

Antecedents of Managers' People Management

Using the AMO Model to Explain Differences in HRM Implementation and Leadership

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7.1 Introduction

Over the past several years, we have seen a growing recognition of the notion that managers on different hierarchical levels can make a difference to performance (Purcell and Hutchinson 2007). Under the heading of people management, their role is considered to be twofold (Knies et al. 2020): On the one hand, managers are responsible for HRM implementation (Brewster et al. 2015), and, on the other, their leadership behavior has an impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors, and ultimately, on performance (Gilbert et al. 2011b). However, until now, the people management role of managers has mainly been studied in a private sector context. This raises the question as to what extent the people management role of public managers has been recognized and examined. This chapter therefore focuses on managers' role in people management within a public sector setting.

After a brief elaboration of what such a public sector role of people management actually entails, the bulk of this chapter discusses various antecedents of managers' people management, thereby answering the question why some managers' perform better than others. The main question guiding this contribution is: What are the antecedents (favoring and hindering factors) of public managers' HRM implementation and leadership behavior? In this chapter, we use the AMO model (Appelbaum et al. 2001; Boxall and Purcell 2008) as a conceptual framework to map and examine the antecedents of public managers' people management. This model has primarily been used to explain employees' behavior and performance, but some scholars have also applied it to managers' people management. We follow the latter stream of research.

In this chapter, we first discuss the general antecedents of managers' people management. Whenever possible, we contextualize these factors so that these reflect the typical characteristics of the public sector that stimulate or hinder managers'

people management. Under the *ability* category of the AMO model, we specifically focus on managers' people management abilities and management development. Under the *motivation* category, we look at managers' willingness to take up people management responsibilities and their priorities. Finally, under the *opportunities* category, we focus on support from different organizational stakeholders (HR department, higher management, etc.) and (personnel) red tape.

7.2 Managers' People Management

Traditionally, the importance of managers in HRM has been recognized. In fact, the literature on managerial work shows a long-standing involvement of line managers in people management issues (Gilbert 2012). Nevertheless, in recent years, managers' involvement has become more formal and structured (Brewster et al. 2015; Larsen and Brewster 2003). There are some indications that managers, traditionally, played a more modest role in public sector people management compared to their private sector counterparts. In 1997, Poole and Jenkins pointed out that the main responsibility for HRM in the public sector is more likely to be vested in the HR department rather than in line management. In 2008, McGuire et al. pointed to the devolution of HR responsibilities to line managers in public organizations. Indeed, a recent empirical study by Brewster et al. (2015, 591) revealed that "there is no real difference in the likelihood of assigning responsibility to line managers across the public and private sectors." This might point to a converging effect where the public sector is increasingly mimicking the private sector. Various researchers have looked into managers' people management role and have aimed to shed light on what such a role actually entails and what the effectiveness of this so-called devolution is (Bainbridge 2015; Perry and Kulik 2008).

In this chapter, we define people management as managers' "implementation of HR practices and their leadership behavior in supporting employees they supervise at work" (Knies et al. 2020, 712). Following Purcell and Hutchinson (2007), we distinguish two components of people management: (1) the implementation of HR practices by managers; and (2) their leadership behavior. The concept of people management brings together different lines of research. The former component, which consists of the implementation of general HR practices and tailor-made arrangements, is rooted in the HRM literature, more specifically the literature on HRM devolution (Perry and Kulik 2008). The basic premise is that when studying employees' perceptions of HRM, it is not sufficient to look at the presence of practices, but managers' enactment has to be taken into account as well (Guest and Bos-Nehles 2013). The literatures on high-performance or high-commitment work practices (see also Chapter 9 of this volume) and on idiosyncratic deals are closely related to the implementation of HR practices. The latter component, leadership behavior, is focal in the leadership literature and is also widely studied from a public management perspective. Leadership behavior as part of the people management concept is understood as a manager demonstrating supportive behavior through specific acts

that aim to help employees at work. We acknowledge that the leadership concept generally has a broader orientation, also including dimensions such as change-oriented or external leadership. However, these dimensions are not included in our understanding of people management. The leadership component of people management builds on notions of social exchange and perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) (Eisenberger et al. 1986). For a more elaborate discussion of people management, see Chapter 3 of this volume.

Until now, we have referred to managers in general when talking about the actors responsible for people management. By managers, we mean line managers who are responsible for the primary processes in the organization, i.e. managers outside the HRM function (Brewster et al. 2015, 578). We can make a distinction between top managers, on the one hand, and middle and frontline managers, on the other. Managers on all these hierarchical levels have people management responsibilities, although the nature of their responsibilities varies. Top or senior managers mainly have a responsibility for designing the organization's HRM policies and creating the conditions for effective implementation, while middle and frontline managers are primarily responsible for implementing people management (Wright and Nishii 2013). In practice, the division of responsibilities is highly dependent on the size of the organization: In larger organizations, managers on different hierarchical levels often have different responsibilities when it comes to people management, while in smaller organizations, such as schools in Belgium (Van Waeyenberg and Decramer 2018), top managers are responsible for both designing and implementing people management. In the literature, we witness a tendency for public management and public administration scholars to focus on top managers (e.g. Andrews and Boyne 2010; Forbes and Lynn 2005), while HRM scholars have taken an interest in middle and frontline managers (Purcell and Hutchinson 2007). In the remainder of this chapter, we will talk about middle and frontline managers when discussing people management unless stated otherwise because in many (larger) organizations, managers on this hierarchical level are primarily responsible for HRM implementation.

Although recent studies find little evidence for sector differences in managers' involvement in people management (Brewster et al. 2015), it appears that managers in the public sector have traditionally played a more modest role in people management compared to their private sector counterparts (Poole and Jenkins 1997). Possible explanations for this are bureaucratization, the size of the organization, and higher levels of union activity (Poole and Jenkins 1997). Also, public governance values, such as equality of treatment, might be challenged by the discretion of line managers in people management (Harris et al. 2002). In addition, Knies and Leisink (2014) rightly question how much discretionary room managers actually have for their people management tasks because public organizations are traditionally known for the limited room for managers due to detailed personnel systems and regulations (Boyne et al. 1999; Kessler et al. 2000; Truss 2008; 2009). These types of structural issues definitely impact the responsibilities that are assigned to line managers in the public sector in the first place. The rigidity of the regulatory context of public organizations therefore might result in managers signaling a lack of actual decision-making

authority and financial power regarding their people management role (Cascón-Pereira et al. 2006; Op de Beeck 2016). In the remainder of this chapter, we will systematically address the antecedents of managers' people management activities using the AMO model and pay particular attention to public sector-specific antecedents.

7.3 The AMO Model

In this section, we introduce the AMO model (see Knies 2016, for a more elaborate overview), which serves as an analytical framework for examining relevant antecedents of people management. The AMO model is a generic framework with roots in industrial psychology. The rationale of the AMO model (Appelbaum et al. 2001) is that individuals perform well when they have the ability (A), motivation (M), and opportunities to perform (O). Employees are able to do their job if they possess the necessary knowledge and skills. They are willing to do their job if they feel adequately interested and incentivized. Employees have the opportunities to perform if their work structure and environment provide them with the necessary support and avenues for expression. Boxall and Purcell (2008, 173) summarize the reasoning behind the AMO framework by stating that “individual attributes have a huge impact but even the most able and motivated people cannot perform well if they lack ‘the tools to finish the job’ or work in an unsupportive social environment.” We apply the AMO model as our theoretical lens in this chapter for several reasons. First, it is a generic model that can be applied to various contexts (including a public sector context). Second, it provides the basis for a systematic analysis of the antecedents that matter for managers' people management. Third, the model highlights the importance of both individual and contextual variables, which provides a rich understanding of the hindering and favoring factors explaining managers' people management.

Based on an overview study, Boselie et al. (2005) concluded that the AMO model is an often-used framework in HRM research. However, they also showed that the AMO model is often “presented as part of a general rationale for the study” but that “very few studies had derived an explicit set of propositions from a theory, and then tested these in the research design” (Boselie et al. 2005, 71). Since 2005, various empirical studies have been published testing the assumptions first outlined by Appelbaum et al. (2001). Most of these studies apply the model to employee performance (Marin-Garcia and Tomas 2016). Recently, scholars have also applied the AMO model to explain performance by managers, in particular, related to HRM–people management. Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) studied the effectiveness of line managers' HRM implementation in two private sector organizations and found that ability is the best predictor of effective implementation, followed by opportunity. Gilbert et al. (2015) conducted a similar study of effective HRM implementation in five organizations (three service, one industrial, and one non-profit) and also found support for the importance of line managers' abilities on effective HRM implementation. Van Waeyenberg and Decramer (2018) studied effective implementation as well, but they focused specifically on a “mini-bundle” of performance management practices. This

study was conducted in a public sector context (education in Belgium). Van Waeyenberg and Decramer found overall support for the effect of all three AMO components on employees' satisfaction with the system. Another study that was conducted in a public sector context is that by Knies and Leisink (2014). Studying police and medical center middle managers, they found support for the effect of all three AMO factors. Moreover, this study helped to clarify how the AMO variables are interrelated. The results show that individual characteristics (i.e. ability and motivation) are directly related to managers' people management, whereas job characteristics (i.e. opportunity) have an indirect effect through motivation.

The studies highlighted here all explicitly refer to the AMO model and study all three elements (ability, motivation, and opportunity) in a comprehensive study. However, there are other studies that study only one or two relevant elements, often without direct reference to the AMO model. In Section 7.4, we draw from this pool of studies as well as discuss the main antecedents of people management in a public sector context. In each of the following sections, we will start by providing a rationale of why we selected particular antecedents and why these are relevant from a public sector perspective. Our aim is to provide a sector-specific understanding of the important antecedents that influence managers' people management activities. For each of the six antecedents discussed below, we report the results of relevant public sector studies. However, we do not claim to provide a comprehensive and systematic overview of all available empirical evidence.

7.4 Abilities: Managers' People Management Abilities and Management Development

In this section, we will discuss the first element of the AMO model: abilities. More specifically, we focus on managers' people management abilities and management development programs that are aimed at improving these abilities. These factors are particularly important in a public sector context because very often public managers are not selected or promoted based on their people management abilities. As a result of (the remnants of) the closed career system in many public organizations (Brewer 2005), it is often the best doctor or teacher who is appointed as manager, or the one who has the longest tenure (Hutchinson and Wood 1995). Because many public managers are not trained as managers, their abilities are a vital component influencing their people management activities, and so are the programs designed to develop their abilities (Bainbridge 2015).

7.4.1 People Management Abilities

Managers' people knowledge and skills are considered a key driving or constraining factor with regard to people management. Generally, a distinction is made between

knowledge of formal policies and procedures, on the one hand, and soft skills to coach employees and deliver feedback aimed at goal attainment, on the other. That is, line managers should have insight into their organization's HR policy and (how to implement) the HR practices as they are intended. Depending on their actual responsibilities in HRM within an organization, managers will need sufficient knowledge of operational HR tasks in varying domains. Studying line managers in the Belgian federal government, Op de Beeck (2016; 2017) found that the HR domains with the highest manager involvement are follow-up and evaluation and the training and development of employees. She also found that the regulatory context of the federal government largely prevents line managers from playing a role in HR areas such as promotion, reward, and recruitment and selection. Whether their HR tasks are extensive or limited, managers will need skills and knowledge in line with the HR-related aspects of their managerial function (e.g. how to conduct an employee evaluation or identify training needs). In addition, several supporting leadership skills can be identified, such as managing change, motivating, communicating, interpersonal skills, team-building skills, and involving employees (McGovern et al. 1997; Thornhill and Saunders 1998).

All too often, however, managers lack the expertise necessary to tackle people management issues that are increasingly complex. A major issue here relates to the fact that line managers are often promoted because of their seniority or professional expertise in a certain field rather than because they have good people skills (Hutchinson and Wood 1995). This is especially valid in the public sector where the closed career system is still in place (Brewer 2005). As such, managers' actual leadership potential and people skills are rarely assessed within the public sector (Op de Beeck 2016). In fact, for many managers, people management issues are often not formally recognized as part of their job (Napier and Peterson 1984). As a result, managers are frequently left feeling underqualified or uncertain with regard to the people aspect of their managerial position (de Jong et al. 1999; Hutchinson and Wood 1995; Op de Beeck 2016). There is empirical evidence that line managers' lack of people management abilities has a negative impact on the performance they deliver regarding people management in general (Bos-Nehles et al. 2013; Gilbert et al. 2015) as well as in a public sector context (Knies and Leisink 2014; Van Waeyenberg and Decramer 2018).

7.4.2 Management Development

Given the skills issues we identified, Whittaker and Marchington (2003, 259) emphasize that more attention should be paid to how line managers are "recruited, inducted, appraised and rewarded, and trained up in the HR aspects of their jobs." As such, the proper people-oriented training at the right time may partly address the skills issue. Management development can provide a solution to managers feeling incompetent and also make them feel more confident in their people management role (Bach 2001; Gilbert 2012; Harris et al. 2002). McGurk (2009; 2010) has studied

the effect of management and leadership development on organizational change and individual and organizational performance in several public service organizations (fire brigade, train-operating company, and adult social service). His findings highlight the relevance of a contextualized approach to management and leadership development. In one of the cases, McGurk (2009) showed that the design of the program is important for the outcome. In this case, the management development program was aimed at an effective implementation of HR policies. This top-down approach resulted in top-down change, but it did not stimulate bottom-up initiatives or innovation. McGurk (2010) reports similar results: Traditional management development programs lead to effective compliance with top-down determined objectives but have little or no impact on strategic change. On the other hand, a collective and emergent approach to leadership development had a significant impact on strategic change, although not always in the expected direction. A crucial factor in the effectiveness of management development is the transfer of knowledge into practice (McGurk 2009). Without such a transfer, investments in management development programs are a waste of money and time.

7.5 Motivation: Managers' Willingness to Take on People Management Responsibilities and Their Priorities

In this section, we will discuss the second element of the AMO model: motivation. More specifically, we focus on managers' willingness to take on people management responsibilities and their priorities. The first factor mainly has to do with individual managers' motivation to perform people management. The second factor also concerns the organizational context in which people management activities are incentivized or not. As such, the two factors are related. Both willingness to take on people management responsibilities and managers' priorities are particularly important in a public sector context because, as stated before, many public managers are former professionals who are not trained as managers. Many of them gain a management position later in their careers, and, according to Bainbridge (2015, 847), these new line managers "may be less than enthusiastic about their newly acquired people management responsibilities." Moreover, public managers are incentivized to focus on the attainment of short-term, operational goals instead of providing people management support to their employees (e.g. McGuire et al. 2008).

7.5.1 Willingness to Take on People Management Responsibilities

The success of people management will largely depend on the extent to which managers feel adequately willing, interested, and motivated to perform people management

activities and to support their employees. In empirical research—mostly conducted in a private sector context—it is found that managers are often reluctant to accept their people management role (Bos-Nehles 2010), possibly because they do not recognize the value of people management (Thornhill and Saunders 1998). Overall, people management cannot be delivered effectively by managers who do not take people management seriously or who do not reflect a belief in HRM (Watson et al. 2007; Whittaker and Marchington 2003). In particular, people management depends on the extent to which managers are autonomously motivated (Bos-Nehles 2010; Op de Beeck et al. 2018; Vallerand and Ratelle 2004; Watson et al. 2007). Autonomous motivation stems from the person itself (intrinsic) and states that people engage in an activity because they find it inherently enjoyable and satisfying (Coursey and Vandenberg 2012; Guay et al. 2000). In other words, managers who show a genuine interest in and a sense of ownership over their people management role are likely to be more successful in the enactment of people management. On the other hand, controlled motivation, where there is an obligation (extrinsic) to behave in a specific way (possibly linked to reward or sanction) (Coursey and Vandenberg 2012), is expected to negatively affect people management (Perry et al. 2009; Vallerand and Ratelle 2004). Therefore, pushing people management upon managers will likely fail to deliver (Harris et al. 2002).

Several studies have provided support for the assumed effects of (intrinsic) motivation for people management on the delivery of people management activities in a public sector context (Knies and Leisink 2014; Op de Beeck et al. 2018; Van Waeyenberg and Decramer 2018). Also, Knies and Leisink (2014) have shown that managers' willingness to support the employees in their team is partly dependent on the level of discretionary room that managers perceive, which was an issue in the police and medical center units they studied. That is, if managers perceive that they can do no more than implement designed HR policies without paying attention to the local situation, this will limit their willingness to support their employees. This implies that the extent to which managers are willing to perform people management can be influenced by the organization.

7.5.2 Priorities/Capacity

In looking after their subordinates' well-being, one might expect managers to feel a natural responsibility in implementing people management. Nevertheless, a major drawback of people management is that managers often experience a lack of time to perform their people role and perceive people management as an increase in their workload (Bach 2001). This is because people management often conflicts with other daily duties. In dealing with these competing demands, long-term goals (such as investing in a relationship with your employees and supporting their development) often suffer under pressure from short-term, operational targets. As a result, managers' priorities often lie in meeting short-term, operational goals, while paying

little attention to people management activities (Bos-Nehles 2010; McGuire et al. 2008; Watson et al. 2007; Whittaker and Marchington 2003). Altogether, managers may easily become “overloaded” by combining all of their leadership roles (e.g. steward, entrepreneur, professional, and coach) (Van Wart et al. 2012), which may lead them to be less successful in performing their people management role. Therefore, having the capacity to spend sufficient time on each of their respective roles will both help managers and benefit people management.

The fact that managers tend to focus on short-term goals and the activities leading to short-term goal attainment holds for both private and public sector contexts. However, public managers, compared to their private sector counterparts, might be even more incentivized to focus on the short term, at least in some parts of the public sector. This might have to do with a system for job rotation that is in place in many public (civil service) organizations. To overcome problems associated with the division of labor and the specialization of units, coordination is required. One of the instruments to stimulate coordination and prevent compartmentalization is job rotation for senior managers (Verhoest and Bouckaert 2005). For example, senior civil servants in the Netherlands are obliged to move to another department every 5–7 years. This incentivizes senior managers to focus on short-term results, and as a result, prioritize these short-term goals as well for the middle and frontline managers they supervise. As people management usually takes investment and results are only visible in the longer run, both top managers’ willingness to stimulate people management activities and middle and frontline managers’ willingness to perform people management activities are not stimulated by this system.

7.6 Opportunities: Support from Different Organizational Stakeholders and Red Tape

In this section, we will discuss the final element of the AMO model: opportunities. More specifically, we focus on the support that managers receive from different organizational stakeholders and red tape. While the abilities and motivation categories are mainly related to the individual characteristics of managers, the opportunities category primarily refers to the context in which the manager operates. Two characteristics of the context are relevant to highlight here as these distinguish private and public organizations: the degree of publicness (the degree to which they recognize various public values as an element of being part of the public sector) (Antonsen and Beck Jørgensen 1997), and related to this, the level of centralization of HR decision-making (Meyer and Hammerschmid 2010). Regarding the former, managers in high-publicness organizations are subject to more constraints than managers in low-publicness organizations. Regarding the latter, Meyer and Hammerschmid (2010) have shown that decision-making in central government across the EU is still highly centralized. Although the level of centralization varies across countries and across HR practices, this echoes the implication that public sector managers face more constraints.

7.6.1 Support for Managers' People Management

An important factor in assuring management's people management is the availability of support. Managers' interaction with different organizational stakeholders can contribute to the success of their people management activities. Following social and organizational support theory (e.g. Eisenberger et al. 1990; Shumaker and Brownell 1984), investing in support may help managers overcome the difficulties associated with their people management role. In this view, support is seen as a coping mechanism that may provide managers with the resources needed to resolve any problems they encounter in their people management (Cohen and Wills 1985; Vigoda-Gadot and Talmud 2010). In addition, the fact that support is generally characterized by some kind of exchange with the expectancy of reciprocity implies that an investment in support will result in favorable attitudes and behaviors on the receiver's end (Shumaker and Brownell 1984; Wayne et al. 1997). Managers may then reciprocate by returning the support they received from others through better performance in their people management or by providing support themselves (Tepper and Taylor 2003). Based on these insights, it is believed that managers' (confidence in their) people management activities is highly reliant on support.

Research attention regarding support of managers' people management has mainly been focused on HR professionals providing line managers with the necessary HR skills and the proper encouragement to perform their HR role (Gilbert et al. 2011a; Hutchinson and Wood 1995; Perry and Kulik 2008; Renwick 2003). Although HR professionals are probably the major source of support, this may be considered a rather narrow focus. Based on insights from social and organizational support theory, it is found that managers are able to rely on an entire support network in which various sources of support can complementarily contribute to managers' people management (Op de Beeck et al. 2017).

The main sources of support to be identified here are the organization in general, HR professionals, managers' supervisor, and their co-workers. First, support for managers from the organization is considered key in managers' efforts regarding people management (McGovern et al. 1997; Shore and Wayne 1993). The overall organizational climate and the direction upheld by top management may support managers through the encouragement and recognition of their people management role (Joiner 2007; Napier and Peterson 1984). We found no studies addressing public-private differences regarding the support for managers from their organization. Second, support from HR professionals seems crucial as they provide managers with the necessary expertise, encouragement, and advice (Bond and Wise 2003; Perry and Kulik 2008; Whittaker and Marchington 2003). In fact, it is believed that "without the support from HR, line managers are unable to acquire sufficient competences in people management skills to progress organizational effectiveness" (Bos-Nehles 2010, 109). In the public sector, however, the "accessibility" of the (central) HR department is often criticized as the bureaucratic nature and the size of government organizations may easily create a sense of distance between HR and the workplace (Op de Beeck 2016).

Third, the supportive treatment by managers' own supervisor is likely positively related to the performance in their people management role (Wayne et al. 1997). The supervisor may not only motivate managers but also controls and manages the immediate resources available to them (Bhanthumnavin 2003). Within the public sector in particular, where supervisors do not have a lot of resources to incentivize their subordinates compared to the private sector, the supervisor's contribution often lies in playing an exemplary role with regard to their own affinity with people management (Op de Beeck 2016). Fourth and finally, professional relationships with co-workers are found to be a vital source of support and motivation within an organizational setting (Paarlberg et al. 2008). Based on social comparison theory, co-workers at the same hierarchical level may motivate managers in their people management role through sharing their personal knowledge, expertise, and experiences and providing overall encouragement (Cohen and Wills 1985; Joiner 2007; Zhou and George 2001). As such, the encouragement of their peers may have a large impact on managers' people management (Op de Beeck et al. 2017). As for support for managers from the organization, we found no studies addressing public-private differences regarding the support from co-workers.

7.6.2 Red Tape

Managers in government organizations are, in particular, subjected to administrative constraints—including red tape—that may hinder their performance. Although not limited to the public sector, empirical research has shown that red tape is more prevalent in public organizations than in private sector organizations (e.g. Baldwin 1990; DeHart-Davis and Pandey 2005; Feeney and Rainey 2010). Often regarded as an effect of bureaucracy, red tape has, therefore, become an important variable in public administration research (Bozeman 1993; Feeney and Rainey 2010). An often adopted definition of red tape refers to “rules, regulations, and procedures that remain in force and entail a compliance burden for the organization but have no efficacy for the rules' functional object” (Bozeman 1993, 283). Employees experiencing (personnel) red tape are found to become dissatisfied, demotivated, and unproductive (Baldwin 1990; DeHart-Davis and Pandey 2005). At the same time, causality may also be reversed where managers' individual dispositions (e.g. work motivation) may affect their levels of perceived red tape (e.g. Scott and Pandey 2005).

In the context of HRM, Rainey et al. (1995) find that rules and laws concerning public personnel administration are the main sources of red tape (see also Van Loon et al. 2016). Therefore, personnel red tape is generally considered a distinct concept (e.g. Rainey et al. 1995). In fact, red tape is particularly perceived to be more prevalent in personnel (and finance) activities compared to other management domains (Coursey and Pandey 2007; Van Loon et al. 2016). An increasing responsibility in people management activities (i.e. HRM devolution) may thus indirectly cause managers to be confronted with red tape more often. Subsequently, managers'

perceptions of (personnel) red tape are believed to decrease their motivation and their flexibility and autonomy in performing their tasks (Baldwin 1990). As a result, formal rules and regulations may sharply constrain (public) managers in performing their people management activities.

7.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to map and examine the antecedents of public managers' people management. As such, there has been a growing recognition of the role of managers in HRM implementation, on the one hand, and of the impact of managers' leadership behavior on employees' attitudes and performance, on the other, i.e. the two components of people management. This chapter reviewed evidence as to what extent managers' role of people management has been recognized and examined within a public sector setting, and which factors explain differences in people management performance between managers.

Although a recent study by Brewster et al. (2015) revealed that there are no public-private differences in the extent to which HRM responsibilities are devolved to the line managers, traditionally, managers in the public sector have played a more modest role in people management compared to their private sector counterparts (Poole and Jenkins 1997). The public sector setting confronts managers with all kinds of challenges that can generally be traced back to the rigidities of the regulatory context (e.g. detailed personnel systems) or conflicting values (e.g. equality of treatment versus managers' discretion in implementing people management activities to fit the needs of different workers). These types of structural issues limit the people management responsibilities that line managers in the public sector are assigned in the first place, but they also impede managers' discretionary room with regard to the people management tasks they do have. Furthermore, the closed career system in place in many public organizations has often led to employees being promoted to manager, based on seniority or professional expertise, resulting in managers feeling underqualified or uncertain with regard to the people aspect of their managerial position. Altogether, the public sector context not only determines the composition of managers' people management role, but also limits managers' discretionary room within that role, therefore affecting the way managers actually perform people management activities.

Using the AMO model as a framework, we addressed a broad range of antecedents of managers' people management activities, each of which affects their people management performance. The review shows that the AMO model generally holds within the public sector context. A number of factors are particularly prominent in the public sector. Consider, for example, red tape, where managers—particularly in public organizations—are subjected to administrative constraints that may decrease their motivation, flexibility, and autonomy, thus hindering their performance. Another example is the lack of investment in people management due to a lack of time and role overload.

The various antecedents of managers' people management activities also stress the importance of public organizations paying more attention to how public managers are selected and supported. For example, in selecting or promoting line managers, it is important to understand that the best candidate for a managerial position is not necessarily the one with the greatest technical expertise or with the most seniority. Instead, people-oriented competencies should be addressed. Furthermore, in training and development of managers, attention should be paid to people skills and leadership in line with the importance of the abilities element in the AMO model. Another example refers to the importance of the HR department providing support to managers in performing their people management activities and drawing their attention to other potential sources of support, such as co-workers. People management will benefit from public organizations adopting an HR approach directed at line managers in keeping with the broad array of job requirements—including the HR and leadership aspect—of a managerial position.

Several questions remain, highlighting that there is certainly room for additional research on public managers' people management. One of the relevant issues to examine further in a public sector context concerns the conflicting values that managers are confronted with when performing their people management activities, in particular, the potential trade-off between equality of treatment and managers' discretion in implementing people management activities to fit the needs of different workers. Do managers experience conflicting values, how do they manage these in practice, and how do these conflicting values play out for the people management support provided to employees?

Another relevant issue that is worth additional research is the regulatory and bureaucratic context that impacts public managers' people management. This context limits the support that managers receive from their HR department, the discretionary room managers perceive they have, and indirectly, their willingness to perform people management. It is relevant to study this issue in more detail and particularly address the question of why some public managers can deal with these constraints more effectively than others can. Finally, our understanding of people management in the public sector would benefit from a systematic investigation of the abilities that are needed for managers to perform their people management role effectively. How do sector-specific challenges shape the required skills and abilities for managers, and how can this information be used for recruitment and selection purposes? Additionally, further research may conduct a systematic comparison of people management and its antecedents in the public sector versus the private sector. Also, a comparison between different sub-sectors within the public sector may be conceivable.

In conclusion, this chapter aimed to enhance insight into the specific contribution of managers in bringing about effective people management. Elements such as a well-organized support system, considering the limitations of (personnel) red tape, the necessary people-oriented competencies, and genuine commitment on the part of managers were found to be key for managers performing people management activities. The public sector setting was found to pose additional challenges to

managers' people management and should be taken into account in order to fully understand how managers can make a difference for performance.

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