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Drawing out the values

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*evidence
solutions
advice*



Presentation aims

- encourage evaluators to take a conscious approach to choosing **value frames** for exercising evaluative judgement
- encourage evaluators to reflect on how the **values held** by commissioners and evaluators influence the value ascribed to data
- stimulate discussion through **case studies** of Public Value and Social Return on Investment



Value and values

- **value:** a measurement of a perceived impact or benefit
- **values:** an idea that defines what matters; in this context, the priority as defined by various actors

Values and value

- if a key value is *fairness*, then you may ascribe more value to procedural fairness than to 'cost effective' and efficient processes
- if a key value is *entrepreneurialism*, then you may ascribe more value to innovative practice than to evidence-led practice
- if a key value is *liberalism*, then you may ascribe more value to clients' exercise of choice than to intervention outcomes
- If a key value is *positivism*, then you may ascribe more value to measurable KPIs within a defined time frame than to the story or narrative

Exercising evaluative judgment

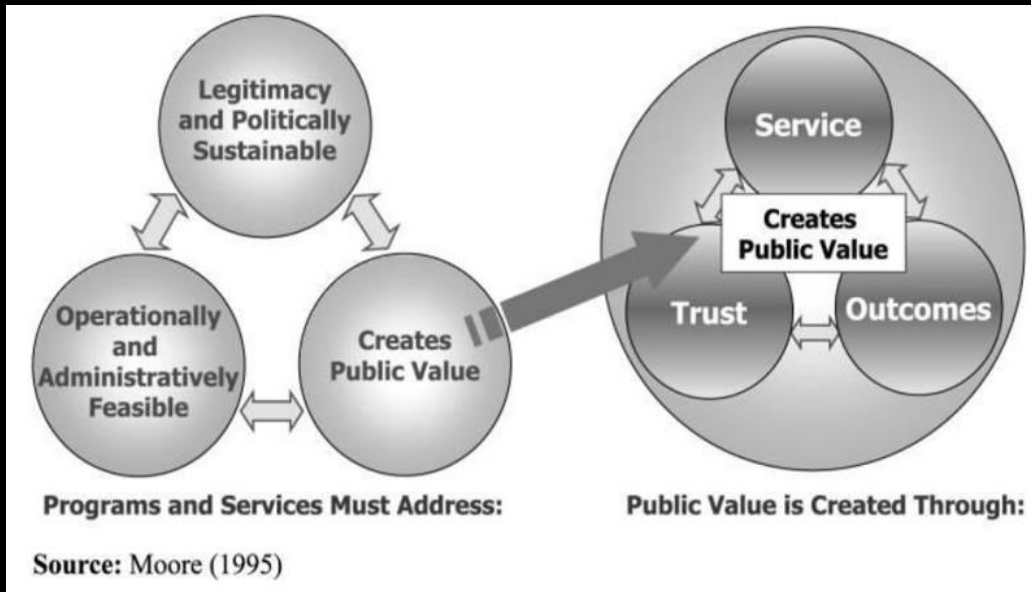
- evaluative judgement distinguishes evaluation from research
- knowledge, experience, and **values** influence how we make judgements about the worth and meaning of evidence and data
- our proposition: evaluators may not always pay sufficient attention to the influence of values

Whose values matter?

- Many stakeholders: multiple values frames (VF)
 - Independent evaluators (VF1) exercise judgement...
 - ...about programs designed/delivered by providers (VF2)
 - ...for beneficiaries (VF3) on behalf of evaluation funders
 - ...commonly on behalf of funding organisations (VF4)
 - ... in compliance with third party accountability requirements (VF5)
- Consider a program targeting **Aboriginal children**, delivered through a **public hospital**, and evaluated by a **commercial evaluator** for the **Department of Health** to guidelines established by **Treasury**

Case 1: Public value – a value frame

- Public value = shareholder value
- A way of framing the value that public institutions create



Case 1: Public value – a value frame

- PV paradigm illustrates difference in business vs public service:
 - values held (commercial vs social) and
 - value generated (financial vs socio-political)
- fairness, procedural justice etc – generally not commercial values but central to public service

Case 1: Public value – a value frame

- Reflections:
- how does PV affect our approach to evaluating government programs?
- should we pay more attention paid to the building of trust between community and government as the underpinning value?

Case 2: Social Return on Investment – a values conscious methodology

- Traditional CBA (even triple bottom line) implicitly gives more weight to readily measurable economic metrics (avoided future costs; lifetime earnings; carbon emissions etc)
- SROI is a form of cost-benefit analysis, which expands CBA scope to place emphasis on capturing social and beneficiary defined value
- Supplements traditional CBA with identification, measurement and 'monetisation' of value created for beneficiaries and stakeholders
- Also draws out and emphasises the value creation story

Case 2: Social Return on Investment

- CBA is well understood; facilitates investment comparison
 - Usually focused on well-accepted outcome measures
- SROI is more about an investment story and is stakeholder driven
 - Same investment > different beneficiary values and value > different result...

Case 2: Social Return on Investment – reflections

- Reflections
 - Choice of method reflects different weighting to information
 - Both CBA and SROI deliver a ‘ratio’ – but its meaning is different
 - What might selecting SROI or traditional CBA say about our (and our client’s) values?

Conclusions

- As evaluators, we apply judgement to evidence and data
- Judgement is not values-free; multiple sets values frames
- Explicitly considering whose values are driving evaluation design will strengthen the authority and transparency of evaluation
- Evaluators should reflect on choice of method from a values perspective (what evidence/data is being prioritised and why?)