

PUBLIC VALUE: A NEW MEANS TO PEEL AN APPLE?



Jean Hartley

The Open University
United Kingdom

Ian Hesketh

Lancaster University Management School and Lancashire Constabulary
United Kingdom

Abstract: This conceptual paper examines the public value framework developed by Moore (1995) and Benington and Moore (2011) and uses the framework analytically as a way to address demand in policing and to prioritise and justify actions. It is therefore a potential tool for evidence-based policing. This paper examines the policing context in which the public value framework may be useful, and then examines existing theory and evidence about its use in policing. In the United Kingdom 'traditional' crime is reported to be falling but the demand on policing services is increasing and changing in nature. A decrease in overall measured crime is incongruent with increases in serious and organised crime, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and cyber offences. It is estimated that there may be as many as 3 million unrecorded fraud and cyber incidents (Thornton, 2015). There is undoubtedly a greater demand on specialist skills, time and resources from police forces. Much of the emerging threat is complex and virtual in nature, involving multiple partners and where there are no easy, agreed or known solutions. Counterterrorism, mental health, violence, child sexual exploitation and missing persons are all issues where public expectations of the police are high. Yet the strategic management tools from the 1990s onwards focus on organisational goal setting, targets and key performance indicators, ignoring wider outcomes and often creating performance rigidity, reinforcing silo mentality and reinforcing the gaming of performance data. In May 2015 the newly elected UK government announced a review of all forces that were still setting arbitrary targets, despite numerous warnings to desist. This paper explores and reports whether and how, in a time of limited resources yet expanding expectations, the public value framework can be used as an underpinning philosophy while also providing a prompt for practical actions for policing activity.

Keywords: policing; public value; legitimacy; performance; PEEL.

INTRODUCTION

The public value theory and framework, originally developed by Moore (1995) and then expanded on by others (Alford and Hughes, 2008; Benington and Moore, 2011) provides a framework to think about how police organisations add value to society, and it also provides a toolkit to help police officers and staff strategically manage demand. In this conceptual paper the framework is briefly outlined and its relevance to policing explained. The paper explores the implications, including the clarification of how the modern police service secures and maintains the confidence of the public, for decision-making and allocation of shrinking resources, and how it frames and measures service and societal outcomes. The

evidence suggests that a public value approach can be helpful in both philosophy and practice in the modern policing environment.

First, this paper sets public value in the context of rising demand and expectations along with austerity pressures. The Assistant Chief Constable of Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary, Sarah Hamlin, captured the essence of a requirement to rethink demand in policing in her observations:

'Policing has reached a watershed in its modernisation programme, attempting to change its value discipline from operationally excellent to customer intimate. Operational performance needs maintaining and yet there is an expectation on us to not only



engage with our customers but understand their needs, motivations and what they value most from the services they receive. Our drive to improve confidence and satisfaction may have led to us creating an “emotional bond” between the public and police and consequently this may explain why the public contact the police first rather than a more appropriate organisation (Hamlin, 2015, p. 1).

Organisational understanding of customer (or citizen) need and customer-perceived value are both critical success factors. Customer needs, values and expectations are very likely to change as they encounter different departments and organisations along their ‘customer journey’. However as a service policing has not refocused or educated the public about how to engage with appropriate organisations for their needs, and instead we have continued to promote accessibility for everything and this has led to a greater need for partner engagement and/or referral. This essentially adds another step in the process, duplicates effort, and adds cost.

PUBLIC VALUE

This paper provides an overview of public value and proposes that the public value framework (Benington and Moore, 2011) provides a useful strategic management tool for policing, with the potential to help police professionals:

- prioritise resources in a time of rising demand and expectations;
- address complex problems, often in collaboration with partners and other stakeholders;
- enhance innovation in order to find better ways of keeping the public safe;
- ensure that the focus remains on processes and outcomes for victims, communities and society;
- adapt to on-going changes in society.

This framework has already been used in a practical way by a number of public sector services, including policing, the BBC, local authorities and health.

CONTEXT

The Police Service in the United Kingdom is undergoing the most significant change in its recent history. This is as a direct result of the demands imposed by the *Comprehensive spending review* (Treasury, 2010), which initially commanded a 20 % reduction in police funding by 2015, opening up the debate around what the police can actually deliver (Millie and Bullock, 2013). In most police forces this has resulted in significant reductions in staff numbers and has been the source of redeployment issues, as well as triggering significant changes in working practices. Nationally, police forces have planned to make GBP 2.5 billion in savings between 2011/2012 and 2014/2015, with a 36 672 workforce reduction having been made between 2010 and 2014 (Morse, 2015). The government review will result in a reduction of the workforce by 43 % by 2021 (Stansfield, 2014). Crime is reportedly falling (Farrar, 2013), but what is clear is that the demand on police services is increasing exponentially. There is a much greater demand for specialist skills, time and resources from police forces (Liver, 2015). Many of the issues that the police increasingly have to address are what Grint (2010) describes as ‘wicked problems’, in that they are complex, involve multiple partners and are problems where there are no easy, agreed or known solutions. Counterterrorism, mental health, violence, child sexual exploitation and missing persons are all issues where public expectations of the police are high. Yet the strategic management tools from the 1990s onwards focus on organisational goal setting, targets and KPI’s, which create a number of rigidities, reinforce silo mentalities and create ‘gaming’. These performance measures undermine the overall intention in performance regimes (Hood, 2006), increasing competition within and between organisations; and reducing innovation (Hartley, Sorensen and Torfing, 2013). Nor will ‘command and control’ approaches create the agility and responsiveness to new challenges in society that will be necessary in this rapidly changing environment.

The independent, from both government and the police, inspecting body for UK police forces is Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). It has adopted an approach, labelled PEEL (Winsor, 2015). This is ‘police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy’, and is a play on the name of Robert Peel, the reported founder of policing in the United Kingdom. ‘Peel’s principles’



are often referred to as the foundation of modern police methodology (Lentz and Chaires, 2007), and from which the title of this paper is drawn. The HMIC inspection criteria set out to examine how police forces provide value for money, how they measure and address performance and how they operate legitimately in society, by consent.

PUBLIC VALUE FRAMEWORK

So, in a time of limited resources but expanding expectations, what can the public value framework add? Mark Moore of Harvard University developed the original approach to public value (1995), and this was then developed further with John Benington of Warwick University (2011). They created a framework, which focused on the added value created by public services. They recognised that measures of added value needed to go beyond the counting of activities, or even the counting of outputs (e.g. stop and search, number of arrests or convictions) to include ways in which public organisations contributed to the wider aims of society, for example creating a fair, just or peaceful society or enabling citizens to live confident, safe and fulfilling lives.

This approach has been applied in both the United States and the United Kingdom, and it takes account of 'networked governance' — that multiple stakeholders are involved in creating and evaluating decisions that affect society and have a view about what is valuable and/or desirable (Benington, 2000).

There are two components of public value.

1. What the public value.

What the public indicate they value or see as important priorities, which is sometimes different from what they want. This involves professionals taking into account the values, needs and aspirations of citizens (individually and collectively) as the professionals design, provide and evaluate services.

2. What adds value to the public sphere.

Value cannot be determined solely from the first component, otherwise it could be based on populist or majoritarian views, whereas a fair society also needs to consider both the longer term (e.g. protecting future generations) and

also minority views. The public sphere is the web of places, organisations, cultures, rules and knowledge held in common by people and held in trust by government and public organisations (Benington and Moore, 2011).

Value may include:

- political value (stimulating and supporting democratic participation and dialogue);
- economic value (generation of economic activity and employment);
- social value (strengthening social capital, social cohesion, social relationships and culture);
- ecological value (contributing to environmental sustainability).

THE PUBLIC VALUE STRATEGIC TRIANGLE

Public servants can create public value by paying attention to three elements, which need to be in alignment to create public value. These elements are dynamic.

1. What is the public value proposition?

What is the value that we are aiming to create/enhance? Can we state this clearly and persuasively? Is it focused on processes and outcomes?

2. What is the legitimacy and support we need to achieve that public value proposition?

This is the authorising environment. Who needs to be on board? What stakeholders will support (or not oppose) this?

3. What operational resources do we need to achieve this outcome?

This is operational capacity. Where will resources come from (resources may lie outside the organisation not just within it)?

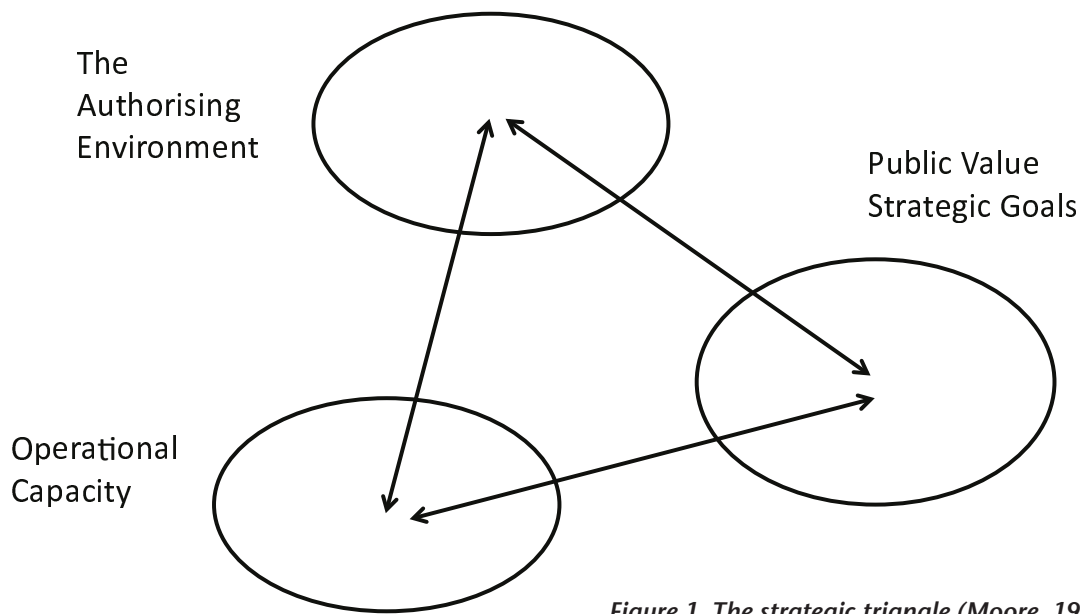


Figure 1. The strategic triangle (Moore, 1995)

WHO CREATES PUBLIC VALUE?

Public value is not only created by the public sector. The private sector and the third sector can also create and add public value. However, one of the key roles of the state and its agencies can be to harness the work of other partners behind clear public value goals and outcomes.

The public value framework was applied to the policing of the Drumcree demonstrations in Northern Ireland, enabling a shift in perspective and purpose that led (over time, and with some problems on the way) to more peaceful protests in which the principal community groups contributed to their own policing and law-keeping, rather than relying on police and army resources to keep them apart (Benington and Turbitt, 2007; Bryson, Crosby and Bloomberg, 2015).

PUBLIC VALUE AS A KEY TOOL IN DEMAND MANAGEMENT

The concept of public value helps to focus attention and effort outward towards mobilising practical and useful outcomes for citizens, communities and society at large, as part of a whole complex adaptive system of governance.

It is a useful tool for strategic planning, posing questions such as: 'What is the public value being added? Who supports this to be achieved? What operational resources are needed?' It also requires clear measurement, or at least assessment. Public value can be used as a mechanism (among professionals, between professionals and the public) to stimulate debate about how to achieve value. It asks where public value is being added (or destroyed), and how this might be improved.

CONCLUSION

Policing is trying to come to terms with managing rising demand and the context of austerity by shifting its ways of prioritising from operationally excellent to focusing on the service user. Policing is attempting to change its value discipline from operationally excellent to customer intimate. Operational performance needs maintaining, and yet there is an expectation on police professionals to not only engage with customers/citizens but also understand their needs, motivation and what they value most from the services they receive, as well as what contributes to the public sphere. The public value framework appears to provide a *prima facie* way of creating valuable outcomes for the public by building



stronger legitimacy and wider support from the public and other key stakeholders. For policing, public value has the potential to inform, clarify and operationalise the notion of prioritising, producing, providing and adding to the services to the public.

The public value framework is not a panacea for difficult choices and tough decisions. The two elements of public value (what the public value and what adds value to the public sphere) can be in tension and can change over time, and different sections of the public may have different assessments of value so this is not always

an easy course to follow, as the Drumcree case study demonstrates. Furthermore, it would be a mistake to think of the public value framework as the 'one best way' to address demand or to enact priorities, given that a single way to achieve complex and contested outcomes has never been found to work. But public value does provide a way of asking penetrating questions, orchestrating important debates among relevant stakeholders and providing a clear rationale for sometimes unpopular courses of policing action, so there is mileage in understanding it and using it as an approach to policing.

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