Identity and Vote Overreporting by Bureaucrats: Implications for Public Service Motivation

Michael Bednarczuk

Abstract
Studies have argued that the higher levels of public service motivation (PSM) found in bureaucrats as compared with others lead to the positive civic and political behaviors seen in government employees. This study extends those findings to see if high PSM could have any negative effects on these same behaviors. Drawing from research on identity theory, it is hypothesized that a salient “public service identity” could contribute to bureaucrats being more apt than others to report that they have voted in elections when they actually had not. Logit models using data covering a span of almost 30 years in the United States find support for the hypothesis. This work suggests that viewing PSM through the lens of identity theory may have broad implications for the field of public administration.

Keywords
public service motivation, identity theory, voter turnout, vote overreporting, bureaucratic behavior

Introduction
Within the public administration literature, public service motivation (PSM) has been one of the most examined and explored topics, and for good cause. It has been associated with numerous positive work-related behaviors and attitudes of government employees (Cho & Song, 2015; Naft & Crum, 1999; Shim, Park, & Eom, 2017). Put succinctly, PSM has been used to explain why bureaucrats excel in their work.

There has been another thread in public administration research that argues that PSM also explains why bureaucrats shine in their communities. According to this school of thought, the higher overall level of PSM in bureaucrats as compared with others is the motivating factor behind the behaviors of government employees that extend outside of the workplace, such as political and civic engagement. This helps to explain why bureaucrats are more likely than others to participate in activities such as volunteering, donating blood, and protesting (Brewer, 2003; Ertas, 2013, 2015; Houston, 2006).

Another way of understanding the effects of PSM may be through the use of identity theory, which until recently has not been used in conjunction with PSM (Perry & Vandenabeele, 2008; Schott, Kleef, & Steen, 2015). Identity theory assumes that “...identities are internalized role expectations” that are organized according to their salience in a personal identity hierarchy (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). Identity salience is “a readiness to act out an identity as a consequence of the identity’s properties as a cognitive structure or schema” (Stryker & Serpe, 1994, p. 17). If a “public service identity” (PSI), which would be derived from possessing PSM, is a salient part of a bureaucrat’s identity hierarchy, then it should be expected that she or he would act in accordance with it and would thus be likely to “perform public, community, and social service” (Brewer, 2003, p. 17). That is, a salient PSI may be what motivates bureaucrats to be active within their communities.

If a PSI does exist within bureaucrats, then identity theory also suggests that bureaucrats may engage in some negative behaviors. According to scholars of identity theory, if an individual is prevented from performing an identity, the ensuing dissonance may cause stress and tension that she or he will actively seek to relieve (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). This dissonance could be quelled by performing the behavior or by claiming to have performed it when they did not. In other words, while those with a salient PSI may be more apt to engage in political and civic activities, they may also be more likely to overreport this same engagement.

To test this negative implication of a PSI in bureaucrats, this article looks to the literature on the overreporting of voter turnout. Overreporting occurs when a person claims to have voted when they have not. Based on the theoretical argument presented, it is hypothesized that bureaucrats are more likely than others to overreport voter turnout.

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The relationship between bureaucrats and voter turnout is worthy of study for multiple reasons. First, voter turnout is able to be independently verified; this allows for a comparison of claimed behavior with actual behavior. In addition, other scholars have found conflicting results in examinations of the voter turnout behavior of bureaucrats (Jensen, Sum, & Flynn, 2009; Tepe, 2012; Bednarczuk, forthcoming), further analysis may shed light on these discrepancies. Finally, while numerous studies have analyzed overreporting (Bernstein, Chadha, & Montjoy, 2001; Karp & Brockington, 2005; Silver, Anderson, & Abramson, 1986), only one has focused on identity (Brenner, 2012). This suggests that such a study could contribute to the fields of public administration and electoral behavior.

Data were collected from various surveys administered across several years. The use of multiple sets of data gathered in different manners from unique points in time serves to increase the confidence of the inferences made in this article. Six surveys taken over a period of almost 30 years were used to test whether there was any effect of government employment on overreporting. Logit models showed that bureaucrats were consistently more likely than others to overreport their turnout, thus supporting the hypothesis.

These results suggest that the increased salience of a PSI in bureaucrats may influence their answers on questions about their political behaviors. Furthermore, this is not a recent phenomenon: While the most recent data set in this article used surveys from 2012, evidence for this behavior dates back to 1984. This finding may give other scholars the impetus to be more creative and rigorous in their examinations of the link between PSM and other political behaviors. These results also suggest that conceiving of PSM as a form of identity should continue to be examined and explored.

In addition, there is little to suggest that this behavior would be limited to questions of civic engagement. If there are instances outside of the political realm where a salient PSI comes into conflict with expected behaviors, there may be an increased likelihood of misreporting those behaviors. In other words, those high in PSM may be more prone than others to overreport other positive behaviors and beliefs more closely associated with PSM, such as job satisfaction. This highlights another potential source of bias in data collection and speaks to the value of verifying the behaviors of survey respondents.

This article proceeds as follows. The literature on PSM and identity theory is initially reviewed. A look at the literature on the overreporting of voter turnout is included in the hypothesis section. This is followed by a description of the data and a review of the results from the models. Implications and the conclusion end the article.

PSM and Identity

PSM is one of the more popular subjects in public administration scholarship today. Out of a desire to determine how to motivate and study bureaucrats, Perry and Wise (1990) provided the initial definition of PSM, labeling it “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations” (p. 368). Since that time, PSM has become one of the most-studied aspects of public administration. For example, Vandenabeele, Brewer, and Ritz (2014) found that articles on PSM increased by a factor of 20 between 2003 and 2012.

The urge to continue to study PSM is understandable, given the connections between PSM and positive work attitudes and behaviors. For example, Naff and Crum (1999) found a link between PSM and job performance; while others suggest that the relationship between those two may be affected by person–organization fit (Bright, 2007), by job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Vandenabeele, 2009), or by the use of distributed management (Jakobsen, Kjeldsen, & Pallesen, 2016), it appears as if those with higher PSM tend to perform better at their jobs. Furthermore, this effect is heightened by coming into contact with those who benefit from your work and from self-persuasion (Belle, 2013). Brewer and Selden (1998) found that those high in PSM-related attributes were more likely to engage in whistleblowing than those with low PSM, which was replicated and confirmed by Cho and Song (2015). Higher PSM in teachers has been found to lead to performance improvements in students (Andersen, Heinesen, & HolmPedersen, 2014). Other studies have found that those high in PSM were less likely to believe that red tape was a problem (Scott & Pandey, 2005) and were less likely to want to leave their job (Naff & Crum, 1999; Shim et al., 2017). In short, much work has shown that those high in PSM in the public sector tend to be better employees.

While bureaucrats do have varying levels of PSM, numerous studies have shown that those that want to work for government and those that actually do are higher in PSM than those that work elsewhere. For example, Vandenabeele (2008), in a survey of Belgian graduate students, found that those that were higher in PSM were strongly drawn to public employment, especially those organizations that focused on welfare, knowledge, and culture, while Liu et al. (2011) found a similar effect for Chinese students. Other studies have shown that these differences in PSM remain for people once they have secured employment. For example, Georgellis and Tabvuma (2010) found that British bureaucrats tended to have higher PSM over time than their private-sector counterparts. These works suggest that while bureaucrats individually may have different levels of PSM from one another, bureaucrats collectively have higher PSM than nonbureaucrats.

Related to these findings, scholars have credited the collective difference in PSM between bureaucrats and nonbureaucrats with affecting behaviors that extend outside of the workplace. According to Brewer (2003), PSM suggests that “public employees are strongly motivated to perform public, community, and social service” (p. 17). Therefore, evidence of civic engagement among bureaucrats is vital for finding
evidence of PSM. Informed by the notion that bureaucrats have higher PSM than nonbureaucrats, Brewer hypothesized that bureaucrats would have higher civic participation levels than others. Brewer found that bureaucrats were more likely than those in the private sector to be involved in groups and to be in groups that discuss politics. This was argued to provide support for the existence of high PSM in bureaucrats.

Studies on the PSM-influenced behaviors of bureaucrats within their communities have made a host of findings relating to civic engagement. Houston (2006) found that bureaucrats were more likely to volunteer and donate blood than others. Houston claimed that this was evidence that PSM was more prevalent in the public sector than in the private sector. Echoing those findings, Lee (2011) examined other “behavioral implications for public service motivation” and also found that bureaucrats were more likely to volunteer, especially for educational groups (p. 104). Ertas (2013) found that this civic involvement also extended into informal types of participation, as bureaucrats were more likely to engage in activities such as conversations with neighbors or having dinner with their families.

Ertas (2015) later used this framework in an examination of explicitly political behaviors and found that bureaucrats were more likely than those in the private sector to engage in political voice activities. These activities included contacting elected officials, participating in a boycott or engaging in a political campaign. These findings echo earlier work from public administration that used the “bureau voting model” to suggest that bureaucrats were more likely than others to be liberal, vote for Democrats, and turn out to vote (Corey & Garand, 2002; Garand, Parkhurst, & Seoud, 1991; but see Bednarzuk, forthcoming). In total, this branch of research strongly suggests that the effects of PSM in government employees transcend the bureaucracy and affect the rest of society.

To reiterate, the argument put forth by these authors is that the higher levels of PSM in bureaucrats encourages these sorts of behaviors outside of work. Ertas (2015) argued that these studies of bureaucratic behavior introduced a “new kind of PSM theory” that argues that “if government officials are inclined toward a career that they think will serve their constituents, such as ‘spouse’ or ‘neighbor,’ or they may include more internal roles, such as ‘hard-working’ or ‘intelligent.’ These roles are then internally arranged according to their prominence and salience which reflects their importance to the individual. Those roles that are more salient have a greater chance of affecting the behavior of the individual.

The argument made in this article is that PSM is another type of identity. That is, the factors that make up PSM are also the constituent parts of a “PSI.” Those with a PSI would be inclined to believe that “meaningful public service is important” or that they should “unselfishly contribute to [their] community” (Perry, 1996). Those who possess a salient PSI would then be more likely to act in accordance with that identity than those who do not.

There are other uses of the term identity in the sciences, so it is important to specify how this usage compares to others. Identity politics, for example, focuses more on political movements based on categories such as gender or sexuality (Bernstein & Taylor, 2013). Identity politics usually centers on goals such as recognition or redistribution (Thompson, 2014). Other scholars have used the concept of identity in other ways, such as connecting it to feminism. For example, in a study connecting passive representation to active representation with regard to gender, Keiser et al. (2002) found that an increase in female math teachers had a positive effect on female students’ math scores. That said, the use of the term identity in this article focuses more on how the individual conceives of and organizes the self and how that affects subsequent behaviors.

This is not the first time that identity theory has been used to examine PSM. For example, Perry and Vandenabeele (2008) argued that the interplay between institutions and identity could provide an alternative to a rational choice understanding of PSM. To the authors, behavior could be guided by PSM depending “on the publicness of an individual’s identity” (Perry & Vandenabeele, 2008, p. 71). Schott et al. (2015) extended this by explicitly using PSM to better understand how individuals conceive of serving the public. The authors argued that those high in PSM could still behave differently from one another if they had varying interpretations of the public interest. Using identity theory, they argued that the personal hierarchy of role identities would influence the effect of PSM on individual behaviors. Semi-structured interviews with Dutch veterinarian inspectors found that inspectors could be high in PSM yet prioritize different behaviors (such as focusing on animal welfare or on rule enforcement). These works suggested that identity theory could be useful in studying PSM. However, identity theory has not been rigorously examined in public administration in a strictly quantitative manner, which is a gap that this article attempts to fill.

To further highlight the potential usefulness of identity theory with regard to public administration, the concepts of prominence and salience may help to reframe the results of
earlier studies. Prominence, in identity theory, is, “... the valence of the focal identity relative to that of other identities” (Brenner, Serpe, & Stryker, 2014, p. 233). How prominent may PSI be to a bureaucrat? Studies have shown that commitment to an identity can help explain subsequent behaviors (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). In other words, those identities that are of higher importance are more likely to affect someone’s actions. Therefore, it would be expected that those higher in PSM would want to work for the public sector, which was found by Vandenabeele (2008). Thus, prominence may help explain why those higher in PSM tend to gravitate toward government positions.

In addition, salience may help to better understand the actions of bureaucrats. Salience is “... the probability of persons enacting a given identity across social situations” (Brenner et al., 2014, p. 233). If PSI is salient to bureaucrats, and they are presented with opportunities to perform public service, then they should be more likely than others to enact this identity. Therefore, bureaucrats should be more likely to participate in activities such as volunteering, which has been observed by several scholars (Ertas, 2013; Houston, 2006; Lee, 2011). In other words, the notion of salience as used in identity theory may help to better contextualize studies of the political and civic behaviors of bureaucrats.

While these examples have so far highlighted the potential usefulness of identity theory, it is also important to understand the consequences of verifying or not verifying an identity. For that, it is important to turn to “identity control theory” (Burke, 1991). In this framework, people will compare their current situation with their identity and attempt to behave in a manner congruent with their identity. Such congruency is known as “identity verification.” A person feels positive emotions when consistency occurs and negative emotions when it does not. When behaviors are not aligned with identities, then “the system operates by modifying [behaviors] to the environment or social situation...” (Jun, Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2015, p. 429). Therefore, for bureaucrats to perform identity verification with regard to PSI, they should engage within their community, and they will subsequently feel positive emotions because of this verification.

However, according to identity control theory, bureaucrats may be expected to experience some negative consequences to possessing a salient PSI. The same forces that motivate bureaucrats to be more likely to engage politically and civically in their community would also motivate them to feel worse than others if they did not verify that identity. For example, if a bureaucrat was given the opportunity to join in a protest and did not, they may feel more negative emotions than a nonbureaucrat.

This negative feedback may not be limited to opportunities to perform these actual behaviors. Bureaucrats may also experience dissonance if they were asked about performing these behaviors and they had not. For example, if bureaucrats had been asked whether they had engaged in an action normally associated with high PSM, such as volunteering, but they had not, the resulting incongruency could lead to increases in anxiety and stress (Barreto, Ellemers, Scholten, & Smith, 2010).

What would be the consequences of this negative feedback? If bureaucrats do feel bad when they have not performed this identity when given the chance, then they may try to reduce the dissonance between their actions and their beliefs by modifying their behaviors to achieve “identity verification.” To quote Brenner et al. (2014), bureaucrats may choose to “define a situation to promote [the] enactment...” of PSI (p. 232). When it comes to performing actual behaviors, this could lead to a public servant subsequently increasing their level of civic or political engagement. However, when it comes to being asked about these behaviors, while there would be no time for the bureaucrat to alter her or his actual behavior, she or he could still answer the question in a way to affirm this identity. This suggests that bureaucrats may be likely to misreport engaging in civic and political activities to reduce the dissonance between having PSI as a salient identity and then failing to perform it.

Voter Turnout and Hypothesis

To provide support for the idea that the behaviors of bureaucrats may be negatively affected by PSI, a testable hypothesis to examine this claim must be put forth. One way of attempting to answer this question is to verify the survey answers of bureaucrats. This would involve taking the self-reported response from a government employee and matching it against that bureaucrat’s actual behavior. Unfortunately, very few surveys are constructed in such a manner, especially as it concerns behavior that takes place outside of the workplace; finding out how often someone volunteered or donated blood may be impossible. That said, some surveys have been able to validate responses pertaining to one important behavior: voter turnout. These surveys have collected data from the respondents on their reported turnout and then validated those responses from voter rolls. Earlier work has suggested that bureaucrats may be more likely to vote than others (Corey & Garand, 2002; Jensen et al., 2009; Tepe, 2012; but see Bednarczuk, forthcoming), which suggests that this is a meaningful behavior to analyze.

Analyzing the tendency of people to claim that they have voted when they have not has a long history in the literature on “voter overreporting.” Overreporting has been a cause for concern because treating those who misreport voting as voters may bias studies that compare voters with nonvoters (Ansolabehere & Hersh, 2012; Bernstein et al., 2001; Karp & Brockington, 2005; Silver et al., 1986). As was noted by Hanmer, Banks, and White (2014), some studies make distinctions between the policy preferences of those who have claimed to have voted and those that have not. Therefore, “... the consequences of vote overreporting might extend to real-world policy debates...” by erroneously treating those who misreport their turnout as having actually voted (Hanmer, Banks, & White, 2014, p. 131).
Myriad causes for overreporting have been asserted, such as question-ordering effects (Presser, 1990; Zeglovits & Kritzinger, 2014), memory failure (Belli, Traugott, Young, & McGonagle, 1999), nonresponse bias (Jackman, 1999), social pressure (Bernstein et al., 2001), or social desirability bias (Holbrook & Kronick, 2010; Karp & Brockington, 2005). Identity theory has also been used to explain voter overreporting. Brenner (2012) argued that those that saw themselves as political people would be more likely to overreport. It was hypothesized that respondents who were highly involved in politics and large consumers of media would be more likely to overreport. Using various surveys, Brenner found support for those hypotheses.

Based on the work in both the identity and voter overreporting literatures, it may be may be reasonable to assume that government employees may be more prone to overreporting. As was noted by Ertas (2015), the claim made by PSM theory is that people want to work for the government out of a “desire to help others and to be useful to society” (p. 611). If bureaucrats see themselves as giving and useful people, and they are not performing up to the standards of that identity, then it is possible that they may be prone to misreporting to quell that dissonance. In other words, if PSI is a salient part of a bureaucrat’s identity, then she or he may experience dissonance if she or he is not politically engaged in their communities. Therefore, it is reasonable to suspect that to conform to their salient PSI, bureaucrats would be more likely than others to overreport voter turnout.

To summarize, if PSM is prevalent in bureaucrats, then PSM should be a salient identity among them, especially if a bureaucrat was given a chance to perform this identity. This opportunity may present itself if a bureaucrat was faced with a political or civic survey question. A bureaucrat may feel tension between this identity and their behavior if she or he had not engaged in those activities. Therefore, to resolve this dissonance, bureaucrats may overreport this behavior. Therefore, due to the salience of their PSI, bureaucrats should be more likely than others to overreport voter turnout.

**Hypothesis 1:** Bureaucrats should be more likely than others to overreport voter turnout.

**Data and Method**

The data come from two different sources: the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) and the American National Elections Study (ANES). The CCES data are stratified to create a national sample of U.S. adults and was collected via an online survey by Polimetrix in 2006. The ANES data from 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990 were cross-sectional and collected in face-to-face surveys to create a national sample of U.S. adults, while the 2012 data were collected both online and face-to-face. These data focus on American federal elections. These data sets were selected because of the range of years measured, the inclusion of a variable measuring government employment, and the validation of the respondent’s vote.

The dependent variable is a measure of turnover overreporting. For the ANES surveys through 1990, interviewers went in person to local election offices and reviewed the record of participation for each respondent and compared that with the respondent’s purported turnout. For 2012, the ANES used three different firms to verify turnout; the actual techniques used by the firms are proprietary knowledge and were not disclosed. YouGov Polimetrix used a computer algorithm to match respondents to voter registration lists to validate turnout in the CCES.

Following how overreporting is usually modeled in the literature (Brenner, 2012), the dependent variable consists of those who did not vote, with those who claimed to have voted separated from those who said they did not vote. As this variable is dichotomous, logit models will be used.

The key independent variable measures government employment. This was coded as a dummy variable across all of the data sets and grouped together bureaucrats from the local, state, and federal levels. Other variables have been found to lead to overreporting, such as church attendance, political interest, education, and strength of party identification, so they were included (Bernstein et al., 2001; Granberg & Holmberg, 1991; Karp & Brockington, 2005). Church attendance was a dummy for those who attended church at least once a week, while education was coded as dummy for those who had graduated from college. Campaign interest and strength of party identification were coded as ordinal variables. Demographic variables have traditionally been included in models of voter overreporting (Bernstein et al., 2001; Cassel, 2003; Kanazawa, 2005), so the following variables were included: sex, race, union membership, and age. Sex, race, and union membership were dummy coded, while age was left as a continuous variable. As the ANES data covered both presidential and midterm elections, dummy variables were included to model differences between those types of elections and to model differences across years.

**Results**

It is important to visually inspect the general trends in the data. Table 1 shows how frequently government employees overreported their vote compared with others across the 5 years that are assessed in these data sets. In every year, bureaucrats were more likely to overreport turnout. For example, in 2012, it is seen that 34.15% of those who were not government employees overreported turnout, while 44% of government employees overreported. Given the proposed hypothesis, this initial examination of the data is promising. Because the magnitude of the effect is not entirely constant across all of the years examined, it is important to go beyond a surface-level examination of the data and to rigorously model it. This will better account for the effects of the underlying heterogeneity in the samples.
Turning from a descriptive analysis to a more formal analysis of the hypothesis, Table 2 reports the odds ratios from a logit model of the CCES data from 2006 on the effect of government employment on overreporting. For all of the results tables, the odds ratios are for a one-unit change in the independent variable. For example, a 1-year increase in age leads to a 1.05 increase in the log odds of overreporting. In keeping with the literature, those who are more prone to overreporting are older, better educated, strongly identified with a party, more interested in political campaigns, and more frequently attend church. In addition, and in support of the hypothesis put forth, it is also seen that government employees are more apt to overreport. The increase in the log odds of overreporting from bureaucrats (1.35) is larger than that of gender (1.14) and similar to that of race (1.44) and church attendance (1.50).

This effect is highlighted when looking at a plot of the marginal effect of government employment on overreporting, as is seen in Figure 1. Holding all other variables at their medians or means, it is seen based on the point estimate that those who do not work for government have a probability of 0.618 of overreporting, while bureaucrats have a probability of 0.686 of overreporting. All of this evidence suggests that the effect of government employment on overreporting is not merely a statistical effect, but a substantive effect as well.

It is important to qualify the results from this model. This is an analysis of only a single year; further study of additional years would serve as a check that a Type I error is not being committed.

Table 3 shows the results from the ANES data, which were gathered at five different times between 1984 and 2012. The results largely comport with what was found with the CCES data. Those who were likely to overreport were college educated, older, strongly identified with a political party, and interested in the campaigns. In addition, men, Whites, and those participating in a presidential election were more likely to overreport. More importantly, for the purposes of this study, support for the hypothesis was found again, as government employment is seen to increase the likelihood of overestimating turnout. Moving from being a nonbureaucrat to a bureaucrat leads to an increase in the log odds of overreporting by 1.273. This is larger than the effect of gender (1.084), and close to the size of the effect of church attendance (1.591) on the log odds of overreporting. These results are in line with the earlier model that used data collected in a different manner. This provides robust support for the hypothesis, and though some of the data used is not recent, the longitudinal nature of these results further suggests that this effect is not based on situational or contextual elements.

It may be argued that PSI is too similar to political identity as outlined by Brenner (2012). Unfortunately, not every survey that was used in this article included variables similar to what were used by Brenner. That said, a model was analyzed that did incorporate those variables when they were present. Government employment was still significant, and its substantive value was not attenuated, so this model was omitted.

**Discussion**

What are the implications of this finding? Is it possible that the negative effects of PSI only affect bureaucratic behavior when it comes to the overreporting of voter turnout? While possible, it is unlikely. If overreporting is driven by PSI, then bureaucrats may be likely to feel this pressure when faced with other survey questions that are associated with PSM-related behaviors. These behaviors could include civic and political engagement, such as volunteering or boycotting, but they may also extend to work-related behaviors, such as job satisfaction or the likelihood of reporting malfeasance. If PSM is conceived of as a person’s attraction to public-policy making, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice (Perry, 1996) or as “the beliefs, values, and attitudes . . . that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivates individuals to act accordingly whenever...
appropriate” (Vandenabeele, 2007, p. 547), and if government employees experience dissonance when they fail to embody these characteristics, then it may be reasonable to assume that the overreporting seen here may be seen with regard to other behaviors.

What could be done to manage the potential negative impacts of PSI? Survey respondents may need to be told of the importance of accuracy in their survey responses. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012) noted that in addition to addressing the import of validity, surveys should also describe the purpose of the questions. Other studies have used novel ways to measure the desire to serve others. For example, Buurman et al. (2012) gave survey respondents the option of choosing either a gift certificate, lottery ticket, or a charitable donation for their participation and found that the likelihood that a public service employee would choose the riskier option increased with tenure. Other scholars may be able to use similarly creative techniques to indirectly measure PSM. That said, many articles found that the best method of ensuring valid responses is by using an independent or verified source of data (Favero & Bullock, 2015; Meier & O’Toole, 2013), which may also be the best method of capturing the negative effects of PSI.

This finding also fits into a growing part of the public administration and PSM literature that documents the negative consequences of PSM and the difficulties in measuring the attitudes and behaviors of bureaucrats. There are recent articles that speak to a “dark side of PSM,” as those high in PSM may be more apt to resigned satisfaction or higher work stress (Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget, & Varone, 2013; Giauque, Ritz, Varone, & Anderfuhren-Biget, 2012). This led Van Loon, Vandenabeele, and Leisink (2015) to argue that PSM may adversely affect bureaucrats if they feel that they are not impacting society. In addition, work has shown that common source bias may be negatively affecting studies of public administration; for example, the strength of the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance has recently been called in question (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Meier & O’Toole, 2013). In this same vein, social desirability appears to also be affecting how PSM is even measured (S. H. Kim & Kim, 2016). Finally, S. Kim et al. (2013), in a study of a dozen countries, found that the meaning and scaling of PSM dimensions differ across cultures and languages. In other words, many scholars are currently discovering that the ways


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<tr>
<td>Bureaucrat</td>
<td>1.273</td>
<td>0.176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td>0.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>1.205</td>
<td>0.140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td>0.003</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>1.811</td>
<td>0.225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strength of party ident</td>
<td>1.250</td>
<td>0.062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign interest</td>
<td>5.500</td>
<td>0.753</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>1.501</td>
<td>0.163</td>
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<td>Presidential election</td>
<td>2.533</td>
<td>0.391</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1.159</td>
<td>0.207</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>0.124</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0.701</td>
<td>0.114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.021</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3,363</td>
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<tr>
<td>McFadden’s R²</td>
<td>0.133</td>
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<td>Akaike Information Criterion</td>
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<td>Expected Proportional Reduction of Error</td>
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<td>Expected Percentage of Correct Predictions</td>
<td>71.28%</td>
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<td>Log likelihood</td>
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</table>

Note. Coefficients that are significant at the 0.10 level are in bold. OR = odds ratio.
in which we study public administration, or even the concepts within it, may be problematic and are currently fleshing out ways to manage these difficulties.

What are the next steps in a potential research agenda concerning the use of identity theory to examine PSM? More attention could be paid to the prominence and salience of PSI within different types of bureaucrats. For example, bureaucrats could be analyzed by sector. While PSM is higher overall in bureaucrats than nonbureaucrats, bureaucrats themselves have varying levels of PSM, so this identity may be more salient to some than to others. In addition, time spent working in the public sector may reduce the salience of PSI. Longitudinal studies have suggested that PSM diminishes with tenure (Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2013), so those that have been employed longer may be less apt to embody this identity. Studies could also examine what happens when PSI runs up against “little Hatch Act” restrictions. These rules limit the political behaviors of government employees and may include provisions such as prohibitions on political campaigning during work hours. There remains much to explore with regard to the consequences of conceiving of PSM as an identity.

**Conclusion**

Earlier work in PSM had shown links between bureaucrats and political and civic behaviors. These results were recontextualized using identity theory. If such a “public service identity” was in fact present in bureaucrats, then they may engage in some negative behaviors to conform to this identity. Informed by work in identity and voter overreporting, it was hypothesized that government employees would be more likely to overreport turnout. Using five surveys administered at various times over a span of almost 30 years, logit models supported this hypothesis.

This work suggests that scholars should take steps in subsequent studies to attempt to account for the effects of PSI. Such approaches may include reminding survey respondents of the importance of honest answers or by indirectly measuring PSM. However, the most effective yet difficult way of accounting for this effect may be validating survey responses.

Other steps could be taken to ensure the robustness of the findings from this study. Analysis could be undertaken to see whether overreporting is constant among different types of bureaucrats. Future studies could attempt to confirm the behaviors of bureaucrats through contacting volunteer organizations or by comparing their reported behaviors with their actual performance reviews.

PSM is an important part of the study of public administration. With it has come debate over topics such as its usefulness, measurement, and importance. Including the concept of identity only serves to further motivate advances in this field.

**Appendix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Data set</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

*Note. CCES = Cooperative Congressional Election Study; ANES = American National Elections Study.*
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Notes
1. This is also a useful technique for eliminating common source bias (see Favero & Bullock, 2015).
2. Descriptive statistics may be found in the appendix.
3. The Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) used sample matching to create representative samples from non-randomly selected respondents. This was accomplished by drawing a random sample from the target population (which is a true probability sample) and then selecting a “matching” member from the pool of opt-in respondents for each member of the target sample. This also attempts to minimize any bias that may arise from the legitimate concern that those who answer the CCES survey may be more biased because they have agreed in advance to respond to online political surveys. Furthermore, the results from this data set can be compared with the results from the American National Elections Study (ANES) survey, which is administered face-to-face.
4. The ANES uses a multistage area probability sample in collecting data. Response rates for the surveys were 72.1%, 67.7%, 70.5%, and 71.4%, for 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990, respectively. For 2012, the response rates were 38% and 2% for the face-to-face and online components, respectively. These differences reflect a general decline in the willingness of people to participate in surveys. In addition, though the ANES data will be grouped together in the analysis, it is not panel data; that is, the same respondents are not included multiple times.
5. YouGov Polimetrix’s “fuzzy matching” software was found in internal testing to have an accuracy rate similar to manual matching.
6. Specifically, for the CCES and the ANES data from 2012, those who claimed that they voted but were verified to have not voted were coded as 1s, while those who claimed they did not vote and said that they did not or were not registered were coded as 0s. For the ANES data from 1984 through 1990, those who self-reported that they voted, but either voting records showed that the respondent did not vote or no voting records were found, were coded as 1s, while those who self-reported that the did not vote or were not registered and were not validated, those who self-reported that they did not vote or they were not sure if they voted and records show that he or she did not vote, those that self-reported that they did not vote or they were not sure if they voted and records were not available, or self-reported that they did not vote and no registration record or voting record was found were coded as 0s.
7. For example, the question used from the ANES through 1990 states, “Are/Were you employed by a federal, state, or local government?”
8. The variables used to measure political identity in Brenner (2012) were not available in all of the surveys used. See the end of the “Results” section for more detail.
9. There is a concern that multicollinearity may be a problem in any modeling of the data, which may lead to incorrect inferences. To check this, correlations between all of the variables were checked, and none were high enough to suggest that multicollinearity would be a problem. As an additional check, to ensure that combinations of variables were not contributing to multicollinearity, the variance inflation factors of the variables were also examined. The analysis of these factors also suggested that none of the models suffered from multicollinearity.
10. An additional model included employment in other sectors of the economy (military, nonprofit, for profit), but they did not substantively change the results, so this model was omitted.
11. There is a concern that teachers may represent an overwhelming portion of the bureaucrats that were sampled, who may be quite different from “ordinary” bureaucrats. It was found that teachers made up 16% of the total number of bureaucrats. However, to more rigorously examine their effect, an additional model teased out school employment, but this variable was not significant and did not substantively alter the results, so the model was omitted.

References


**Author Biography**

**Michael Bednarczuk** is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His current research interests include the political attitudes and behaviors of bureaucrats, policy diffusion, and presidential primaries.