – that is, a feeling of pleasure – which in turn makes employees willing to spend more time at work, work with greater intensity, judge work more favourably and take on more challenging objectives (Wegener & Petty, 1996). Hence, managers should design jobs and organizations in ways that enable employees to have (some) fun at work – which, of course, is more challenging for some tasks than others (Isen, 2000). A large literature in organizational psychology, management and economics has studied the manifold ways through which

organizations and managers can make work (more) fun (see, for example, Seo, Barret & Bartunek, 2004).

By contrast, public administration scholarship has been largely mute on what public sector organizations can do to make work in government organizations more fun. It would do well to fill this void.

Lesson 8 Carefully design self-interested non-pecuniary incentives

Underlying motivator(s): incentives

In World War II, the German Air Force sought to incentivize fighter pilots through both league tables of victories for each pilot and a daily bulletin which recognized spectacular accomplishments (such as a very high number of enemy ships sunk). These accomplishments were broadcast publicly through the radio and press through the German territory and thus provided pilots with a short-term elevation of their status in the eyes of others (though nothing more tangible). How did fighter pilots react to this combination of public recognition of high performance and status competition between pilots? A recent paper in economics finds that the best pilots tried harder, scored more and died no more frequently when their peers were publicly recognized. By contrast, public recognition of peers led average pilots to score few additional victories yet – due to greater risk-taking – die at a significantly higher rate. In conjunction, status competition and public recognition may have thus reduced the German Air Force's overall effectiveness (Ager, Bursztyn & Voth, 2016).

As this example of 'killer incentives' illustrates, non-pecuniary but self-interested incentives – such as status competition, peer pressure and recognition – can shape the motivation of employees in powerful and complex ways. 'Employee-of-the-month' awards, Air Force bulletins or halls of fame in sports are, among many other examples, symbolic rewards which build on a human need for approbation to motivate effort. A large literature in economics and organizational psychology has studied these and other self-regarding non-pecuniary rewards (e.g. Ashraf, Bandiera & Jack, 2014; Chan, Frey, Gallus & Torgler, 2014; Kosfeld & Neckermann, 2011). Their findings underscore the complex effects of non-pecuniary rewards. Some studies, for instance, find that work performance suffers as a result of direct rankings and explicit comparisons with others in the group (e.g. Ashraf, Bandiera & Lee, 2014). As Winston Churchill put it for the example of recognition, "[a] medal glitters, but it also casts a shadow" (cited in Knowles, 2014, p. 215). Others associate non-pecuniary rewards with greater effort (e.g. Chan et al., 2014; Kosfeld & Neckermann, 2011).

Studying the complex effects of such non-pecuniary, self-interested incentives in public sectors is thus well warranted – not least as they offer a potentially cost-effective means of motivating staff in times of budget crises. As evidenced, however, they may also backfire. Public administration scholarship to date, however, provides little guidance on these nuances of non-pecuniary rewards.

Lesson 9 Make your employees feel good about their pro-social impact

Underlying motivator(s): warm glow

'Feel good about yourself – Give blood!' reads an advertisement of the American Red Cross (cited in Andreoni, 1990). This feeling is arguably well warranted. Donating a unit of blood can save up to three lives. Yet, fewer than 5 per cent of Europe's eligible population donates (Costa-Font, Jofre-Bonet & Yen, 2013). Donating blood is thus a pro-social act: donors incur personal costs for a collective benefit. It is, however, also an act of 'impure altruism': donors receive moral satisfaction from donating. That this is so is evidenced in a range of studies. Donors with O-negative blood – most pro-socially valuable, as it is compatible with all blood types – do not donate more than others, for instance (Wildman & Hollingsworth, 2009). If blood donations were motivated by pure altruistic concerns for the welfare of others, O-negative donors should arguably donate more. The American Red Cross ad directly builds on this moral satisfaction motivation – or what we termed 'warm glow' in our typology – to attract donations (cf. Andreoni, 1990).

This 'warm glow' motivator has seen – building on Andreoni's (1990) classic article with almost 5,000 citations – recurrent application to workplace motivation in studies in economics and psychology. By contrast, public administration scholarship has been largely mute on how to enhance 'warm glow' motivation of public employees. This is a relevant omission from both a practitioner and an academic perspective. As 'warm glow' may correlate with PSM, it might bias inferences in PSM studies which do not control for it. Future public administration work may thus wish to pay greater attention to disentangling working hard to help others from working hard to feel good about helping others.

Lesson 10 Make your team members care about each other

Underlying motivator(s): relatedness

When Pep Guardiola took over as coach of FC Barcelona in 2008, he joined a football team which had had limited success in previous years. Four years later, when Guardiola left, the opposite was true: Barça won 14 titles in four years, including two Champions League wins to make Barcelona the top team in Europe. Guardiola thus became the most successful coach in football's recent

history. Among many management practices which spurred this success, Guardiola was renowned for the relatedness and affective bonds he created within his team. One particular measure that he took was to oblige all players and staff members to have lunch together every single working day. By doing so, he helped strengthen personal relations among all players and staff members, building their friendships and enjoying each other's company. It paid off handsomely in performances on the pitch (*The Telegraph, 2012*).

How to strengthen relatedness – lasting emotional connections and feelings of care between team members which make work more pleasurable – has seen a large number of studies in organizational psychology (see, among many, Pavey, Greitemeyer & Sparks, 2012). These underscore that managers can foster relatedness by implementing social activities that break down the organization's hierarchy and communication barriers among employees, allowing them to get to know each other at a deeper, more personal level. As a result, employees feel psychologically safer at work, feeling more comfortable to share their emotions and feelings without fear (Edmonson, 1999). Next to reducing negative affect (such as fear and stress), relatedness also motivates through positive affect: stimulation from interpersonal closeness and communion. With organizations – including in the public sector – relying more and more on teamwork to reach their objectives, managerial practices to strengthen relatedness arguably become ever more important (Cross, Rebele & Grant, 2016). Yet, public administration scholarship has little to say about them to date. It would thus do well to expand research on this final motivator in our typology.

4.3 Towards a More Holistic, Actionable and Robust Study of Public Sector Work Motivation in Public Administration

Motivating public employees is invariably complex. As our typology underscores, employees may be motivated for other- or self-regarding reasons and by the outcomes of their work and the work itself. Our review of public administration studies underscores the panoply of individual-, job-, management- and organizational-level factors which interact to shape these sources of motivation. Of the many determinants and practices that shape public sector work motivation, public administration has paid relatively more attention to practices shaping PSM, organizational commitment and financial incentives. To build a more holistic understanding of public sector work motivation, public administration scholars would do well to study with equal fervour other potential motivators: non-pecuniary rewards, task enjoyment, relatedness and warm glow. This holds all the more as these motivators are likely to gain in prominence in the future of the public sector workplace – with concurrent austerity pressures and greater

market demand for highly skilled employees enhancing retention and motivation challenges.

To provide guidance to practitioners, public administration scholars would also do well to move from the study of more abstract variables to assessing specific, actionable practices. Many recommendations in public administration scholarship run the risk of being perceived as trivial and overly generic to practitioners. To name just two examples, selecting public servants with high PSM or offering training programmes to strengthen perceptions of a supportive work environment does, quite obviously, seem to be desirable. In and of itself, however, these 'lessons for practice' are not actionable. The crux is in *how* governments can select applicants with high PSM or train public servants to enhance their perception of a supportive work environment and, hence, intermittently boost their work motivation. Some recent work has moved towards providing such more actionable evidence and shown that effects are not as straightforward as generic recommendations assume (cf. Linos, 2018). Other works would do well to follow suit to provide practitioner-relevant evidence.

To ensure such evidence is not only actionable but also valid, public administration scholars would also do well to move towards greater methodological rigour. Two concerns stand out. First, the large number of factors affecting public sector work motivation (see Section 3) underscores that cross-sectional observational studies are suffering from a significant risk of omitted variable bias – and thus a risk of not providing valid insights. Yet, inferences in public administration scholarship are overwhelmingly based on this very research design. Moving towards longitudinal and experimental research designs is thus paramount – on top of qualitative works which can provide more granular evidence on how to enhance work motivation. Second, public administration scholars could make leaps by developing a universally accepted and validated measure of work motivation. Contrary to PSM and organizational commitment, no such measure exists; nor are most public administration works relying on creative objective measures used in other disciplines – such as fighter pilot victories. Instead, different public administration works measure work motivation through different (survey) measures, thwarting comparability. Scale development and validation is thus a priority for future research.

In sum, we hope this Element represents, most of all, a call for more holistic, actionable and methodologically rigorous public administration research on public sector work motivation. Public sector practitioners who seek to motivate public employees in times of austerity and future work tasks requiring ever greater self-motivation and commitment would stand to benefit.