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Antecedents of public service motivation (PSM): The role of gender

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A good deal of research has been conducted in the area of public service motivation (PSM) over the past several decades. PSM maintains that people are predisposed to values or motives that encourage them to act on behalf of the public interest. Despite the plethora of research, there has been no systematic study on how gender interacts with PSM, or how it may antecede the values that comprise PSM and its underlying motives. This essay adds to the research on PSM by examining the interaction between social origins, particularly gender, and motivations to pursue public service values. It offers a number of propositions suggesting that genetics as well as contextual or environmental factors result in sex-differentiated values that serve as antecedents to PSM.

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