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Introduction

Managing for Public Service Performance: How People and Values Make a Difference

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1.1 Introduction

“Managing for public service performance” is a topic that continues to interest politicians, public managers and employees, citizens, and other stakeholders, as well as public management scholars. Just one example of this interest is a study by Thijs et al. (2018) commissioned by the European Union. This study provides a comparative overview of public administration characteristics and performance in twenty-eight EU member states. Its chapter on government capacity and performance deals with topics such as the civil service system and human resource management (HRM), the organization and management of government organizations, and overall government performance. Noting that management matters for public service performance, many studies aim to identify the key factors that contribute to public service performance (e.g. Andrews and Boyne 2010; Andrews et al. 2012; Ashworth et al. 2009; Boyne 2003; Hammerschmid et al. 2016; Pedersen et al. 2019; Walker et al. 2010).

Improving public service performance is an issue, if not increasingly a wicked issue. In many countries across the globe, politicians require public organizations to deal with complex social issues related to globalization, migration, health crises, an aging population, climate change, terrorism, and homeland security. It is up to public servants to deliver on politicians’ promises, to achieve the goals of public policy programs set by governments, and to act responsively to the different stakeholders and complex situations with which they are faced. Classic government bureaucracy does not seem equal to these challenges. Thus, a better understanding of what managing for public service performance means and what it requires from public managers and public servants is essential for the success of public policy programs.

For public administration and management research, “managing for public service performance” is also an important issue that raises essential theoretical and empirical questions. Theoretically, the role attributed to public management has

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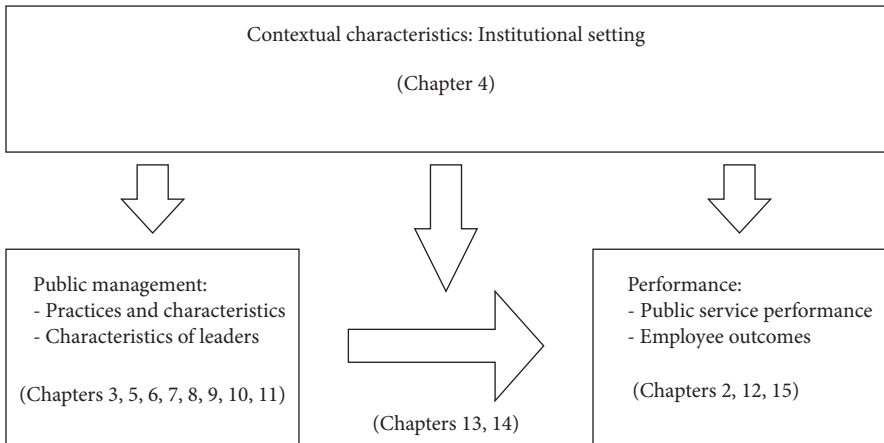


Figure 1.1 Conceptual model of the main concepts examined by the chapters

sparked debate over classic assumptions regarding the politics–administration dichotomy and the public values that (should) guide public servants (Alford 2008; Rhodes and Wanna 2007; 2009). Relatedly, “managing for public service performance” has led to the critical study of the differences between public and private organizations and their implications for management (Rainey 2009). It also raises new issues such as the relevance of context in research (O’Toole and Meier 2015; Pollitt 2013). Empirically, the study of “managing for public service performance” has provided evidence for the positive relationship between management and public service performance. However, the question of *how*, *when*, and *where* management makes a meaningful contribution to public service performance has received scant attention. This question can be framed methodologically: What are the key causal variables which include the key mediating and moderating variables? Addressing this question in either form requires a contextual approach.

The contextual approach in this work draws upon O’Toole and Meier (2015). Contextual variables affect the management–performance relationship, and this is illustrated in our conceptual model (Figure 1.1), which structures our overall study. Johns (2006, 386) defines context as “situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables.” Our aim is to describe these situational opportunities and constraints more specifically. Our ideas of what this context entails, in particular, how it relates to institutional characteristics and how this is relevant to management, are discussed in depth in Chapter 4. The present chapter will focus on how the concept is relevant to how public management affects public service performance.

Despite the steadily increasing number of studies on how public management impacts public service performance, the question of what constitutes public service performance remains contested (Talbot 2005). Public service performance is often

associated with new public management (NPM) because of its focus on results and use of performance management instruments (Andrews et al. 2016; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). Since the mid-1980s, public management reforms across a range of countries in Europe, North America, and Australasia have incorporated an NPM-oriented approach focused on efficiency, results, and innovation. Its distinctiveness from the orientation of classic Weberian bureaucracy is evidenced by the latter's emphasis on hierarchy, compartmentalization, and process, involving legality, rule following, due process, and neutrality rather than outcomes (Kettl 2017; Selden et al. 1999). Thus, the conceptualization of public service performance is an issue in itself.

In addition, how management is understood—the concept and its scope—varies widely. For instance, the Government Performance Project in the US (Ingraham et al. 2003) assumes that government organizations perform well when management runs good management systems. Another line of research focuses on improving leadership (Trottier et al. 2008; Van Wart 2003) and has, to some extent, elaborated on the contribution managers can make to performance through their influence on others. However, public management research has only been modestly interested in how public organizations' human capital can best be managed to achieve organizational goals. Overall, the public management literature has not fully absorbed the findings from the service quality literature (Heskett et al. 1994; Normann 1991; Zeithaml et al. 1990) or the human resource management (HRM) literature (Boxall and Purcell 2016; Jiang and Messersmith 2017), which provides firm evidence on the importance of human resources in delivering, improving, and innovating services.

This summary inspection of the field illustrates that the body of knowledge on “managing for public service performance” consists of contested issues and alternative perspectives, lacks integration, and contains some specific gaps. Thus, the aim of this volume is to clarify the major conceptual and theoretical issues and to provide evidence and commentary on the state of research in this important subject. More specifically, we describe how public managers can manage for public service performance and outline a research agenda, and we point out the practical implications of what we know. We are aware that “managing for public service performance” may convey a modernist assumption of progress through managerial control (Van Dooren and Hoffman 2018), but the aim of this volume is to go beyond this. We argue that there are many different stakeholders with different understandings of what is desirable in public service provision. Put another way, there are multiple public values that compete for attention in public service provision, which creates ambiguity (at best) or conflict (at worst). This latter perspective centering on public values allows us to reflect critically on public management and public service performance.

This chapter maps the field that the chapters in this volume will examine in detail. It does not do so by providing summaries of the individual chapters, but rather by painting a broad-stroke picture of our central argument in order to help the reader navigate through the volume. Section 1.2 elaborates on the contextual approach this volume takes. Subsequently, Section 1.3 describes the characteristics of the public

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sector context from an institutional perspective that pays attention to both public values and structural features impacting public service provision. Section 1.4 describes the empirical scope of our study. Following this, Section 1.5 explores the state of research, concentrating on public management, public service performance, and the linking mechanisms. This will serve to explain the volume's distinctive characteristics in Section 1.6. This section will also explain the ordering of the volume's chapters and topics and summarize their contributions toward answering the main question that motivates this work: How do public managers make a meaningful contribution to public service performance?

1.2 Time and Place of Public Management and Performance: A Contextual Approach

A readily and broadly accepted definition of management is “a process of getting things done through and with people operating in organized groups” (Koontz 1961, 175). Unfortunately, with a history of concentrating on practical outcomes and normative consequences rather than conceptual clarity, public management is less well defined (Hood 1991). The nomological network of the concept entails notions like public administration, public governance, and public policy, which may create confusion about what public management actually is and how it differs from allied constructs. Further ambiguity is often present because many of these scholarly and professional conceptualizations are based upon their particular ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. A history of the field therefore reads like a patchwork of claims about what you can and cannot do or know in this particular domain (Ongaro 2017; Riccucci 2010).

Nevertheless, public management can—based on the above-mentioned concept of management and the extant literature—be understood as the activities aiming to achieve the multiple ends of public organizations. How these ends and public management's role in achieving them are understood evolves over time (Pollitt 2013). Indeed, one illustration is the very introduction of the term “public management” from the 1970s onwards along with ideological changes in society that have increased the dominance of managerialism (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004, 9), at least in some countries in Europe, North America, and Australasia.

Noting that public management reforms aimed at helping or forcing public sector organizations to perform better have swept across many Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and elsewhere since the 1980s, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) pose the question of what broad forces have been at work in driving and constraining change. They propose a heuristic framework that distinguishes socio-economic forces, political pressures, and features of the administrative system itself, which interact and drive or constrain public management reform, with considerable variation between countries. Their approach resembles an open systems perspective, which sees organizations in constant interaction with their environment.

Pollitt and Bouckaert's conceptual model is a useful framework for mapping how the environment currently impacts public management and public organizations. This is illustrated, for instance, by Lodge and Hood (2012), who argue that the key societal changes affecting OECD states consist of multiple austerities, with financial austerity being compounded by population aging and environmental risk. The environment's turbulence creates uncertainties and issues that challenge public management's capacity to achieve public service performance. Examples of such issues and the public management activities they engender are provided by several chapters in this volume, including Chapter 10: "Managing a Diverse Workforce," Chapter 11: "Leading Change in a Complex Public Sector Environment," and Chapter 15: "Managing Employees' Employability."

Pollitt and Bouckaert's study of public management reforms focuses on processes in a longer time perspective. However, the external environment also affects management's activities and impact on performance in a short time perspective. This is a premise of O'Toole and Meier's (2015) theory of how context affects the management-performance linkage. They see context as consisting of industry, sector, and economy-wide factors as well as other normative and institutional structures and regimes (O'Toole and Meier 2015, 238). They develop a public management context matrix that includes the environmental context (with its complexity, turbulence, munificence, and social capital), the political context (with the separation of powers, federalism, process, and performance appraisal as dimensions), and the internal context (including organizational goals, centralization, and professionalization). The hypotheses they develop explain how specific contextual factors will influence public management activities and their contributions to performance.

However, O'Toole and Meier (2015) pay less attention to public values. These can be regarded as an institutional feature of the public sector context, which interact with several other contextual variables. Chapter 4 elaborates on the public sector context as an institutional environment. In our view, institutions are not limited to the features as described by O'Toole and Meier. Rather, institutions are persistent structures situated at various levels above the individual; they are based on common values and influence behavior (Peters 2000). The value component is as important as the structural component, and the interaction between values and structures guides our analysis. "Publicness" is a case in point of an institution that impacts public management. What "publicness" involves varies between settings, and this will be explained by analyzing the public values that are salient in a particular setting.

This perspective on context can also be used to explain this volume's focus on public service in democratic societies. Our institutional perspective is drawn from the literature that mainly comes from and is most relevant in democratic societies. This focus states that characteristics of democratic societies frame—and, in a sense, restrict—our analysis. For instance, the interdependent and complex institutional environment in democratic societies enhances robustness, buffers external shocks, and does not permit sudden top-down policy changes. The normative assumption inherent in liberal democracy—i.e. its explicit attention to stakeholder structures—is that this will likely lead to better performance. We believe that our perspective is

also relevant for systems that do not fully adhere to democratic principles because applying this perspective will facilitate a more complete reflection on the institutional environment and its impact.

1.3 Going Inside the Institutional Perspective: The Public Sector Context

The way in which governments react to societal challenges is dependent on their institutional characteristics and involves their structures and their normative and cultural–cognitive elements. These three elements, which are central to the institutional perspective (Scott 2001), are interrelated. The different modes of governance (Andersen et al. 2012) and reform paradigms (Van de Walle et al. 2016) illustrate this interrelatedness of institutional elements. The structural element is represented by organizational designs, such as hierarchy, market, and network. The normative and cultural–cognitive elements are represented by the particular public values that specify the principles on which governments, governance modes, and policies are based (Bozeman 2007).

Van de Walle et al. (2016) distinguish the Weberian paradigm based upon hierarchy and legality from the NPM paradigm, which emphasizes efficiency, performance, and innovation. They describe NPM as a response, starting with the Thatcher and Reagan governments in the 1980s, to the perceived weaknesses of bureaucratic structures. NPM was mainly concerned with the introduction of market-like mechanisms and business management logic into the public sector. However, NPM has had negative effects in terms of increasing fragmentation, coordination challenges, and a weakened public service ethos that has led to the emergence of a new paradigm. Various labels are used for this new paradigm, which include neo-Weberianism, network governance, and new public governance, and which emphasizes coordination, effectiveness, and outcomes as key characteristics. Van de Walle et al. (2016, 3) observe that the succession of reform paradigms has led to “successive layers of reforms sedimenting within public administrations” and increasing their complexity and variety.

Andersen et al. (2012) aim to link public values to a typology of modes of governance. The four modes of governance they distinguish are: (1) hierarchical governance based on classic Weberian bureaucracy; (2) clan governance based on norms of a relevant group such as a profession; (3) network governance based on balancing interests and including different societal interests in government and policy; and (4) market governance based on the idea of utilizing the market as an allocative mechanism. Theoretically, the literature associates different public values to these modes of governance. Andersen et al. (2012) add to this by asking Danish public managers to evaluate the importance of public values in relation to the governance modes. One important finding is the clustering of public values into seven components: (1) the public at large; (2) rule abidance; (3) budget keeping; (4) professionalism; (5)

balancing interests; (6) efficient supply; and (7) user focus. Another important result is that these value components can be linked to the four governance modes. The values of professionalism and balancing interests are negatively related, indicating that the clan/professional and network governance modes differ most regarding who should decide (the relevant group of professionals versus all societal groups involved). Also, rule abidance and user focus are negatively related, implying a value conflict between hierarchy and the market. Finally, there appear to be value differences between organizations that perform different tasks within the public sector. For example, public managers in regulative/administrative organizations regard rule abidance and balancing interests as more important than public managers in service delivery organizations, who regard professionalism and user focus as more important.

These studies highlight the importance of including the public sector context in our study of managing for public service performance. The public values that inform public service performance may differ significantly between types of organizations and between types of governance modes. Furthermore, the institutional characteristics of certain public sector contexts may enable certain kinds of public management behaviors while constraining others. The kind of publicness of an institutional context is arguably a central feature to take into account, for instance, when studying the relationship between public values and public service motivation (PSM) of employees or the impact of a structural feature such as red tape on the job performance of public employees. What publicness entails in structural, normative, and cultural-cognitive terms is thus part of this study (addressed in Chapter 4).

It is important to recognize that the institutional context is a determinant as well as an outcome of actors' behaviors (Ongaro 2017). On the one hand, the prevailing public values influence the value preferences and actions of the actors, and, on the other, values are (re)produced by actors' actions (Andersen et al. 2012; Vandenberghe et al. 2013). Values seen in this institutional perspective are an important feature of this volume, as signaled by its subtitle "how values make a difference." The other part of the subtitle refers to "how people make a difference." This view resonates with Pfeffer's (1998) emphasis on "putting people first" and can be considered a generic feature of HRM, which holds for the public and private sectors alike. By combining this starting point with "how values make a difference," we aim to highlight the interrelatedness of the important role people play in public service provision and the public sector context.

1.4 Public Services: The Scope of This Volume

The concept of public services refers to services provided, ordered, and/or mainly financed by government for its citizens, corporate actors, and society as a whole. This understanding is related to the structural characteristics that are regarded as distinctive of public organizations (Rainey 2009), namely, government ownership, funding, and political authority/oversight. Typical public organizations, which

exhibit all three characteristics, include government ministries. However, there is institutional variation across countries regarding these criteria, which is illustrated by the example of healthcare: While the National Health Service in the United Kingdom is public according to all three formal criteria, healthcare in the Netherlands is provided by organizations that are legally private bodies charged with a public task.

There are economic and political reasons for having specific kinds of services provided by public organizations instead of by the market (see Rainey 2009). Services are provided by public organizations when these services, once provided, benefit everyone and society as a whole (e.g. national defense and education). Governments also regulate market activities and market externalities when markets themselves are unable or unwilling to do so, such as in the case of the environmental consequences of market activity. In addition, there are political reasons for providing publicly funded services that stem from human dignity or human rights, for instance, in the case of homeless people or asylum seekers.

Thijs et al. (2018, 7–8) use structural criteria when they describe public employment in the EU member states. The broadest concept of public sector employment, labeled as producing “services of general interest,” includes 29.7 percent of the EU workforce and comprises private sector employment in areas such as education and health. A second, slightly narrower concept of public sector employment excludes private sector employment in these areas and covers employment in the three mainly publicly funded sectors of public administration, health, and education. This concept differs from the situation in many non-EU countries where health and education are considered part of public administration. Following this second definition, 25 percent of total employment pertains to public sector employment in the twenty-eight EU member states. The third and strictest definition using the label of “government/public administration” excludes health and education. Government employment represents 6.9 percent of the workforce in the twenty-eight EU member states.

For a look beyond the European Union, we turn to the OECD. The OECD (2017) uses the concept of general government employment, which covers employment in all levels of government (central, state, local, and social security funds) and includes core ministries, agencies, departments, and non-profit institutions that are controlled by public authorities. *Government at a Glance 2017* (OECD 2017) concludes that the size of general government employment varies significantly among OECD countries. Nordic countries such as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden report the highest general government employment levels, reaching almost 30 percent of total employment. On the other hand, OECD countries from the Asian region have low levels of public employment, amounting to only around 6 percent of Japan’s total employment and 7.6 percent of Korea’s total workforce (OECD 2017, 90). Anglo-American countries fall in between, with general government employment representing around 15 percent of total employment. For instance, the US reports 15 percent, Great Britain 17 percent, and Canada 18 percent.

In this volume, we will concentrate on public administration, health, and educational services. Health and education fall within the scope of this work, irrespective of countries' traditions to consider them as part of public administration or as sectors in and of themselves.

1.5 Literature Review: Defining Key Concepts

1.5.1 Managing

The idea of drawing a sharp distinction between leadership and management has been criticized on various grounds. Nevertheless, studies in the field of public management and public service performance tend to concentrate on management or on leadership, and only a few studies try to combine the two explicitly (Andrews and Boyne 2010; Knies et al. 2018b).

Management capacity has been the central independent variable in an influential line of research on government performance (Ingraham et al. 2003). The underlying assumption is that when a government's systems—including capital, financial, information technology, and human resources management systems—work well, the government will be effective and perform well. Putting good management systems in place is regarded as the responsibility of public managers. In addition, public managers need a strong orientation toward performance, including performance-orientated strategic planning and measurement as a basis for policy-making and management. This line of research continues to inform studies of public management and the management systems that are seen as tools to affect performance (Andrews and Boyne 2010; Andrews et al. 2012; Melton and Meier 2017; Nielsen 2014). Many studies in this line of research focus on internal management and individual organizations. Other studies concentrate on boundary-spanning management practices such as networking with external stakeholders and more complex organizational configurations such as implementation structures and networks (e.g. Agranoff 2007; Andrews et al. 2012; Meier et al. 2007; Provan and Milward 2001).

There is also a line of research that understands “managing” as leadership activities. For instance, Andrews and Boyne (2010) combine their interest in managerial capacity with leadership and assume that executive managers' leadership skills help to coordinate management systems and link them to performance. Following Van Wart's (2003) call to study leadership in the public sector context, some studies have examined public managers' leadership styles and described them as transformational or transactional (Jensen et al. 2016), often linking these styles to leadership effectiveness (Trottier et al. 2008) or organizational outcomes (Jacobsen and Andersen 2015; Oberfield 2014; Sun and Henderson 2017). Other leadership studies have developed concepts of public sector leadership (Fernandez et al. 2010; Tummers and Knies 2016), relying to some extent on Yukl's (2012) taxonomy of leadership

behavior. The lack of consensus in the study of managerial and leadership activities is further illustrated by the fact that activities such as setting challenging goals, building trust, and stimulating employee participation are studied as internal management activities by some (e.g. Favero et al. 2016) and as transformational leadership by others (e.g. Jensen et al. 2016).

Knies et al. (2016) note that many studies understand managing for public service performance as referring to activities by executive or senior managers. Studies of middle and frontline managers are rare (Brewer 2005; Knies et al. 2018b). This gap in the public management literature is conspicuous as frontline managers are considered vital in the service management and HRM literatures. The service management literature argues that “at the moment of truth” when the service provider and service customer meet, the skills, motivation, and tools of the frontline employee largely determine whether the expectations of the client will be met (Normann 1991, 16–17; Zeithaml et al. 1990). In other words, service quality is essentially the result of individual or small group performance. Hence, personnel management at the frontline of service delivery is considered a key factor in service performance (Normann 1991). As a consequence, the importance of the frontline manager looms large (Purcell and Hutchinson 2007). In the HRM literature, Wright and Nishii (2013) have elaborated on the role of line managers in a more general sense by distinguishing between intended HRM practices, which refer to the HRM strategy determined by executive managers, and implemented HRM practices, referring to those that are typically applied by line managers. The authors argue that line managers’ implementation is important because it impacts employee perceptions of management intentions and because these perceptions influence employee behavior and ultimately organizational performance.

Taking into account the public sector context, one can understand why lower-level managers have not been studied intensively. The focus of public service practice has not been so much on the individual client or customer but on collective outcomes for citizens and society generally. Furthermore, this latter perspective is the basis of the Weberian bureaucracy model and its adherence to rules and regulations in public service delivery and in internal matters related to finance and personnel management. Given the reliance on rules and procedures, human characteristics and their dynamics were expected to exert very little influence. Some even contended that the very nature of bureaucracy substituted for leadership (Javidan and Waldman 2003). Thus, there was little need or room for an increasing role for line managers as this would conflict with the dominant model of bureaucracy and public personnel management, which was based upon government directives and detailed personnel policy regulations (McGuire et al. 2008; Truss 2008).

Contrary to the selective focus found in much of the current literature, this work will pay attention to both management and leadership activities and combine insights from different disciplines. Chapters 3 and 5 will examine the management and leadership literatures extensively and draw on research from several disciplines. This volume will also study managers at different levels in the hierarchy who are

involved in the public service delivery process. Thereby, we strive for a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution managers make to public service performance, both directly and indirectly through the employees they supervise and through various organizational processes. We will also distinguish between different management and leadership activities because they may contribute to public service performance in different ways (Park and Rainey 2008; Ritz 2008; Vermeeren et al. 2014). An example of different leadership activities can illustrate this point. On the one hand, transformational leadership is known to be positively related to employees' PSM (Vandenabeele 2014; Wright et al. 2012), the use of performance information (Moynihan et al. 2012; Sun and Henderson 2017), and employees' organizational citizenship behaviors (Bottomley et al. 2016). On the other hand, initiating structure, which is a supervisor's task-related leadership behavior (Yukl 2012), has a strong impact on subordinates' job performance (Rowold et al. 2014). What this example also shows is that studying management requires us to examine the public employees whose attitudes and behaviors are impacted by management and leadership activities, and through whose job performance unit-level and organizational performances are achieved.

1.5.2 Public Service Performance

Performance is the core of public management. One of the first accounts in this domain was written by Woodrow Wilson (1887), who equated performance with mere efficiency (Halachmi and Bouckaert 1993). Over time, the literature on public service performance has grown, paralleling the growing interest in NPM. Gradually, conceptualizations of performance in the public sector have become more complex. However, an early observation still holds: "performance is a difficult concept to define and measure. Stakeholders often disagree about which aspects are most important" (Brewer and Selden 2000, 685). The diversity of opinion is also reflected in different approaches to measurement. Brewer and Selden (2000) proposed a multidimensional concept of performance that distinguishes between internal and external accomplishments on the administrative values of efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness. Another multidimensional conceptualization was proposed by Boyne (2002) in his study of local government performance. He distinguished between outputs, efficiency, outcomes/effectiveness, responsiveness, and democratic outcomes. Both conceptualizations have informed other studies (e.g. Andrews and Boyne 2010; Boyne et al. 2006; Kim 2005). These studies have developed measures of performance for different public services provided by, for example, schools, municipalities, and federal ministries or national agencies. However, the diversity of performance criteria in existing studies continues unabated. In fact, a review of performance based on research published in ten public administration journals argues that there are at least six distinctions in performance criteria (Andersen et al. 2016).

Organizational performance in HRM studies (e.g. Boxall and Purcell 2016) is no longer understood as financial performance only, which suited the earlier focus of most HRM research on private organizations, but as also including employee outcomes. HRM studies have developed an understanding of employee outcomes that is broader than Boyne's (2002) staff satisfaction, which he regards as an aspect of the performance dimension "responsiveness." Drawing on work and organizational psychology, HRM studies examine various aspects of employee well-being, which involve physical, psychological, and social well-being (Van de Voorde et al. 2012). HRM studies in the public sector have examined a variety of employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Steijn 2008), affective commitment (Mostafa et al. 2015), work engagement (Borst et al. 2019), and resigned satisfaction and burnout (Giauque et al. 2012; Van Loon et al. 2015).

Public management studies' conceptualization of public service performance refers primarily to organizational and societal outcomes (Van Dooren et al. 2010). To be clear, we will refer to this latter understanding when using the concept of public service performance, and we will use the term "employee outcomes" to refer to outcomes that are specific to employees as relevant stakeholders.

Parallel to the ongoing research interest in public service performance, there is a growing interest in the concept of public value creation (e.g. Alford et al. 2017; Hartley et al. 2019) following seminal work by Moore (1995; 2013). This raises the question of how the two are related. We will touch on this issue here and provide further discussion in Chapter 2. Moore (1995) sees the primary responsibility of public managers as using operational resources to satisfy the public's aspirations and concerns—as voiced by an authorizing environment—and undertaken to create particular public value outcomes. However, the definition and measurement of public value itself are not very clear. Moore (2013) proposes a public value account that suggests concrete measures to recognize the value that an agency produces and the costs it incurs. How public value is operationalized depends on the public service context. The achievement of collectively valued social outcomes might include mission achievement (e.g. enhancing democracy, protecting the natural environment, and moving welfare clients to independence), client satisfaction, or attaining justice and fairness (e.g. providing access for all welfare clients and ensuring equitable distribution of services). This operationalization resembles the development of concrete measures for the multiple dimensions of public service performance of different public organizations (Boyne et al. 2006). However, the concept of public value goes beyond public service performance in that public value theory involves the recognition of multiple stakeholders and public debate about what is seen as valuable to society and to the public sphere (Hartley et al. 2019). While public service performance consists of aggregated individual preferences for what is considered good performance, public value creation requires public debate about what adds value to a fair and just society (Hartley et al. 2019). Clearly, public service performance research may benefit from public value theory by paying explicit attention to different stakeholders and to the public values to which stakeholders refer in weighing certain outcomes (see Chapter 2).

1.5.3 Linking Mechanisms

Public management research has invested much effort in studying the impact of public management on performance and paying some attention to external and internal contextual factors (e.g. Andrews and Boyne 2010; Andrews et al. 2012; Meier et al. 2017). Public management studies have paid less attention to the linking mechanisms between frontline and organizational-level performance.

HRM research has extensive interest in the mechanisms that link HRM and leadership to unit-level and organizational-level performance outcomes. The main premise is that HRM and line managers' implementation of HRM policies affect employees' perceptions of HRM, impacting their attitudes and behaviors and ultimately helping to determine individual and organizational performance. Jiang et al. (2012) offer a theoretical explanation for these linking mechanisms. Based on social exchange theory, the authors argue that by investing in employees through HRM, an organization signals that it values its employees and cares about their well-being. This creates feelings of obligation and a psychological contract among employees, instilling the need to reciprocate and engage in behavior that supports organizational goals. In addition, Jiang et al. (2012) use the resource-based theory to argue that HRM affects employees' competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities), enabling them to contribute to performance. Boxall and Purcell (2016) add that HRM contributes to performance if HRM practices are well integrated and aim to influence not only employees' abilities and motivation but also their opportunities to perform well. The validity of these mechanisms linking HRM and performance has been demonstrated in the public sector (Messersmith et al. 2011). Early studies of HRM in the public sector showed the impact of various mediating variables, including employees' trust and job satisfaction (Gould-Williams 2003). Later studies have added insights about the mediating role of, for instance, person–job and person–organization fit (Steijn 2008; Van Loon et al. 2017).

One specific link in the public management–public service performance chain is the individual employee's job performance. Wright and Nishii's (2013) multilevel framework regards organizational performance as building on unit/team and ultimately individual performance. However, while individual job performance presumably contributes to organizational performance, studies find that antecedents of job performance do not influence organizational performance (see Chapter 14 for an example involving PSM as an antecedent). Chapters in Part II of this volume generally deal with organizational performance, and chapters in Part III take an interest in job performance and the factors that influence this.

Given the dearth of public management studies of the mechanisms that link public managers' activities to public service performance and employee outcomes, it is obvious that we have much to gain by taking a multidisciplinary approach that draws from scholarship on public management, leadership, HRM, and work and organizational psychology research.

1.6 Our Approach

This chapter has introduced the topic of managing for public service performance and the approach this volume takes to study this topic. Summarizing the distinctive characteristics, our approach can be described as:

- *multidisciplinary*: combining insights and perspectives from the fields of public management, leadership, HRM, and work and organizational psychology;
- *critical*: moving from an instrumental approach toward a broader understanding of public managers' and employees' activities affecting public service performance, including consideration of the stakeholders involved in this process and the different public values they hold; and
- *context-sensitive*: examining the validity of generic insights relative to public sector characteristics that impact public service performance.

This latter characteristic deserves some further elaboration. This chapter discussed the public sector context that impacts the management–performance relationship. Adding contextual variables to the study of “managing for public service performance” increases its relevance for the public sector context. However, doing so can decrease the generalizability of the results along with the opportunity to compare the results with studies conducted in other contexts and specifically in private sector contexts. That is why Knies et al. (2018a, 8) regard contextualization as a balancing act between rigor and relevance. However, they argue that increasing the relevance through contextualization does not inevitably cause a loss of rigor. First, claims that variables are distinctive of the public sector context and should be included in research should themselves be evidence-based. Second, public sector studies should explain the level of contextualization required for their study after considering its effect on the rigor and relevance of their study. For instance, as Knies et al. (2018a, 6) explain, framing the relevance of the research question for public sector organizations and highlighting how this context differs from those in mainstream studies amount to a basic level of contextualization that will hardly affect a study's generalizability. However, adding public sector-specific variables to the model or adjusting generic measures to fit the public sector context amounts to an advanced level of contextualization and will affect a study's generalizability to non-public sector contexts more profoundly. Therefore, the approach this volume takes to the study of “managing for public service performance” will be context-sensitive on the basis of evidence supporting the relevance and measurement of contextualization. In this, we aim to move the state of the art beyond a mere best-practice approach—which mainly identifies successful practices to apply them elsewhere—to a more contextualized best-fit approach (Purcell 1999). This means that we try not just to identify what works but also to reflect on what works where and why.

The outline of this volume is based on the major components of the public management–performance framework (see Figure 1.1). Figure 1.1 visualizes the main components schematically; the individual chapters add rich details to the conceptualization of the variables and their relationships. Overall, the volume consists of three parts. Part I introduces the key concepts and elaborates on the institutional setting of different public services. Part II focuses on public managers’ characteristics and practices in “managing for public service performance.” The chapters draw mainly on management, leadership, and HRM perspectives. The chapters in this part concentrate on the organizational level, understanding public service performance as referring primarily to organizational and societal outcomes, and pay attention to the macro and organizational context. Part III of the volume adds to this by concentrating on the linking mechanisms at the micro level and deals with employees’ attitudes and behaviors, public service motivation, and person–environment fit as well as employee outcomes. Related to the focus on micro-level mechanisms, these chapters add insights from work and organization psychology to management and leadership perspectives.

On the left-hand side of the conceptual model, the main independent variable is represented by public management. Chapter 3 offers a conceptual introduction to people management based on strategic HRM and leadership literatures. Subsequent chapters included in Part II offer reviews of the contribution to public service performance made by leadership (Chapter 5), the qualities of effective public managers (Chapters 6 and 7), performance management (Chapter 8), and the various types of human resource management systems (Chapter 9), as well as two specific public leaders’ roles included in the concept of “integrated public leadership” (Fernandez et al. 2010), namely, diversity management (Chapter 10) and change leadership (Chapter 11).

On the right-hand side of the conceptual model, the dependent variables are presented. The concept of public service performance is examined in Chapter 2, which also reviews how studies include stakeholders in public service performance measures. Employee outcomes are also featured explicitly as a dependent variable. Chapter 12 offers a general overview of employee outcomes and the organizational and job characteristics that affect them. Other chapters in Part III cover various aspects of employee well-being as well as employees’ employability (Chapter 15).

The institutional setting of public services is the main topic of Chapter 4. It provides insights about the idea of publicness as an institutional characteristic and its relationship with management and behavior in public institutions. Subsequent chapters add to this by examining the contextual features that are relevant to their topic. The chapters in Part II pay more attention to contextual characteristics on the sectoral and organizational levels, such as governance paradigms and public service logics. The chapters in Part III pay more attention to contextual characteristics at the job and individual level, such as red tape and public service motivation.

The chapters in Part III examine mechanisms at the micro level that link public management and public service performance. Specific attention is given to the

impact of public value conflicts on public professionals and their behaviors (Chapter 13) and to PSM and individual job performance (Chapter 14).

This conceptual model has the heuristic purpose of helping to integrate the answers that individual chapters give to our overall question of how management makes a meaningful contribution to public service performance. The comprehensive answer to this question is summarized in Section 16.2 of the concluding chapter. Chapter 16 also provides directions for future research and outlines the implications of our insights for public organizations' efforts to create public value.

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