#### The process of bargaining is key.

Randall Davis 12. Assistant professor of political science at Miami University, Ph.D. in artificial intelligence from Stanford University. "Unionization and Work Attitudes: How Union Commitment Influences Public Sector Job Satisfaction." *Public Administration Review*, 73(1), 80-81. Initialism expanded for readability.

Discussion and Conclusions

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

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

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

Because the findings presented in this article suggest that union membership can increase public sector job satisfaction, practicing public managers could use this information to frame assumptions to structure bargaining relationships. First, it may not be beneficial for managers and labor leaders to approach collective bargaining with an “us versus them” mentality. In some ways, management and labor may share similar values, such as a preference for service to society, as important work rewards associated with public service. If management and labor can agree on bargaining outcomes that fulfill preferred values, the bargaining process could contribute to higher performing public agencies. Second, as Kearney and Hays suggest, “participative decision making provides personal benefits to the individual employee as well as desired organizational outcomes” (1994, 44). Given this conclusion, union members may perceive lower levels of red tape partially because they are afforded the opportunity to participate in rule creation through the collective bargaining process. If labor and management can approach the bargaining process as a participative forum in which to address workplace issues, positive individual and organizational outcomes become more likely.