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INTRODUCTION

Ventures in public value management: introduction to the symposium

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ABSTRACT

This essay reviews the development of public value management, tracing its rise from relative obscurity in the 1990s to the global attention it receives today. We also introduce the accompanying essays in this symposium which aim to spur further development in the years to come. We review the main tenets of public value management and highlight the key debates in the literature, discussing the mandate of public managers vis-a-vis politicians, the mobilization of 'the public', the framing of strategic challenges and the distinctiveness of value creation in the public domain. The five accompanying essays deal with these debates, but also break new ground by addressing fresh questions.

From lone voice to mainstream

Despite its innovative message, to say that Mark Moore 'burst on the scene' of public management thinking with his 1995 book *Creating Public Value* (*CPV*) would be an overstatement. The book was not much noted when it came out. Partly, it was crowded out by the voices of proponents of the much more straightforward 'run government like a business' ideology of new public management that was hitting its stride throughout the OECD world at about the same time. Moore was not one of them. Whilst sharing the notion that public sector managers could learn from the way strategy and strategic management were conceptualized and pursued in the corporate sector, he rejected the notion that mere mimicking business practices and creating markets for public services would do the trick. That did not go down so well then. Now, it does.

Moore's ideas have gained a prominent place in the scholarly and managerial debate on public services, soliciting passionate pleas from proponents and opponents alike. This collection of essays addresses some of the old yet remaining questions on public value management (PVM), but also attempts to shift the focus towards new issues. After reviewing the core propositions of PVM and the still ongoing debate about the mandate of the public manager and other issues, this essay introduces five new questions which deserve further attention: The connection between public value and innovation, the articulation of what is valuable in fundamentally controversial policy spaces, the extension of PVM towards a network of agencies and actors, the

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connection between the tools of PVM and the existing armoury of new public management tools used in public organizations, and the use of PVM in empirical research.

The core ideas of public value management

Perhaps the core idea of *CPV* was the 'strategic triangle', which encompassed three factors that needed to be understood and be aligned with each other (see Figure 1). The first of these factors concerned the substantive value the government organization should be producing. Moore argued that public managers should actively develop what it called 'public value propositions' for the agencies, units or programmes they are responsible for. A public value proposition is somewhat akin to a mission statement but is much more task-specific and focused. It is inspired by the notion of a 'business case' that business managers have to make to their senior management or to investors and shareholders, but it is articulated in terms not of business-like metrics such as financial 'bottom lines' or customer satisfaction, but in terms of *the public's* aspirations and concerns as well as the procedural norms and values associated good public sector governance. In *CPV*, Moore left the argument at that, with only hints of how one might possibly assess the net public value of a policy, initiative or organization. In his 2013 follow-up monograph, *Recognizing Public Value (RPV)*, he set out to do precisely that.

Secondly, *CPV* urged strategic public managers to 'manage up' and 'manage out' by actively garnering authorization for their value propositions. Importantly, particularly for readers from parliamentary systems, was that by authorization he did not mean getting the nod from the minister. While indisputably a key part of what Moore coined the 'authorizing environment' of the public manager, elected officials are not

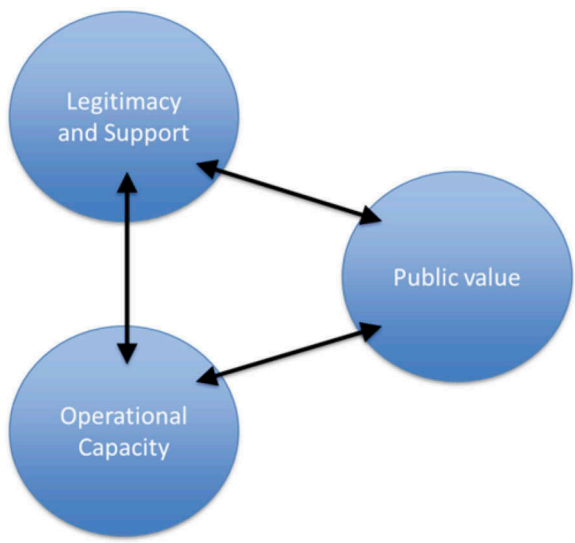

Figure 1. The strategic triangle of public value management.
Source: Moore (2013, 105).

the sole arbiter of the ends public agencies should pursue. In fact, he alleges that they often do rather a bad job of it. As Donahue and Moore (2012, 2) put it:

> Elected officials trespass into administrative terrain – requiring or forbidding this or that procedural tactic – and, even more chronically, neglect to complete their assigned work of deciding. Instead of resolving empirical disagreements and normative disputes to forge workable mandates, they paper over their differences by issuing superficially attractive but incoherent and incomplete policy directives, which compel administrators, willingly or not, to take up the decision-making work left undone.

So much for politicians delivering their end of the 'public service bargain' (Hood and Lodge 2006)! At least it is clear where Moore's sympathies lie. Whether this assertion also constitutes an empirically robust and fair-minded diagnosis of the many problems that beset the complex and fragile nexus between politicians and public managers in civil service systems and public policymaking processes, is another matter (Peters 2001; Savoie 2003; Peters and Pierre 2003; Raadschelders, Toonen, and Van Der Meer 2007; Lewis, Alexander, and Considine 2009; Van Der Meer 2015). But regardless whether elected politicians do their job properly or not, Moore makes the pivotal point that public managers who want to fulfil their organization's mission and create public value need to engage with many other actors whose support can provide them with a licence (as well as resources) to operate on their public value proposition. They need to stretch their influence well beyond their formal authority (Leonard and Moore in Donahue and Moore 2012: 86). This they should do by 'calling into existence' a wider authorizing environment (as argued by Moore and Fung 2012, 186) which can include lawmakers, interest groups, regulators, clients and, by one means or another, the general public. In Moore's thinking, actively building legitimizing constituencies is a necessary part of strategic public management. This is discussed in more depth below.

The third corner of the 'strategic triangle' concerns itself with the practicalities of actually producing the service or the action required. It is no good articulating a public value proposition and getting support for its execution if the public manager cannot muster the organizational capacity required to deliver on it. So, public managers are also expected to 'manage down' within their own organizations to align resources, people and processes to the task at hand, as well as to 'manage out': to consider and align the broader 'value chain' of which their organizations tend to form only a part. Many public service and policy interventions rely on distributed operational capacity, in other words coordination and collaboration between a range of organizations and groups both within and beyond government. In keeping with its (understated but obvious) grounding in Selznick 2011; classic work of the institutionalization of public organizations, CPV still focused much of the operational capacity-building effort on focal organizations. Soon after, Moore recognized much more explicitly that this was too narrow a conception of operational capacity, and following the global trend recognized that inter-organizational, co-produced, collaboratively created forms of operational capacity – and innovation of that capacity – are pivotal in today's networked world (Moore 2013; Moore and Hartley 2008; Mulgan 2009; Page et al. 2015).

Putting these elements together, the public manager in this approach is urged to maximize the value to be created, subject to the constraints of the other two aspects of the framework: the authorizing environment and the operational capabilities. To take a

rather over-simplified example, the head of a corrections (prisons) department may be well aware (consistently with the overwhelming weight of the research) that pursuing rehabilitative and/or restorative justice approaches is more effective and less costly in the long run than adopting a more punitive approach aimed at retribution or deterrence. At the same time, the government to whom the head is accountable might seek to pursue the more punitive approach, egged on by public opinion whipped up by the media into what has been termed 'penal populism' (Roberts et al. 2002). In this situation, the public manager finds the most valuable course of action (rehabilitation, etc.) is also the least politically acceptable one. The challenge will be to judge how far the more valuable strategy can be pushed in the face of the political alignments currently in place. This requires astute political judgement and sensitivity on the part of the manager.

Years of relative obscurity gave way to growing recognition that Moore's conception of strategic management might be an idea whose time has come, even in jurisdictions beyond the US separation of powers context in which it was initially developed. Certainly, Moore's charismatic and global executive teaching practise has exposed thousands of middle-ranking and top officials from around the world to his ideas, and made quite a few converts. A Dewey-inspired pragmatist to the bone, Moore's actor-focused methodology in both his teaching and his writing – he excels in using Harvard cases of the 'given challenge, conflict or dilemma X, what should public manager Y do now?' variety – puts his audience into the manager's chair rather than taking the analytical-deductive vantage point that conventional public management scholars prefer. As a result, the 'strategic triangle' has become a staple in public service education and training institutes such as the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), Warwick University and the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG).

Academics, on the other hand, have mostly long eschewed the public value approach. Some considered it anathema to the principle of the primacy of politics (over bureaucracy), the Westminster system and comparable doctrines of responsible government common in parliamentary democracies (Rhodes and Wanna 2007, 2008). But over the years scholars, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, have picked it up (e.g. Stoker 2006; Alford 2008, 2009, 2014; Alford and O'Flynn 2009; Weinberg and Lewis 2009; Benington and Moore 2011; Alford and Yates 2014). With some exceptions, it has attracted more interest from scholars with a public *management* background (or from management scholars with a public sector bent) than from public *administration* or public *policy* scholars. There has been quite a lot of theoretical work. Scholars have, for example, started to reconfigure the strategic triangle and other tenets of the public value approach into analytical tools for systematically describing, interpreting and evaluating managerial behaviour and public governance processes (Moulton 2009; Williams and Shearer 2011). Some even pronounced it 'the next big thing' in the field (Talbot 2009), while *Public Administration Review* devoted a symposium to it (Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg 2014; see also Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg 2015). Use of the framework has been spreading even further in the field (Meynhardt 2009; Spano 2009; Cels, De Jong, and Nauta 2012; Vandenabeele, Leisink, and Knies 2013). At the same time the public value framework has inspired only a limited amount of empirical research, so its current status is mainly heuristic.

Public value and public values

A foundational issue in this field is whether we should use the concept of 'public value' or that of 'public values'. Moore and the expanding circle of PVM scholars

consistently use public value in the singular. Value in this framework is something like 'worth' or 'utility,' and refers to qualities accorded to actions, objects or situations external to those who value them substantively. The utility notion of value suggests that what is being 'created' (as in CPV) and should be 'recognized' (in RPV, now in the sense of being 'measured') is an aggregate, a net resultant of what in reality are a wide range of concepts of utility or worth, which moreover can pertain both to the content of the service being delivered and the manner in which it is being produced.

The notion of 'public values' (plural) is generally associated with the work of Barry Bozeman who defines it as follows:

> Public values are those providing normative consensus about (1) the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (2) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; (3) and the principles on which governments and policies should be based. (Bozeman 2007, 13)

In this line of inquiry, public values pertain not to substantive issues, but to good governance criteria like integrity, openness, participation, lawfulness and professionalism (Beck Jorgensen and Sorensen 2013; De Graaf, Huberts, and Smulders 2014).

The utility notion of value suggests that what is being 'created' (as in *CPV*) and should be 'recognized' (in *RPV*, now in the sense of being 'measured') is an aggregate, a net resultant of what in reality are a wide range of concepts of utility or worth, which moreover can pertain both to the content of the service being delivered and the manner in which it is being produced. The distinctiveness, plurality and heterogeneity of *public* values (as opposed to, e.g. values prevailing in the market sector) are held by many other theorists to be at the very core of public sector work. They build their own frameworks for public management explicitly around the tensions between different (types of) public values (Meynhardt 2009). Some scholars see PVM not as an aggregate but as tackling discrete problems that emerge from the task environment, each with standards relevant to its own context and conjuring up different mixes of values and standards (Alford and Hughes 2008).

Moore himself eschews discussing competing value approaches explicitly in *RPV*, instead introducing the construct of the public value account as a pragmatic yet systematic way of dealing with the inevitable multi-dimensionality of the public value concept. Bozeman (2012) sees Moore's notion as a 'managerial' approach to public value, which is agnostic about the actual value content and focused on pragmatically constructing and assessing value propositions underpinning the claims and actions of public agencies; and depicts his own as 'normative', in that the public values (plural) notion is first and foremost about the content of values held by citizens and political actors, contained in constitutions, laws and in other public institutions. The Moore and Bozeman frameworks overlap at certain points, and diverge at others (for a useful comparison, see Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg 2014). They are designed to serve different purposes, and neither has been well served by a tendency of some scholars to conflate them (e.g. West and Davis 2011).

Debating public value management

Notwithstanding the growing recognition and momentum, the PVM approach continues to evoke questions and debates (Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg 2014; Bryson,

Crosby, and Bloomberg 2015). Here we set out the critiques and responses from public value scholars.

Public value managers encroaching on the domain of elected politicians?

Probably the longest-running aspect of the debate concerns the extent to which the public value framework does and should entail public managers trespassing on the legitimate territory of the elected politician.

This is a vital issue, since it affects some of the primary tasks of the manager – namely, finding out what is of value to the public, crystallizing that into a coherent mandate, and securing legitimacy for it. The traditional orthodoxy is that this has mainly occurred through the formal structures and processes of government (in which citizens elect governments, which lay down policies and budgets for the public service who administer them).

What has prompted debate has been the public value model's questioning of the traditional approach. Moore (1995) calls for public managers to become like entrepreneurs, employing a 'value-seeking imagination' to fashion ways of creating public value, a role for which they are well-positioned at the intersection of policy, politics and operations. In response, critics accuse the public value school of usurping the prerogatives of democratically elected politicians, setting themselves up as the Platonic guardians of the public interest (Rhodes and Wanna 2007; Stoker 2006). This, of course, is seen as undemocratic and therefore illegitimate. It defies the longstanding and widely recognized principle of the 'politics/administration dichotomy' – that politicians should not interfere with public administration and appointed public servants should not encroach on politics (Wilson 1887; Svara 2006), with the latter being subordinate to the former.

As a practical matter, although many public servants subscribe to the notion of the dichotomy in normative terms, it is apparent that many, perhaps most of them do in fact engage with 'small-p' politics, if not the 'big-P' variant (Aberbach and Putnam 1981; Kingdon and Thurber 1984; Peters 2010). One potential reason for this disjuncture is offered by Peters (2010), who has described the dichotomy as a 'convenient fiction' enabling public servants to exercise power without being held fully accountable for it. But available research shows that for many managers, when they do breach the dichotomy, at least part of the reason is a commitment – or at least a felt obligation – to serving the public. They indicate that they *have to* engage in processes such as dealing with stakeholders, brokering compromises, and building alliances, simply in order to realize their mandated responsibilities (Hartley et al. 2015). In other words, many of them take the view that while there is legitimacy attached to respecting the dichotomy, they are also expected to achieve politically directed mandates. The issue then becomes one for managers of weighing up the two values: how far should they push into the political domain while maintaining a net benefit for the public?

Public servants can be more or less active in seeking to learn what the public wants from government and its processes. They can do so at different times in the policy process and the electoral cycle, in different forums (within or outside the executive branch) and in different manners (speaking, listening, soliciting). At the more 'classic' (Wilsonian–Weberian) end of the spectrum, the sole locus of initiative is the elected politician, who sets the political agenda, listens to stakeholders and decides on policy

questions. In this context, the public manager is the loyal servant of the elected government, who responds to political requests for expert advice, waits for policies to be formulated and handed over by politicians in one form or another, and works to implement them. At the more proactive (Moore-inspired PVM) end, public managers may also put issues onto the agenda, work actively with ministers and legislators to get them to adopt particular positions, and make strategic calls when political imperatives remain ambiguous or absent and yet action on an issue has to be taken. Where along this spectrum managers sit (empirically) – and ought to sit (normatively) – are not simple questions to answer. The answers to both depend on institutional and contextual factors and cultural practices which vary across time and space: constitutional norms of political and administrative systems, the beliefs and traditions shaping public service cultures at the level of agencies and policy sectors, the nature of the issues governments have to deal with, patterns of relationships between political and public service elites (Patapan, Wanna, and Weller 2005; Rhodes, Weller, and Wanna 2009; Bevir and Rhodes 2010; Wilson 2016).

The work of organizing political deliberation could be seen as largely the domain of politicians and their political advisers. But another possibility is that the public manager is a proactive party, in a very particular sense: that s/he sponsors the deliberative *process* rather than the political *content*, seeing to matters like who should be involved, how should issues be framed, what should be the venue and context. In other words, exercising public leadership by using the power to convene. These questions can obviously affect the political content, and it would be important to ensure that the 'process manager' is acting in good faith to ensure genuine airing of views and engagement between positions.

This is close to Heifetz's (1994) notion of mobilizing adaptive work, in which the manager challenges those who are normally 'the led' to grapple with the nature of the complex problems they collectively face. Of course, such developments reach way beyond how we normally think of people behaving and interacting in society. This means that a big part of the answer to these issues entails changing people's consciousness. Dewey's reflections on the nature of 'the public' (1927) include the observation that 'only by recognizing the consequences of private interactions on those not directly involved in them could a public begin to understand and act on its own interests' (Moore 2013, 271.) Dewey argues that perhaps the best way to encourage people to move to a perspective where they acknowledge their rights and obligations to one another is 'the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion' (Moore 2013, 271). Moore (2013) and others draw the evocative notion of 'summoning a public into existence' from Dewey's work.

Idealized public managers and overly simple strategic challenges?

Two related criticisms repeated quite often in the literature are that the managers featuring so prominently in Moore's and other PVM scholars' accounts are idealistic and idealized, and the circumstances they face are not all that difficult to comprehend and act on.

On the 'who' side, the argument is that the chief protagonist at the heart of the story is usually a task-focused, public-service minded, politically astute public servant, driven to succeed not for their own sake but for the public good. They tend to possess

skills sets that are impressive in their depth and width: they are excellent analysts, effective communicators, smart coalition-builders, creative innovators and courageous reformers.

There are such people, plenty of them, at all levels in the public service (Riccucci 1995, 2005). But in the messy world of governance, there are also many more players that are not quite of the same ilk or blessed with the same level of competence. There is room for debate about whether public value analysis takes proper account of managers who are self-interested, ill-motivated, cynical, partisan, bureau-shaping, risk-avoiding, accountability-shunting, power-seeking, heretic (Riker 1986) or plainly not all that supremely competent officials. Or simply that there are officials who may not share the sense of urgency about the issue that the main character takes for granted, and thus are less likely to engage with the problem to be solved than she is. In other words: there is a risk that the more mundane, even base, human, political and bureaucratic drivers of the behaviour of public managers and their counterparts are left out of the strategic triangle's equation – yet decades of research on 'people who run government' have produced a mountain of evidence highlighting their pivotal importance (Dunleavy 2014; Peters 2010; Rhodes 2011; Barber 2015). Note that if there is such a problem with public managers, it exists not only for proponents of the Weberian–Wilsonian perspective on the interface between politics and the public service, but even more so for PVM theorists who urge public managers to play a greater role in defining purposes and mobilizing support than many in the field are comfortable with.

One observation that can be made here is that this may be of no concern, as the triangle is a *prescriptive* tool and not an empirical theory. But even then, how *realistic* does that make public value governance as a guide to action, let alone to understanding the observable patterns and pathologies of public administration? At the very least, the value-creating strategic manager needs to appreciate the variability of imagination, capability, commitment and high-mindedness among stakeholders, as she seeks to align parties in their authorizing and task environments, without which she may well stumble. A key future challenge for public value scholars (as well as proponents of Denhardt and Denhardt (2007) 'New Public Service') may well be how to reconcile their upbeat normativity about the high-mindedness of public servants and other actors in the 'public sphere' (Benington 2011) with the more nuanced empirical realities. Another observation is that there is considerable evidence in Moore's works that the theory does take account of such people. This is most evident in the notion of the authorizing environment, the analysis of which can call for hard-headed realism about players, their interests and power. Certainly a rigorous and subtle application of this kind of analysis should inform strategic calculations.

On the 'what' side, there is debate about whether the public management stories underpinning the theory are simply too easy, and the managers in question seen as 'fair-weather successes'. It is argued that the problems dealt with in the case studies in Moore's books are not really all that intractable. In particular they are said to mainly concern issues about which there is a reasonable consensus as to what is valuable, as well as a relatively non-contentious political environments well as a relatively benign political environment, not instances of wicked problems, intractable policy controversies (Schon and Rein 1994) or adaptive challenges (Heifetz 1994). Everyone seems to agree that garbage should be cleared away efficiently and in an ecologically sustainable fashion; that air pollution should be tackled by a joint effort between

government, the community and business; and that the police should seek less aggressive but still effective ways of dealing with crime. On this basis, they argue, more daunting tests of the PVM framework are needed.

An alternative framing might delve into more complex realities under the surface of these cases. For instance, while the joint tackling of air pollution is rhetorically acceptable, the harder issues of cutting back carbon consumption are more controversial. While most would disapprove of police brutality towards minorities, difficult cultural factors impede efforts to curb it – as recent events in the USA and in Europe have shown. More tellingly, other cases from Moore's work explicitly point to the complexity: efficient garbage collection is simple enough, but getting citizens to reduce their consumption of wasteful products is more challenging. And running a programme to bring profoundly disadvantaged people into work and social interaction is among the most complex activities in society.

Two telling examples (among others) where this complexity is explicitly addressed are: (1) the chapter in *RPV* on child protection – one of the most difficult areas of government activity (Moore 2013) – and (2) the book on strategic management in the US Coast Guard, in which the central manager faced complex, contending values, a fractious political environment and the fragmentation of the various sources of capability as she forged a security strategy for the organization in a post-9/11 world (Donahue and Moore 2012).

This is therefore a contentious but potentially useful point that should be the subject of experimentation and investigation. There needs to be an analysis of situations where the protagonists are antipathetic or even antagonistic to the cause or service in question, and whether the model remains useful for them even in that context. There also needs to be an analysis of the usefulness of the model in 'wicked problems' settings (see Geuijen et al. 2016, this issue).

How distinctive is value creation in public management?

One of the perennial arguments in public management and administration more generally is the extent to which managing in the public and private sector is different, and therefore how feasible it is to introduce private sector techniques into government organizations. In this vein, some of the critiques of the public value framework question its public sector bona fides. Rhodes and Wanna (2007, 410), for instance, accuse Moore of urging public officials to 'copy the private sector and behave like corporate executives', commenting that his argument presupposes 'that there are few significant differences between the public and private sectors'. Dahl and Soss (2014) go even further, seeing the public value framework as effectively a neoliberal subterfuge, designed to harness the democratic state to the purposes of the corporate sector.

It is important to make categorical distinctions within these phenomena. Even though public management is analogous in *form*, it is distinctively different in *content* from private sector management. The juxtaposition of the well-known Harvard business policy model of strategy with the public value framework is an example. The Harvard business model posits that the definition of the business (i.e. what products it offers to what markets) should reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the organization as well as the opportunities and threats in the (market) environment. In the public sector, the analogue to products and markets is primarily public value.

Instead of a market environment, the public manager deals with a political one. And instead of only using their organizations' own staff and resources to deliver, the public manager needs to involve various external individuals or organizations in contributing to production. Notice that the broad categories are similar, but their content differs by sector. Moore (2000) got into this issue when he asserted that the value produced by nonprofit organizations lies in the achievement of social purposes rather than in generating revenues; and nonprofit organizations receive revenues from sources other than customer purchases.

Thus the essential question here is whether analogy entails identity – that is, whether the presence of similar categories in both means that they also amount to the same thing in substance, even if the content of those categories is radically different. It could be argued that both the strength and the weakness of the public value framework reside in the fact that it is analogous in form to the private sector. The challenge is distinguishing the form from the content.

A preview of the essays

As mentioned before this essay introduces five new questions which deserve further attention: The connection between the tools of PVM and the existing armoury of New Public Management tools used in public organizations, the articulation of what is valuable in (very) wicked problems and fundamentally controversial policy spaces, the connection between public value and innovation, the extension of PVM towards a network of agencies and actors, and the use of PVM in empirical research.

Tooling up public value management

The first essay in this collection will push for new questions by examining the *tools of public value* (Jorrit de Jong, Scott Douglas, Maria Francesca Sicilia, Zoe Radnor, Mirko Noordegraaf, Peter Debus). This essay examines the substance of the tools within the PVM framework (the strategic triangle, the public value account, etc.) and their connection with other frameworks developed within business management or new public management (performance indicators, lean management, etc.). The authors argue that the essence of the tools of PVM rests in their principles of application. The tools should be used in such a way that they encourage and sustain the process of 'restless value-seeking' rather than limit the ambition of actors through the false comfort of rules and targets. In contrast to other management styles tools, PVM does not promise managers to eradicate uncertainty. Instead, the tools invite managers to engage with ambiguity by structuring their ongoing learning process on what is desirable, what is justifiable and what is possible. Public value does not exclude the use of other management tools such as a planning and control cycle, market research, operational optimization, as long as these tools are also applied to further bolster and direct the spirit of restless value-seeking.

Strategies for creating public value in managing global wicked problems

The second essay in this special issue seeks to determine whether public value theory (PVT) provides a useful guide for analysis and action in wicked problems, especially those that cross borders, like the issue of forced migration. These issues are

characterized by significant conflict over the values at stake. But they also lack any institution, structure or process that provides a natural social or political location in which the problem can be nominated for attention, sized up in a process of deliberation and design and used as the platform for directing co-ordinated action across many different independent organizations: they have a problem of institutional fit. The authors (Karin Geuijen, Mark Moore, Andrea Cederquist, Rolf Ronning and Mark van Twist) find that applying PVT to global issues helps focus direct policy design on the well-being of refugees, but also on their rights and duties, as well as on the costs and outcomes for society, including justice. Public leaders seeking to act effectively on such issues have to imagine, and find ways to create, forums that can engage all affected interests (including those of refugees), and forge them into a public that can produce a more or less articulate and precise description of the public value that they would like to create through their combined efforts. An enormous obstacle seems to be the absence of structures of international governance. Calling a pubic into existence that can legitimize public action to deal with problems without having a government to help define and convene the relevant public is challenging. Much is left to agreements that can be made among governments, commercial enterprises and voluntary organizations to take and share the responsibility for effective social action. Learning how to engage national governments with international NGO's and global business activities may be a necessary part of building a capacity for governance that can use PVT to deal effectively with global wicked problems like forced migration.

From public value management to public value innovation

The third essay – by Barbary Crosby, Paul 't Hart and Jacob Torfing – explores how public managers in particular can use insights about public sector innovation and public value governance to make more than incremental progress in remedying their societies' most pressing needs. After outlining the distinctive features of public innovation, it first considers some traditional barriers to achieving it. It then considers the usefulness of the public value governance framework for public managers seeking to design and adopt innovative solutions to complex problems, and examines the type of leadership that is more likely to foster collaborative innovation and create public value. It finishes by offering a number of levers suggest a number of possible levers for achieving public innovation by adopting design logics and practices associated with experimentalist governance.

Towards a multi-actor perspective on value production

The fourth essay – by John Bryson, Alessandro Sancino, John Benington and Eva Sorensen – argues that one criticism of Moore's case-based approach is that it creates an individualist perspective on the strategy process in public organizations. The public manager in the story, often cast as the hero, is that particular actor who is to do the strategizing by working up the triangle, seeking alignment between the three clusters of values, interests, capacities and constraints involved. And it is that individual who has to do the requisite managing up, managing out and managing down to anchor and implement the emergent strategy. In this account *CPV*, and more generally some older Kennedy School cases, seem to have had a somewhat

myopic view of how organizations and their strategies operate and evolve, with only some attention for the formal structures, institutional routines and power games deemed pivotal by other strategy researchers (Mintzberg 2003). At any given point in time both within and across organizations different 'public managers' may be pursuing their own public value propositions with regard to the same issue. *CPV* only began to scratch the surface of the complexity that may arise when in multi-actor, shared-power environments 'everyone' is 'managing strategically' in complex and uncoordinated fashion. While this problem has been attenuated somewhat by more recent cases, it is an area in which it could and should engage more systematically with the fast-growing bodies of knowledge on network governance and collaborative public management (Klijn and Koppenjan 2004; Crosby and Bryson 2005; Kupucu, Augustin, and Garayev 2009; O'Leary and Vij 2012). An implication of this is that the problem is not with the theoretical framework – indeed, it is well set up to help comprehension of various forms of collaborative network – but rather with the choice of cases and research sites (see essay # 5).

Essay # 4, therefore, focuses on the integration of PVM with a multi-actor, shared-power framework. It spans at least several levels, from individual to local and national organizations, when considering policy analysis and evaluation, processes of democracy and strategic management. It also acknowledges an extra element to the model, in which leadership and other practices are in the middle of the strategic triangle.

Research on public value: pragmatic and/or analytical?

The final essay considers the state of empirical research on PVM. Authored by Jean Hartley, John Alford, Eva Knies and Scott Douglas, it asks what and who the public value framework is really *for*, and how it can improve its impact. In Moore's pragmatic universe it first and foremost should help public officials to tackle the challenges they face more effectively and in doing so to 'create' public value, become 'agents of change' (Cels, De Jong, and Nauta 2012), or, in the spirit of Dewey (1927), help the public in tackling its problems. There can be little doubt the heuristic and inspirational value of Moore's model for practitioners the world over. But what about the added value of the strategic triangle, the public value chain and other Moore-inspired concepts for the *study* of public management?

The essay accordingly will go into the questions: Why is there so little empirical research on public value so far? What are the gaps? How can they be realistically addressed given the current distribution of research capabilities across jurisdictional and disciplinary domains. The authors suggest that the most fruitful starting points would be to start with explicitly examining and probing the different understandings of public value adopt comparative designs and new data-gathering methodologies to gain more rigorous empirical insight into PVM practices.

Another possible avenue is suggested by this special issue of PMR as a whole. Each of the essays contains topics worth pursuing, and makes compelling cases for doing so. They may constitute the proximate starting points mentioned earlier. In the end, researchers will of course follow their own trails, dictated by a combination of intellectual interests, institutional opportunities and constraints and path dependency *inter alia*.

In sum, public value theory gets to the heart of key issues in public policy and public management. It has become part of the intellectual and practitioner landscape of public management. In its early days, it was enthusiastically embraced by public

managers, but at the same time elicited spirited critique from academics. There is now a better understanding on both sides, but there is also continuing debate, carried forward by a burgeoning academic literature. This special issue canvasses the state of the art and carves out new territory. We hope it sparks some insights that do lead in new and valuable directions.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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