

**MONASH UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

**THE PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT
RELATIONSHIP AND MANAGEMENT MORALITY:
CONCEPTUALISING A CORRELATION UTILISING
A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TYPOLOGY OF PUBLIC
SECTOR MORALITY (PSM)**

Ali Haidar & Len Pullin

*Working Paper 84/98
December 1998*

ABSTRACT

The Public service of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom in the recent years have undergone fundamental changes in many aspects of senior service employment relations. A debate has arisen on the potential impact of these changes on public service morality (see Halligan and O'Grady, 85; Doig, 95; Greenway, 95; Keating, 95; Parker, 89; Self, 95; Considine 88; Thompson, 91; and Pratchett and Wingfield, 96). This paper concentrates at the level of the public manager - minister/councillor interface and is concerned with developing a suitable analytical framework to examine whether or not there is a correlation between the public service employment relationship and public service morality (PSM). It introduces and develops the concept of a multi dimensional framework for analysing PSM. The framework consists of four dimensions of the dependent variable PSM - anonymity, partisanship, obedience, and means-end relationship and three heuristic ethical patterns - service, neutrality and technocratic. Two types of employment relationships are introduced as independent variables: Northcote-Trevelyan (NTER), and managerialist (MER). The paper generates several tentative hypotheses linking the nature of the employment relationship and the PSM dimensions. The conceptual scheme has the potential to be applied in countries which have followed or continue to follow the Westminster style of public service.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the notion that the nature of the employment relationship in a public management context is correlated with the morality of managers and their underlying work ethics. It is based on the observation that what is commonly termed as the Westminster style of public service management is no longer the dominant public service management style in many countries. The distinctive Westminster public service style, with its characteristic structure, function, role, and morality which evolved with the Westminster style of 'cabinet' government, was adopted in most Commonwealth countries including Australia and New Zealand. However, in the last two decades, the public services in Australia, New Zealand and Britain have undergone fundamental changes, and to all intents and purposes moved away from the Westminster style.

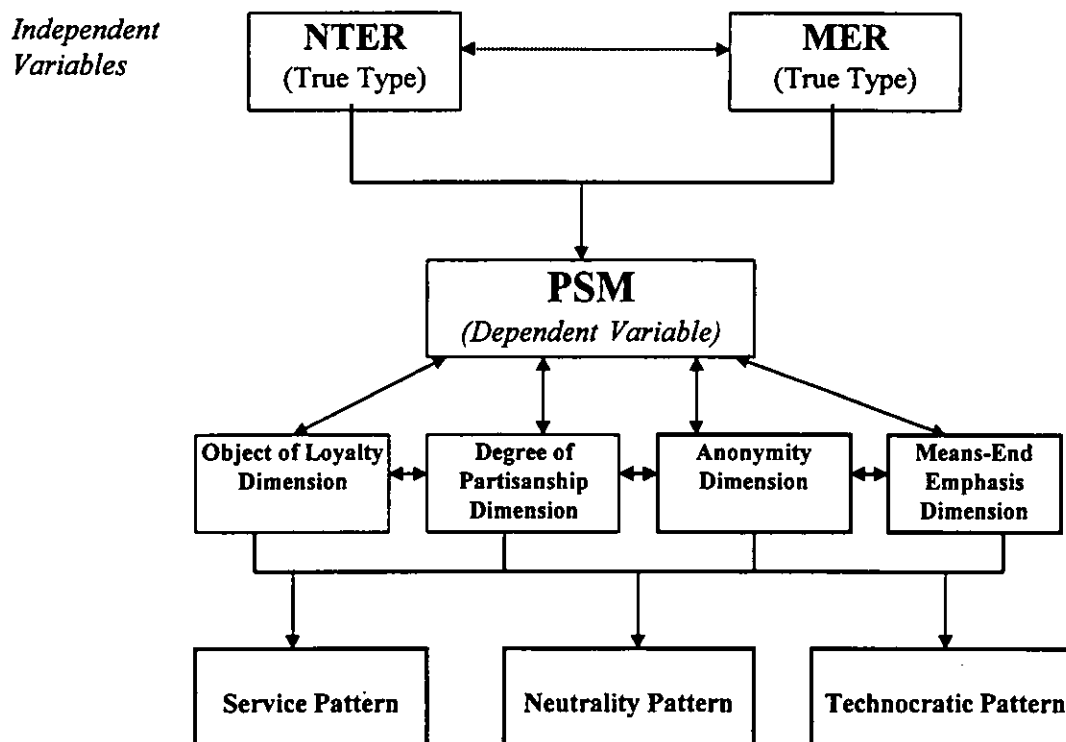
The implications of these changes in respect of public service morality (PSM) has generated intense interest amongst students of public sector management. However, whilst there has been much philosophising on the effect of these changes on PSM (see, amongst others, Halliagn and O'Grady, 85; Doig, 95; Greenway, 95; Keating, 95; Parker, 89; Self, 95; Considine 88; Thompson, 91; and Pratchett and Wingfield, 96) there have been very few empirical studies. Those that do exist in Australia were completed in the 1960's and are based on case study method (see Parker, 61, 64 and 65). More recently, Pratchett and Wingfield (96) completed a multi-dimencional study of local government morality in the United Kingdom. The aim of this paper is to develop a suitable enabling framework by refining and further developing the Pratchett and Wingfield (96) concept, and to test whether or not the nature of the public service employment relationship is correlated to PSM.

To achieve this aim the paper is structured as follows: firstly, it briefly outlines the conceptual framework developed in this paper and then defines and discusses the two employment relations frameworks underlying the research: the Northcote-Trevelyan type employment relationship (NTER) and the Managerialist employment relationship (MER). The paper then examines existing public management literature to identify and define the PSM dimensions and patterns incorporated in the conceptual framework. The paper concludes by identifying several hypotheses for future testing utilising the typology and indicates the research potential of such a framework in a time of rapid public sector change.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In examining the literature on public service ethics it is apparent that considerably more PSM research is normative rather than empirical. There is a distinct tendency towards prescription, with public service ethicists suggesting normative standards that public servants should follow. For example, in the USA, Rohr (89) suggests that public servants follow the 'regime value', O'Toole (90), in the UK, indicates that civil servants work for the "common good" and, in Australia, Jackson (87, 88) advises that public servants are obligated to work for "public interests". The framework proposed in this study (see Figure 1) seeks to redress this situation by facilitating empirical analysis based on the perceived reality of PSM rather than prescription or myth.

Figure 1: Conceptual Correlation Between Public Service Employment Relationships and Public Service Morality (PSM)



As previously indicated the aim of this research is to establish a framework to test the view that the nature of public service employment relationship is correlated to public service morality (PSM). In exploring relevant literature it became apparent that PSM (the dependent variable) was a multi-dimensional variable comprising four dimensions: object of loyalty, degree of partisanship, degree of anonymity and means/end (see Figure 1). These are scaled dimensions which depending upon their emphasis, formulate into three distinct, heuristic, ethical patterns: 'service, neutrality and technocratic' (see Figure 1).

The independent variables, the Northcote-Trevelyan type employment relationship (NTER) and the Managerialist employment relationship (MER) are defined in the context of this research as 'true type' relationships which represent an ideal fit with the findings of the literature review. In the framework (see Figure 1) a dotted line relationship is indicated between the NTER and MER 'true types' representing, in reality, that employment relationships may fall between them.

It can be hypothesised from the framework that there is a relationship between the nature of the employment relationship (NTER/MER) and the dependent variable PSM. The nature of PSM, and hence the PSM pattern (see Figure 1), will be influenced by the degree to which the employment relationship in any given situation reflects the features of either NTER or MER or somewhere in between. The literature, discussed more fully below, is indicative that NTER will be correlated with the neutrality pattern (see Armstrong, 89; Jackson, 88; Quinlan, 93; and Hawke, 89) whilst MER will be correlated with the technocratic pattern (see Holmes and Shand, 95; Amy, 90; Keating, 90; and Wilenski, 88).

UNDERLYING EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS FRAMEWORKS

In the discussion so far, mention has been made of a move from the 'Westminster' style of public sector management to a more managerialist approach. No concerted attempt has been made to define these terms, except that in one there is an emphasis on process (Westminster) and in the other an emphasis on cost and

efficiency (managerialism). Concern has also been raised (see Greenway, 95; Considine, 88; and Wilenski 88), although by no means concordant, that a move from one to the other will lead to a denigration in PSM.

This part of the paper examines the notions of the 'Westminster' system and 'managerialism' and seeks to define these terms in the context of this research. Surprisingly, although both are in common usage in public management, no clear definition of either exists, particularly when aligned with the employment relationship.

Northcote-Trevelyan Type Employment Relationship (NTER)

The 'Westminster' system of public management had its genesis in the Northcote-Trevelyan Report 1854 which recommended specific processes and procedures for the recruitment, selection and promotion of civil servants to the British Civil Service. Although the format and emphasis may change in different situations, the basic structural elements of the 'Westminster' system (now on referred to as the Northcote-Trevelyan type employment relationship (NTER)) is defined in this research as follows:

It is a formalised employment relationship which provides legal guarantees of the rights and obligations of public managers. Decisions regarding many aspects of employment relations are taken out of and put beyond the control of politicians and given to a relatively independent government agency. A hallmark of NTER is that the public service employment relationship is managed and controlled by people or institutions other than the departments or superiors of the public servants and are centralised. The system of employment relations in practice in public management in Australia until the seventies characterises the Northcote-Trevelyan type.

The above definition was derived from the merit based system of public service in the United Kingdom and its colonies established in the middle of last century. This system was based on the *Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service (1854)*, commonly known as the Northcote-Trevelyan Report after its two authors.

The need for the Northcote-Trevelyan Report arose due to the problems afflicting the British civil service at that time, including public service patronage appointments, an inability of the service to attract capable people, competition between public departments for their services when competent person became available and a lack of unity in form, structure and conditions of work (54, 2-5). The report observed that the public service required "....aid of an efficient body of permanent officers, occupying a position duly subordinate to that of Ministers who are directly responsible to the Crown and to Parliament, yet possessing sufficient independence, character, ability, and experience to be able to advise, assist, and to some extent influence, those who are from time to time set over them" (54, 1).

The report recommended that public managers should be recruited from younger people who would join at the lower ranks based on a competitive examination conducted by a central Board, "Such board should be composed of men holding independent position, and capable of commanding general confidence; it should have at its head an officer of the rank of Privy Councillor..." (54, 6-7). By Order in Council of May, 1855, the British Government established a Board of three Civil Service Commissioners to conduct qualifying examinations (Spann, 73, 361).

Similar problems to those experienced in the UK also beset public service employment in Australia which, until the close of the nineteenth century, was plagued with political patronage in recruitment, arbitrary management of personnel matters and departmentalism (Spann, 73, 363). Australian public service employment, both commonwealth and state, up until the 1970's, is a product of a series of reforms which included the 1859 commission of inquiry in Victoria, several decisive events in New South Wales and the 1902 Commonwealth Public Services Acts (Spann, 73, 309). One compelling reason for bringing public service employment relations under the control of law, to be managed by an independent central personnel agency, was to rectify the public service of these ills (Caiden, 1965, 590).

One of the fundamental aspects of the Northcote-Trevelyan type is that the employment relationship is managed by a centralised personnel management agency¹. A comprehensive list of the powers and duties of the central personnel agency can be found in Spann (65). These central personnel agencies impartially defended the merit system against politicians and patronage and protected the legitimate interests of the public service (Spann, 73, 386)

In further refining the definition of NTER, it can be safely stated from the above, that it is normally related to a centralised staffing function. Departmental heads have little control over manpower, methods of work and finance. Departmental staffing under the NTER is controlled and supervised by central personnel agencies. Their expenditures are subject to Treasury control. They are also dependent on other specialised common service agencies, for example, a Department of Works may be their constructing authority. All this makes it harder for an individual department to 'design itself' for its specific tasks (Spann, 73, 360).

Some of the benefits for employees of the NTER is that the centralised personnel system widens the career prospects of managers, it curbs inbreeding, reaps economies of scale, and brings uniformity in recruitment, promotion, pay and employment conditions. It is claimed to be more equitable and helps avoid competitive bidding for officers from different departments (Spann, 73, 386). The value of NTER is best summed up by Spann (73), who states that it "was a pattern not without interesting variations, and which never extended itself to all positions. But it came to be the norm, departures from which, however numerous, have been felt to need special justification" (Spann, 73, 309). However, it is not without its critics.

It is argued that the NTER becomes obsessed with uniformity; fails to recognise differences in needs and demands and creates rigidity rather than flexibility. Critics argue that "if the principles of good management are to apply in the public sector, then the real employer, the agency that determines the work to be done, should have more control over who is to do it and on which terms" (Spann, 73, 387).

Managerialist Employment Relationship (MER)

The ethos underlying the criticisms of NTER is that entrenched in what we have termed as the 'managerialist employment relationship' (MER). This can be portrayed as the other end of a continuum (NTER - MER). The underlying assumptions of MER are defined in the context of this paper as:

the empowerment of departmental public managers to directly control personnel functions such as recruitment, selection, promotion, and termination, be responsible for and to control, costs, budgets, financial management and other managerial functions

The reforms introduced in public sector employment relations in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom since the early eighties typify the underlying assumptions of MER. In August 1986, the Australian Commonwealth Government introduced the Public Service Legislation (Streamlining) Act. This Act included "mechanisms whereby public servants could, relatively easily, be dismissed on the grounds of redundancy or inefficiency". Departmental secretaries were given increased power to remove inefficient staff. In addition, for all but junior staff, the right of appeal over promotions was abolished (Thompson, 91, 131). At the commonwealth level the notion of permanence was removed by renaming heads of departments as 'departmental secretary' rather than 'permanent head'. Departmental secretaries are now appointed on a fixed term contract for up to five years. This is reviewed after five years and they now rotate amongst different departments (Halligan, 91, 352).

The notion of contracts in public management was extended to the appointment of senior public managers under five yearly 'performance' contracts in Victorian local government (Local government Act 1989, s.95A). Performances of these managers are reviewed annually (Local government Act 1989, s.97A)

¹ Note: we use the term central personnel agency to include both the commissions and boards that operated in Australia before the radical reforms of the eighties. However, the current Commission is quite different and its role and function is discussed later in the paper.

utilising objective criteria. In essence the focus in MER is on objectives and results in terms of outcomes and value for money (Keating, 95, 18).

PUBLIC SERVICE MORALITY

The paper so far has indicated that there are four dimensions of PSM, anonymity, partisanship, loyalty and means/ends emphasis (see Figure 1). These dimensions are now expanded upon and developed in the terms of a continuum of three ethical patterns: service, neutrality, and technocratic. The identification of these three ethical patterns does not assume that the moral profile of public managers would necessarily fall into these types. The purpose of the patterns is heuristic. The four PSM dimensions are scaled ('anonymity to public', 'non-partisanship to partisanship', 'loyalty to ministers and/or to the public interest', and 'means/ends emphasis'), and the technocratic and the service ethical patterns can be considered two extremes of a continuum while neutrality is the middle ground or a compromise between them (see Table 1).

Table 1: Typology of Moral Patterns

Scaled Dimensions	Moral Pattern Continuum		
	<i>Service</i>	<i>Neutrality</i>	<i>Technocratic</i>
<i>Object of Loyalty</i>	Public Interest	Minister/Public Interest	Minister
<i>Degree of Partisanship</i>	Partisan	Non-Partisan	Non-Partisan
<i>Degree of Anonymity</i>	Public	Anonymous	Anonymous
<i>Means-End Emphasis</i>	Ends (public interest)	Means (processes)	Ends (results)

Neutrality Pattern

The doctrine of neutrality is not fully defined in public statutes or regulations, nor could it be effectively enforced by outside sanctions. It is part of code of a conduct that permanent officials are supposed to follow (Spann, 73, 311). Given the legitimacy and implicitness of neutrality in public management and despite lack of prescription it provides a suitable basis for a heuristic pattern of PSM.

Public managers are servants of the duly elected government of the day. Whilst they serve the government as a whole, an individual public manager's first and foremost duty is to the minister in charge of the department in which he or she is serving. This duty entails that public managers serve the minister with integrity and to the best of their ability.(Armstrong, 89, 141).

Public managers have three functions in relation to ministers: providing advice, implementing policies and managing and delivering services for which government is responsible (Armstrong, 89,140-41).

The neutrality ethic suggests that managers implement policies of their superiors and of their agencies in a morally neutral manner. They are not to exercise independent moral judgement (Jackson, 88, 244). While implementing policy, if public managers are exercising discretion or where the policy requires official interpretation they are expected to implement whatever moral principles are reflected in the policies or the orders of their superior rather than to act on their own moral principles (Thompson, 85, 556). The duty of an official lies in obedience to the government of the day. Public managers must suppress personal convictions, including those regarding the public interest in the line of duty (Jackson, 87, 244).

Public managers also advise ministers in policy formulation. However, once ministers have decided on a course of action, it is a duty of a public manager to carry out that decision whether they agree with it or not (Armstrong, 89, 142). As Quinlan puts it, "One may think of a particular policy concept to be a square circle, and indeed within the confidence of Whitehall one may argue fervently to that effect; but once the decision is taken, it is a matter not just of duty but of professional pride to make the very best square circle that effort and imagination can contrive. If you cannot work like that - to revert to a previous point - you are in the wrong business" (Quinlan, 93, 542). Or, as Thompson puts it, if they initiate a policy managers should anticipate the intentions or objectives of their superiors (Thompson, 85, 556).

Public managers should act as agents of ministers (Fraser, 78, 5). They should act as an effective instrument in the hands of the government rather than oppose or acting as a stumbling block against implementation of ministerial wishes (Hawke, 89 9). They should not obstruct or sabotage implementation of government policies even if they disagree with them (Williams, 85, 49; Quinlan, 93, 42). Public managers should not refuse to take an action merely because to do so would clash with their personal opinion, or political views, unless it is a matter of conscience. They should do whatever ministers ask them to do (Armstrong, 89, 143). But obedience to ministers on the part of public managers is not unconditional according to the neutrality ethic. Public managers must do anything under a minister's command so long as it is not unlawful. When a command is unlawful, public servants should complain following proper channels, processes and procedures, they should report to superior officers (Armstrong, 89, 143).

Obedience to superiors is nothing abnormal or peculiar to the public sector. This is a common feature across all large organisation. Essentially, subordinates may think about or advise upon a range of things but, in finality, what the superior says goes. (Quinlan 93, 541). Thompson sums up neutrality as follows: "The ethic of neutrality portrays the ideal administrator as a completely reliable instrument of the goals of the organisation, never injecting personal values into the process of furthering these goals. The ethic thus reinforces the great virtue of organisation - its capacity to serve any social end irrespective of the ends that individuals within it favour" (Thompson, 85, 556)

Obedience to ministers on the part of public managers in the Westminster constitutional system is justified on several grounds. Executive power in the system is conferred upon and exercised by ministers. Public managers have "no constitutional personality or responsibility separate from the duly elected government of the day" (Armstrong, 89, 141-42). Constitutionally public managers cannot work without the authority of ministers. Authority exercised by public servants without delegation from a minister would be illegitimate (Jackson, 88, 244). Ministers are conferred with this power so that they can carry out governmental work and require the obedient support from public servants to do so.

Obedience demanded from public managers to ministers is fundamentally different from that of obedience in other formal organisations. Public managers through a process of election obey the people through the minister. In other words they obey democracy. Ministers represent public interest (Jackson, 88, 245). When a public manager obeys a minister s/he works for public interest (Thompson, 85, 556). Public managers, except through the ministers, have no duty to work for public interest: "In my opinion, it would be theoretically unsound and practically dangerous - and indeed actually arrogant - for civil servants to suppose, or for critics or commentators to encourage them to suppose, that they had some duty or entitlement of private, unelected judgement of the public's desires or interests over or around the views of the government's duly elected leaders" (Quinlan, 93, 542). To assign to the public service any responsibility in husbanding the public interest is undemocratic (Jackson, 88, 245).

Quinlan argues that in the governmental system different institutions perform different role and that different roles justify different ethics. The ethic of a parliamentarian is to criticise publicly any misjudgment or clear failure eg. to take care of the needy, on the part of the government. But that is not the ethic of the role of a public manager. The ethic of public manager's role requires him or her to be silent and obedient "once the time for advice in confidence is past" (Quinlan, 93, 543). Public managers may find ministers one sided and biased from their perspective but they must realise that ministers exist in a world characterised by "unrelenting presence of professional adversarialism confronting them". Ministers might

not be balanced in their expressed views but this should not stop public managers in supporting them. Once "our proper advice has been given by the lights of our own ethic, our lines of non-acceptance should be drawn only at clear untruth" (Quinlan, 93, 543-44).

In terms of how this duty of obedience impacts personally on public managers is quite clear. Public managers cannot complain about the fact that they have been asked to be obedient. They are morally obliged to obey ministers. Managers accept duties on their own volition. The moment they find these duties disagreeable they are free to resign (Thompson, 85, 556; Jackson, 88, 245).

Commonly, in the Westminster constitutional type or in systems derived from the type such as Australia, the equivalent term is political neutrality but the correct interpretation of the spirit of the concept is non-partisanship (Uhr, 88, 114).

The public service is a non-political and disciplined career service (Armstrong, 89, 141) where public managers are required to serve to the best of their ability, whoever the electorate chooses to put at the head of the nation's affairs, irrespective of the public manager's personal liking or political inclination (Quinlan, 93, 540). Serving duly elected governments of a spectrum of political affiliations with equal loyalty is considered to be "one of the most fundamental values of our Westminster-derived system of government" (Hawke, 89, 7). If public managers fail to be politically detached and non-partisan "....the stability and the professionalism of the public service will also be subject to severe strain." (Fraser, 78, 6-7).

There is a widely held view that the party political activity of public managers should be limited (Williams, 85, 48). If they have party political affiliation, that affiliation should not influence their behaviour in relation to ministers or to the public. (Williams, 85, 48). Public managers must not show bias or partiality to any political party or to any of their views. This political neutrality is how they gain and maintain the confidence of politicians. As Armstrong indicates, public managers should at all times conscientiously fulfil their "duties and obligations to, and impartially assist, advise, and carry out the policies, of the duly elected government of the day" (Armstrong, 89, 141).

The neutrality ethic is based on the premise of the policy-administration dichotomy doctrine. According to this doctrine, determination of policy is the responsibility of the minister and public managers have no constitutional responsibility or role, distinct from that of the Minister (Armstrong, 89, 141). Public managers have the function of assisting the ministers in the formulation of policies and they are required to provide ministers with all the information and experience at their disposal in this regard. This advice must be impartial, honest and must be given 'without fear or favour, and whether the advice accords with the Minister' view or not' (Armstrong, 89, 142).

The neutrality ethic accommodates public managers to put "....forward their own views, argue with their superiors, and contest proposals in the process of formulating policy" but it requires that the "disagreement must take place within the agency and according to the agency's rules of procedure" (Thompson, 85, 556). Public managers must assist ministers as best as they can in policy formulation and must not deliberately withhold relevant information from the minister and must not seek to obstruct or delay a ministerial decision if they disagree with a particular policy of ministers" (Armstrong, 89, 142). As Quinlan says: "In any event, our role sets major duties, and corresponding opportunity to contribute, before that point of decision. We have duties of care about facts and proper process, duties of balance in argument, duties of frankness in advice and if necessary in warning; as William Armstrong said, our job is 'to put reality in front of ministers' - arguably a touch of arrogance in that, and so not to every taste, but carrying a proper truth." (Quinlan, 93, 341). Essentially, this view confers a dynamic role in policy formulation but also casts a mantle of public silence over those in public service.

Armstrong states that "There is and must be a general duty upon every civil servant, serving or retired, not to disclose... any document or information or detail about the course of business, which has come his or her way in the course of duty as a civil servant" (Armstrong, 89, 142). Public servants should be anonymous,

they should not make comment publicly on public policy issues and should not disclose official secrets. (Williams, 85, 48).

Public managers in giving information to select committees, media and individuals should take a permission from their ministers. Ministers effectively 'own' or are custodians of the information and only they have the authority to decide what information should be made available, how and when it should be released, whether it is to parliament, to select committees, to the media, or to individuals. Serving or former public managers should not disclose information to unauthorised individuals or organisations without the permission of the minister. To do so would be a breach of confidence. (Armstrong, 89, 143).

Ministers should decide what they want to do with information that comes to their department. Ministers may be quite imperfect in handling information but that does not justify the practice of whistleblowing or information leakage. The role of the public managers is not to act as a check on ministers. As Quinlan says "It is not for us [public managers] to police or punish perceived ministerial breach in any public context, whether by the back door or the front. The duty of confidence is similarly not conditional on good actions by others; the term 'whistle-blowing' in this context is so far as my observation goes, usually euphemism for behaviour that more often deserves contempt than commendation" (Quinlan, 93, 542).

The anonymity principle is justified on the grounds that public policy process requires public managers and ministers to work very closely together. It is like village life, where neither party can hide a secret from the other. In the policy development phase both parties argue in favour or against a range of policy options and in the process the views of both come out. The intimacy of this process is built upon the assumption of mutual trust. Politicians trust public managers and in return public managers are endowed with the innermost dealings and confidences of government. The principle of anonymity, if observed, maintains the trust between civil servants and ministers. Disclosure is a breach of trust, irrespective of the motive, for political, personal or pecuniary gain. Whatever the motive, it damages the trust between civil servants and ministers, and also between colleagues (Armstrong, 89, 142).

Service Pattern

In this view public managers are not mere subordinates of ministers. Neither are they instruments at the hands of the politicians. Public servants are equal partners in government because they exercise governmental power (Uhr, 88, 109)

Many students of public sector management agree that the policy/administration dichotomy is false and unrealistic. In reality, public managers formulate policies when they advise ministers. They formulate policy when they are implementing or overseeing its implementation. In effect, laws passed by parliament or policies announced and adopted by ministers are rarely complete, they require interpretation and often allow room for discretion. It is in this area of policy formulation where the proponents of the service ethical pattern differ from the proponents of the other two models, they argue that public managers should be formulating policies in addition to their function of implementing them.

Jackson argues that the concept of public service is duotheistic. Public managers can be considered to have two masters where one is the government of the day and the other the public interest (Jackson, 88, 241). The argument places the public servant in a judgemental role, as it is "unethical for a public servant to be indifferent to the public interest" (Jackson, 88, 249) and they are responsible for serving and are intended to serve the public interest (Uhr, 1991, 287). Given this view, they are then put in a position of deciding what is and what is not in the public interest rather than blind obedience. This is in direct contrast to the ethic of neutrality which Jackson describes as no ethic at all for public servants (Jackson, 88, 248).

In the context of the service ethical pattern, obedience of public servants to the ministers is conditional as the public interest commands the loyalty of public managers first. They are required to serve the government of the day so that it may effectively and efficiently govern and at the same time serve the public interest (Jackson, 88, 242). "The duty public servants owe to the government of the day is engaged only as

long as the government is acting in the public interest. The duty is disengaged where the government contravenes the public interest" (Jackson, 88,247)

In the service pattern public servants perform a role of control and check on the acts of politicians (Jackson, 87, 289) and their guiding principle in monitoring the performances of politicians is the public interest. This role can be considered re-active as public servants need only become involved when politicians are not acting in the public interest. The underlying ethos supporting this view is that whilst governments, in order to govern, require a willing and able public service there are moral limits on governing. It is the role of the public managers, if ministers forget, to point the moral limits of governing. In those moments, civil servants have the responsibility of which Shakespeare's King John spoke to one of his chamberlains: "Casting an eye of doubt can be dangerous, but if it is never done what is the value of a professional public service"(Jackson, 87, 289)

The service ethic requires public managers to resist and obstruct ministerial policies but not all of them, they must do everything they can but only if the government acts against the public interest. Their resistance should include but not be limited to engaging in secret whit-anting of a government from within if necessary, giving 'fearless advice' come what may and evening leaking information as Clive Ponting did (see Jackson, 87, 248). "There are occasions when leaking serves the public interest. Leaking may always be illegal but it is not always unethical or immoral." (Jackson, 87, 248). Public managers must promote public interest even at the cost of losing their job (Jackson, 87, 280).

A rationale for the service ethic can be found in the institution of tenured public sector appointments. Jackson argues that public managers have been provided with security of tenure and other aspects of the status of the 'professional public service' and these only make sense if public managers carry a duty of public interest which transcends the government of the day (88, 241). Further, the conditions of employment and status of public servants give them the "responsibility and the opportunity to act morally in the broadest sense" (Jackson, 87, 280). The neutrality ethic counter argument is that only politicians have the legitimate right to work in the public interest because they are elected to their positions by the electorate (the public). According to this view, it is undemocratic for public servants to pursue their assumption of the public interest because they are not elected to do so. In response, service ethic proponents argue that democratic elections are not the only means of legitimisation as there are many institutions in the Westminster style of cabinet government, such as the monarchy and the judiciary, that are not elected but are still considered still legitimate. As Jackson puts it, election alone does not confer legitimacy - legal or moral- in the Westminster system of government (Jackson, 88, 246).

Further support for the neutrality view comes from Keating who states that, the service ethic argument has "failed to define the public interest in a manner which would provide a useful guide to action" (Keating, 90. 394). Neither do they provide any guidance as to how public servants would make the necessary judgements involved, nor how they would be held accountable for them (Keating, 95, 23). Concern for outcomes underlies the technocratic pattern but outcomes in this context are focused on financial and other results and measures.

Technocratic Pattern

Traditionally public management has emphasised a limited range of values such as efficiency, economy, democracy, integrity, impartiality, and equity etc. Whilst the technocratic ethic has not discarded these values, they have been expanded by recognition of responsiveness to government, close focus on results, and a strong commitment to accountability (Keating, 95, 20). This ethic emphasises that "The ethic of value for money and customer service should take its place alongside the ethic of probity and stewardship" (Holmes and Shand, 95, 552).

The technocratic ethic shifts the focus of attention of public servants to objectives and results in terms of outcomes achieved and whether or not they represent value for money (Keating, 95, 18). The focus on results is the ethical or philosophical content and provides public managers with a set of higher principles to guide them in the performance of their work (Keating, 90, 395). By working for results, public managers

might best serve the public and this approach "provides the criteria against which ministers and administrators can be held accountable, including a proper concern for the public interest" (Keating, 90, 395).

The underlying principle of the technocratic ethic is that the achievement of outcomes in the most economical way legitimises public policy. Without this emphasis on results the ethic of public service "lacks meaningful content, and instead becomes little more than a slogan" (Keating, 90, 396-7). Traditionally, public sector management has had an emphasis on process and never really identified what public servants are actually meant to do and certainly not what they are meant to achieve. The notion of service to the public was part of the ethos but there was little attempt to give it content, and the service relied heavily on the delegation of Crown prerogatives for its legitimacy (Keating, 95, 16). In the technocratic view taxpayers want value for their money and if public servants cannot provide cost effective services, they lose the confidence of the community. The public service can gain and maintain that confidence by achieving results in a cost effective way (Keating, 95, 21).

An emphasis on results leads to greater prominence being given to performance measurement and the development of performance indicators. In this the technocratic ethic is no exception and significance is given to performance measurement and indicators. Where performance is inevitably subjective, then performance measurement and indicators should be treated as guides to judgement (Keating, 95, 17-18). However, although performance is important in the technocratic ethic process is not ignored.

The technocratic ethic, rather than sacrificing process at the altar of results, seeks to balance the traditional concern for process and the scrutiny of inputs with a new emphasis on cost-effective achievement of improved outcomes (Keating, 90, 387). As Keating puts it, "Due process and fair dealing and the clear requirement to work with the law continue to be mandatory, but are no longer sufficient in themselves. Many of the detailed controls over processes have been removed in order to facilitate and encourage the pursuit of cost effective achievement of results. More emphasis of accountability is now more on what is to be achieved. Managers are now held accountable for both results and processes" (Keating, 90, 390). The technocratic ethic requires public managers to achieve results following due process not by sacrificing it. "Indeed a corrupt process is unlikely to produce good results" (Keating, 95, 20).

The first duty of a public manager is to conform with legal requirements and the spirit of those requirements, they are not required to turn their back on equity considerations in order to achieve results. They are required to meet equity considerations as part of law but achievement of results should not be sacrificed for process considerations either. In order to achieve a caring and compassionate society the most cost effective method should not be ignored but it would be unfair for public managers to help one group and ignore another (Keating, 95, 20-21).

A criticism of the technocratic ethic is that it is a "return to 'instrumentalism' by the backdoor" (Wilenski, 88, 217). The ethic suggests that the policy/administration dichotomy is valid and policy and administration can be separated. In essence the public service is a "neutral machine that mechanically puts policy into effect". The technocratic ethic denies that administration refines and defines policy and that public management can be a policy making activity. The ethic suggests that management is a value-neutral activity and denies that administration "requires exercise of value judgements" (Wilenski, 88, 217).

Amy identifies that positivism provides the intellectual underpinning of the technocratic ethic (Amy, 90, 157). It portrays public servants as technicians and this technocratic image serves to legitimise the role of public managers in the political system. It provides them with a ticket to the halls of power and they are considered acceptable on the ground that they are value-free and supposedly only address questions of means. "So much in the same way that eunuchs were thought safe to be allowed to work in harems", public managers "who are technocrats and thus 'neutered' politically are considered safe to be included in the policy-making process" (Amy, 87, 56).

The technocratic ethic denies any difference between public and private sector management, rather it argues that management techniques are universal and equally applicable to both the sectors. The ethic reintroduces the idea that 'good managers' can be assessed independently of the values that he or she brings to the task at hand." (Wilenski, 88, 217). Inherent in this is the argument in favour of a division of functions between politicians and public servants.

The technocrat sees the role of public managers as limited to assisting the government of the day in making its own judgements and implementation of its policies, rather than as an independent source of policy innovation (Keating, 90, 390). Ministers are the elected leaders of the people and it is their prerogative to determine goals, grand visions and broad strategic directions of the society (Keating, 90, 391).

Whilst not formulating policies for their ministers, public servants do identify the likely consequences of various policy options and point out the feasibility and effectiveness of various options in achieving those objectives. Indeed, public managers should question objectives that are ill-defined, or when there is a clash between them, so that an appropriate balance can be achieved (Keating, 90, 394).

Public managers should advise ministers without fear or favour but where value judgements are involved these should be recognised and left to the ministers for decision because they are the "...the prerogative of ministers". In the circumstance that a public manager does not adhere to this role division, "...there is the risk of breaking down the relationship of trust between the minister and the public servant on which depends the effectiveness of the governing partnership". Public managers "...need to realise that there are limits to how far a public servant can go in pressing contrary or unwelcome advice in a democracy. There is no point in continuing to insist on a point once it is clear that the minister has been sufficiently briefed and has made a decision." (Keating, 90, 394).

In a democracy, the responsibility of a public manager does not go beyond what the law has determined for them to do and their responsibility for the public interest ends with their advice regarding "what they consider to be the best policy, consistent with the government's overall policy framework and objectives" (Keating, 95, 23). The technocratic ethic reinforces "democratic values by ensuring that the public service becomes more responsive to the government's overall objectives and strategies and more responsive to the public". The ethic insists on developing program objectives that are much more clearly defined in order to provide useful guidance to public managers and to reduce intrusion of values and priorities of public managers.

In matters where public servants have decision-making discretion they are expected to

employ that discretion having regard to government policy (Keating, 95, 17). The role of the public service and its relationship with government now "lies between the two extreme characteristics" - independence and responsiveness (Keating, 95, 21). The tension between independence and responsiveness becomes quite strong in some but not all matters of policy advice. "In many situations it is possible to develop logically the likely implications of various alternative options and even to recommend the most effective course of action given the government's objectives" (Keating, 95, 22).

These two values might clash where public managers have wide scope to make value judgements. In these circumstances public managers "need to understand and respond to the government's overall political framework and strategy. Thus, good advice begins with an appreciation of the government's objectives" (Keating, 95, 22).

The technocratic ethic is based on the belief that only an election legitimises a particular group's claim to determine public interest. The election is a mechanism through which public interest is judged, and the people who judge them can be held accountable for their judgement whatever that judgement is. This line of argument suggest that ministers should decide and public managers should advise and "to the extent that public servants do make administrative decisions, the intention is that these should be within the framework of government policy and governed by legal requirements and government-approved guidelines" (Keating,

95, 23). Ministers are the only legitimate source of authority in the Westminster system of democracy and they should be determining public interest (Keating, 95, 21). "Whatever the faults of this democratic system, it is, to paraphrase Churchill, 'difficult to think of a better legitimising process'" (Keating, 90, 396).

The technocratic ethic questions the legitimacy of a public manager's perception of the common good against that of the democratically elected government (Keating, 90, 394). The claim that public managers can act in the public interest challenges the theory of representative government, "Any assessment of the public interest cannot be divorced from a consideration of who will be held accountable for it. It is ministers who take responsibility for the major policy decisions. How then can a bureaucrat be responsible for the public interest without being accountable for it? How would public servants be separately accountable on a matter of policy judgement?" (Keating, 90, 394).

However, it can be argued that ministers can sometimes be too responsive to specific interest groups and may be somewhat short term on occasions. Public servants on the other hand, are experts and possess accumulated experience and hence are less likely to be captives of specific interest groups and are much more likely to see long term consequences of policies and consider common interests, but this argument does not hold. Policy decisions require and depend more upon values and less upon experience and expertise. Public servants are not value free, they have values and these colour their consideration of policies. Their values are influenced by gender, ethnicity, religion, education and class and they also have interests. In addition to this, public servants themselves vary from one another about what is public interest. As Keating identifies, there is "no single correct view of the public interest". (Keating, 95, 21)

Finally, there are various mechanisms to check and balance unrestrained or corrupt exercise of the power given to ministers and public servants are not needed to do this. The constitutional institutions are parliament, the law courts, guidelines on official conduct, appeals processes and the Freedom of Information Act etc. (Keating, 90, 394-5).

In the technocratic ethic public servants should neither be politically naive nor should they be protagonists of particular policies, nor should they get themselves embroiled in partisan political debate. "Independence in the sense of an impartial public service continues to be important. This does not mean that public servants have no views of their own, but it does mean that they can be sufficiently detached to advise in terms of what they understand to be the government of the day's objectives" (Keating, 95, 22).

In summarising this section, it can be seen that significant differences in views regarding PSM have been identified which have been translated in this paper into the notion of service, neutrality and technocratic PSM patterns. The literature, as previously identified, indicates that research in this area is largely normative rather than empirical and prescriptive rather than evaluative. This situation provides the ideal base and opportunity for studying the reality of PSM rather than the somewhat mythical 'should be'.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has reviewed PSM literature in Westminster type government systems with a major emphasis on Australia. In the process it has demonstrated gaps in the literature, in particular the emphasis on normative rather than empirical research, and from this has conceptualised a framework for the study of PSM. It can be considered that the main contribution of this paper is the differentiation of different aspects of PSM, the identification of its various dimensions and the linking of PSM to the nature of the employment relationship in the construction of our conceptual framework.

The major use of this type of framework is to generate hypotheses and organise empirical data. In this case hypotheses can be generated regarding interrelationships amongst the variables based on past speculation or research. One hypothesis, following the Westminster constitutional theory, would be that non-partisanship, anonymity, obedience to ministers, and emphasis on process or means are highly correlated. Similarly,

based on the claims of managerialists, it can be hypothesised that a focus on ends will correlate with the neutrality ethic. It will be noticed that these are conflicting claims.

Hypotheses can also be generated relating the employment relationship to PSM. Based on existing anecdotal data surveyed above, it can be hypothesised that public managers working under MER will display the technocratic ethic and that NTER will be correlated with the neutrality ethic. In accordance with the views of Hood (91), it can also be hypothesised that in Australia, even under MER, public managers may display the neutrality ethic for quite some time in the future.

The conceptual framework has significant utility value in terms of its applicability across public service employment at local, state and federal government levels both nationally and internationally. For example, it would be possible to compare PSM in various Australian local government locations with different types of employment relationship. The framework also offers the potential for international comparative analysis.

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