# ARTICLES

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# Galloping Elephants:
# Developing Elements of a Theory
# of Effective Government Organizations

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## ABSTRACT

*Much of the theory and discourse on public bureaucracies treats them negatively, as if they incline inevitably toward weak performance. This orientation prevails in spite of considerable evidence that many government organizations perform very well, and in spite of many examples of their excellent performance. This article draws on the literature and research on effective government organizations to select and develop conceptual elements of a theory to explain their effectiveness. The available research suggests that such a theory should include the following components: supportive behaviors from external stakeholders such as political authorities; agency autonomy in refining and implementing its mission; high "mission valence" (an attractive mission); a strong, mission-oriented culture; and certain leadership behaviors. The discussion further posits that these factors enhance several forms of motivation of people in the agency—task motivation, mission motivation, and public service motivation—that can be differentiated but that must be linked together in effective government agencies.*

*A corollary of this fact is the falsity of an equally common claim: that public and nonprofit organizations cannot, and on average do not, operate as efficiently as private businesses. . . .* (Simon 1998, 11)

The elephant serves as a virtually archetypical symbol of a large, cumbersome, lumbering being. Yet an elephant can run *very* fast. Pachyderm means thick-skinned, yet elephants display sensitivity in acts of altruism and nurturance beyond those that

are instinctively parental in many animals. Government organizations, or bureaucracies, have virtually an archetypical status as cumbersome, bungling entities, yet many of them perform *very* well. Impugned for centuries as insensitive, they also commonly display sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of clients and others (e.g., Goodsell 1994; Gore 1995, 49). This article develops and advances concepts and propositions, summarized in exhibit 1, about why government agencies perform well, when they do. In its present form, this set of propositions will evoke comparisons to the parable of the blind men trying to describe the elephant, because the propositions need much more articulation, justification, and specification of relations among them. They do, however, consider and develop some fundamental issues such as: What provides the basic incentive for effective performance of government agencies, in the absence of economic markets for their outputs? Is it a form of public service motivation or a motivation to achieve the mission of the agency, or is it more specific task-related incentives such as interest in the work tasks themselves, or is it pay or other benefits? The propositions hold that all these forms of motivation contribute to the performance of effective agencies, especially when members of the agency see them as linked together. The propositions also hold that characteristics of the external oversight and political influence on the agency relate to its effectiveness, as do characteristics of the agency's mission, culture, leadership, and tasks, and that these factors in turn enhance the three forms of motivation just mentioned.

This article develops such propositions as a step toward development of a theory of effective government agencies on the argument that we need more theoretical development of that topic.[1] That public and academic discourse on bureaucracy tends to be negative will be considered here to be obvious and will not be elaborated, even though this mostly negative orientation involves many important issues and nuances. Much of the literature treats the government bureaucracy as a social problem and liability, rather than as an asset. Many authors focus on the problem that public bureaucracies are too bureaucratic, with too much hierarchy, too little innovativeness and energy, too much red tape, too much spending, too little efficiency, too little responsiveness to almost everyone and everything outside their boundaries and most of what is inside them, too much of a lot of other bad things, and too little of a lot of other good things (e.g., Barton 1980; A. Downs 1967; Niskanen 1971; Warwick 1975).[2] If this list seems long, it is rather brief compared to Caiden's (1991) listing of 175 bureaucratic pathologies (cited in Bozeman forthcoming).[3]

[1] Wolf (1993) tests seven theories of bureaucratic effectiveness and argues that we do not need new theories, we need tests of existing theory. The propositions and discussion in this article draw on Wolf's analysis as valuable, but also proceed on the argument that such theories as we have need much more articulation.

[2] This observation overstates the case in an effort at lively discourse. In fairness one should acknowledge that the references cited provide a more balanced and subtle analysis than depicted in this sentence.

[3] While not necessarily negative in its assessment of bureaucratic performance, much of the academic literature on public bureaucracy concentrates on the problem of bureaucratic power, whether there is too much of it, and how it can be controlled (see Hill 1991 and 1992; Durant 1992), rather than on when and why it performs effectively.

**Exhibit 1**
**Propositions About Effective Public Agencies**

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Public agencies are more likely to perform effectively when there are higher levels of the following conditions.

Relations with oversight authorities (legislative, executive, judicial) that are:
• Attentive to agency mission accomplishment
• Supportive
• Delegative

Relations with other stakeholders characterized by:
• Favorable public opinion and general public support
• Multiple, influential, mobilizable constituent and client groups
• Effective relations with partners and suppliers
    • Effective management of contracting and contractors
    • Effective utilization of technology and other resources
    • Effective negotiation of networks

Autonomy in operationalization and pursuit of agency mission, but not extremely high levels of autonomy
(a curvilinear relationship between autonomy and agency effectiveness)

Mission valence (the attractiveness of the mission):
• Difficult but feasible
• Reasonably clear and understandable
• Worthy/worthwhile/legitimate
• Interesting/exciting
• Important/influential
• Distinctive

Strong organizational culture, linked to mission

Leadership characterized by:
• Stability (a curvilinear relationship between leadership stability and agency effectiveness)
• Multiplicity—a cadre of leaders, teams of leaders at multiple levels
• Commitment to mission
• Effective goal setting in relation to task and mission accomplishment
• Effective coping with political and administrative constraints

Task design characterized by:
• Intrinsic motivation (interest, growth, responsibility, service, and mission accomplishment)
• Extrinsic rewards (pay, benefits, promotions, working conditions)

Utilization of technology

Development of human resources:
• Effective recruitment, selection, placement, training, and development
• Values and preferences among recruits and members that support task and mission motivation

Professionalism among members:
• Special knowledge and skills related to task and mission accomplishment
• Commitment to task and mission accomplishment

Motivation among members:
• Public service motivation
• Mission motivation
• Task motivation

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On the other hand, all along in academic and public discussion of the government bureaucracy, one can detect more ambivalence than rigid antipathy, even in predominantly negative treatments. Recently, too, more and more authors defend the public bureaucracy or debunk stereotypes and negative allegations about it (e.g., G.W. Downs and Larkey 1986; Goodsell 1994; Milward and Rainey 1983; Stillman 1996; Wamsley et al. 1990), while others describe and analyze excellent leadership and management in government agencies (Ban 1995; Barzelay 1992; Behn 1991; Cohen and Eimicke 1995; Cooper and Wright 1992; Denhardt 1993; Doig and Hargrove 1987; Hargrove and Glidewell 1990; Holzer and Callahan 1998; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Riccucci 1995; Thompson and Jones 1994). Recent empirical research further undercuts some academic assertions about public bureaucracies, indicating that they are not as evasive of external control and oversight as is often alleged (Rubin 1985; Wood and Waterman 1994) and that people in them show more effort and motivation, and less shirking and slacking, than sometimes is alleged (Brehm and Gates 1997; H.G. Rainey 1983). Recent research also shows evidence of the historical inaccuracy of some current reformers' depictions of public bureaucracies as traditionally hidebound hierarchies that resisted innovation and entrepreneurial behaviors; rather, the evidence indicates frequent instances of entrepreneurial, innovative, and generally effective performance (Wolf 1997).

## EXAMPLES OF AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS

In addition, numerous specific examples of agency accomplishments provide evidence that government agencies often carry out their tasks and missions very competently. About the Social Security Administration (SSA), for example, one can point out the following:

- The agency operates the social security program efficiently in an administrative sense. An economist discussing reforms of the system in 1998 pointed out that one reason to save the system is that it is very efficient, with administrative costs running at 0.8 percent of benefits (Eisner 1998). This is lower than comparable figures for private annuity companies, even considering that they must pay taxes and provide payouts to shareholders. The figure for SSA represents increased efficiency over the last decade. A Roper survey in the early 1980s asked a representative sample of Americans to estimate the percent of each dollar in the Social Security program that goes to administrative expenses. The median estimate was fifty dollars out of every one hundred. The

actual figure at that time was $1.30 out of every one hundred.

- The efficiency gain reflects ongoing efforts to control costs. During the 1980s, SSA carried out Project 17,000, which reduced employment in the agency by 17,000 employees.

- Outside Kansas City, large caves have been developed as industrial storage facilities, and one can drive underground on roads that run through the caves, accompanied by large trucks that deliver and receive materials at the storage facilities. The SSA Public Service Center (PSC) in Kansas City operates a file storage facility in one of these caves, containing millions of file folders. SSA employees work in this facility, communicating information from the files to other employees in the PSC offices downtown, who need information from the files to process client claims and requests. The PSC operates this storage facility to hold down costs. It is much less expensive to store the files in this remote site than to store them in office space in downtown Kansas City.

- SSA has proficiently advanced the computerization of claims processing, with computers now performing many of the functions that employees once performed.

- In 1995, the rankings of a major national survey of customer satisfaction with telephone service found that the SSA ranked number one in the nation. Others high in the ratings included Southwest Airlines; L.L. Bean; Nordstrom; Xerox; Disney; Saturn; Federal Express; and AT&T Universal Credit. Mutual fund companies ranked 8th, and variable annuity providers ranked 11th; these rankings are noteworthy because these companies provide services roughly similar to those of the Social Security Administration (Gore 1995, 49-51).

- In the 1970s, SSA reorganized the structure for claims processing in their large public service centers (Rainey and Rainey 1986). To solve a problem of excessive delays in processing the claims, SSA created work modules of about forty people each, that included all the specialists necessary to process a claim from beginning to end. The work modules were essentially teams that worked on a particular set of cases—much like having work teams build automobiles rather than manufacturing them on assembly lines. The change to these modules was painful, difficult, innovative, well-led, well-managed, and very successful. This provides

an excellent example of effective leadership of major organizational change (H.G. Rainey 1997, 344-48).

Significantly, one can also point to an example about a very distinct agency, the U.S. Department of Defense. In the Gulf War, the military performed so well in certain ways that one could call the results virtually miraculous. In the years after Vietnam, authors made national reputations and became talk show celebrities by criticizing the poor management and leadership of the U.S. military. Whether or not one approved of the Gulf War, and in spite of many controversies and criticisms related to it, the success in actually carrying out the operations (including related functions such as logistic support) was so evident, with such a low number of casualties on the part of the U.S. and allied forces, that it has to be striking to anyone at all familiar with military operations.

One can point to other examples as well—such as the Centers for Disease Control—that typically receive favorable assessments of their general performance and professionalism, and still others such as those described by authors cited in this article (e.g., Denhardt 1993; Holzer and Callahan 1998; Wolf 1993 and 1997). Gold (1982), for example, identifies as well-managed, successful organizations the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Passport Office, and the governments of Sunnyvale, California, and Charlotte, North Carolina. Wolf (1997) identifies the Bureau of Standards in the Commerce Department between 1917 and 1924 as the agency most highly rated for effectiveness in his large sample of agencies, thus suggesting that effective public agencies have been around for a long time. Significantly, also, Osborne and Gaebler's (1992) very influential proposals for reforms of public management draw almost exclusively on examples of practices that already exist in governmental organizations. The examples illustrate the point that in spite of immensely complex issues over what performance means and how one assesses it, public agencies often perform very well.

## MIXED RESULTS OF PRIVATIZATION

Another indication of effective performance by public agencies comes from the limited success of privatization initiatives. Assessments of the privatization of public services generally tend to report savings that result from privatization, but the results also show a mixed pattern with many instances where no savings were achieved, and with few findings of the very large savings projected by some proponents of privatization. The more carefully designed the study, the smaller the reported savings (e.g.,

Gill and Rainey 1997). Similarly, evaluation of the privatization of state-owned enterprises is much more complicated than its aggressive proponents have projected (Durant, Legge, and Moussios 1998). These limited successes of privatization support Simon's assertion, quoted at the beginning of this article, that public organizations can and often do perform as well as private firms.

Lowery (1997), among others, helps to explain why one should expect mixed results from certain types of privatization when he analyzes quasi market failures, such as the failure of a market to develop for the contract (i.e., there may be little competition for the contract). As Lowery points out, the aggressive proponents of privatization implicitly rely on the dubious assumption that the bureaucrats who could not manage effectively before contracting-out suddenly become transformed into highly efficient and effective managers of the development and monitoring of contracts. The mixed results suggest that the success of privatization initiatives depends heavily on sound management by government employees, and they return us to the questions: When and how do government agencies and the people in them perform well? Why would bureaucrats who otherwise have weak incentives for efficiency, or who otherwise face dysfunctional incentives and information patterns, be motivated to have a successful contracting process?

## POWER SHARING AND THE HOLLOW STATE

In addition, the extension of privatization arrangements, and the increasingly *networked* or *hollow state* character of many public programs, strains the depiction of the public bureaucracy as a centralized, retentive, monolithic entity. If so centralized and retentive, why has the bureaucracy allowed all this privatization, and how could it remain so centralized and retentive if it is sharing power with so many entities (Kettl 1993; Milward, Provan, and Else 1993)? These developments, then, indicate the need to rethink the more negative depictions of public bureaucracy and to consider theories that explain effective government agencies.

## BUSINESS BLUNDERS AND GENERIC THEORIES OF MANAGEMENT

Business firms produce abundant examples of waste, inefficiency, blundering, and fraud, even in the most reputable and admired firms. This raises the issue of whether market exposure actually causes business firms to perform more effectively than nonmarket government agencies. A rich tradition in organization

and management theory involves a generic perspective on those topics. This tradition is the idea that distinctions between public and private, and for-profit and nonprofit organizations amount to stereotypes and oversimplifications (H.G. Rainey 1997, 55ff). Many scholars who study organizations emphasize the commonalities among organizations, especially among those that purportedly differ by location in the public and private sectors. Simon (1998, 11), in the assertion mentioned above and quoted at the outset, provides an example of this perspective. Significantly, in relation to the later sections of this article, he attributes the prospects for effective public organizations to, among other factors, the presence of dedicated public servants who are motivated not by narrow economic self-interest but by organizational loyalty and identification (and by implication, an ideal of public service). Simon also argues that effective public administration is essential to democracy. He thus quite dramatically implies the need to seek explanations and theories of effective government organizations.

## MODELS OF EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

To develop a theory of effective government agencies, one obviously has to decide how to proceed. Lowery (1997), while not directly pursuing models of effective agencies, suggests employing concepts and methods from economics-based and public choice theory to analyze some of the oversimplifications of those same approaches. His analysis of quasi market failures develops useful concepts for elaborating that discussion. The approach in this article, however, focuses more on government agencies and their general effectiveness, and it draws more on case studies and empirical research in public administration and public bureaucracy as well as concepts from organization and management theory. The propositions advanced later will draw on conclusions from many of the authors on successful leadership and management who are cited above. Some of those authors concentrate on one part of the elephant such as leadership, mission, or culture, and some draw only implicit conclusions about linkages to organizational effectiveness. The full group of references is not easily summarized here.

One subset of the references, however, includes efforts to characterize government agencies that perform efficiently. These profiles represent efforts to develop models of excellent organizations and to specify their attributes. Exhibit 2 summarizes some of these profiles. An elaborate review and critique of these efforts is beyond the scope of this article, but the row headings on the left of the exhibit indicate common topics in the profiles,

including aspects of the agency mission and public orientation (including public service), leadership and primary means of managing employees, and task design and work environment. Especially as summarized in the exhibit, in ways that cannot do full justice to the analyses, the profiles need much more specification and articulation to move in the direction of a theory. Yet some of their implications are clear, and they show up in the propositions in exhibit 1 and in the discussion of them that follows.

Also of significance are some omissions in the implicit models in exhibit 2. (In the parlance of organizational effectiveness researchers, they mostly represent *internal process models*.) Additional factors receive emphasis in other research on agency effectiveness. Wolf (1993) analyzed forty-four case studies of federal agencies to construct measures of the agencies' characteristics and their relationships to the organization's effectiveness. As do most of the profiles in exhibit 2, his findings indicated the importance of leadership and sense of mission. In addition, however, he found important a variable representing political autonomy (that included *universal political support* and/or freedom from direction by political authorities). This variable indicates the importance of relations with oversight authorities and other external stakeholders, a topic that receives little or no emphasis in the profiles in exhibit 2. It also suggests the need for a supportive and delegative role by those authorities that allows the agency reasonable autonomy to develop and pursue its mission (cf. Wilson 1989; Meier 1993a).

## PROPOSITIONS AND A FRAMEWORK

As we indicated earlier, exhibit 1 states propositions about effective agencies that draw on the references just cited and on additional references and examples that are described below. Exhibit 3 provides a diagram that suggests a framework linking these propositions and their component concepts. While exhibit 1 does not clearly posit all the relationships, it bears the implication that all the components in exhibit 1 should be positively related in the more effective agencies. Also, in exhibit 3 and in the discussion to follow, some of the relationships are hypothesized so clearly that they have sharp and challenging implications for research, theory, and practice.
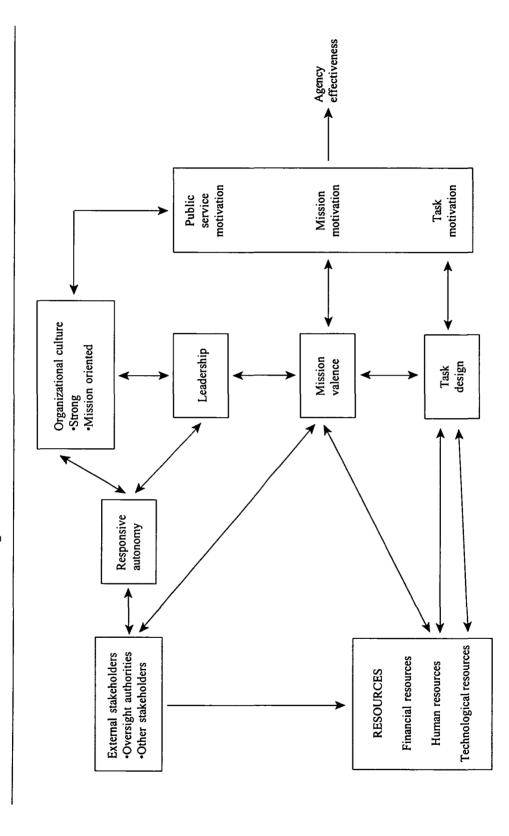
## THE MEANING OF EFFECTIVENESS

In the literature on organization theory, the topic of organizational effectiveness is complex and inconclusive in certain ways, and it involves an unresolved diversity of models,

**Exhibit 2**
**Characteristics of High Performance Government Agencies**

| | Gold (1982) | STEP (1985) | Wilson (1989) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mission / public orientation | Emphasize clear mission and objectives | Closer contact with customers to better understand their needs | Mission is clear and reflects a widely shared and warmly endorsed organizational culture<br><br>External political support |
| Leadership / managing employees | Employees take pride in the organization and its product<br><br>Focus on treating employees fairly and respectfully through honest and open communication<br><br>Emphasize delegation of responsibility and authority as widely as possible<br><br>Management aims at challenging and encouraging people<br><br>Management emphasizes innovative ways of managing | Increased discretionary authority for managers and employees for greater control over accountability<br><br>Increased employee participation taps their knowledge, skills, and commitment | Executives command loyalty, define and instill a clear sense of mission, attract talented workers, and make exacting demands of subordinates<br><br>Leaders make peer expectations serve the organization<br><br>Maximize discretionary authority for operators<br><br>Executive takes responsibility for organizational maintenance<br><br>Bottom-up implementation perspective |
| Task design / work environment | Places great value on the people in the organization<br><br>Job tasks and goals are clear | Partnerships to allow the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and other resources<br><br>State-of-the-art productivity improvement techniques<br><br>Improved work measurements to provide a base for planning and implementing service improvements and worker evaluation | Clearly defined goals<br><br>Widespread agreement on how critical tasks are performed<br><br>Agency autonomy to develop operational goals from which tasks are designed<br><br>Ability to control or keep contextual goals in proper perspective |

Note: Portions of this exhibit are adapted from Rainey (1997, 359) and from Hale (1996, 139), with portions using Hale's terminology and summary.

| Denhardt (1993) | Alliance (1994) | Hale (1996) | Holzer and Callahan (1998) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dedication to public service and understanding public intent<br><br>Serving the public, which represents democratic values | Mission clarity and understanding<br><br>Maintain open and productive communication among stakeholders | Focused mission that is clarified and communicated to organization members | Customer focused<br><br>Build partnerships with public and private organizations and citizens |
| Leader demonstrates commitment to mission<br><br>Manager builds sense of community in organization<br><br>Manager clearly articulates values<br><br>Managers insist on high ethical standards<br><br>Empowered and shared leadership<br><br>Employees accept responsibility and performance accountability | Empowered employees<br><br>Organizations allocate resources for continual learning<br><br>Employees accept accountability to achieve results with rewards and consequences<br><br>Motivate and inspire people to succeed | Enabling leadership that emphasizes learning, communication, flexibility, sharing, and vision development | Manage for quality using long-term strategic planning with support from top leadership<br><br>Develop human resources and empower employees through team building, systematic training, recognition, and balancing employee and organizational needs |
| Pragmatic incrementalism (change is natural, appropriate)<br><br>Approach to change is creative and humane<br><br>Commitment to values | Defined outcomes and focus on results (performance measures)<br><br>Institute new work processes as necessary<br><br>Flexible, adjust nimbly to new conditions<br><br>Competitive in terms of performance<br><br>Restructure work processes to meet customer needs | Emphasize learning and carefully support learning, risk taking, training, communication, and work measurement<br><br>Nurturing-community culture that is supportive and emphasizes teamwork, participation, flexible authority, and effective reward and recognition | Adapt technologies that include open access to data, automation for productivity, cost-effective applications, and cross-cutting techniques that deliver on public demands<br><br>Measure for performance by establishing goals and measuring results, justifying and allocating as necessary resource requirements, and developing organizational improvement strategies |

**Exhibit 3**
**Characteristics of Effective Government Agencies**

including goal models, internal process models, stakeholder models, resource dependence models, participant satisfaction models, and competing values models (Daft 1998, ch. 2; H.G. Rainey 1997, ch. 6). The discussion here cannot resolve these variations, but it can proceed using a relatively straightforward definition of agency effectiveness: The agency performs well in discharging the administrative and operational functions pursuant to the mission. It achieves the mission as conceived by the organization and its stakeholders, or pursues achievement of it in an evidently successful way. While it skirts some of the controversies over the concept of organizational performance, this approach to effectiveness bears similarities to conceptions some researchers and authors use (Collins and Porras 1994; Gold 1982; Peters and Waterman 1982; Wolf 1997).

This concept of effectiveness refers to whether the agency does well that which it is supposed to do, whether people in the agency work hard and well, whether the actions and procedures of the agency and its members are well suited to achieving its mission, and whether the agency actually achieves its mission. Does it produce the actions and outputs pursuant to the mission or the institutional mandate (Osborne and Gaebler 1992, 351; Wolf 1997), and does it appear to contribute to outcomes indicated by the mission? Did the U.S. military win the Gulf War, does the CDC reduce health risks, and does the Social Security Administration pay benefits expeditiously, accurately, and appropriately, and do all these results come in significant part from the activities of the agencies and their members? As additional examples, the Coast Guard has stated as one of its central goals the reduction of accidental deaths and injuries from maritime casualties (U.S. Coast Guard 1996). The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (1996) includes in its mission the goals of saving lives, preventing injuries, and reducing traffic-related health care problems. Evidence that the agencies' operations have contributed substantially to the achievement of these goals provides evidence of agency effectiveness.

This concept of effectiveness concerns the organization's administrative and operational effectiveness, and not necessarily the effectiveness of the general policy design in which the agency operates. For example, the Social Security Administration may operate the Old Age and Survivors Insurance program very effectively, in the sense that claimants' benefits are expeditiously and accurately authorized, calculated, and paid in ways that provide income security for the clients. The program, however, still may need reform through some form of privatization or some other adjustment because of the fiscal and financial implications of the benefits and benefit schedules that Congress mandated for the

program. As another example, the U.S. military performed well in the Gulf War, but critics can dispute or lament the policy decision to proceed with military force. In addition, declaring that the Forest Service is an effective organization does not resolve controversies over the use of public forests for timbering by private firms.

Numerous other conceptual and methodological complexities can be discussed at length. The most important objective of this article, however, is to advance concepts and generalizations useful to theorizing about agency performance, so it is best simply to move to the propositions themselves.

## RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The propositions use the term *stakeholders* from the organization theory literature to refer to persons, groups, and institutions that have an interest in the activities and outcomes of the organization sufficient to draw their participation and attention to the agency. Oversight authorities such as legislative, executive, and judicial authorities are one obvious component of this part of the framework. Other stakeholders, such as constituent and client groups, the general public, and various partners and suppliers such as contractors, exert less legally formal influences on government agencies.

*Effective agencies will have oversight authorities that are supportive, delegative, and attentive to agency mission accomplishment.* The authorities will devote attention to the agency, in a demanding way that emphasizes effective performance. Yet the authorities also will tend to be supportive in the sense of providing resources and authorization necessary to support good performance. They will be delegative in that they will refrain from micromanagement and extensive intervention in decisions about the management of the agency.

As an example of these conditions of oversight, one can point to the response of congressional leaders such as Wilbur Mills when the Social Security Administration was having serious problems with backlogs in claims processing during the 1970s. Congress had expanded the types of coverage and benefits of the social security program, and the population of entitled persons had grown rapidly. Decisions about claims became more complicated, more varied, and simply more voluminous. More claims took longer to process, and citizens complained to their congressmen about delays in receiving a response about their claims and inquiries. To oversimplify for brevity, Mills and other congressional leaders essentially told Commissioner Robert Ball to fix

the problem and accepted Ball's assurances that such efforts were underway. SSA actually took some time to adopt reforms, while devoting considerable attention to diagnosis and planning. The ultimate solution, which involved reorganizing the major payment centers (public service centers) into work modules where teams worked together to process claims, proved highly successful. While demanding a solution, congressional leaders delegated the selection and management of the solution to the agency's leaders. By contrast, in more recent years observers have expressed concern that rapid turnover in the top executives at SSA, due to efforts by presidential administrations to increase their control over the agency, has damaged effective management within the agency (Rainey and Rainey 1986; U.S. GAO 1986). As a roughly similar example, the highly effective Gulf War operations were conducted relatively autonomously by commanders there, without extensive control or intervention from Washington. As an example of the failure of oversight officials to focus on mission accomplishment, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had a reputation for weak performance at one point, frequently attributed to oversight officials' use of the agency as a haven for political cronies.

## OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Summarizing research on the influence of interest groups on public bureaucracies, Meier (1993a) concludes that *an agency is better able to obtain resources and autonomy of operations when it has interest groups that, in addition to being attentive and interested, are geographically dispersed, diverse along various dimensions (such as demographic makeup), mobilizable, and multiple.* That is, an agency loses autonomy if it is captured by an interest group, and it gains autonomy and influence if it has supporters that are diverse but mobilizable. The agency can play different groups off against each other but, as is elaborately discussed in the literature on public bureaucracy and public management, it usually needs the support of interest groups to gain resources. In addition, as is implied in the discussion of issue networks, policy subsystems, and subgovernments, other actors, such as experts, play a part in this process.

*Agencies will also tend to be more effective when they have favorable public support.* This includes generally favorable public opinion and media coverage.

*More effective agencies also will manage well their relations with allies and partners* (Holzer and Callahan 1998) *such as contractors and other public, private, and nonprofit entities with which they interact in carrying out their work.* For example, a

growing literature now details the requirements for the effective management of contracts and privatization initiatives (e.g., Globerman and Vining 1996; Donahue 1990; Gill and Rainey 1997; Kettl 1993; Lowery 1997; H.G. Rainey 1997; Rehfuss 1989) as well as the effective management of networks of actors and organizations more generally (Provan and Milward 1995; O'Toole 1997). Agencies that have in place systems that meet these requirements should more effectively manage such relations and thereby enhance their own effectiveness.

## AUTONOMY

*Government agencies will be more effective when they have higher levels of autonomy in relation to external stakeholders, but not extremely high levels of autonomy. (The relationship between autonomy and effectiveness is curvilinear.)*

When oversight authorities are supportive and delegative, as we have described above, they grant autonomy to the agency. Autonomy to manage its mission and tasks tends to enhance an agency's performance of the mission and tasks. Yet the following discussion of organizational culture describes examples of agencies that became too insular. The SSA example above illustrate the responsiveness of the agency and its leaders to the demands of stakeholders. An effective agency's autonomy does not imply extreme isolation from communication and exchange with external stakeholders; it should be conceived as a responsive autonomy. Wolf (1998) concludes from his data that agency leaders earn grants of autonomy from oversight officials through skillful management of relations with external stakeholders.

## MISSION VALENCE

*The higher the mission valence of the government agency, the more effectively the agency will perform.* The concept of mission valence draws on the concept of *valence* from the expectancy theory of work motivation. Formulations of that theory use the concept of valence from chemistry (the positive or negative charges of atomic particles) to refer to the positive or negative attractiveness of an outcome of behavior—to how good or bad, attractive or unattractive, a person considers an outcome to be (H.G. Rainey 1997, 229-32). An agency's mission can be attractive or abhorrent (e.g., combat, war) to individuals. The more engaging, attractive, and worthwhile the mission is to people, the more the agency will be able to attract support from those people, to attract some of them to join the agency, and to motivate them to perform well in the agency (depending on some other conditions we will discuss).

The external stakeholders and the members of the organization interactively establish the organization's mission. The mission is the general social contribution and purpose of the agency and its related general goals. The military services must defend the nation, be prepared for combat engagements and, when necessary, to win them. The Social Security Administration provides income security for retired persons and their survivors. The Centers for Disease Control must defend the populace against diseases and other dangers to health. Any organization has a mission, in this general sense, whether or not the organization has joined the herd of organizations issuing mission statements. The mission has higher valence when it has higher levels of the dimensions listed in exhibit 1 (cf. Behn 1991, 67-69; DiIulio 1994; Hargrove and Glidewell 1990; Wilson 1989).

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

*Effective government agencies have a strong organizational culture, effectively linked to mission accomplishment.*

*Organizational culture* is probably the most overused and loosely used term in contemporary management discourse. Journalists regularly use it to interpret developments in business firms and other organizations. In any brainstorming or planning session of government employees that is concerned with organizational improvement, leadership, or related matters, participants will repeatedly refer to the need to change the cultures of agencies. These casual uses of the term typically refer to a subdimension of culture, such as employees' attitudes toward risk taking, but their common usage suggests the need for a concept such as culture. Scholars, of course, have devoted much attention to culture and regularly assert its importance to organizational analysis (Schein 1992; Trice and Beyer 1993), including the analysis of government agencies (Wilson 1989; H.G. Rainey 1997, 273-81).

*Culture* refers to patterns of shared meaning in organizations, including shared values and beliefs about appropriate behaviors and actions. It also refers to such matters as the nature of the organization and its relation to other entities or to the basis for authority in the organization. Culture can be manifest in, and influenced by, symbols, ceremonies, statements, and actions of leaders. The proposition above asserts that a strong organizational culture will be related positively to agency effectiveness when the culture is effectively linked to mission accomplishment. The literature now contains numerous examples of strong or salient cultures in agencies that promote the agencies' effectiveness in accomplishing their missions and the roles of leaders in shaping such cultures (e.g., Doig and Hargrove 1987; Lewis 1980

and 1987; Maynard-Moody, Stull, and Mitchell 1986; Mashaw 1983, 216; Meier 1993a; Rainey 1997, 273-81; Wilson 1989). In addition, authors suggest guidelines for leaders in their efforts to influence and develop culture (Schein 1992; Trice and Beyer 1993; Yukl 1998).

Like other propositions advanced here, this proposition about strong agency culture runs into complexities and potential controversy, since a strong culture could make an agency impervious to external oversight and control, resistant to innovation, or otherwise poorly adapted to imperatives of its environment. Examples of such a problem include Hoover and the FBI, and the case of a public health agency in Kansas that became so focused on professional autonomy that the legislature ultimately intervened to assert authority over the agency (Maynard-Moody et al. 1986). Strong culture does not need to imply insularity or arrogance. Values strongly espoused in a strong culture can include adaptiveness, surveillance of the environment, and responsiveness. The two examples above can be interpreted as illustrations of ineffective linkages to agency mission that in the long run damaged the agencies' effectiveness.

## LEADERSHIP

*The more effective the leadership of the agency, the more effective the agency. More effective leadership is characterized by more stability, multiplicity, commitment to mission, effective goal setting, and effective administrative and political coping.*

Scholars regularly cite leadership as an essential element in the success of public agencies. Leadership has long been treated as an important determinant of an agency's power and influence (Meier 1993a, 75-77; Rourke 1984). More recently, numerous authors describe and analyze effective, innovative, and exemplary leaders in government agencies (Behn 1991; Cooper and Wright 1992; Doig and Hargrove 1987; Hargrove and Glidewell 1990; Riccucci 1995; Terry 1995). As we noted earlier, Wolf (1993) reports empirical evidence of a significant role of leadership in achieving agency effectiveness. Holzer and Callahan (1998, 160) report results of a survey of winners of an award for exemplary state and local public service initiatives, in which the respondents rate the support of top agency executives as the most important factor in the success of agency innovations.

Like most fundamental topics in the social sciences, the topic of leadership is vast, richly elaborated, and inconclusive (Yukl 1998). Enough listings of desirable leadership skills and qualities could be gathered to build another great pyramid. They

vary widely, and none of them can claim conclusive validation. One could choose any of a number of such listings, but one can reasonably choose, as a general conception of leadership skills for government agencies, the *Executive Core Competencies* of the Senior Executive Service (U.S. OPM 1998). The competencies include the following: leading change (including leadership competencies of creativity and innovation and service motivation, among others); leading people (e.g., conflict management, team building); results driven [sic] (e.g., accountability, customer service); business acumen (financial, human resources, and technology management); and building coalitions and communication (e.g., interpersonal skills, partnering, political savvy). From many sources in the leadership literature, one can add that leaders need a basic motivation for the role, along with a drive to take responsibility, to lead others, and to make a difference.

In addition to such general conceptions, however, the subdimensions of leadership cited in the proposition above and in exhibit 1 seem particularly important to leadership in government agencies. First, scholars and experts emphasize the problems that result from rapid turnover of top executives in public agencies (e.g., Warwick 1975; Heclo 1978; U.S. GAO 1986). Conversely, various researchers have reported an apparent linkage between stable, long-term leadership—often from career civil servants—and effective performance of public agencies (Behn 1991; DiIulio 1994; Doig and Hargrove 1987; G.W. Rainey 1990; Rainey and Rainey 1986; Riccucci 1995). Excessive stability of leadership can build a harmful insularity, of course, and there are also important examples of generalist leaders such as Eliot Richardson who earned reputations as excellent government executives through a variety of relatively short-term posts in different agencies. Riccucci (1995) provides additional examples of effective leaders without long-term governmental experience. Leadership stability, then, needs to be considered in association with other dimensions in exhibit 1, which hypothesizes a curvilinear relationship between leadership stability and agency effectiveness.

Shared leadership, for example, can make a short-term leader more influential on agency effectiveness. The literature on management in both the public and private sectors increasingly emphasizes the importance of sharing leadership roles among teams or cadres of leaders, as well as the empowerment of individuals to assume roles in the leadership of various parts of the work (e.g., Behn 1991; Denhardt 1993; Huber and Glick 1993; Sims and Lorenzi 1992; Terry 1995, ch. 4). As an example of a skillful approach to shared leadership, one can cite James Webb's creation of a leadership triad at NASA and his emphasis on maximal leadership continuity in the agency (Lambright 1987).

Although he did not possess scientific skills, he established a strong relationship with assistant administrators who did have those skills, and he thereby enhanced his own legitimacy, and more importantly the quality and legitimacy of the decisions of the leadership team. Somewhat similarly, Nancy Hanks, as the early and influential chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, empowered her deputy chairman to serve as the chief spokesperson for the agency, to complement her own abilities and her preference for working in small, informal settings (Wyszomirski 1987). Such skillful exercises in empowerment and team leadership can help even short-term political appointees to ensure that their influences on the agency endure (Ingraham 1988).

The problem of turnover at the top of many agencies also makes a strong commitment to an agency's mission an important aspect of leadership. The most effective agency executives, such as Robert Ball, Hyman Rickover, Nancy Hanks, James Webb, and Gifford Pinchot, all embody such a commitment. Analysts of their careers conclude that they displayed a desire to "make a difference" (Doig and Hargrove 1987, 11) coupled with an ability to see new possibilities, which led them to focus on the agency and its mission as an avenue for exerting influence on the development and pursuit of new possibilities.

The most frequently repeated observation about the distinctive characteristics of public agencies concerns the vagueness, multiplicity, and mutual conflict among agency goals. Therefore, skillful leadership through mission development and through goal setting in relation to the mission contribute significantly to agency effectiveness. The literature now offers numerous examples of such leadership practices (e.g., Behn 1991; Denhardt 1993; Riccucci 1995; Wilson 1989).

Finally, it seems to be obvious that leaders of effective public agencies will display skills in coping with the political and administrative pressures and constraints of their roles. Yet the importance of this dimension of leadership is reflected in frequent expressions of concern that these constraints penalize effective leadership and make it scarce in public agencies (e.g., National Academy of Public Administration 1986; Thompson 1993, 18-22). Significantly, accounts of the most influential and innovative agency leaders emphasize their ability to turn into opportunities the constraints that supposedly impede many executives and to cope with the pressures and complexities of their roles (Ban 1995; Doig and Hargrove 1987; Hargrove and Glidewell 1990; Lewis 1980 and 1987; Riccucci 1995).

## TASK DESIGN

*The more the task design in the agency provides extrinsic and intrinsic rewards to individuals and groups, the more effective the agency.*

In addition to the general mission, there are more specific characteristics of the work people do, and in the framework these are included in a broad conception of *task*. Included in this conception of task are those factors associated with an individual's relatively specific ongoing activities that provide extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for work. Organizational behavior researchers commonly define extrinsic rewards as those mediated externally to the individual and provided by the organization, such as pay, promotion, and physical conditions of work. Intrinsic rewards are mediated internally to the individual and include psychological rewards such as interest in the work, enjoyment of the work, a sense of growth and development, and a sense of worthwhile accomplishment. Organizational psychologists have developed measures of the motivating potential of jobs, which assess the degree to which the job provides autonomy, task significance, task identity, feedback from the work, and skill variety. These factors tend to increase intrinsic work motivation (Hackman and Oldham 1980). This conception of task design is intended to include conditions mentioned in the profiles of excellent public organizations described in earlier sections, such as whether the members are empowered, whether they are organized into teams and have a teamwork orientation, and whether decisions are participative.

Included in this conception of task and task design are extrinsic rewards associated with the more specific, day to day work of the individual, such as those that are mentioned above. These rewards will also depend, of course, on organizational structures and policies such as human resource management/personnel policies.

The distinction between task and mission is useful in analyzing whether they are two distinct sources of incentive and motivation in government agencies that are separable but that need to be linked together. For example, consider a professor who is excited about her work for the day. How much is she motivated by the overall mission or general societal contribution of the university, and how much by the intrinsic rewards from her enjoyment of the more specific activities of teaching and research? A NASA employee may enjoy his job designing and implementing training procedures for space shuttle astronauts.

How much additional motivation does he derive from the overall mission of advancing space exploration and travel?

## UTILIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Exhibit 1 hypothesizes that utilization of technology and development of human resources relate to agency effectiveness, because Holzer and Callahan (1998) emphasize the importance of these processes in innovative government agencies and because of the obvious importance of such processes in building the internal capacity of an agency. Holzer and Callahan provide elaboration on effective utilization of technology and human resources; other examples and case studies abound. SSA, for example, has used computerization to improve markedly the efficiency and accuracy of case processing. Herbert Kaufman's classic study, *The Forest Ranger*, provides case illustrations of the effective development of human resources.

## PROFESSIONALISM

Various authors attribute agency effectiveness to professionalism among the members of the agency (Brehm and Gates 1997; Wilson 1989; Wolf 1993 and 1998). Authors in public administration have analyzed professionalism in that field, and an elaborate literature examines the topic of professionalism in sociology and organization theory. This latter material develops the concept more elaborately than do some of the authors who write about professionalism in public agencies. For example, sociologists define professions as occupations with the following characteristics: they apply advance skills based on theoretical knowledge; they require advanced training; they require testing of competence through examinations and other means; they are organized into professional associations; they emphasize adherence to a code of conduct; they espouse altruistic service. Members of such professionalized occupations tend to have values and beliefs that accord with the occupational characteristics, such as belief in collegial maintenance of standards among professionals, identification with other professionals, and commitment to professional norms. Authors on professionalism in public agencies tend to define it less elaborately—as involving specialized skills that require advanced education or training, membership in professional groups outside the agency (Wilson 1989), or simply a commitment to professional norms of performance and behavior and to do the work right and well (Brehm and Gates 1997).

Professionalism can enhance an agency's performance by increasing its autonomy, due to the social status and intellectual

authority and independence of professionals in the agency (Wolf 1998). In addition, professional norms and technical training provide incentives and guidelines for individuals in the agencies (Wilson 1989; Brehm and Gates 1997).

## MOTIVATION

*Effective government agencies have high levels of motivation among their members, including high levels of public service motivation, mission motivation, and task motivation.*

The preceding propositions lead to this one. The framework and propositions generally assert the important role of motivation that stimulates effort and effective behaviors among people in the organization. The proposition refers to all of the several forms of motivation to emphasize the important questions: Can we actually conceive and validate these three separate forms? Is there a general motive to serve the public? Is it stimulated in government agencies, stimulated to higher levels in some than others, and in turn translated into motivation, effort, and effective behavior?

## PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION

Public service motivation can be defined as a general altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation, or humankind. Major social scientists recently have referred to evolutionary developments that have fostered in human beings motives and attitudes conducive to communal and collective behaviors, including trust, reciprocity, and identification with organizations (Ostrom 1998; Simon 1998). Since animals display altruistic behaviors, behaviors that involve self-sacrifice on the part of their groups, these motives should be considered fundamental in humans as well, and in some persons as strong as the more extrinsic motives for money or other material gain. Such forms of motivation have been part of human discourse since classic times, when, for example, Athenians pledged to leave their city better than they found it.

A form of public service motivation has been part of discourse in public administration for a long time. Frederickson and Hart (1985), for example, discuss a "patriotism of benevolence" that involves benevolent impulses and behaviors toward a broad community. They define it as an affection for all people in the nation and a devotion to defending their basic rights, as granted by enabling documents such as the Constitution. Frederickson (1997) treats such a motive, and associated ethical and equitable behaviors, as a central theme in public administration.

Interestingly, however, this topic has attracted not nearly as much systematic research as one might have expected. Various surveys have found that government executives and managers tend to express a motive to serve the public or society in a worthwhile way (e.g., Sikula 1973). Kilpatrick, Cummings, and Jennings (1964) found that federal executives, scientists, and engineers gave higher ratings than did their counterparts in business to work-related values such as the importance of doing your best, even if you dislike your work, the importance of doing work that is worthwhile to society, and the importance of helping others. H.G. Rainey (1983) found that state agency managers rated the "opportunity to engage in meaningful public service" as a more important work reward than did managers in large business firms. Among the very large sample of executives and managers in the *Federal Employee Attitude Surveys*, high percentages of the respondents who enter the federal government rate public service and having an impact on public affairs as the most important reasons to enter federal service; very low percentages of these groups rate salary and job security as important attractions (Crewson 1995, 94). Analyzing other large social surveys such as the *General Social Survey*, Crewson (1997) also finds that public sector respondents, as compared to private sector respondents, place a higher value on work that is useful to society and that helps others. These results and other findings within such surveys suggest the form that general service motives in government may take—placing a high value on work that helps others and benefits society as a whole, on a degree of self-sacrifice, and on responsibility and integrity. Public managers often mention such motives (Hartman and Weber 1980; Lasko 1980; Kelman 1989; Sandeep 1989).

Seeking to refine the conception of public service motives, Perry and Wise (1990) suggest that public service motives can fall into three categories: *instrumental motives*, including participation in policy formulation, commitment to a public program because of personal identification, and advocacy for a special or private interest; *norm-based motives*, including a desire to serve the public interest, loyalty to duty and to government, and social equity; and *affective motives*, including commitment to a program based on a conviction about its social importance and the patriotism of benevolence (Frederickson and Hart 1985; Frederickson 1997).

Perry (1996a and 1997) provides more recent evidence of the dimensions of a general public service motive and ways to assess it. He analyzed survey questionnaire responses from about four hundred people, including managers and employees in

various government and business organizations, and graduate and undergraduate students. He developed scales for four dimensions of public service motivation: attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest and civic duty, compassion, and self-sacrifice. He found higher levels of some of these factors associated with religious involvement and family background.

These findings and those cited above show that public service motivation is a complex concept that deserves more attention. The evidence, however, strongly supports the existence of a general form of public service motivation that tends to be more prevalent among government employees than private sector employees. The evidence also suggests that this form of motivation involves a general motive to provide significant service that benefits the community, the public, or society in dutiful, compassionate, and self-sacrificing ways.

## MISSION MOTIVATION

The above proposition about motivation also holds that high levels of mission motivation contribute significantly to the effectiveness of public agencies. Why coin a term such as *mission motivation* and propose it as a new concept? Wilson (1989) describes the existence of a *sense of mission* in such agencies as the Army Corps of Engineers and the Forestry Service. Various authors describe how leaders develop a sense of mission for their agencies and inculcate it into the culture of the agency through goal setting, symbolic actions, and other techniques (e.g., Behn 1991; Cooper 1987; Denhardt 1993). The proposition about mission motivation asserts that members have perceptions of the mission of the agency and may be highly motivated to contribute to the achievement of the mission. When so motivated, an individual will extend effort and seek to perform well in ways that he or she perceives to be related to accomplishing the mission.[4]

This pattern of motivation differs from public service motivation, although the propositions and framework assert that they have a strong relation to each other in effective agencies. While public service motivation focuses on altruistic service that benefits a community or a larger population, mission motivation has as its target or objective the mission of the agency. For example, this distinction raises the issue of how much of a person's motivation is accounted for by a sense that her actions contribute to a general public service, and how much is accounted for by this sense of mission? When a tank commander in the Desert Storm operation works hard to contribute to an effective combat initiative by his unit, how much is he motivated by a

[4]A reason to use a term such as *mission motivation* is that it implies a different concept from a *sense of mission*. It includes not just the perception of a mission but the extension of effort toward achieving it.

perception or belief that he is contributing a valuable service to the nation or to humankind, and how much by a perception or belief that his actions contribute to the mission of winning combat engagements in defense of the nation? How much is a module manager in a public service center of the Social Security Administration motivated by a belief that her actions contribute to something worthwhile and important to the nation as a whole, and how much is motivated by a belief that sound management of her module will contribute to the mission of providing income security for the retired people who have earned it through their contributions to the program?

An earlier section introduced the concept of mission valence because of its relevance to the role of mission motivation. A mission can have a high valence for an individual and attract that person to an agency. Members of NASA, for example, observe that many people came to NASA and remained there because of interest in and excitement about the mission of space exploration, when they could have worked in the private sector for higher pay. Motivation in organizations always involves at least two general steps—first, joining and staying; second, working hard and well. One can take the first step without taking the second (March and Simon 1958). High levels of mission valence will tend to attract certain individuals who will self-select into the organization on the basis of the valence of the mission for them, but then their levels of mission motivation will further depend on their perceptions about the linkage of their work to the mission. Buchanan (1974 and 1975) some years ago reported evidence that idealistic people may enter the public service and later become discouraged because they cannot see the linkage of their work activities to their ideals. Through leadership practices such as those described earlier, the agency must sharpen and make salient the relations of individuals' work to the mission. In turn, the perceived linkage of the mission to public service values can enhance both mission valence and mission motivation, such that in the government agencies that perform the best, members will show both high levels of mission motivation and high levels of public service motivation and will feel that the mission of the agency contributes to general worthwhile public service.

## TASK MOTIVATION

The distinction made earlier in this article between the general concept of task motivation and the concepts of public service motivation and mission motivation serves a purpose of distinguishing among patterns of motivation. Returning to the example of the highly motivated professor, consider how much of

that person's motivation might derive from a sense of contributing a valuable public service; how much from a sense of contributing to the university's mission of advancing teaching, research, and public service; and how much from enjoyment of the specific work itself? Other examples of the task motivation at issue here include a NASA employee who finds it fun and exciting to develop and implement safety and emergency drills for training astronauts. Also, a district office manager for the Social Security Administration enjoys the tasks of managing the office, supervising personnel, and engaging in public relations activities such as appearing on a local radio show to answer questions about the social security programs.

These examples illustrate the broad concept of task motivation advanced here. They reflect the influence of the relatively specific and immediate extrinsic and intrinsic rewards available through the person's role in the organization, as described earlier in the discussion of task design. These factors can be independent of, or weakly related to, public service motivation and mission motivation. For example, agency employees may express high levels of motivation in spite of low levels of some of these rewards, such as favorable physical surroundings at work. Ultimately, however, the framework and the proposals hold that agency effectiveness will be highest where organizational design, task design, leadership, and other factors produce desirable levels of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards through tasks and where members of the agency perceive that task activities and accomplishments contribute to mission accomplishment, which in turn contributes to the provision of a worthwhile and valuable public service.

Ultimately, too, the propositions and framework hypothesize that the several forms of motivation play a significant role in determining agency effectiveness, as do the other factors such as leadership and culture. These actually posit very debatable and researchable concepts and relations that might be opposed by other interpretations. For example, one might argue that external forces, such as technological and economic factors, drive the performance of public agencies by providing new technologies and human and financial resources, such that the espoused motives of bureaucrats and the dramaturgy of leadership provide merely a superficial, self-justificatory labeling for developments that are essentially out of the control of the people in the organizations. Such alternative interpretations, along with the general importance of the performance of government agencies, provide all the more reason to continue to develop theories to explain their performance.

## DIRECTION FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT
## AND THE PROBLEM OF PARSIMONY

The concepts and relations in the propositions advanced here need more development in a variety of ways. In particular, however, many related concepts and topics that are not discussed here need further consideration in relation to the propositions and agency effectiveness. These include typologies of agencies and differences by type of agency; organizational socialization processes; organizational commitment or identification; performance measures and their availability and adequacy; and numerous others.

The lengthy list of variables in exhibit 1 raises the question of whether the list can and should be pared down to a more parsimonious set. In a sense, the set of variables is not so vast if one conceives it as basis for a LISREL analysis or a similar analysis that would treat the subdimensions under the more general variables as indicators of the more general variable that would factor together in measures of it. As a hypothetical statement about the most important variables, however, based on the literature reviewed and cited in this article, one can posit that the variables for the following concepts will emerge as the most important: relations with external authorities and stakeholders, autonomy, leadership, professionalism, and motivation among members.

### A SYMBIOSIS OF FREEDOM?

As we noted earlier, Simon (1998) emphasizes the essential role of effective public administration in maintaining the strength of democracy. Other social scientists have remarked on the interesting tendency of democratic systems to coincide with free market systems, and conservative economists often have mentioned the need for an effective, albeit limited, government in a prosperous economy. Analysis of effective government agencies should be part of a new dialogue on the role of government and public administration (e.g., Durant 1998) that recognizes that effective organizations in business, government, and the nonprofit sector benefit each other. Pursuit of systematic explanations and theories about effective government agencies should continue as part of the effort to enhance these mutual benefits.

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