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## A typology of dis/value in public service delivery

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### IMPACT

Public service providers are now expected to play a central role in public value creation by designing and delivering services that are both relevant and beneficial to the wider society in which they operate. In this article the authors explore the view that service providers can destroy, as well as create value. Drawing on a scoping review of the public value and co-creation literatures, the article proposes a typology of the types of dis/value emerging from the review. The findings will be useful for professionals engaged in designing and delivering public services, including managers, planners and commissioners.

### ABSTRACT

Dis/value or public value destruction is now increasingly recognized as part of the public value process. Despite this, confusion about the concept remains. This article assesses the use of public value destruction, and synonymous terms, in the public value and co-creation literatures, and considers their meaning in public service delivery. The article provides findings from a scoping review to explore the conceptualization of value destruction to date. We progress the conceptualization of the term dis/value by identifying a typology and suggesting future avenues for its exploration.

### KEYWORDS

Co-creation; dis/value; leadership; management; public services; public value; scoping review; value destruction

## Introduction

The implicit assumption that value creation is wholly positive dominates the public value discourse. Actions are taken to produce or create public value because it is seen as a value in and of itself. Critical approaches, however, have begun to question this narrative and discussions that run counter to assumed positive value are gaining traction. Here we advance the public value discourse to further include the concept of 'dis/value'. In a recent article (Cluley et al., 2020), we made the first steps towards this by introducing the term dis/value, defined as 'an umbrella term to capture the range of public value experiences that may not fit with the general perception that public value co-creation is a positive process for all' (p. 2). While a range of terms has been used to refer to dis/value, such as 'destroyed value', 'value failure' and 'public value loss', these terms are often used synonymously or without reference to each other. In order to provide an overview of such terms, this article presents findings from a scoping review of public value and co-creation literature and offers a typology of dis/value based on this.

The term 'public value' was first used by Moore (1995) to emphasise the importance of public value creation by public service managers. Moore introduced the use of the 'public value triangle' to conceptualize the public value production process, whereby value is created out of democratic support for a particular action or strategy that in turn results in greater support and public value. Since then, conceptualizations of public value have proliferated, with increased emphasis on the role played by a wider network of stakeholders (Crosby et al., 2017; Bryson et al., 2017; de Jong et al., 2017; Hartley et al., 2019).

Common to the value creation and production discourse is an explicit and generally expected focus on benefit (Plé, 2017). The vast majority of empirical studies exploring public value and its production process show affirmative examples, where public value is associated with the creation of beneficial effects (Torfing et al., 2021). To consider destruction as part of this could seem antithetical, however, we argue that to ignore it is a greater risk. As Cluley and Radnor (2019) note, public service users are not a homogeneous group. While public value experiences will be valued by some service users they equally may not be by others. Essentially, public value experiences are the consequence of a dynamic relationship between human and non-human factors (Cluley & Radnor, 2020).

In the literature, public value destruction tends to refer to the opposite of public value creation, typically articulated as activities which damage value rather than create something positive. Where dis/value has been explored, a variety of terms have been used to describe the process including: subtracted and destroyed (Benington, 2011), loss and displacement (Hartley et al., 2019), disvalue (Esposito & Ricci, 2015), contamination (Williams et al., 2016), and dis/value (Cluley et al., 2020). These terms are often used interchangeably but can mean different things in different settings. Furthermore, there has been comparatively less interest in public dis/value, although it may now be described as a slowly emerging field of study (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011; Henna et al., 2018; Steen et al., 2018; Koolma & van Dreven, 2019; Esposito et al., 2020). Hartley et al. (2019) note that public value destruction has been under researched, and Steen et al. (2018, p. 289) call for more

research to explore the 'dark side' of co-creation. Similarly, Dudau et al. (2019) state that positive readings of the 'co'-paradigm (co-creation, co-production and co-design) need to be challenged by research on co-destruction.

The primary rationale for focusing on public value and co-creation is to specifically bring together the disparate literature on public value destruction and value destruction. Our conceptual aim is to identify broad themes to offer a typology to inform future research and conceptual development.

The following research questions framed our enquiry:

- (1) How are words pertaining to dis/value (for example loss, destruction, subtraction, failure) used in the public value and co-creation literatures, and how do they assist us to understand dis/value in public service delivery?
- (2) Where are the gaps/future contributions needed to improve our understanding of dis/value?

To answer these questions, in this article we present scoping review findings to position dis/value in language used in the existing literature, such as: failure, destruction, loss, and other such terms. We then provide a typology to aid the understanding of the 'how, when and where' of dis/value and the meaning and effect of specific words associated with it. In this typology we present four types of dis/value emergent from the two bodies of literature reviewed. To conclude we consider the potential for future research options to enhance the understanding of dis/value.

## Methodology

There are various methods of synthesizing literature/evidence, such as systematic review, meta-analysis, qualitative synthesis, scoping review and narrative review. Each method has its own theoretical approach (Snyder, 2019) and, when designing a review, the most appropriate method should be chosen to achieve specific study aims (Munn et al., 2018). A scoping review based on Arskey and O'Mally's framework (2005) was chosen as the most appropriate approach for this study. As Munn et al. (2018) show, scoping reviews can be used to clarify concepts across a body of literature. As Snyder (2019, p. 335) outlines, scoping reviews are typically used to 'map a field of research, synthesize the state of knowledge, and create an agenda for further research'. This mirrors the aims of our study—to provide an overview of the terms used to articulate dis/value and to create a typology to be used for future research.

The following search terms, specifically focused on dis/value and public service delivery, were used to search the Scopus and Web of Science databases: 'public value' AND loss OR destruction OR lost OR failure OR destroyed OR displaced OR disvalue OR contaminated.

This was supplemented by a search of the value creation literature, using the search terms: 'value co-creation' AND destruction OR co-destruction OR codestruction OR dark side OR public.

The search was limited to peer-reviewed papers: for public value those published from 2002 (to reflect the date of publication of Bozeman's article on failure) to 2020. For value co-creation, we limited the search from 2016 to 2020 as a period which has seen a growing interest in public

service co-destruction. Twenty six articles were chosen for inclusion with 18 from the public value literature and eight from the value co-creation literature. Seventeen additional references were added from limited citation searching in selected publications, including some book chapters. Publications were screened for the following criteria: descriptive details such as date or publication, geographical focus and, journal title; terms used to refer to dis/value; definition of terms; application of terms; and study findings.

This detail was analysed for trends using a thematic approach, common to scoping reviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006; von Heimburg & Cluley, 2021). We identified four types of dis/value:

- (1) Market-economic-budgetary dis/value where dis/value can occur because of decisions around budget setting, commissioning and contracting.
- (2) Leadership-managerial-political dis/value, based on decision-making.
- (3) Process-experiential dis/value seen as interactional and phenomenological experience.
- (4) Organizational-functionalist dis/value associated with how value is perceived as being owned by an organization or system.

Below we present the findings of the scoping review. First, we provide an overview of the terms used to refer to dis/value and the contexts they are used in (research question 1). This is followed by a discussion of the typology of dis/value that emerged from the thematic analysis (research question 2).

## The conceptualization and use of terms relating to dis/value

Across the two bodies of literature, the predominant words typically used to articulate the opposite of public value creation were 'failure' (Bozeman, 2002; 2007) and 'public value destruction' (Benington, 2011; Koolma & van Dreven, 2019). Other words were also used, albeit more sparsely, including: lost and displaced public value (Hartley et al., 2019) and contaminated value (Williams et al., 2016). It is unclear if the different words chosen to articulate dis/value by scholars are chosen to explain different phenomena, used inter-changeably, or used without consideration for other terms (Cluley et al., 2020).

### Dis/value in the public value literature

A variety of terms were used in the public value literature to refer to dis/value. Public value failure (PVF) was most commonly used. First introduced by Bozeman (2002; 2007) who stated PVF occurs when neither the market nor the public sector provides goods and services required to achieve core public values.

According to Bozeman PVF occurs as seven types: (1) inadequate policy-making not representing the core public values of a society; (2) imperfect monopolies, where private providers are used even when a government monopoly may be in the public's best interest; (3) when benefits are restricted by individuals or groups with power; (4) a scarcity of providers of public services; (5) short time planning when a longer view may provide more value; (6) substitutability versus conservation of resources, where

efficiency is prioritized over public value creation; and (7) threats to subsistence and human dignity (Bozeman, 2002).

PVF has since been progressed in empirical research, in studies addressing science policy (Bozeman & Sarewitz, 2005), shortages in influenza vaccines (Feeney & Bozeman, 2007), tax and spending policies (Kalambokidis, 2014), and higher education (Anderson & Taggart, 2016). Across these studies PVF is generally nestled within discussions of the public interest and how this is met, or not, by the private domain and government (Bozeman & Johnson, 2015). These studies inform how the PVF model is useful to the commissioning, procurement and contracting processes in local public service delivery.

Another term commonly used in the public value literature is 'destruction', typically articulated as the opposite of public value creation. This term has been used in research addressing destruction in public service processes (Benington, 2011), political decision-making (Spano, 2009), and in leadership (Ayres, 2019; Hartley et al., 2019; Koolma & van Dreven, 2019). Focusing on politicians, Spano (2009) argues that public value destruction occurs when public needs are not met by government services, laws and regulations. To avoid cases of public value destruction he suggests, first, that objectives must be agreed in a transparent way; second, designed to meet need; and, third, agreed targets must be used carefully.

Public value destruction was also considered in specific public services. In a study of housing, Koolma and van Dreven (2019) considered how leaders' 'well-doing and wrongdoing' (p. 2) can impact on the creation or destruction of public value. They describe public value destruction as 'a negative change to fewer and inferior products or services, and to less appreciation by clients, stakeholders, and the public in general' (p. 2).

Similarly, in a study of policing leadership, public value and rural crime, Hartley et al. (2019) found that public value creation is a dynamic process involving both creation and loss. Hartley et al. focused on collaboration between the police, professionals, and citizens. Several examples of lost and destroyed public value were identified. For example, rural communities felt abandoned when a valued rural policing service was withdrawn, with a decline in trust and confidence in the police. Here, public value destruction was not only about ending a valued service, but also reputational damage to the police. In a study of a local currency in the city of Bristol, UK, Ayres (2019) explored how soft meta-governance and relational public leadership can be used to promote public value in governance networks. Although this was not a study of public service delivery, it illustrates similar risks to value creation involved in public service partnerships. Using the public value strategic triangle (Moore, 1995), Ayres argues that when a public value proposition is articulated through soft meta-governance, it is open to interpretation that can lead to reputational damage when external actors align the organization to network decisions that are at odds with their own organizations' values. (Ayres, 2019).

As well as failure and destruction, several other terms are used in the public value literature to describe dis/value. These include loss and lost, disvalue, displaced and subtracted value. At first sight, *lost* and the *loss* of public value sound similar to destruction. However, where destruction indicates damage, for instance to organizational strategy, the use of

lost or the loss of public value highlights a reduction in an amount of value. For example, Roman and McWeeney (2017) state that leadership is required to ensure public value loss does not happen in market-driven narratives of governance (p. 480). Li (2019) refers to the public value account, articulating loss in percentage terms, suggesting loss can be measured. Additionally, the word 'loss' is also used with a connection to public value loss when a valued public service is withdrawn (Hartley et al., 2019).

Esposito and Ricci (2015, p. 230) use (dis)value to describe how 'value destruction occurs if the target is different from the one originally intended'. This suggests that what has been destroyed can become valuable again. Their focus is how public value is regenerated by liberating and refocusing stolen or damaged assets for use by the wider community. This is about using destroyed value to create new public value, thereby reversing a negative force.

For Benington (2011), public value may be subtracted at different points of service delivery processes, suggesting it is important to ensure activities creating public value are constantly reviewed, and ended if unhelpful. Additionally, for Chien (focusing on public-private partnerships), the 'genre and intensity of public value over time is subject to addition, subtraction or mutation' informed by changes to the dimensions of publicness (Chien, 2015, p. 381).

Finally, Hartley et al. (2019) introduce the term 'displacement' of public value, whereby value may increase for one organization when a problem is displaced into another organization. Hartley et al. use the example of rural crime to illustrate how public value displacement may occur when crime is shunted from one UK police force area into another.

Common to all of the terms reviewed, whether used explicitly or in passing, is a language steeped in negativity. When describing dis/value, words such as 'insufficient', 'distortion', 'failure', 'destruction', 'inadequate', 'imperfect', 'scarcity', 'threat', 'wrongdoing', 'inferior', 'negative' and 'loss' proliferate. Regardless of the term used, the inference is that something undesirable is happening. A similar pattern was observed across the public management co-creation literature that follows.

### *Dis/value in the public management co-creation literature*

Where public value has typically been interested in the creation of strategic and organizational value, co-creation is described as 'an interactive and dynamic relationship where value is created at the nexus of "interaction"' (Osborne, 2018, p. 225). However, it can mean different things in specific public service settings, with the words 'co-design' and 'co-production' used interchangeably (Voorberg et al., 2015; Osborne et al., 2016). Like public value, discourse associated with co-creation is typically positive. However, there have been some recent critiques of the 'co-' paradigm. Dudau et al. (2019, p. 1577) argue we have been lulled into thinking co-creation always creates value. Terms such as 'constructive disenchantment' (Dudau et al., 2019) and 'co-destruction' (Engen et al., 2020) have been used in the public management literature. In addition, there are several ways in which dis/value has been articulated in the co-creation literature: as interactional service encounters, as process and ecosystem, and value co-destruction, and as dark side.

It is useful to note that the business literature has influenced understanding on value co-destruction (Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010; Echeverri & Skålén, 2011; Plé, 2017). In particular, Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres (2010) argue, value co-destruction can happen accidentally or intentionally. First, because of insufficient resources, which itself, may be a strategic choice; second, employees might operate independently to co-create value for themselves and customers, but not for the organization; third, value co-destruction may occur when an organization transforms service delivery, for instance by introducing online self-service; lastly, customers might intentionally misuse resources by complaining unfairly or taking advantage of staff, creating value for themselves, while destroying value for the organization.

Examples of value destruction are identified in Espersson and Westrup's study (2020) of the integration of unaccompanied refugee minors into Swedish society. They address how value was destroyed, highlighting three instances of co-destruction. First, value co-creation with service users can be restricted by the conditions and prerequisites where frontline workers operate; second, frontline workers' perceptions of the limitations of young people can destroy value; and, third, contradictory advice from frontline workers can contribute to value destruction.

For Engen et al. (2020), value co-destruction occurs when 'interacting parties fail to integrate resources in a mutually-beneficial manner, leading to the diminishment of value-in-use for one or more of the interacting parties' (p. 5). They describe four dimensions of value co-destruction in public services:

- Lack of transparency and information-sharing.
- Mistakes about service users by professionals in paperwork and case files.
- Weak bureaucratic competence by service users, and a poor understanding of service systems and websites.
- Lack of service when users cannot access services because of reduced staffing and call centre queues.

Similarly, Plé (2017) notes that value co-destruction may occur for all or just one of the parties involved and that it can be accidental or intentional.

In addition to service user experience, there is an increased focus on public service eco-systems where value is created in

the interactions among different actors (Trischler & Charles, 2018; Petrescu, 2019; Engen et al., 2020; Strokosch & Osborne, 2020). Public service ecosystems inform how value is created at micro, meso and macro levels and is inclusive of collective and individual aspects of value (Petrescu, 2019). It is argued that value is not delivered in a linear or horizontal way, but within complex ecosystems of actors which are always changing (Strokosch & Osborne, 2020). For Engen et al. (2020), when there is resource integration between actors in a service ecosystem, both harmonious and disharmonious processes will occur. In a similar vein to the service ecosystem approach, Cluley and Radnor (2019; 2020) and Cluley et al. (2020) suggest public services operate as assemblages of multiplicitous elements that can include both positive and negative public service value experiences.

Finally, a growing argument in the co-creation approach to value destruction is consideration of the dark side of public value creation. Williams et al. (2016) use the dark side notion to explore value co-contamination, resulting from the misuse of resources in interactions between service providers and service users. With the dark side in mind, Steen et al. (2018) discuss the 'evils' that can emerge from co-production. Taking a critical perspective, they suggest co-production and co-creation could lead to reduced or confused government services with increased responsibilities for citizens.

Table 1 details current terms pertinent to the conceptualization of dis/value across both bodies of literature. The definitions suggest that dis/value can be the product of changes in service delivery by organizations and processes at different levels. Some of these have been explored in detail (particularly the work of Bozeman, 2002; 2007), whereas other papers refer to dis/value in passing. The examples illustrate that dis/value can be identified at a broad range of systematic levels, encompassing strategy and organization, individual user experiences, as well as the processes within them.

### A typology of dis/value in public service delivery

Our thematic analysis of the types of dis/value discussed indicated four emergent types of dis/value: (1) market-economic-budgetary dis/value resulting from decisions around budget setting, commissioning and contracting; (2)

**Table 1.** Definitions of dis/value in the public value and public management co-creation literature.

Term	Definition	Author
<b>Public value literature</b>		
Failure	'Public failure occurs when neither the market nor the public sector provides goods and services required to achieve core public values'.	Bozeman (2002), p. 150
Destruction	'Destruction of public value encompasses a negative change to fewer and inferior products or services, and to less appreciation by clients, stakeholders, and the public in general'.	Koolma and van Dreven (2019), p. 596
Loss	Public value loss can occur when services are withdrawn. This not only leads to the absence of a service but influences longer-term relationships, legitimacy, credibility and trust.	Hartley et al. (2019)
Subtraction	The subtraction of public value in the stages of a process.	Benington (2011)
Displacement	Displaced public value is the theory that as public value is created in one locality, a problem may be displaced to another.	Hartley et al. (2019)
Disvalue	'Disvalue is created if the target is different from the one originally intended'.	Esposito and Ricci (2015), p. 229
<b>Public management co-creation literature</b>		
Co-destruction	'The notion of value co-destruction captures the diminishment of value for one or more actors that are involved in direct interactions with each other'.	Engen et al. (2020), p. 2
Co-contamination	'Value co-contamination results from the misuse of resources during the interaction between service providers and service users'.	Williams et al. (2016), p. 700
Dark side	Negative effects arising from co-creation processes.	Steen et al. (2018)
Ecosystem	Disharmonious processes will occur when there is resource integration between actors in a service ecosystem.	Engen et al. (2020)

leadership–managerial–political dis/value, based on decision-making; (3) process–experiential dis/value comprising interactional and phenomenological experience; (4) organizational–functionalist dis/value associated with how value is perceived as being owned by an organization or system. In line with recent work on public service ecosystems (Petrescu, 2019; Engen et al., 2020) and assemblage (Cluley & Radnor, 2020), we suggest that these four types are relational rather than individual. For the purpose of clarity, however, we discuss each type in turn in this article while recognizing their overlaps.

### *Type 1: Market–economic–budgetary type*

This type of dis/value refers to activities including public service budget setting, strategic commissioning, procurement and contract design. As discussed earlier, Bozeman's (2002) public failure value may arise from inefficient policy-making, imperfect monopolies, restriction of benefits by power holders, scarcity of providers, short-term planning, prioritization of efficiency over public value creation, and threats to subsistence and human dignity. Empirical examples have tended to be more strategic, including waterway policy (Bozeman, 2002), vaccine policy (Feeney & Bozeman, 2007) and education (Anderson & Taggart, 2016).

In particular, two of Bozeman's failure criteria—scarcity of providers, and short-term planning—inform our understanding of dis/value in local public service delivery, using the lens of strategic commissioning and procurement (Glasby, 2012; Loeffler & Bovaird, 2019). First, for scarcity of providers, Bozeman identifies problems with the provision of technology for electronic welfare checks. Procuring this sort of provision can be challenging for public service organizations, alongside problems with procuring internal systems, for example for planning care worker rotas. Second, dis/value can arise from gaps in local service provision. One example may be local authorities experiencing difficulty in fulfilling England and Wales' Care Act 2014 responsibilities if there is insufficient provision in the market at a price that a local council can afford. This can be exacerbated by the lack of availability of provision for rural communities, underfunded care providers and the expense of recruiting and maintaining poorly paid staff (King's Fund, 2022).

Regarding short-term planning, authors have highlighted how budgetary decisions can damage stakeholder relationships and organizational reputation. In their research on rural policing, Hartley et al. (2019) discussed how the removal of a budget for a valued service contributed to crisis. The decision not to invest in a service may be because of service performance, or changes to local priorities, and a clear decision may have to be made where there is insufficient budget. This is associated with trade-offs between providing preventative and crisis services, where preventative services are withdrawn to release funds for immediate priorities.

Moreover, an example of the market–economic–budgetary type of dis/value could be how a local service provider market in health and social care provision will need to run as smoothly as possible and understand any gaps or risks. If this does not happen, it may lead to dis/value at various levels. At the service level, staff may feel

pressured and under resourced. At the user level, there could be increased hospital admissions or the need for alternative care provision, displacing stress onto relatives and friends.

### *Type 2: Leadership–managerial–political–professional type*

Here dis/value is associated with decisions by leaders, managers, politicians and professionals involved in public service delivery. There are a number of ways dis/value may arise. As Hartley et al. (2019) note, a decision about ending a valued service may damage an organization's reputation and impact on trust. Koolma and van Dreven (2019) considered how well-doing and wrong-doing by leaders can destroy public value. It is likely these sorts of decisions will be made at strategic and political levels (Esposito & Ricci, 2015; Hartley et al., 2019) but can impact at a practice and personal level. In some cases, decisions may be made with full awareness of the consequences but involve a trade-off between priorities.

One example is the—reluctant—decision by local authority leaders to reduce the availability of Sure Start provision in the UK (a family-focused local preventative service) as part of the UK austerity agenda that started in 2010. Navigating a challenging financial environment by local leaders required difficult decisions which in some cases led to hardship and isolation by families, criticisms of local decision-making processes, and protests (Smith et al., 2018).

Other examples are strategically agreed changes to infrastructure, where a decision by senior managers impacts on frontline practice. Engen et al. (2020) found that changes within an organization—for example new software applications or websites that do not work properly—may lead to an inability to operate. This causes problems for users and such changes can also impact on staff who might find them unnecessarily complex (Butler, 2018).

### *Type 3: Process–experiential type*

Dis/value has focused less on emotional impact, tending to focus on public service delivery rather than the service user perspective. The process–experiential type is located in interactional and phenomenological experience, and is fundamentally about the relationship between the professional and the service user. It is informed by research on value co-destruction, including the organizational restrictions within which frontline workers operate, how they communicate with service users, and their perceptions of users' needs (Engen et al., 2020; Espersson & Westrup, 2020; Kaartemo & Känsäkoski, 2018). As Alford (2016) notes, the value of services lies in the experience rather than tangible objects. In public services, this is typically found in assessment processes and pathways determining vulnerability that inform service planning.

The degree to which legislation is biased towards care or control (or a sliding scale between them) will inform the user experience and if participation is voluntary or enforced, for example as an obligatee (Alford, 2016). The point to be made is that not all public value experience is consensual, willing or wanted. Interactions with state agencies highlights value co-destruction can also manifest as a lack of transparency, mistakes, problems with

bureaucracy and an agency's inability to serve (Engen et al., 2020). Type 3 may also include the dark side of co-creation and coproduction (Steen et al., 2018). This view implies that a weakness in applying professional values or acting inauthentically by professionals can contribute to dis/value.

An example of the process–experiential type is informed by what Echeverri and Salomonson (2017, p. 96) call 'demeanour practices and activities' to explain how professionals relate and communicate with customers. Although demeanour may be based on an individual's customary way of communicating, a change of demeanour by professionals may be required when a service moves from working on a voluntary basis, to one where they are mandated to do so. In essence, we argue that even with the best strategy and resources, if the process experience is poor this may contribute to dis/value and public value destruction.

#### **Type 4: Organizational–functionalist type**

Although enchanting, the outcomes of partnership working and integration is poorly evidenced—for example, see Cameron (2016). This type illustrates how public value creation can be attributed to a public service organization or considered as the co-created property of a group of stakeholders (Engen et al., 2020; Bryson et al., 2017). The literature reviewed tended to highlight issues and examples where value increased or decreased, or went up or down, moving generally from positive to negative. This can suggest there is a set amount of value contained within an organization and this increases or decreases dependant on decision-making and the quality of relationships between the actors involved.

Although the agreed aim is to create value, there may be practices that create dis/value. Relationships between multi-agency partners can lead to dis/value (Engen et al., 2020) or public value displacement from one organization to another (Hartley et al., 2019). If performance management leads to exaggerating value creation, there is a risk targets become the goal rather than the needs of service users (Spano, 2009). Also, there will be specific reasons why stakeholders may choose to collaborate, including mutual reasons, to obtain resources, or if directed to do so (Hudson, 1987). As Engen et al. (2020, p. 16) state 'harmonious and disharmonious' processes can occur where there is resource integration between partners within a wider service ecosystem.

An example of the organizational–functionalist type is that the delivery of public services may be subject to disputes and brokering between agencies. This may involve establishing where a service user is 'ordinarily resident', to determine which authority is legally and financially responsible for an individual's support.

As stated at the outset, our typology is not intended to be taxonomical or static. The types are dependent upon a range of fluid and relational factors, such as people, environment, values, policy, material objects, and many other things dependent on context and timing. Acknowledging this multiplicitous and relational make up allows for fluidity within and between types that accounts for inevitable change and motion. For this reason, our typology is fluid, and it can be added to and be changed as contextual factors themselves change. Consequently, we propose this

typology as a starting point, as a flexible framework that can be used and adapted to make sense of alternative experiences and processes of value creation in public services and, importantly, dis/value.

## **Discussion**

Following our presentation of the scoping review and typology, first, we reflect on the impact of the typology on public value creation and value co-creation. Second, we consider some additional broader observations identified in the scoping review.

While value creation has been central to theorizing about public services, less attention has been paid to framing public value loss and destruction, although there have been recent attempts to progress this (Hartley et al., 2019; Engen et al., 2020; Osborne, 2020). Our scoping review highlights the disparate yet growing consideration of alternative experiences of value pertaining to the negative, or as we refer to it, dis/value.

Our typology demonstrates that dis/value encompasses the broad themes and, as it is the first attempt to bring these together, we are aware that the term remains a complex and uncertain area of focus. Differences in how value creation is understood and organized will depend on the specific service context, as well as a range of other relational and changeable factors. In the same way that its counterpart value is subjective, so too is dis/value. Acknowledging this, however, should not be shied away from but, rather, diversity of experience may be embraced to ensure inclusivity. This difference and subjectivity should not be seen as a challenge but as a platform from which to challenge the heterogeneity implicit within assumptions that value is wholly positive. It is the rigidity associated with the conceptualization of value as a positive transaction that we argue has resulted in the neglect and glossing over of alternative, less than positive experiences. The typology we have suggested provides an alternative perspective through which to view value creation that allows for all experiences of value to be accounted for. To reiterate, our typology is based on our scoping review findings and serves to group the explorations of dis/value that we found. As further explorations of dis/value are added to the literature, our typology will expand and grow and additional types may be needed and old ones might be removed.

Across the studies, value tended to be articulated as a linear process, moving from good to bad or up and down. The inbuilt fluidity of our typology challenges this trend towards understanding the creation of value as the product of solely transactional, unidirectional decision-making. As evidenced across the typology, dis/value can occur because of a range of relational factors that extend beyond human or financial transaction that are dependent on a range of factors. These are hidden in frontline practice, or activities in complex partnership working and ecosystems.

In the literature, dis/value is associated with decision-making (or avoidance of decision-making) and is identified as the product of intent and accident, as well as intended and unintended consequences (Esposito & Ricci, 2015; Engen et al., 2020; Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2020). Consequently, dis/value may be a product of commission and omission. Commission suggests a conscious decision which leads to the implementation of a decision or strategy

that contributes to dis/value. Conversely, omission suggests dis/value occurs because something or someone was left out, either consciously or unconsciously (by decision, strategy or overlooked). This is important as dis/value will occur for different reasons, some which are planned and deliberated upon and others which are unconscious to the actors involved. Importantly, all experiences of dis/value and value alike will be contextual, temporal and include a heterogeneous combination of factors.

Across the literature, it is apparent a linear approach to value influences how dis/value (as well as public value creation) is perceived. As mentioned, the literature tends to highlight issues and examples where value increased or decreased, or went up or down, moving generally from positive to negative, although there were a few examples of value moving from the negative to the positive (for example see Esposito & Ricci, 2015). This linear association could be a consequence of the implicit associations tied up in the term 'value'. For example that value is a positive concept (Voorberg et al., 2015) associated with strong monetary associations—a logic that results in a linear approach to value.

Supporting this, and based on alternative explorations of value (for example Cluley et al., 2020; Cluley & Radnor, 2020), a linear approach to value and dis/value, such as that identified, serves to limit understanding by removing flexibility and the space for service user experiences that do not fit. Cluley and Radnor (2020) argue co-destruction is part of the assemblage of value co-creation. Where dis/value can often be seen as transactional, in reality it is much more fluid, as demonstrated by Cluley et al.'s (2020) application of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of assemblage. Cluley et al. (2020) argue that the transformation of value will be the product of processes, events and 'affects' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that include, but extend beyond, human interactions. Dis/value will be impacted on by different resources, investment decisions and service assessments—it is the product of material and socio-cultural resources and interactions. The value outcome as the process of events may impact differently on public value loss and destruction, as some will be anticipatory (predicted), while others will be crisis events.

To reduce dis/value to a binary opposition risks reducing value to a static phenomenon that may miss the nuances of individual experiences that differ from the norm. As we have argued, here and elsewhere (Cluley & Radnor, 2019), value is fluid and changeable and public services and their users are heterogeneous. Public value and dis/value, moreover, may be experienced differently depending on time, context and individual and collective needs (Cluley and Radnor, 2019). We hold to our definition of dis/value presented in the introduction: 'an umbrella term to capture the range of public value experiences that may not fit with the general perception that public value co-creation is a positive process for all' (Cluley et al., 2020, p. 2).

Dis/value is not easily identified and requires framing—albeit flexibly—as it will be overt and covert, identified in various levels, interactions, processes and settings. Essential to the need for flexibility is that public value creation and destruction tend not to be thought of as co-existent or combined. As Plé (2017) notes, value co-creation and co-destruction may alternate and coexist as two sides of the same coin. In public service delivery, a choice might be

made to destroy what is valuable for one party to create future value for the same party, thereby conducting destruction and creation at the same time. For example, in co-production the view of destroyed value in partnership between the state and the citizen is not always clear, and it is sometimes a requirement to destroy value to create value. An example is child safeguarding where what is valuable to a family may be destroyed by the state, but with a plan to return to a future value equilibrium. In this difficult context—a key principle of the UK's Children Act (1989) is those involved in providing services should work 'in partnership' with families and children who may be in need. This partnership working may be considered as a form of co-production but must balance a child's right to be consulted, the rights of parents and the responsibility of the state to promote and safeguard children in need. Here, we question whether public value creation and destruction are always in opposition.

Finally, it seems that words are important if they are to articulate public dis/value carefully. Common to all of the terms reviewed, whether used explicitly or in passing, was a language steeped in negativity. Across the public value and co-creation literatures, words, such as 'destruction', 'loss', 'subtraction' and 'failure', were often used without a deeper consideration or definition of their meaning. While this may be favourable to allow for flexibility, some terms could be perceived as more radical than others. For example, words like 'destruction' and 'evil' perhaps sound more severe than 'lost' or the 'loss of value'. It is also imperative to note that some terms may not be palatable to certain audiences, for example 'dark side', which could be validly perceived to have discriminatory connotations.

## Conclusion

This article is a first attempt to establish a flexible typology of dis/value, and is 'open for use' by scholars for development and refinement and we encourage this. The article presents scoping review of dis/value, informed by the public value and value co-creation literatures. Following increasing critical approaches to the conceptualization and exploration of public service value, our aim was to identify how dis/value has been described and consider how it applies to contemporary service delivery. We suggest a flexible typology to provide a heuristic for understanding the different types of dis/value and their assemblages and, importantly, to recognize the relational composition of dis/value.

In this article, we have made two important contributions to the conceptual development of dis/value by:

- Exploring the origins and trajectory of public value failure, loss and destruction, and the similar terminology of value co-destruction in the co-creation literature. Our scoping review shows that with the lack of a theoretical model, terminology pertaining to dis/value varies and that it manifests variously in different contexts and settings.
- Introducing a typology of dis/value to inform theory development and empirical research.

Common to our article is a general acceptance that dis/value represents an opposite to public value and value co-creation. Dis/value is little understood and has only recently started to be theorized in more depth. In this article we have made the



first steps towards advancing our previous introduction of the term dis/value (Cluley et al., 2020) by proposing a typology. Further research is required to expand it, in particular focusing on the heterogeneous nature of public services and their users. As we have emphasised, timing, context and individual and collective need impacts on how value is experienced and created or not. We have previously suggested service users' perception of the state will impact on their perception of dis/value, as some will have to 'navigate the state' to negotiate access to services. Others may be 'rejected by the state' and denied financial resources, and some citizens may 'reject the state' by living outside of accepted societal norms (Cluley et al., 2020).

It is apparent that, in some research, the use of the term 'value destruction' is very broad, and not always subtle enough to communicate different types of dis/value. The impact of value destruction, lost value—or the loss of value—indicate subtle differences about the impact of dis/value. To expand on this, we call for further research in a number of areas. We propose that, as our typology is 'open for use', future research might consider whether there are advanced categories of dis/value. Future research will be enhanced by detailed examples and an enhanced understanding of types and experiences of dis/value, considering the fluidity and relationships between the types. Research could explore how state legislation, policy and power feeds into the creation of dis/value. Consideration of the lived experiences of service users is also required, including equalities issues and how service users experience discrimination in public service delivery.

It is also imperative to return to the observation that the literature addressing dis/value is largely associated with negative discourse, as well as terms like 'dark side' which may not reflect the inclusive, anti-discriminatory ethos of public service practice. To progress research on dis/value it is imperative that this does not dissuade practitioners from engaging in research.

Finally, the findings are useful for professionals engaged in designing and delivering public services with vulnerable people, including managers, planners and commissioners. This is because the findings draw attention to how service providers can also destroy, as well as create, value. Furthermore, in the changing landscape of global public service design and delivery, the four types of dis/value will have immediate appeal to international practice.

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