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Papi, Luca and Bigoni, M. and Bracci, E. and Deidda Gagliardo, E. (2018) Measuring public value: a conceptual and applied contribution to the debate. *Public Money & Management*. ISSN 0954-0962. (In press)

DOI

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Measuring public value: a conceptual and applied contribution to the debate

In a context of economic crisis and worsening of social wellbeing, the challenge for public services is the creation of public value. Academics and practitioners alike have increased the interest in understanding the ways in which public value can be created, managed and measured. The paper aims at contributing to this debate by proposing a public value measurement model. A longitudinal case study is adopted in order to assess the feasibility of the model and the organizational implications when public value measurement is available for both internal and external purposes.

Keywords: public value, performance measurement, value pyramid, municipalities, cultural services.

Introduction

In a world scenario characterized by a slow recovery from the economic crisis, increasing pressure is put on public administration (PA) to do more with less. In this context, the creation of public value (PV) becomes critical to legitimize the austerity policies in place. PV creation does not come without problems, especially in Italy, where the value generated by PA is still perceived as unsatisfactory, affected by internal and external public disvalue issues, with the high level of corruption at the forefront (Esposito and Ricci, 2015, pp. 227). While there is in the literature a wide array of definitions about what PV is and of contributions on the need for PV creation, very limited are the contributions on how it can be measured and made “visible” and manageable.

This paper aims at contributing to the theory and practice of Public Value Management, by focusing on how to measure the value created by a PA, which is still the most problematic issue within the field (Spano, 2009; Marcon, 2014; Moore, 2014). To this end the paper firstly aims at identifying a model, informed by the relevant literature about what PV is and how it can be created, which can be used to measure PV generated by a PA. Second, it aims at testing the model in a longitudinal case study, in order to highlight its strengths and weaknesses, together with its usefulness for practitioners. The case of the Italian Municipality of Ferrara, in particular its cultural and touristic services and events in 2013 and 2014 will be considered. Ferrara is a medium-sized city in the North-East of Italy, with a marked touristic vocation, thanks to its natural beauties and rich history, with its historical centre included in UNESCO’s list of World Cultural Heritage. Cultural events have been the target of increasing interest and investment by the city council over the last years, in order to offset the decline of chemical and mechanical industries on which local economy used to rely. The paper broadens the compass of previous researches (Poddighe and Deidda Gagliardo, 2011; Bracci et al., 2014) by providing a refined model for PV measurement, and applying it to the cultural and touristic services of the city. As a result, it will be possible to extend the investigation of its benefits by considering not a single service but different initiatives and actors which are involved in a complex and not always straightforward process of PV generation.

The next section discusses the relevant literature on PV, from which the measurement model described in the subsequent section has been drawn. After detailing the methodological issues, the case analysis and the main findings are described, before discussing the contributions of the paper and its implications for practitioners and researchers.

Understanding Public Value

The first problematization of PV comes from Moore’s work. Moore (1995) conceived a “*Strategic Triangle*”, based on a strategy which must (1) create something valuable, (2) obtain legitimacy and political sustainability from the authorizing environment, and (3) be operationally feasible (Moore, 1995, p. 71). Since then, a new field of study, Public Value Management, was born and even considered sometimes as a new paradigm to rethink government activities, services delivery systems and public policies (O’Flynn, 2007). Public Value Management literature has devoted much effort in trying to conceptualize what PV is and find possible avenues for its creation and, even if to a lesser extent, measurement. This dynamic is summarized by Horner and Hutton’s (2011) “*Public Value Dynamic*” which is made up of three conceptual areas. The first area, called Authorize, relates to how PV is conceived and legitimated; the second, called Create, focuses on how PV is produced; the third, called Measure, relates to how PV is quantified.

The multifaceted concept of PV implies a broad spectrum of possible interpretations in the literature. According to Kelly et al., “*public value refers to the value created by government through services, laws, regulation and other actions*” (Kelly et al., 2002, p. 4). Alford considers citizens as the subject who judges what PV is through the expression of preferences in direct deliberations and public representations (Alford, 2002a, pp. 338-339). On the wake of Alford’s approach, Smith states that PV changes over time and is continually redefined through socio-political interactions (Smith, 2004, p. 68). This point of view is confirmed by Stoker, who states that “*the judgment of what is public value is collectively built through deliberation involving elected and appointed government officials and key stakeholders*” (Stoker, 2006, p. 42). In O’Flynn’s view, “*public value has been described as a multi-dimensional construct – a reflection of collectively expressed, politically mediated preferences consumed by the citizenry – created not just through outcomes but also through processes which may generate trust or fairness*” (O’Flynn, 2007, p. 358).

The importance of PV is such that Benington (2011) contends that PA has the duty to stimulate debate about PV within society,

following its two-fold dimension: things that everyone considers valuable and things that add value to the public sphere. Talbot states that the concept of PV is contemporaneously formed by public interest, self-interest and procedural interest (Talbot, 2011, p. 30). These components must be considered in a conceptual framework that “*provides a guide to public managers or whoever is seeking to create public value*” (Talbot, 2011, p. 31). The literature has underlined the importance of value as a fundamental component of PA’s action, grounded in the ability to satisfy citizens’ needs and to promote mutual trust and fairness. However, a long-term view should be adopted, as PA should be able to generate value not only for today’s citizens but also for future generations. Considering the case of local government, Deidda Gagliardo (2002, p. 185) highlights this by noting that PV is “*the global widened and integrated value of a local administration, that expresses the capacity to satisfy the community’s actual and future needs*”. There is no value if the satisfaction of today’s needs is pursued at the expense of the ability to achieve the same (or more) in the future.

According to Moore (1995, p. 211), there are five levels in PV creation, namely quantity and quality increase in public activities, cost decreasing in both money and legitimation terms, better understanding of citizens needs and satisfaction of these, more fairness in public sector, growth of innovation and reaction skills. From here two perspectives arise in the value creation process. The citizen’s perspective, whose needs must be pursued through public activities, and the PA’s perspective, whose resources should be invested efficiently not to endanger its financial equilibrium and hence its ability to deliver PV in the future. However, the creation of PV involves both the provision of benefits (for instance an increase in the quantity of services offered) and the imposition of sacrifices (such as higher taxation). Value is then created in presence of a high level of benefits and a low level of sacrifices (Spano, 2009). Furthermore, a complex dynamic between benefits and sacrifices according to different perspectives arises (Deidda Gagliardo, 2002). If higher taxation would increase the sacrifices imposed on citizens, it would at the same time increase the benefits for PA (more resources available). As a result, benefits and sacrifices should be evaluated in the light of political programs, prioritizing those actions which are seen as critical to the generation of value as conceived by political bodies (Spano, 2009).

A critical element in the creation of PV, most especially in times of decreasing resources, is the partnership between public, private, not-for-profit organizations and citizens. This issue has been extensively analysed within Public Governance literature, which focuses on the need to promote co-operation, fairness and democracy in public service delivery as opposed to the quasi-market system promoted by New Public Management (Osborne, 2006). Interactions within the network actors, who exchange resources in a trust-rooted negotiated rule system (Rhodes, 1997), are functional to PV creation. In particular, increasing attention is being paid to the involvement of citizens in value co-creation, with Pestoff and Brandsen (2010) identifying four levels of democracy in public service delivery: representative democracy, participative democracy, consumerism and co-production of services. Osborne and Strokosch (2013) go further with the identification of the different co-production types, by affirming that they could promote both user value and user participation. In addition, in some cases they may lead to experimental ways of service co-production. Also Bovaird and Löffler (2012) consider co-production as an activity oriented to good purpose through an interrelation between practitioners and the public. Alford (2002b) identifies five different motivators for citizen co-creation: sanctions, material rewards, intrinsic rewards, solidary incentives and expressive values. These motivators should be chosen on the basis of the consumed PV nature.

The final and most problematic area of PV is measurement (Moore, 2014). In order to make the value “visible”, tool and methodologies identified by Public Performance Management and Measurement literature can help to overcome the dearth of models which can provide a reliable and synthetic measure of value generated (Deidda Gagliardo, 2015).

Two main approaches arise, with the first based on the use of balanced scorecards. According to Kloot and Martin (2000), the measurement process is based on primary and secondary objectives. The former is considered as the desired result to achieve, the latter as its determinant. Secondary objectives are considered functional to the achieving of the primary ones. The authors have developed a balanced approach of measurement based on existing models. They used the original dimension in the “Balanced Scorecard” to measure secondary goals (“Internal Business Process” and “Innovation and Learning” dimensions), and primary goals (“Financial” and “Customers” dimensions) (Kloot and Martin, 2000, p. 235). The scorecard approach is also used by Moore in his “Public Value Scorecard model”, where the original dimensions of Kaplan and Norton’s “Balanced Scorecard” have been replaced by the three components of the “Strategic Triangle” (Moore, 2003). Talbot, starting from Moore’s model and adding two dimensions underlined by Kelly et al. (2002) describes his “Public Value Creation Framework” as composed by five different components: “Social results focus”, “Trust & Legitimacy focus”, “Services focus”, “Resources focus” and “Processes focus” (Talbot, 2011, p. 32).

The second approach is constituted by multidimensional models which are not based on a scorecard approach. Marcon (2014) quotes some models which have been used in practice, such as the BBC model, contributions from Work Foundation, the public ROI framework, and the Accenture Public Service Value Governance Framework.

However, these models do not identify a single synthetic PV measure. Cole and Parston (2006)’s “Public Service Value Methodology” is a notable exception that tries to give a score to different outcomes which are then normalized through a common scale. These scores are put together with their related cost-effectiveness scores, using a method that shows a ranking of the outcomes obtained with a given amount of public resources. In any case, this contribution considers PV creation as a single episode and not in an intergenerational perspective, with a focus on external effects without considering the internal dimensions of PA.

Towards a Public Value measurement model

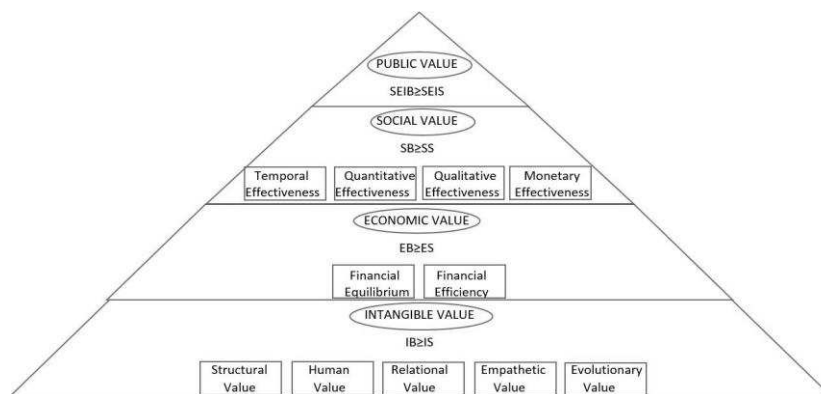
Despite the call made extensively in the literature, PV measurement remains more at a conceptual level, rather than a practical and applied one. We aim at bridging this gap by applying a PV measurement model to a case study. For the purpose of this study, public value is conceived of as the PA’s ability to achieve and maintain in the long term an equilibrium between the satisfaction of the community’s final needs (i.e. a decrease in the unemployment rate) and PA’s functional needs (i.e. an equilibrium between PA’s revenues and expenses), as mediated by political priorities. As a result, any PV measurement system should focus PA’s attention on the key benefits and sacrifices involved in the process of value creation (Moore, 2014), promoting the needs of the community and

safeguarding the interest of PA itself at the same time, in order to secure the possibility to generate value in the future as well (Spano, 2009). It should consider both the citizen and the PA's perspective, capturing its key dimensions through multidimensional indicators, with an adequate weighting which reflects political priorities (Bracci et al., 2014). From PA's perspectives, this means focusing not only on financial sustainability, but also on the key intangible non-mission based aspects (Bryson and Crosby, 2014) which fuel value creation. From citizens' perspective, desirable social outcomes should be promoted (Moore, 1995). Notwithstanding the use of different types of measures (both financial and non-financial), the measurement model should provide citizens and practitioners with a single measure, to make PV easily visible and comparable over time and space. This model can be represented by the "Value Pyramid" (VP) (see Figure 1, Deidda Gagliardo, 2002, Bracci et al., 2014), in which Public Value is the result of three different dimensions of analysis: Social, Economic and Intangible Value.

The Public Value (PV) is the expression of the whole value created and it condenses both citizens' and PA's perspective. It is generated when social, economic and intangible benefits are higher than related sacrifices. The Social Value (SV) is observed from citizens' perspective, and it is the expression of their satisfaction in qualitative, quantitative, temporal and monetary terms with public services, by maximizing the differential between "Social Benefits" (SB) and "Social Sacrifices" (SS). The Economic Value (EV) is observed from PA's perspective and it is the expression of the maximization of its economic performance, financial stability and efficiency. EV is created when "Economic Benefits" (EB) are greater than "Economic Sacrifices" (ES).

The Intangible Value (IV) is observed from PA's perspective and it is created when "Intangible Benefits" (IB) are greater than "Intangible Sacrifices" (IS). This dimension is critical as it focuses on the main constituents of the PA, such as its organization, its human resources, its links with other public, private or non-for-profit bodies or its ability to understand the changes in the context in which it operates and to evolve accordingly. Five types of intangible values are considered: "Structural", "Human", "Relational", "Empathetic" and "Evolutionary".

Figure 1: The Value Pyramid



To have a meaningful comparison between benefits and sacrifices, the model uses a Measurement Grid (see an example in Figure 2, column letters show the steps of the model), where the results of the above dimensions determine the synthetic measure of the "Public Value" created (Column O). Each dimension (Column A) is divided into sub-dimensions (Column B), which reflect particular aspects of public value and their relevant value drivers (Column D). Every sub-dimension is dual: for each of them, the value drivers for measuring both sacrifices and benefits are defined (Column C and D). Then, for every value driver, an indicator has to be chosen (Column E). The value drivers could be determined both through a mono-polar correlation, where benefits and sacrifices are conceptually linked but expressed in two antithetical scales, and through a multi-polar correlation, where benefits and sacrifices are mathematically or statistically linked and expressed in a single scale (when an increase in benefits implies an automatic decrease in sacrifices and vice-versa).

The Measurement Grid uses the mathematical tool of normalization to translate the results obtained through heterogeneous quantitative and qualitative indicators (Column I) into a common relative scale, which is decimal-based in our model (Column J). The normalization process (Arboretti Giancristofaro et al., 2009) is fundamental when dealing with PA's performance due to the need to compare input, output and outcome measures which can be expressed in quantitative, qualitative or monetary terms. The normalization tool, which traces back these heterogeneous metrics to a common scale, enables a PA to make homogeneous comparisons between benefits enjoyed and sacrifices endured by a territory (Deidda Gagliardo, 2015). The normalized measures for benefits range from zero (the worst benefit obtainable for the value driver) to ten (the best benefit obtainable). On the other hand, sacrifices equal to ten are the highest obtainable (worst result), while sacrifices equal to zero are the lowest (best result). The result achieved is related to this normalized scale¹. Every sub-dimension is then weighted in percentage within its dimension (Column K) and each dimension is weighted in percentage to the total value created or consumed (Column M). PV is measured both synthetically, through a single measure which represents the total value created, and analytically, through measures for every dimension and sub-dimension.

¹ For example, Figure 2 presents among the benefits the value driver "Increase in daily average initiatives in each event", measured by the indicator "Number of initiatives within each event / Duration in days of each event". The worst possible result is a value of 1 (that is benefits equal to 0), while the best is a value of 46 (benefits equal to 10). The result achieved (14,07) in a scale ranging from 1 to 46 equals to 2,90 in a scale ranging from 0 to 10.

Figure 2: The Measurement Grid: an example

MEASUREMENT GRID																			
EXAMPLES	A	B	C	D	E	F		G	I	J	K	L		M	N		O		
	SOCIAL VALUE	DIMENSION	SUB-DIMENSION	S/B	VALUE DRIVERS	INDICATORS		NORMALIZATION SCALE		RESULT ACHIEVED	NORMALIZED RESULT	SUB-DIMENSION WEIGHT	NORMALIZED AND WEIGHTED RESULTS IN SUB-DIMENSIONS		DIMENSION WEIGHT	NORMALIZED AND WEIGHTED RESULTS IN DIMENSIONS		PUBLIC VALUE INDEX	
						SACRIFICES (to measure sacrifices decrease)	BENEFITS (to measure benefits increase)	WORST POSSIBLE RESULT	BEST POSSIBLE RESULT				S/B	Result		S/B	Result		Result
								-10	0										
					Decrease in the event turnout	N° of users at each event / N° of initiatives within each event	11810	378	2986,13	2,28		0,34							
					Increase in daily average initiatives in each event	N° of initiatives within each event / Duration in days of each event	1	46	14,07	2,90	15%	0,44	0,10	40%	-	-	-	-	

Methodological issues

To achieve the second aim of the paper, the PV measurement model presented in the previous section was implemented in a municipality. In particular, a single case study has been considered (Yin, 2014) and analysed through an action research experimental approach (Argyris et al., 1985; Susman and Evered, 1978) with a longitudinal perspective. The case was selected because the Municipality of Ferrara gave the researchers full access to data and provided support during the process of implementation of the model, which is a key criterion in the qualitative sampling of a pilot case study (Yin, 2014). In order to fully appreciate the benefits and limits of the model, before extending its application to the whole of the Municipality’s activity and to other PAs, the researchers have chosen to focus on a single, relevant policy, which is the implementation of the cultural and touristic services of the Municipality. Ferrara plays an important role in the Italian cultural context, thanks to its cultural, historical and artistic heritage. Moreover, over the last 30 years, Ferrara has invested consistently to develop varied cultural and touristic activities, with events ranging from street music festivals to exhibitions of world famous artists’ work; Ferrara also hosts what is considered to be probably the most ancient medieval Palio in the world (Accorsi and Rimondi, 2008). The Municipality sought to understand what is valuable for citizens and users (Concept), has organized events in collaboration with non-profit organizations, associations and volunteers (Creation and Co-Creation) and was willing to measure the PV that was created or consumed (Measurement).

The case study was carried out through the active participation of researchers and practitioners in the implementation of the PV measurement model. Practitioners involved were mainly managers and public servants of the “Cultural Events and Tourism” department of the Municipality of Ferrara, which is in charge of managing the city’s main cultural and touristic services. Interviews with external partners which took part in the delivery of cultural events were also carried out. The researchers not only developed the PV measurement model and explained practitioners its functioning and purpose, but also offered continuous support and took part in all the meetings related to its implementation and discussion of the results.

During the first round of meetings in 2014, the model was presented to practitioners to enable the selection of value drivers. The value drivers and weights for ponderation, which are the key elements of the model as they reflect the way PV is created in the public body’s view, were defined by practitioners for each dimension and sub-dimension. The researchers in this phase only provided advice but did not directly intervene in the choice of value drivers and weights to limit the risks of “reflexivity” and to make sure that they reflected the priorities of the Municipality. Since the department did not have a full-blown performance measurement system in place, the researchers then proposed indicators for each of the value drivers and sent back to practitioners the resulting spreadsheet to secure consistency between value drivers and proposed indicators. Changes to the indicators were discussed and agreed upon during an ad hoc meeting.

After this phase, an experimental measurement for 2013 was performed, and another round of meetings with practitioners in 2015 enabled researchers to re-calibrate the indicators in the Measurement Grid, and to untangle the ways in which such measures affected the work of managers. The researchers also met with the organizers of the events in order to collect data as needed, then PV was measured for 2013 and 2014. In a last meeting in May 2016 the results were discussed between researchers and practitioners and feedback on the usefulness of the model was collected.

Analysing the case of Ferrara

Figure 3 depicts the synthetic measures of PV created in 2013 and 2014. The results show that PV created in 2013 was 3,28, while in 2014 it was 3,01. In general terms, value generated by Ferrara’s cultural and touristic activities has slightly decreased. The public value measured with this model is represented by a synthetic index that should be broken down into its determinants. In the case we investigated, it is obtained with the same set of value drivers and indicators in both years analysed. As for the “Social Value” dimension, public value created is equal to 1,26 in 2013 and to 1,09 in 2014. This means that the benefits provided to users through the fruition of cultural and touristic events are higher than the sacrifices endured, although a decrease has been noted.

As far as the “Economic Value” (EV) is concerned, value is equal to 2,15 in 2013 and to 2,13 in 2014. This shows that the economic benefits for the Municipality overcame the related economic sacrifices with a similar performance in both years. Hence, events organized by the Municipality seems to be financially sustainable, this securing the possibility to offer the same events in the future. The third “Intangible Value” (IV) dimension is the only one where value is consumed, with a result of -0,13 in 2013 and of -0,22 in 2014. Thus, the Municipality does not seem to be currently effective in managing the “key constituents” of cultural and touristic activities, such as partnerships with private and not for profit concerns or the co-ordination of different kinds of human resources,

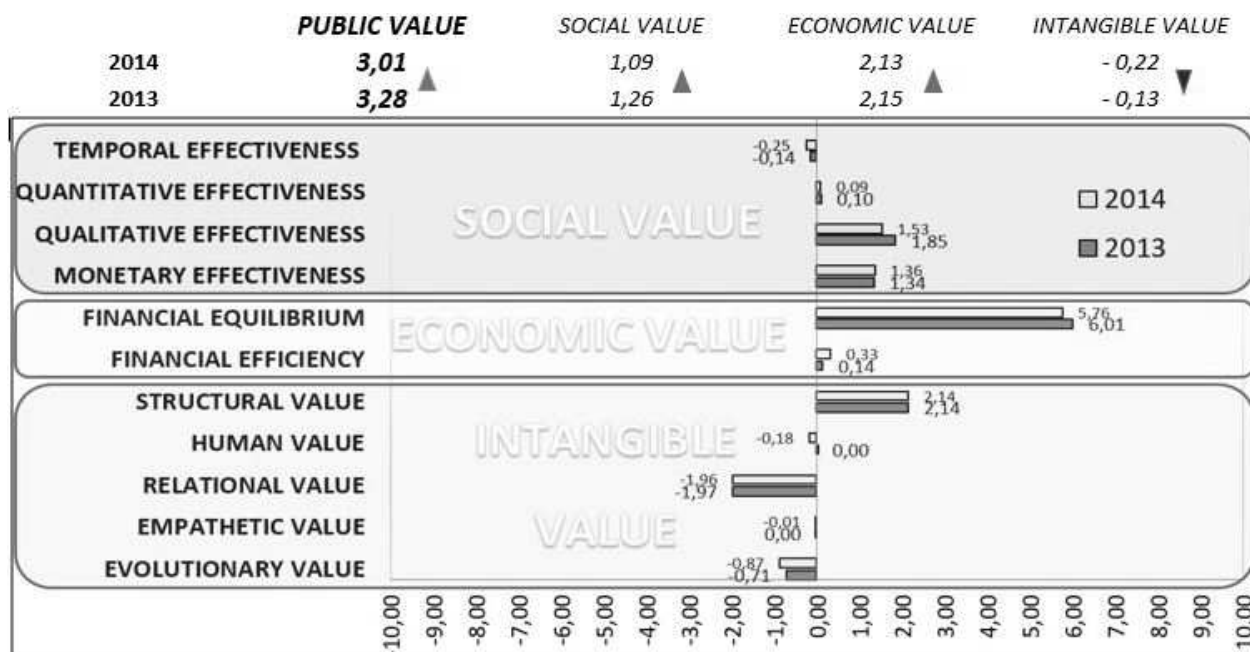
which would fuel increases in value created.

Looking at each sub-dimension, financial sustainability remains the main strength of the Municipality's events, and accordingly most of the value generated is constituted by EV. This is a good achievement, especially given the relevance of the financial aspect of the events to the Municipality, in a period of great financial stress caused by a generalized decrease in State transfers. Ability to provide sustainable events is paramount to the Municipality, and this is mirrored by the weight on total PV chosen, which is equal to 40%. Considering the sub-dimensions of EV (Figure 3), it is clear how it hinges on the ability to achieve Financial Equilibrium, that is the capacity to cover the cost of the events with own revenues. Even with a slight decrease in the period analysed (from 6,01 to 5,76), it is clear how great attention has been paid to avoid overspending to minimise contribution to the events. Variations in per capita expenses and revenues (Financial Efficiency) have not hugely contributed to the generation of EV.

Some reflections are needed as far as the SV dimension is concerned (whose weight on total PV is 35%). Ferrara's cultural and touristic activities are very appreciated by its users (Qualitative Effectiveness), who would have welcomed more initiatives within each event and even an increase in the events, more evenly distributed over the year, also to tackle issues like crowding, as it is mirrored by the substantial equilibrium between benefits and sacrifices in Quantitative and Temporal Effectiveness. The negative variation of SV created between 2013 and 2014 must be carefully observed and monitored during the next years, as focusing on financial sustainability might have hindered the possibility to invest more in new initiatives.

The IV dimension, which represents 25% of total PV, remains unsatisfactory and shows a difficulty in the intangible assets management. The main strength, captured by Structural Value, is represented by presence of the requirements for the ISO 20121 certification, which secure accessibility and environmental sustainability of the events. These good results are offset by the other sub-dimensions, most especially by Relational Value. It is clear how value has been consumed by the currently poor relations between organisers and other local actors. In particular, the relations between the organizers of the events (mainly the Municipality and not for profit organizations) and the wider commercial environment must be improved. Ways to build an enduring relationships with local hotels or shops to increase attendance and to generate benefits for local economy should be explored. Evolutionary Value is also a concern, as the possibility of a better integration of the events in a rapidly changing society is still hindered by the limited use of web tools not only to advertise the events but also to interact with users. Benefits nearly equal sacrifices as far as Human and Empathetic Value are concerned.

Figure 3. Public Value created in each dimension and sub-dimension



On discussing the results with practitioners, the usefulness of the model has been noted. Before the application of the model, the Municipality could only count on sparse data produced by different subjects (those involved in the organization of the events), something that prevented the "Cultural Events and Tourism" department from having a deep understanding of what had been achieved by each of the events. A more thorough collection of data was triggered by the implementation of new actions to meet the requirements for ISO 20121 certification, but a full-blown performance measurement system was still lacking. Very specific data enabled an understanding of some of the aspects which were critical for the success of the events, such as turnout, and for their financial sustainability, such as contribution from the Municipality. Collection of new data, and most especially their "systematization" through the PV model has allowed not only a deeper understanding of the performance of each event, but also an holistic view of the activity of the department and a more informed judgement on the overall performance. As stated by practitioners, the slight decrease in value created was not perceived by the department due to the absence of precise measures. Although the decrease has not been seen as particularly significant, it has raised the practitioners' awareness of the need to carefully monitor the events to avoid a deterioration of their performance due to lack of attention. Having a unique measure for the overall value created, and a break down of it into different inter-connected dimensions was appreciated to highlight areas which require attention. Practitioners also suggested to improve the indicators used for measuring the dimensions of PV. In particular, the need to grasp the determinants of Social Value would require a widespread use of more detailed customer satisfaction surveys, to capture users'

perceptions of what works and what does not in each of the events, enabling a more focused investment of existing financial resources. Results provided by the use of the PV model, in the practitioners' opinion, are particularly useful for decision making purposes and should be not only circulated within the department, but also discussed with other actors involved in the organization of the events to secure improved coordination. Given the very complex nature of the system and the need of technical knowledge to interpret the data, practitioners seem skeptical regarding a possible use of the model to communicate results to citizens. Using some of the key data within the Municipality's annual report has been seen as a possibility, but the need of a clear contextualization and explanation to allow non-experts to fully appreciate the results seem to curtail the opportunities for external divulgation, also for some concerns about a possible political exploitation of data. Much emphasis has been placed in the literature on PV creation and measurement as a way to promote democracy and active citizenship, triggering a dialogue between citizenship and PA (Bozeman, 2002). This, however, requires the giving of a "public value account" (Moore, 2014) to citizens, which needs to be understandable by the latter to allow them to evaluate what has been achieved and take action accordingly. Practitioners' comments suggest that the discharging accountability to promote participation seems threatened by the complex nature of PV and the inherent technicalities of the measurement process.

Discussion and conclusion

The paper aimed at contributing to the theory and practice of Public Value Management by focusing on the issue of how to measure PV. Through an analysis of the contributions from different fields of literature, it has proposed and applied the VP model, which can be used to measure in a comprehensive way the value created by a public organization. Its application to Ferrara's cultural and touristic services and events has provided the opportunity to broaden the compass of previous studies (Poddighe and Deidda Gagliardo, 2011; Bracci et al., 2014) which only focused on a single service. The application of the PV model has shown how Ferrara's cultural and touristic activities have created value in both 2013 and 2014. However, a slight decrease has been noted, with much attention being paid to securing financial sustainability, which remains the focal point for value creation from the Municipality's perspective. However, even though benefits for users have been higher than related sacrifices, a decrease in Social Value may have meant that a focus on financial resources, which secures inter-generational fairness, has curtailed fruitful investments in the events. On the other hand, Intangible Value seems to be still unsatisfactory, and more needs to be done to create synergies with other local actors. Practitioners recognized the usefulness of the model, as it measured a decrease in value that would have not been perceived and has triggered a more accurate measurement of both the overall performance and that of single events. Practitioners have also highlighted how it can be used for informed decision making and for better coordination among the organizers of the events, while they remain skeptical about the possibility to use the results for accountability purposes. The reasons are related to the difficulty to have a unique perspective about what public value is and for whom, and the possibility of political criticism in case of worsening results.

The model does not come without inherent limits. First, there is a risk of subjectivity when choosing value drivers, which in testing the model has been reduced through the active involvement of practitioners. However, since it relies on the use of indicators, as for performance systems, the possibility for a manipulation of the indicators to present a better situation still remains. The same issue affects the weighting of the three dimensions, which could be manipulated in order to give more prominence to the dimensions which present better results, rather than be used to mirror political priorities. A further risk relates to the definition of the extremes used to operate the normalized decimal scale. This could be overcome by the use of objective measures. In the case study, percentages has been used to the maximum possible extent (from 0% to 100% or from 100% to 0%) to minimise the risk of subjectivity in setting the extremes of the scale. However, the use of the model as a tool for decision making and performance improvement rather than for communicating results achieved to the citizenry, as suggested by practitioners, may reduce the incentive for manipulation.

Despite these risks, this model has many advantages. First of all it forces the organization to re-think its performance measurement and management system by stimulating reflections on what are the key constituents of value generation and on how they could be reliably measured. As a result, the need to collect new data may be highlighted. As demonstrated by the case study, it is not always easy to perceive the variation in PV generated from a year to the other, and having a reliable measure can help avoiding its deterioration over time. The VP model offers a holistic view of value generated by a service or even a policy by providing a single measure, but allowing at the same time a more detailed analysis of its elements and enabling management by exception, so that the organization's efforts can be focused on critical areas where PV has been consumed. It also helps highlighting the connections between different dimensions of value, so that politicians and managers can appreciate the impact of their decisions on every dimension and on the total value generated at the same time. A wide application of the model is also possible as it is not linked to any context-specific factor. Its conceptual structure always remains the same, only the value drivers, the indicators and the extremes of the normalized scale should be defined consistently with the case analyzed. However, thanks to the normalization process, the results captured by the means of different context-specific indicators are always traced back to a scale ranging from zero to ten, securing homogeneity to the measurement process. As a result, the model can be tailored to the specific social and organizational context in which a PA operates, in the form of customized value drivers, indicators and targets, but its functioning would remain the same. The VP model can also become a tool for re-thinking and improving the relations between different actors when many departments or organizations are involved in public service delivery. By bringing together the different actors involved, the VP model can also become a tool to stimulate the search for innovative ways of co-production, co-creation and co-measuring of value. Further research is needed to explore innovative ways to measure PV, as well as the ways in which it can be conceptualised and communicated (Moore, 2014). As far as the VP model is concerned, future research could further test and develop it, considering different contexts and methodologies. Comparisons between public bodies from different countries would be particularly fruitful as they could provide a deeper understanding of how the model is used and results interpreted in different cultural, legal and organizational contexts. Finally, further research is needed to increase our understanding of how to use public value measures to discharge accountability to external stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Municipality of Ferrara for their collaboration on the project and Public Money & Management's two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. Although the paper is the result of an equal joint effort by the authors, their primary individual contributions are reflected in the following of sections of the paper. Luca Papi: Understanding Public Value and Analysing the case of Ferrara; Michele Bigoni: Towards a Public Value measurement model and Methodological issues; Enrico Bracci: Discussion and conclusion; Enrico Deidda Gagliardo: Introduction.

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