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Unionization and Work Attitudes: How Union Commitment Influences Public Sector Job Satisfaction

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This article explores whether union commitment dampens public sector job satisfaction. By examining the connection between union commitment and two workplace attributes that are presumed to be more prevalent in public sector workplaces—perceptions of higher red tape and greater public service motivation—this article develops three hypotheses exploring the direct and indirect relationships between union commitment and public sector job satisfaction. The findings from a series of structural equation models indicate that union commitment directly increases members’ job satisfaction, but it more prominently increases members’ job satisfaction indirectly by reducing perceived red tape and enhancing public service motivation.

After five decades of growth, labor unions represent a significant policy-making presence in government organizations (Kearney 2010; Riccucci 2011), but recently, legislators have sought to limit public employees’ bargaining rights. It is not surprising that legislatures would seek to limit public sector collective bargaining, particularly when many assume that unions increase the cost of government. However, in addition to potential increases in government costs resulting from unionization, union members may also experience psychological consequences. Scholars have long acknowledged that employees’ psychological evaluations of work are likely related to employee performance (Judge et al. 2001; Wright and Davis 2003). Given that unionization can encourage members to perceive role conflict and increase job stress (Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway 1992), the psychological outcomes of unionization may be equally influential as cost in determining government performance. Thus, managers interested in maximizing employee performance in government could benefit from a deeper understanding of the psychological outcomes of public sector unionization.

Job satisfaction represents one psychological factor that influences individual performance. Labor

relations scholars frequently argue that unions’ political function within organizations decreases member job satisfaction. Perry and Angle describe collective bargaining as organizational politics because labor negotiators “manage influence to obtain non-sanctioned ends or . . . employ non-sanctioned means of influence” (1979, 488). Organizational politics associated with collective bargaining has been cited as a primary source of union member job dissatisfaction because it unrealistically raises job expectations, alerts members to less desirable work elements, and provides a forum for unionized employees to voice discontent (Berger, Olson, and Boudreau 1983; Borjas 1979; Freeman and Medoff 1984).

While this article tests these existing theoretical claims, few studies have examined the relationship between unionization and job satisfaction in public sector work environments. Two aspects of the public sector work environment potentially challenge earlier theoretical conclusions: higher levels of perceived red tape and greater public service motivation (PSM) among employees. To explore the effects of union commitment on public sector job satisfaction, this article tests three hypotheses based on two areas of scholarship. The first hypothesis, that union commitment directly decreases job satisfaction, is based on theory suggesting that the organizational politics of collective bargaining provides members a mechanism to voice dissatisfaction (Perry and Angle 1979). The second hypothesis, that union commitment indirectly increases job satisfaction by lowering perceived red tape, is based on theory suggesting that organizational limits on employee autonomy reduce job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham 1976) and that perceptions of red tape limit employees’ perceived work autonomy (DeHart-Davis and Pandey 2005; Pandey, Coursey, and Moynihan 2007). The third hypothesis, that union commitment increases job satisfaction by increasing PSM, stems from research

Few studies have examined the relationship between unionization and job satisfaction in public sector work environments.

suggesting that individuals with high PSM are more satisfied with work in the public sector because of its social significance (Perry and Wise 1990; Rainey 1982) and that unionization may increase some elements of public service motivation (Davis 2010).

Union Commitment and Public Sector Job Satisfaction

Public Sector Job Satisfaction

Grounding job satisfaction in theories of emotion, Locke describes job satisfaction as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job” (1976, 1300). According to Locke (1969), developing emotions that give rise to job satisfaction is a three-step process. First, workers must experience some element of the work environment. Second, employees must use a value standard on which work elements are judged. Finally, workers must evaluate the how the perceived work element facilitates or inhibits the achievement of preferred values. If a perceived element of the work environment reinforces espoused values, positive emotions, such as job satisfaction, will result. Alternatively, if elements of the work environment contradict an individual’s value preferences, job dissatisfaction will be the outcome. For example, if an individual values discretion to determine the best way to complete his or her work, overbearing supervision that limits perceived authority will result in job dissatisfaction. However, supervision could also result in satisfaction if an individual values the attention and feedback resulting from direct supervision.

Several elements of the work environment influence job satisfaction, but two factors are distinct to the public sector work environment (Wright and Davis 2003). The overall work environment comprises two elements: the work context and job characteristics. The work context refers to observable organizational characteristics that influence job satisfaction by shaping an employee’s interaction with the work organization. One element of the work context that is often presumed to be predominant in public workplaces is red tape (Bozeman and Rainey 1998; Rainey, Pandey, and Bozeman 1995). Red tape undermines job satisfaction for those who desire work autonomy by communicating to employees that they are controlled by the work organization. Feelings of dependence and perceived lack of autonomy can lead to alienation (Ryan and Deci 2000) and reduce job satisfaction because employees begin to view their efforts as unimportant for achieving valued work outcomes (Hackman and Oldham 1976).

Second, job characteristics represent “the collection of tasks that comprise the job” (Perry and Porter 1982). One job characteristic that meaningfully influences satisfaction is the degree to which job tasks positively influence the lives others (Hackman and Oldham 1976). Jobs that enable workers to positively influence the lives of others are likely to elicit satisfaction for those who value public service as an important work outcome. The value of service to society as a meaningful work outcome is more pronounced for those who embrace the service ethic, or public service motivation (Perry and Wise 1990; Rainey 1982). Research suggests that public employees, compared to private, are more likely to embrace this ethic (Crewson 1997; Houston 2000, 2006). Those who value job tasks that facilitate service to society may perceive government work as more meaningful, which contributes to higher job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham 1976).

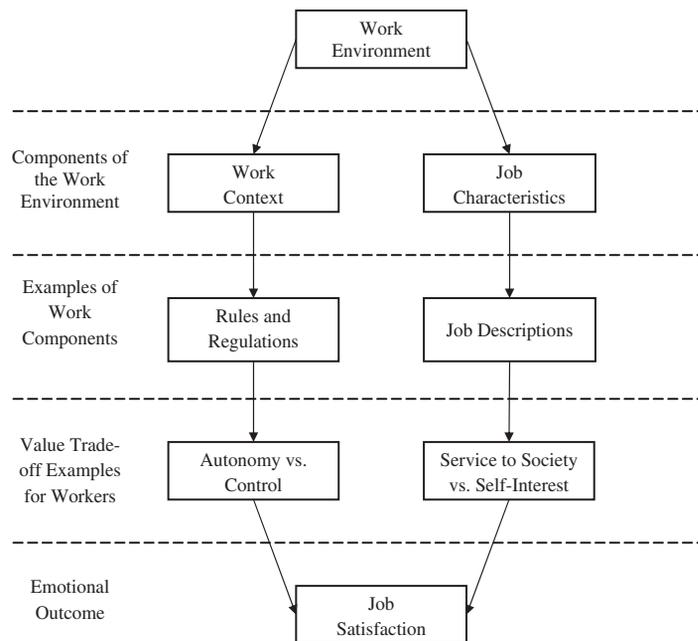


Figure 1 Conceptual Diagram Relating the Work Environment to Job Satisfaction

Public managers can facilitate job satisfaction by ensuring that employees perceive favorable value trade-offs with respect to both elements of the work environment. Figure 1 illustrates the effects of the work environment on job satisfaction through employees evaluations of the work context and job characteristics. Figure 1 implies, for example, that altering organizational rules can facilitate job satisfaction so long as changes emphasize a value that the employee is likely to prefer, such as autonomy. Furthermore, attempts to facilitate job satisfaction as a result of rule changes may not have the full intended outcome if managers emphasize job characteristics that undermine the employee’s preferred value trade-offs.

Union Commitment and Job Satisfaction

Individual values are not developed in isolation but through social interaction between individuals in groups (Berger and Luckman 1967). Thus, social structures that communicate values are critical for understanding job satisfaction. Unions exist as social structures within the workplace and are characterized by unique needs, loyalties, and values (Nisbet 1976). Specifically, unions embrace the value of individual and employee rights (Klingner, Nalbandian, and Llorens 2010), and they seek to protect that value by limiting managerial discretion over personnel processes (Donahue, Selden, and Ingraham 2000). While some union members are deeply committed to union values, others may reject these values (Newton and Shore 1992). Union commitment occurs when members adopt “a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization” (Gordon et al. 1980). Members who are deeply committed to the union are more likely to adopt values that homogenize workplace attitudes (Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway 1992).

The most common result in the literature on labor unions finds that union commitment and collective bargaining processes increase job dissatisfaction (Freeman and Medoff 1984; Kochan 1980; Kochan and Helfman 1981). This finding is frequently explained in terms of the “voice hypothesis,” which suggests that workers

with less attractive and rewarding jobs commit to unions to rectify less desirable work elements (Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway 1992). From this perspective, unions can encourage dissatisfaction because they alert members to elements of the work environment that undermine their preferred values. A complementary political explanation attributes member dissatisfaction to the activities of union leaders. The political perspective emphasizes that union leaders build members' expectations of the work organization beyond what is reasonable and fail to deliver promised outcomes, thereby facilitating discontent (Hammer and Avar 2005; Ross 1948). For example, employees may be content with the pay they receive, but after joining a union, they become convinced that they are underpaid. In addition to acknowledging low pay, the union could communicate to members that low salaries undermine employee rights, a value that is closely associated with unionism. Because employees now perceive that elements of the work environment contradict their preferred values, they begin to negatively evaluate work. Common to both explanations is the assertion that unionization undermines job satisfaction by alerting members to unfavorable value trade-offs. While these studies do not specifically examine unionization in the public sector, it is reasonable to expect the following:

Hypothesis 1: Union commitment will have a direct, negative effect on public sector job satisfaction.

Union Commitment, Bureaucratic Red Tape, and Job Satisfaction

In their sector-specific theory of job satisfaction, Wright and Davis point out that "the key to understanding any potential sector differences in employee job satisfaction is to consider ways in which the public sector work context differs from the private sector" (2003, 75). Drawing from Buchanan (1975), Wright and Davis argue that more prevalent elements of the public sector work context, such as red tape, reduce job satisfaction. Scholars examining the consequences of perceived red tape consistently support that assertion (Baldwin 1990; Buchanan 1975; DeHart-Davis and Pandey 2005; Lan and Rainey 1992).

Research examining perceived red tape in the public sector has become commonplace in public administration, partially because red tape is often assumed to be more prevalent in public organizations (Bozeman 1993; Rainey, Pandey, and Bozeman 1995). Empirical research in public administration increased dramatically following Bozeman's (1993) efforts to distinguish red tape from other organizational phenomena. Bozeman conceptualizes red tape in two ways. First, organizational red tape is defined as "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" (1993, 283). Second, stakeholder red tape is defined as "organizational rules, regulations, and procedures that remain in force and entail a compliance burden, but serve no object valued by a given stakeholder group" (284).

Public employees experience negative psychological consequences, such as purposeless and alienation, when they perceive high levels

of red tape (DeHart-Davis and Pandey 2005). According to Locke's (1969) theory of job satisfaction, the dissatisfaction that employees experience as a result of perceived red tape likely stems from an unfavorable disruption in the value trade-offs that employees expect. While the work of Hackman and Oldham (1976) implies that union members may favor rules because they enable achieving the value of autonomy over dependence, there are other reasons why union members may value organizational rules. For example, employees may perceive organizational rules as good when they facilitate consistent treatment of all employees within the organization (DeHart-Davis 2009). If collective bargaining prevents uncertainty and inequity arising from arbitrary managerial discretion, union members may value increased prevalence of rules. If formal organizational rules reinforce the value preferences associated with unionism, it is possible that unions could meaningfully influence the public sector work context by reducing perceived red tape for committed union members.¹ As Bozeman

If collective bargaining prevents uncertainty and inequity arising from arbitrary managerial discretion, union members may value increased prevalence of rules.

points out, "administrative rules, regulations, and procedures are not ... inherently good or bad, but only good or bad from the perspective of values posited and the extent to which they seem to serve or thwart those values" (1993, 283-84). It is important to note that connecting value preferences to red tape suggests that union members would not likely begin from the assumption that collective bargaining rules amount to red tape. Yet unionized environments are often characterized by more formal rules (Gallagher 1983), and formal rules are the raw materials that give rise to red tape. There is reason to believe, however, that committed union members, compared to noncommitted members, working in environments with identical degrees of formalization would perceive different degrees organization wide red tape because of different value preferences. Research suggests that the rules imposed by collective bargaining limit the ability of managers to make arbitrary personnel decisions (Donahue, Selden, and Ingraham 2000), which reduces feelings of alienation and exploitation for members (Barling, Kelloway, and Bremermann 1991). When members perceive that rules enable favorable value preferences, they are likely to be more satisfied with work. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect the following:

Hypothesis 2: Union commitment will have an indirect, positive effect on public sector job satisfaction by reducing members' perceptions of red tape.

Union Commitment, Public Service Motivation, and Job Satisfaction

Wright and Davis (2003) also point out that job characteristics that are distinct to the public sector can influence job satisfaction. Jobs characterized by tasks that afford employees the ability to positively influence the lives others are often presumed to distinguish public service and enhance overall job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham 1976). Public administration scholars often argue that public work tasks are characterized by the values of benevolence, compassion, self-sacrifice, and social equity (Frederickson and Hart 1985; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Perry and Wise 1990). As Locke (1969) points out, however, job satisfaction results when individuals perceive that job characteristics enable them to achieve preferred values. Therefore, the ability to positively influence the lives of others

facilitates satisfaction only for those who value service to society as a meaningful work reward.

Public administration scholarship has long argued that individuals who embrace these value preferences embrace a unique service ethic, or public service motivation (Perry and Wise 1990; Rainey 1982, 2003). Perry and Wise initially defined the concept of public service motivation as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded uniquely in public service institutions and organizations” (1990, 368). Later, Perry (1996) operationally defined PSM as consisting of four component dimensions across three categories of motives. Rational motives represent the degree to which one is attracted to the policy-making process, affective motives relate to emotions such as compassion, and the norm-based category of motives is represented by self-sacrifice and commitment to the public interest. Today, scholars more broadly construe PSM to incorporate not only an individual’s aspiration to work for government, but also one’s drive to serve the public good and to promote the well-being of a collectivity (Perry and Hondeghem 2008).

Individuals who are characterized by higher degrees of public service motivation are more likely to seek public employment because they value service to society as a primary work reward (Crewson 1997; Houston 2000; Rainey 1982). This likely leads to greater job satisfaction by encouraging employees to achieve preferred values through government work (Brewer and Selden 1998; Naff and Crum 1999). However, given Locke’s (1969) conceptualization of job satisfaction, it is the implicit values associated with public service motivation that influence public sector job satisfaction. While PSM may embody a set of values that contribute to public sector job satisfaction, it does not develop in isolation from one’s social interactions (Perry 1997, 2000; Perry and Vandenabeele 2008).

The recognition that PSM stems from social foundations has encouraged some to call for research designed to uncover PSM’s institutional roots (Perry 1997, 2000). Social institutions represent the foundation that communicates PSM. Perry and Vandenabeele define institutions as “social structures infused with values” (2008, 58). Given that PSM originates from interaction within social institutions, and labor unions represent a social institution that is prevalent in municipal government, labor unions may possess the capacity to influence PSM. Those social institutions characterized by publicly oriented values, such as altruism, as opposed to self-interested values encourage the growth and development of PSM (Perry and Vandenabeele 2008). While social interaction within unions might encourage conflict between labor and management, potentially undermining PSM, it may also reinforce publicly oriented values with respect to other union members. It is possible, for example, to act in accordance with the public interest from the perspective of the union while acting contrary to the public interest as viewed by management. To address the connection between PSM and institutional values, Perry and Vandenabeele (2008) acknowledge that commitment to an institutional identity is more likely to shape PSM than simple group membership.

While social interaction within unions might encourage conflict between labor and management, potentially undermining PSM, it may also reinforce publicly oriented values with respect to other union members.

While union commitment does not specifically shape public sector job characteristics, it may influence the values that members use to evaluate specific job characteristics by increasing PSM. Unions emphasize the protection of employee rights as a fundamental value (Klingner, Nalbandian, and Llorens 2010; Kochan 1980). The distinct values tied to unionism stem from the belief that employers wield significant power over employees, and laborers must collectively even the balance of power between labor and management (Parboteeah and Cullen 2003). Union members often seek to advance the collective good of the labor organization, which may socialize into members the values that give rise to PSM (Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Perry and Vandenabeele 2008). If individuals who display higher PSM are likely more satisfied with public sector work because they perceive that it favors their value preferences, and union commitment facilitates PSM by institutionalizing values, it is reasonable to expect the following:

Hypothesis 3: Union commitment will have an indirect, positive effect on public sector job satisfaction by increasing PSM.

Model Controls

Although this article focuses on the relationship between union commitment and public sector job satisfaction, alternative explanations exist. First, research suggests that union socialization influences union commitment (Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway 1992), PSM (Davis 2010), and job satisfaction (Freeman and Medoff 1984). As such, this research controls for the effects of union socialization. Second, demographic categories such as education, gender, and race influence union commitment (Angle and Perry 1981), PSM (DeHart-Davis, Marlowe, and Pandey 2006), and job satisfaction (Clark 1997; Weaver 1977). These variables are included in the model as full covariates. Although race and gender are often insignificant in red tape studies (Pandey and Kingsley 2000; Scott and Pandey 2000), those demographic characteristics are modeled to rule out alternative explanations. Finally, two variables in the model control for membership in police and fire unions, as they are the most heavily unionized municipal government departments.

Data and Research Design

The data used to test these hypotheses were collected from a survey of local government employees in a Kansas municipality. A research team constructed a contact list of 1,115 potential respondents and communicated with survey respondents following the tailored design method for mixed-mode surveys (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009). Each potential respondent was notified of the study by the city manager, and researchers ensured respondent confidentiality from management. Employees with access to municipal e-mail addresses were invited to complete electronic surveys, whereas those without city e-mail received mail questionnaires. Survey invitations, both paper and electronic, indicated that participation was voluntary and confidential. At the end of the data collection phase, 53.99 percent of respondents ($n = 602$) had completed the survey. Because this analysis examines the effects of union commitment on public sector job satisfaction, only the responses from labor union members were

Table 1 Respondent Demographic Characteristics

	Percent
Gender	
Female	27.7%
Male	71.7%
Missing	0.6%
Race	
American Indian	1.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.8%
Black	7.0%
Hispanic	5.6%
White	77.9%
Missing	7.3%
Education	
High School/GED	13.7%
Some College	48.7%
Bachelor's Degree	23.8%
Some Graduate School	2.0%
Graduate Degree	3.6%
Other	6.4%
Missing	1.7%
Organizational Role	
Department Head	0.3%
Superintendent	0.3%
Administrative/Policy Staff	2.0%
Supervisor	16.5%
Lead Worker	33.1%
Clerical	16.2%
Technical	29.7%
Missing	2.0%
Functional Department	
Police Officer	32.2%
Fire Fighter	15.1%

analyzed ($n = 329$). The characteristics of unionized respondents are outlined in table 1.

The statistical method employed in this article, structural equation modeling (SEM), possesses several advantages over regression analysis. Two advantages are important for this research. First, SEM controls for measurement error by using multiple questionnaire items to measure latent constructs. Latent constructs are created by separating the unique variance for observed items from the shared variance between items (Kline 2005). Unique item variance is assumed to be a measurement error, and shared variance is presumed to measure the construct of interest. Second, SEM allows for specifying more complex models incorporating indirect effects. This article tests the indirect effects of union commitment on job satisfaction through perceived red tape and PSM.

Several survey items operationalize constructs of interest. First, perceptions of red tape are assessed using a single survey item, also known as the general red tape scale (Bozeman and Feeney 2011). While single questionnaire items are not ideal in SEM analyses, this item was chosen to comport with previous research. Second, 13 items are used to operationalize union commitment (Kelloway, Catano, and Southwell 1992). Third, to measure PSM, I use the 12 items advocated by Coursey et al. (2008) and the three attraction to policy making measures advocated by Perry (1996). Consistent with previous research, both commitment to union values (Kelloway, Catano, and Southwell 1992) and public service motivation (Coursey et al. 2008; Perry 1996) are modeled as higher order constructs.

Public employees reporting greater union commitment also report higher job satisfaction.

Finally, job satisfaction is measured with three items. All measures used in this study are discussed in the appendix, and all are coded such that higher values reflect positive attributes. While the degree of missing data was minimal, all missing data were recovered using full information maximum likelihood, and all analyses were conducted in Mplus version 6 (Muthen and Muthen 1998–2010).

Findings

Prior to explaining the statistical findings, a discussion of model specification and estimation is necessary. First, the union socialization construct is defined by only two indicators. Two indicator constructs are underidentified because the number of estimated parameters exceeds the pieces of known information (Brown 2006).² To ensure that all components of the model are identified, factor loadings were constrained to equality. Second, researchers have debated the existence of attraction to policy making as a dimension of PSM. As Perry suggests, the attraction to policy making subscale is composed “entirely of negatively worded items,” which “confounds whether the subscale taps the attraction to policy making dimension” (1996, 20). Although not depicted in the diagram, each reverse-scaled PSM item loads on a negative wording construct. The negative wording construct extracts the shared variance in the attraction to policy making items because of negative wording from the true attraction to policy making construct. Finally, the initial model estimates returned one inadmissible solution, a negative residual variance associated with the commitment to public interest dimension of PSM. To address this the negative residual variance was constrained to zero and tested for significance. The results of a χ^2 difference test on one degree of freedom reveal that constraining the negative residual variance to zero does not significantly reduce model fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.144, p = .0762$). As such, all subsequent models were estimated with this model constraint in place.

Before interpreting the findings, it is necessary to determine whether the overall model fits the data. General guidelines suggest that $RMSEA \leq .08$, $CFI \geq .90$, and $NNFI \geq .90$ indicate good-fitting models (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993; Marsh, Hau, and Wen 2004). The findings presented in the model surpass the suggested cutoff criteria for all three measures of model fit. Because the model fits the data, it is reasonable to proceed with analysis of parameter estimates. Table 2 presents the factor loadings associated with all manifest variables, and the model presented in figure 2 provides the model fit statistics and parameter estimates.

All five of the hypothesized parameters significantly contribute to the fit of the model. Because all indicators are treated as categorical in this analysis, traditional χ^2 difference testing is not appropriate, and all model constraints were tested for significance using the χ^2 difference testing option for categorical variables in Mplus (Muthen and Muthen 1998–2010). The direct path between commitment to union values and job satisfaction is significant at the .05 level, whereas all other parameters are significant at the .01 level or greater. Table 3 illustrates the change in model χ^2 and associated significance levels.

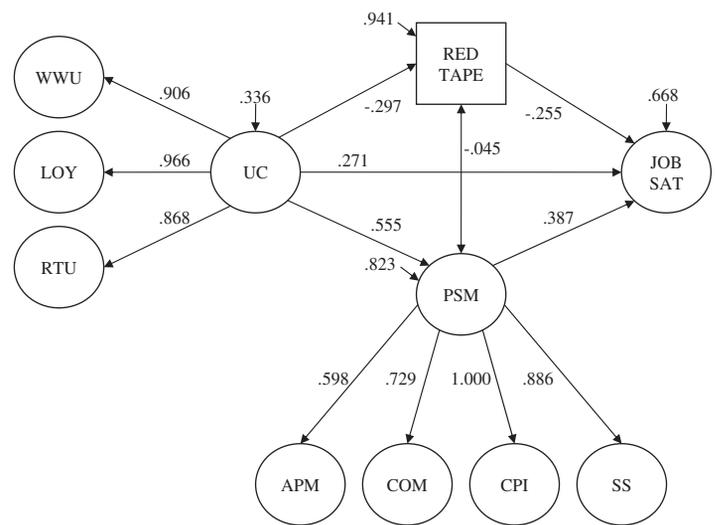
The results presented in figure 2 illustrate the complex relationship between union commitment and job satisfaction in the public sector. First, public employees reporting greater

Table 2 Standardized Factor Loadings

Scale Items	Standardized Estimates	R ²
Union Socialization		
MEETINGS	.846	.716
UNIONINT	.846	.716
Willingness to Work for the Union		
WWU1	.978	.956
WWU2	.896	.803
WWU3	.939	.882
Loyalty to the Union		
LOY1	.884	.781
LOY2	.857	.734
LOY3	.854	.729
LOY4	.855	.811
LOY5	.856	.875
LOY6	.857	.754
Responsibility to the Union		
RTU1	.705	.497
RTU2	.873	.763
RTU3	.821	.674
RTU4	.797	.636
Attraction to Policy Making		
APM1 (Reversed)	.126	.016
APM2 (Reversed)	.314	.099
APM3 (Reversed)	.573	.328
Compassion		
COM1	.461	.212
COM2	.349	.122
COM3 (Reversed)	.615	.378
COM4 (Reversed)	.475	.226
COM5	.644	.414
Commitment to the Public Interest		
CPI1	.662	.438
CPI2	.792	.627
CPI3	.829	.688
Self-Sacrifice		
SS1	.626	.392
SS2	.745	.555
SS3	.600	.360
SS4	.424	.180
Job Satisfaction		
JS1	.613	.376
JS2	.952	.906
JS3	.841	.706
Negative Wording		
APM1 (Reversed)	.754	.569
APM2 (Reversed)	.294	.086
APM3 (Reversed)	.758	.575
COM3 (Reversed)	.006	.000
COM4 (Reversed)	.338	.114

union commitment also report higher job satisfaction. The direction of the relationship is positive, which contradicts the negative hypothesized relationship. Second, the model provides evidence suggesting that union commitment indirectly influences public sector job satisfaction through perceived red tape and PSM. Employees reporting greater union commitment perceive less red tape, and employees who perceive more red tape also report less job satisfaction. Additionally, members who are more committed to the union report greater PSM. Those reporting higher PSM, in turn, are also more satisfied with the nature of public sector work.

Although figure 2 presents several direct relationships, it does not provide information on the total indirect effect of union commitment on job satisfaction. Total indirect effects are estimated as the product of multiple direct effects (Kline 2005). In this model, the



Model Fit: $\chi^2(658, n = 329) = 1359.592; p < .001; RMSEA = .057 (.053, .061); CFI = .961; NNFI(TLI) = .957$

Figure 2 Standardized Parameter Estimates

Table 3 Regression Parameter Significance Levels

	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	P
Model				
Full Model	658	NA	NA	NA
Job Satisfaction				
Union Commitment	659	4.967	1	.026
Red Tape	659	24.633	1	<.001
PSM	659	43.082	1	<.001
Red Tape				
Union Commitment	659	7.511	1	.006
PSM				
Union Commitment	659	16.174	1	<.001

indirect effect of union commitment on job satisfaction through perceived red tape is .076 ($p = .022$), and the indirect effect of union commitment on job satisfaction through PSM is .215 ($p = .001$). The total indirect effect of union commitment on job satisfaction is estimated as the sum of all indirect effects (Kline 2005). The total indirect effect of union commitment on job satisfaction is .291 ($p < .001$), which is greater than the direct effect of union commitment on job satisfaction (.271). Finally, the total effect of union commitment on job satisfaction is calculated by adding the direct effect to the total indirect effect. The total effect of union commitment on job satisfaction is .562.³ Practically speaking, the model suggests that the overall influence of union commitment on job satisfaction is strong and positive.

Finally, there are multiple R^2 values in structural models corresponding to each exogenous variable. First, the model controls explain 66.4 percent of the variance in commitment to the union. Second, the model controls and commitment to the union explain 5.9 percent of the variance in perceived red tape and 17.7 percent of the variance in public service motivation. Finally, the overall model explains a relatively large portion of the variance in job satisfaction, 33.2 percent. Although a relatively small proportion of the variance in perceived red tape is explained by the model, the remaining R^2 values indicate that this model has reasonable explanatory capacity.

Table 4 Standardized Model Control Parameter Estimates

	β	SE	Z	P
Job Satisfaction				
Union Socialization	-.096	.08	-.74	.460
Fire Fighter	-.255	.113	-4.740	.007
Police Officer	-.018	.081	-2.961	.768
College Degree	-.104	.072	1.939	.052
Female	-.032	.076	-.567	.571
White	-.018	.097	-.303	.762
PSM				
Union Socialization	-.278	.020	-1.053	.292
Fire Fighter	-.008	.016	-.105	.916
Police Officer	-.162	.023	-1.096	.273
College Degree	.096	.028	1.004	.316
Female	.197	.028	1.178	.239
White	-.041	.012	-.683	.495
Red Tape				
Union Socialization	.316	.324	2.652	.008
Fire Fighter	.049	.500	.717	.473
Police Officer	.100	.384	1.483	.138
College Degree	.002	.342	.035	.972
Female	-.092	.350	-1.574	.115
White	.098	.484	1.486	.137
Union Commitment				
Union Socialization	.743	.032	20.57	<.001
Fire Fighter	.297	.136	5.263	<.001
Police Officer	.206	.112	3.441	.001
College Degree	-.037	.110	-.658	.511
Female	-.109	.111	-1.919	.055
White	-.049	.133	-.883	.377

Additionally, several significant relationships exist between the control variables and other model constructs. First, firefighters tend to be more dissatisfied with their jobs. Second, individuals who interact more frequently with other union members perceive higher levels of red tape. Finally, three model controls are significantly related to union commitment. Survey respondents who reported more interaction in union socialization reported greater commitment to the union. Additionally, police officers and firefighters reported greater union commitment. Table 4 provides the standardized parameter estimates and significance levels for all control variables.

Discussion and Conclusions

The labor relations literature frequently asserts that unionization contributes to job dissatisfaction (Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway 1992), but these studies focus primarily on private sector unions. This article has examined union members' job satisfaction in the public sector. The findings presented here suggest that public sector unionization can increase members' job satisfaction by favorably altering the work environment. Perhaps the most interesting result concerns the positive relationship between union commitment and job satisfaction. Although this finding is surprising in light of substantial evidence pointing to unionization as a source of member dissatisfaction, unions are integral in minimizing wage inequality and increasing autonomy in the work organization (Belman, Heywood, and Lund 1997; Kearney 2003; Kearney and Morgan 1980; Llorens 2008). This research is consistent with arguments that unions can increase members'

satisfaction by enabling them to achieve preferred values, and it supports the assertion that favorably altering perceptions of the work environment serves as a mechanism by which unions indirectly increase job satisfaction.

The major element of the work context examined here is perceived red tape. Not surprisingly, members who are more committed to unions perceive less red tape. Although formal organizational rules are more numerous in unionized environments (Freeman and Medoff 1984; Gallagher 1983), committed union members tend to perceive these rules more favorably. Union members may assess rules positively because collective bargaining agreements establish rule-oriented protections of employee rights, which favorably alter value trade-offs perceived by union members. One caveat is in order, because this article examines union member perceptions of organizational rules broadly construed. There is little reason to expect that union members begin from the assumption that collective bargaining rules amount to red tape, but the general red tape scale measures reactions to burdensome rules broadly construed. Therefore, the findings suggest that committed union members, compared to noncommitted members, feel differently about organization wide red tape. All union members might be expected to view those rules associated with the labor contract even more favorably. That hypothesis cannot be tested here, but it would be valuable to determine whether these findings are a product of using the general red tape item rather than a human resource red tape scale.

Second, unions appear to be social institutions that communicate PSM, and commitment to the union seems to increase PSM. Although this finding contradicts assertions that unions are primarily self-interested (Moe 2006, 2009), it is understandable from the perspective of organizational psychologists exploring the causes of union commitment. Research suggests that commitment to the union is associated with feelings of loyalty to the labor union, willingness to personally sacrifice for other union members, and a sense of responsibility to advance the collective good of the union (Kelloway, Catano, and Southwell 1992). Union commitment and PSM provide similar frameworks from which employees approach the evaluation of work elements. Although many of the emotions associated with union commitment are similar to those that foster PSM (Perry and Hondgehem 2008; Perry and Wise 1990), scholars have yet to specifically emphasize the role that social boundaries play in understanding PSM. This would represent an intriguing question for future research.

Because the findings presented in this article suggest that union membership can increase public sector job satisfaction, practicing public managers could use this information to frame assumptions to structure bargaining relationships. First, it may not be beneficial for managers and labor leaders to approach collective bargaining with an "us versus them" mentality. In some ways, management and labor may share similar values, such as a preference for service to society, as important work rewards associated with public service. If management and labor can agree on bargaining outcomes that fulfill preferred values, the

This research is consistent with arguments that unions can increase members' satisfaction by enabling them to achieve preferred values, and it supports the assertion that favorably altering perceptions of the work environment serves as a mechanism by which unions indirectly increase job satisfaction.

bargaining process could contribute to higher performing public agencies. Second, as Kearney and Hays suggest, “participative decision making provides personal benefits to the individual employee as well as desired organizational outcomes” (1994, 44). Given this conclusion, union members may perceive lower levels of red tape partially because they are afforded the opportunity to participate in rule creation through the collective bargaining process. If labor and management can approach the bargaining process as a participative forum in which to address workplace issues, positive individual and organizational outcomes become more likely.

The results from this analysis, however, should be viewed with caution. First, to examine employees throughout the organizational hierarchy, the number of organizations surveyed was limited to a single municipal organization. The findings reported here may not translate to other municipal organizations of varying size. Furthermore, the findings reflect the attitudes of local government employees, and it may not be possible to generalize to other levels of government. Second, all survey respondents worked in Kansas. Because of vastly different collective bargaining regulations in other states, the generalizability of these findings is limited. Third, the data used to test the hypotheses exclude certain occupations. Given that the majority of unionized employees in this data set represent public safety workers and clerical employees, it is questionable whether other occupational categories would exhibit similar attitudes.

It is interesting that relatively little research in public administration has examined the psychological effects of unionism in the heavily unionized public sector. Perhaps this is because public administration, with its emphasis on government organizations as the object of study, has become more interested in the politics of unionization. Nonetheless, labor unions represent a social group with the ability to influence the work-related attitudes of government employees. Although the power and influence of public sector unions vacillates over time, they are likely to remain an integral component of the public sector work environment (Kearney 1992, 2010). As such, research on public sector unions can contribute to a broader understanding of how employees experience and interpret public sector work settings.

Appendix: Operational Definitions

Bureaucratic Red Tape

Respondents were asked to rate the level of red tape, defined as burdensome administrative policies and procedures that have a negative effects on organizational performance, on a scale between 0 and 10.

Public Service Motivation: Attraction to Policy Making

Attraction to policy making was assessed using all three of Perry’s (1996) measures rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- APM1: Politics is a dirty word. (Reversed)
- APM2: The give-and-take of public policy making doesn’t appeal to me. (Reversed)
- APM3: I don’t care much for politicians. (Reversed)

Public Service Motivation: Compassion

Compassion was gauged using the five items proposed by Coursey et al. (2008) rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- COM1: Most social programs are too vital to do without.
- COM2: It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.
- COM3: I seldom think about the welfare of people whom I don’t know personally. (Reversed)
- COM4: I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help themselves. (Reversed)
- COM5: I am often reminded by daily events how dependent we are on one another.

Public Service Motivation: Commitment to the Public Interest

Commitment to the public interest was gauged using three items proposed by Coursey et al. (2008) rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- CPI1: I unselfishly contribute to my community.
- CPI2: I consider public service my civic duty.
- CPI3: Meaningful public service is very important to me.

Public Service Motivation: Self-Sacrifice

Self-sacrifice was gauged using four items proposed by Coursey et al. (2008) rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- SS1: Much of what I do is for a cause bigger than myself.
- SS2: Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.
- SS3: I feel people should give back to society more than they get from it.
- SS4: I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was assessed using three items rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- JS1: Doing my job gives me a sense of personal satisfaction.
- JS2: I am proud to work for this organization.
- JS3: Overall, I am satisfied working for this organization.

Union Commitment: Willingness to Work for the Union

Willingness to work for the union was examined using three items rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- WWU1: I am willing to put in a great deal of time to make the union successful.
- WWU2: If asked I would run for elected office in the union.
- WWU3: If asked I would serve on a committee for the union.

Union Commitment: Loyalty to the Union

Loyalty to the union was assessed using six items rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- LOY1: I talk up the union to my friends as a great organization to belong to.

- LOY2: The record of the union is a good example of what dedicated people can get done.
- LOY3: There's a lot to be gained by joining the union.
- LOY4: Deciding to join the union was a smart move on my part.
- LOY5: I feel a sense of pride in being a part of the union.
- LOY6: Based on what I know now, and what I believe I can expect in the future, I plan to be a member of the union the rest of the time I work here.

Union Commitment: Responsibility to the Union

Responsibility to the union was gauged using four items rated on a five-point scale. Respondents were asked to assess agreement with the following statements:

- RTU1: Every member must be willing to take the time and risk of filing a grievance.
- RTU2: It is every member's responsibility to see that the other members "live up to" the collective agreement.
- RTU3: It is the duty of every member to keep his/her ears open for information that might be useful to the union.
- RTU4: It is every member's duty to support or help another worker use the grievance procedure.

Union Socialization

Labor union socialization was assessed using two measures rated on a five-point scale ranging from quite frequently to never. Items were reverse-coded so that higher values indicate more participation in institutional and individual socialization experiences. Respondents were asked to assess participation in union activities with the following questions:

- MEETINGS: How often do you attend union meetings? (Reversed)
- UNIONINT: How often do you interact with other union members outside of meetings and work? (Reversed)

Model Controls

This project uses a series of sociodemographic variables as covariates, or model controls. The following demographic characteristics were collected in the survey instrument:

- Race was dichotomized to reflect white and nonwhite employees.
- Education was dichotomized to reflect those with a college degree and those without.
- Role in the organization was dichotomized to include management and nonmanagement.
- Gender
- Police officer
- Firefighter

Notes

1. Red tape represents one concept widely researched in public administration. However, the findings presented here may also comment on the psychological benefits of formalization. In an attempt to discern whether the findings differ when analyzing formalization, as opposed to red tape, a second model tests a formalization construct based on three questions. The results indicated positive relationships between union commitment and formalization and between formalization and job satisfaction. The relationship between union commitment

and formalization, however, was not statistically significant. The lack of significance between union commitment and formalization could be attributable to the use of a three-indicator construct controlling for measurement error as opposed to the single red tape item.

2. Three indicator constructs are identified because the model estimates six parameters with six known pieces of information (three item variances and three covariances between items). Two indicator constructs, on the other hand, are underidentified because the model must estimate four parameters with only three known pieces of information.
3. Although Mplus does not provide a *p*-value associated with the total effect, both the total indirect effect and the direct effect are significant at the .05 level. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the total effect, comprising both direct and indirect relationships, is also significant.

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