

Introduction

“Millennials are frequently written off as narcissistic, arrogant, and fickle. Although there is certainly some truth in such negative perceptions, the millennials also can be quite impressive in their ambitions and achievements. They are a generation of conflicting characteristics—self-absorbed but also civic minded.”

—Alsop, 2008, p. vii

As Generation Z (a.k.a iGen/Genzers/Genzees) gains media traction for its environmental protests and concern for the planet as a whole, the peculiarities of its predecessor—Generation Y (a.k.a Millennials/Gen Y/Generation Next)—is gradually paring down in public interest (Alsop, 2008). While such a process is expected for every generation as it reaches its apex, we assert that Generation Y has yet to entrench its generational vocation, distinctly within the workforce and precisely, within the public sector.

Researchers concur that by the end of the year 2020, Millennials are expected to be fully integrated into the labor force, just as Generation Z begins to enter it (Thompson, 2017). Interestingly, one ramification of the increase of the human lifespan is an increase in the retirement age. Therefore, the integration of Generation Z brings forth a new reality where four different generational cohorts are working side by side. Each cohort is conversant with its own habits, customs, skills, and standards, each with its own disparate needs that often contrast the others' required accommodations. From this perspective of cohort-bound forms of aging, five categories of generational cohorts are classified in literature: (a) the Traditionalists (also termed Veterans; individuals born between 1922 and 1945); (b) the Baby Boomers (individuals born between 1946 and

1964); (c) Generation Xers (individuals born between 1965 and 1980); (d) Generation Y/Millennials (individuals born between 1979 and 1990); and (e) Generation Z (born between 1991 and 2002) (Zemke et al., 2000).

Accordingly, the amalgamation of these five generational cohorts poses new challenges, never before encountered in the Westernized labor force, requiring further scrutiny and interpretation. Even though it is too early to discern the effects of iGen's integration into the workforce, much can be discussed in relation to Generation Y, particularly in terms of the distinction in ethical perceptions, values, and morals.

While the divergences in attitude and culture are taxing to all sectors, they are particularly noticeable within the public sector, presumably on account of the sector's conservative attitude and technologically incompetent nature. In opposition to previous multi-generational cohorts, however, it would appear that Generation Y's conflicting outlook with these public institutions is not only vexing to the sector but also throwing off-course the long-accustomed, quintessential *modus-operandi*. This is especially reflected in Generation Y's lack of loyalty to the workplace, as they've shown to frequently change career paths; and in their inability to abide by certain pre-established regulations, which they believe are no longer fitted to present realities.

Millennials are unlike any other youth generation in living memory. They are more numerous, more affluent, better educated, and more ethnically diverse . . . They are beginning to manifest a wide array of positive social habits that older Americans no longer associate with youth, including a new focus on teamwork, achievement, modesty, and a good conduct. Only a few years from now, this can-do youth revolution will overwhelm the cynics and pessimists . . . This cohort wants to behave ethically (85%) with almost one-third willing to quit their job if they perceive their firm is behaving unethically . . . They also value working for more environmentally conscious companies (53%) and are willing to take less salary to do so . . . They are altruistic, care about volunteerism (85%), and believe it is important to give back to the community through unpaid service. (Strauss & Howe, 2000)

As a by-product, the Millennials' motivation to serve the public sector is steadily deteriorating. The 2011 survey conducted by the National

Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), graduate students' interest in government and/or public-sector careers has dropped significantly (Bright & Graham, 2015).

The pretext behind this decline is ambivalent and is open to many interpretations. Some believe that the lack of interest in working in the public sector is a result of poor academic curriculums; weakening of the public-sector job market; the nature of governance, and subsequently, the rise of additional employment opportunities in the third sector and/or business sector—particularly the emergence of the tech industry and other opportunities made available as a result of globalization. Nonetheless, a repeated postulation is that which claims students hold the position that government organizations are not rewarding enough, as opposed to private sector organizations (Infeld & Adams, 2011).

Instinctively, one might be tempted to pair the lack of interest in government work with the preconceived notion that Millennials are “spoiled” or “sheltered”—“trophy” kids if you will. However, we would like to offer another perspective by first examining what this unique generational cohort perceives to be “rewarding” in the first place.

By the same token, we wish to challenge the commonly held belief that it is up to members of Generation Y to adjust themselves to the public sector. We maintain that the opposite is true—the system must learn to accommodate Generation Y and pay close attention to their demands. Not because they are special and must continue to be sheltered in the workplace, just as they were at home, but because a state's fate depends on it.

It is crucial to remember that unlike those cohorts before it, this cohort has plenty of other employment opportunities, often more attractive in other sectors—many of which tend to clash with the state's principal propositions and modus operandi (e.g., Facebook, Google, etc.). These other institutions offer Millennials exactly what they need to be content. As a result, they bring into their lineups the most adroit of workers, thereby depriving the public sector of the people most ideal for serving the state.

Ultimately, a lack of competent employees could, in turn, hinder—or even altogether prevent—the state's ability to address internal as well as external matters as they come, and perhaps further erode the younger generation's trust in the system. Therefore, the public sector must make an effort to cater to Generation Y, both for the sake of the younger generation's confidence in the state system and for the sake of the state's growth and development.

This book takes as its basic premise that generational diversity contributes to managing ethics and leadership in the public service that meets the public interest. In the future, the public workplace will be experiencing increased mobility and technological competencies required to satisfy social needs. Generational diversity management in public organizations may affect the public sector ethos and values and, in turn, may improve managerial efficiency, policy effectiveness, public service performance, and public trust in the public sector.

However, to benefit from the advantages of a generationally diverse workforce, public managers need to use it as a strategy through which the different experiences, workforce values, and competencies of public service employees play a part in improving performance, replacing retirees, and attracting competent staff. As such, the public service will become an attractive employer for Millennials.

Therefore, this project aims to highlight innovative practices in the pursuit and management of workforce diversity in the public sector and suggest some practical guidelines to enhance and make the most of a diverse workforce in the public service. The identification of trade-offs generated by a diverse public workforce and the measures adopted to support them are core elements of this project.

Chapter 1 discusses the development of the concept of diversity in the public service and the implementation of diversity management in recruitment, hiring, retainment, and managing a diverse workforce to enhance performance in public organizations. In this chapter, we review the literature on diversity practices in the area of human resource management (HRM). We focus on the theoretical underpinning of diversity management to evaluate HRM strategies and policies to manage diversity effectively. Our framework will also help researchers identify key areas for future research and guide practitioners to formulate and implement diversity appropriately.

Chapter 2 provides a valuable and thoughtful understanding of the theoretical foundation for generational differences based on the generational cohort approach. We first introduce definitions of generational boundaries that have been adopted in academic research and an organizational context; second, we identify generational differences in work-related attitudes and values; finally, we discuss the gaps in the literature and the implications of applying a cohort-based approach in public management and ethics. By approaching this study from a cohort-based approach, we could gain a clear and compelling picture of the similarities and differences between

generational attitudes and behaviors, and their potential impact on individual and organizational decision-making and practice. In particular, it is suggested that the challenge for public-sector managers recruiting Generation Y employees, who are likely to have a distinctive set of values, beliefs, expectations, and attitudes, could affect the way this cohort approaches ethical issues and values conflicts that arise in daily practice.

Chapter 3 draws on ethical decision-making theories and models. Ethical decision-making is the process whereby individuals apply their ethical reasoning and attitudes to determine whether a given situation or issue is right or wrong. Ethical decision-making studies offer comprehensive cognitive models of ethical reasoning and examine individual and organizational variables that may facilitate or hinder ethical decision-making.

Chapter 4 aims to comprehend further why public servants engage in unethical behavior. We will briefly overview recent studies examining the antecedents and consequences of ethical judgment in public service. The scholarly discourse of public sector ethics identifies several antecedents to ethical judgment classified as organizational, environmental, and personal demographic characteristics underlying a wide array of global- and geographic-based trends.

Chapter 5 offers empirical testing of how generational diversity affects the extent to which successive generations of public service employees hold that public service ethos encourages ethical decision-making and behavior. The first objective of the research presented in the chapter is to stipulate and measure work-values differences and similarities across generations in the public service given the coming of age of a younger generation and the retirement of an older generation. It implies that understanding generational diversity in public sector values as they are inducted or socialized into normative attitudes and behaviors may facilitate the development of diversity management practices to address growing challenges spawned by age diversity. The proposed research is of special importance, given the disturbing growth of corruption and ethical misconduct in the public sector in Israel.

The second objective is to uncover the underlying mechanism of PSE (public sector ethos) by scrutinizing the effects of the three dimensions of PSE and ethical decision-making regarding ethically questionable conduct in the public service across generational cohorts. By focusing on the interaction effect between PSE and generational cohort on ethical sensitivity, rather than on the chosen variables alone, our study aims to contribute to the burgeoning exploration of the dynamic nature of the PSE

construct in predicting what forms of ethical attitudes and judgments are associated with the most recent generation to enter the public service. An examination of the sort suggested here will focus on generational differences and their possible effect on public management, providing for informed management strategies to ethical training and code enforcement placed on the agenda of administrative ethics committees. Public managers need to be more proactive than reactionary in handling diversity issues involving members of different generations, including ethical issues.

For that, we define the construct of ethical sensitivity, public service ethos, and generational cohort. Second, we offer a set of propositions about how each variable influences the perceptions of ethical sensitivity in the public service and examine the effect of the interaction between PSE and generational cohorts on ethical sensitivity among public service employees in Israel. Next, we present a scenario-based instrument to measure ethical sensitivity, examining its association with public service ethos on a sample of 674 Israeli government-agency employees. We conclude by considering the implications of our findings for developing further research on the generational cohorts' understanding of PSE and public administration ethics for improving the effectiveness of diversity-management practices in organizational ethics in the future.

Finally, this book proposes to identify innovative practices in the pursuit and management of generational workforce diversity in the public sector and to provide some practical guidelines to enhance and make the most of Millennials working in the public service. Identifying trade-offs generated by a diverse public workforce and the strategies adopted to address them are core elements of demonstrating moral entrepreneurship of the public service.