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The Political Economy of Public Values: A Case for the Public Sphere and Progressive Opportunity

Barry Bozeman¹ and Japera Johnson²

Abstract

During the years that have elapsed since the publication of Moore's and Bozeman's quite different theories of public value, a great deal of attention has been focused on the public value(s) topic. In this essay, we discuss the evolution of the respective approaches, but particular attention is given to the criteria Bozeman established as "public values failure criteria," a set of ideas juxtaposed against and influenced by market failure criteria. We suggest two new criteria worth adding to the original Bozeman model. The first of these is related to Moore's work on the "public sphere." We offer a somewhat different definition of "public sphere," one that seems compatible with public values failure criteria. The second criterion pertains to "progressive opportunity," a criterion taking into account the injurious potential of social inequities. We show the two criteria are especially relevant to the concerns in contemporary political economy disputes and that the two desiderata reinforce one another.

Keywords

public administration, administrative theory, governance, public values

A social system which incorporates the assumption that a portion of society may righteously monopolize the productive forces of nature, so that other men must ask the permission of the monopolists to draw on the resources of nature, practically denies to the unprivileged class not merely a rightful share of goods, but an intrinsic claim to any share at all.

—Albion Small (1895)

Introduction

Since the 18th century and the decline of Divine Right rule, an increasing number of nations have developed public–private sector distinctions that are not merely theoretical but are widely recognized to be of great import to their societies' functioning (Mann, 1984). The existence of a distinct public sector implies, in its necessary aggregation of individual interests, the possibility of

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specific public values that help galvanize citizen allegiance, especially in a democracy (Beck Jørgensen, 2006; Hefner, 1998).

Scholarly discussion about public values is plentiful and has intensified in recent years, particularly in public administration (for an overview, see Van der Wal, Nabatchi, & de Graaf, 2013). Scholars are drawn to many different aspects of public values, resulting in a fragmented literature serving varied purposes. Rhodes and Wanna (2007) note that “the ambiguous nature of public value and its various applications fuels its popularity—it is all things to all people” (p. 408). Indeed, the plasticity of public value and public values concepts seems to provide scholars a wide range of entry points.

The primary purpose of the current article is to present the case for two cornerstone public values, *public sphere* and *progressive opportunity*, both needed for a more complete discussion of public values. A secondary purpose is to consider these two public values in the context of political economy, including contrasting the public values with market failure and neoliberal economic perspectives on values. The proliferation of market values as lens to public deliberation suggests the utility of considering public values perspectives in conjunction with market values perspectives (e.g., Bozeman, 2007).

Many (e.g., Benington, 2011; Fraser, 1990; Habermas, 1991) have provided definitions of the public sphere. According to McKee (2004), the public sphere is “any place, either physical (McKee, 2004) or virtual (Papacharissi, 2009; Shirky, 2011), functioning as a setting for expansive communication among citizens about the meaning, development, conservation, or revision of public values.” As such, the public sphere is a precursor value, a prerequisite for identifying and achieving public values, at least within the context of a democracy.

Importantly, the public sphere is both a *value* and an *institution* and the above definition provides no distinction. We do. Thus, our definition of the public sphere as a public value is “open public communication and deliberation about public values and about collective action pertaining to public values.” By contrast, the “place . . . functioning as a setting for expansive communication” (about public values) is a *public value enabling institution*, not itself a public value.

We define *progressive opportunity* as “the social conditions requisite to ensure that members of a society have equal ability to exploit their individual abilities and to achieve the goals they have set for themselves.” Achieving progressive opportunity includes, in most cases, means of redressing structural inequalities, often including ones found deep in a nation’s history and social fabric (E. Anderson, 1999). We borrow from egalitarian philosophy to develop the progressive opportunity public values criterion, arguing consonant with others (E. Anderson, 1995; Arneson, 1989; Sen, 1992), that human diversity begets inequality. While closely related to equality, the idea of progressive opportunity is not identical to equality. Differences in talents, endowments, potentialities (E. Anderson, 1999), and experiences (Gladwell, 2008) necessarily mitigate equality but they do not necessarily affect a society’s opportunity structure (see Roemer, 1998, on the relationship of equality to opportunity).

Before presenting arguments for the two public values criteria, each “nodal value” in the Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) terminology, we set the context for their discussion by providing a brief categorization of approaches to studying public values; discussing the importance of sector issues, public and private, to public values; and examining the processes by which public values emerge and change. We conclude that the public sphere and progressive opportunity face threats emanating from the increasing dominance of markets in social choice. We examine an alternative framework, the “embedded economy” that, unlike neoclassical economics, provides some purchase on the moral issues accompanying the political economy.

The Public Values Literature: Three Approaches

Despite the public value literature’s fragmentation, one finds several thematic approaches, including most prominently (a) *public policy application*, (b) *normative public value criteria*,

and (c) *management improvement*. Most of our attention is to the public value criterion category with some discussion of the related public policy application category. Despite the close kinship of names, the management improvement approach to public values is not closely related to our interests or to normative public values in general and, thus, we discuss only in passing. We begin with management improvement, chiefly to show how it is different from our concerns (despite its having drawn the attention of the normative focused public values scholarly community).

Public Values Approach: Management Improvement

The *management improvement* public values approach is most closely associated with Mark Moore and his book *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Moore, 1995). In a recent edited book (Benington & Moore, 2010), he and co-author John Benington summarize the management improvement public value approach (the present authors' term) and its motivation. Reflecting on the original Moore conception, Benington and Moore (2010) note that the approach does not start with "any fixed idea about the substantive content of government's responsibilities" (p. 9). Clearly, the hallmark of the Moore approach is its focus on effective public management and it has no specific take on normative public values. For an overview on management improvement public values, see Williams and Shearer (2011).

Public Values Approach: Public Policy Application

More relevant to our purposes is the *public policy application* realm of scholarship tends to analyze particular policy domains to identify distinctive public values issues posed in those domains. Thus, public values scholars focus on such policy domains as utilities (e.g., Bruijn & Dicke, 2006; Steenhuisen, Dicke, & de Bruijn, 2009), public works (Furieux, Brown, & Allan, 2008), contracting for services (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007), public health (Feeney & Bozeman, 2007), electronic governing (Omar, Scheepers, & Stockdale, 2011), science and technology policy (Bozeman & Sarewitz, 2005, 2011; Valdivia, 2011), and environmental policy (Corley, 2004; Logar, 2011; Meyer, 2011; Sarewitz & Pielke, 2007), to name just some of the public policy domain applications.

While one should refrain from over-generalizing from the diverse analyses of public values in public policy domains, it is possible to identify a few tendencies. In the first place, most of these studies focus more on the meaning of public values within a specific policy context rather than identifying new or different public values. Second, when new public values or public value criteria are presented, they are in most cases ones that have specific resonance or even a unique presence in the public value domain examined (e.g., Bruijn & Dicke, 2006; E. Fisher, Slade, Anderson, & Bozeman, 2010; Valdivia, 2011). Third, many of these studies (e.g., Logar, 2011; Meyer, 2011) apply an existing, broader public values framework, often using either Moore's (1995, 2000) managerially oriented framework (e.g., Hui & Hayllar, 2010; Moore & Braga, 2003) or Bozeman's (2002, 2007) normative political framework (e.g., E. Fisher et al., 2010; Logar, 2011; Meyer, 2011).

Public policy applications of public values may be extremely useful for posing new policy evaluation standards or for identifying crosscutting and sometimes-perverse effects of public policy. In a few instances, methodologies have been developed to facilitate public policy applications of public values. For example, "public value mapping" (Bozeman & Sarewitz, 2011) is an approach involving the identification of public values (usually from examination of fundamental policy statements) and the subsequent tracking of policy initiatives and outcomes, assessing the relation of these outcomes to the public values given as a starting point.

Public Values Approach: Normative Public Value Criteria

Much of the work in the management improvement genre tends to be agnostic about public values content, offering no definition of public value, no preferred set of public values, and no criteria for public values. Such tasks are left to *normative public values*.¹ Normative public values raise a much different set of questions than does management improvement public values. As normative public values cannot ignore content of public values, such thorny issues, as these, must be addressed: defining public values, identifying them, understanding the ways in which they emerge and change. Much of the current article builds on [Bozeman's \(2002, 2007\)](#) conceptualization of normative public values. His initial definition referred to public values 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; and (3) the principles on which governments and policies should be based. (Bozeman, 2007, p. 13)

Public Values: Origins and Social Mechanisms of Change

Where does one find public values? How do they originate and how does one identify them? As there is no set of stone tablets with public values etched on them, the issue of public value sources will remain contentious just as will the specific content of public values. This contentiousness is not entirely bad. Discourse about public values may be inherently desirable in much the same way as Dewey (1927) maintains that dialectic about the nature of public interest is instrumental to building strong communities.

Identifying Public Values

One finds in the public values literature a number of different approaches to identifying or suggesting public values. One can elicit public values inductively by scholarly means; for example, Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) conduct an extensive literature review of published works pertaining to public values and then organized themes by clusters. One can infer public values from case studies (e.g., Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2002; Feeney & Bozeman, 2007; Gaughan, 2011; Rogers & Kingsley, 2004). Increasingly, researchers have used questionnaires, generating data from either public managers or the general citizenry or both (Berman & West, 2012; Van Der Wal, De Graaf, & Lasthuizen, 2008). Some have conducted content analysis of public documents (Bengston, Webb, & Fan, 2004); for example, E. Fisher and colleagues (2010) examine the values articulated in U.S. federal legislation for nanotechnology and then tracked several years of subsequent programmatic action to determine if the later public values themes matched the public values presented originally as the rationale for the legislation.

Another approach (e.g., [Bozeman, 2002](#); [Bruijn & Dicke, 2006](#); [Seligman, 1998](#)) to identifying public values is to posit them and then present an argument for the posited public values. While such an approach is not common in research traditions seeking empirically based causal theories, it is quite common in normative political theory (e.g., Cohen & Arato, 1994) and moral philosophy (Hausman & McPherson, 2006; Rawls & Herman, 2000). While one might well ask, "by what authority do you posit public values?" it seems clear that an adequate answer is "no authority is needed." Several philosophical schools, including Dewey's (1927) pragmatism and Habermas' (1992) communitarianism (Delanty, 2002) and, for that matter, the Socratic tradition, encourage presentation and argumentation about values or in some cases assume argumentation as a fundamental premise.

Public Values and Change

Public values are historical, contextual, and to some degree consensual (Beck Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). Public values, by their very nature, are resistant to rapid change (Beck Jørgensen, 2006).

In line with the logic of punctuated equilibrium theory (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; True, Jones, & Baumgartner, 1999), Economist Joseph Stiglitz (2012) argues that fundamental beliefs unique to societies tend to be static social constructs that change only with the emergence of new attractive ideas that are salient enough to be accepted as conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom or societal beliefs change only after intellectual discourse or a current cataclysmic event disrupts the fabric of beliefs. In short, broad values change occurs either forcefully through some dramatic realization of a perceived intolerable social dysfunction or, more commonly, through a slowly dawning recognition of dysfunction and incremental changes requiring many years.

Even the most homogeneous and stable societies typically move slowly in changing public values; indeed, homogeneity may be a deterrent to public values change or a drag on the pace of change. According to some (West & Davis, 2011; Davis & West, 2009), a diversity of beliefs is a precondition to changing social construction of values and encouraging the emergence of new public values. Diversity establishes the opportunity for discourse and consideration of fundamental change (Lemke, 1993).

Change in public values depends in part on both the composition of the public sphere and levels of opportunity in society (Stiglitz, 2012). It can be argued that larger societies are comprised of smaller societies and that the degree of social distance among these typically diverse societies in part determines the potential and the pace of fundamental social change (such as changes in core public values). In these smaller societies, new ideas are generated, gain salience, and then are brought into the public sphere, at least if members of these smaller societies have access to the public sphere and legitimacy within it. If societies arbitrarily assume or assign hierarchies to socially distant groups, some groups will be disadvantaged in proffering ideas for change and the society's reservoir of ideas for change (Stiglitz, 2012), including change in public values will necessarily be diminished. In sum, public values change is very much a function of the ex ante characteristics of a society, particularly its degree of heterogeneity, stratification, and institutions for aggregating interests (Smith, 2004).

In considering the characteristics of a society, one looks to its social institutions as both a reflection of the society and as means of social change. In modern democratic nations (as opposed to, say, theocratic nations), governments and markets tend to be the primary institutional forces driving fundamental change and, thus, the relationships between public and private sector context and the boundaries between them have much to say about public values. (For more general treatments of the roles and reciprocal effects of governments and political authority and markets, see Bozeman, 1987; Dahl & Lindblom, 1953; Lindblom, 1977; Moulton, 2009.)

Public Values and Market Failure

Most market failure models deal with questions of externalities (Bator, 1958) or spillover effects and with technical efficiency in the pricing of goods and services. Moreover, as the market failure model is widely known, there is no need to provide detail about the model's basic points (useful accounts are provided by Bruce, 2001, and Anthoff & Hahn, 2010; Zerbe & McCurdy, 1999, provide a brief history of the model). It is perhaps helpful to point out that there is nothing in any familiar version of the market failure model pertaining to either equity or fairness. This neglect has not gone unnoticed by political scientists. As Dahl and Lindblom (1953) observe, policy analysis writ large might have taken a far different turn had

economists felt the same enthusiasm for defining an optimum distribution of income as for the optimum allocation of resources, if they had pushed with vigor the equalitarian notions that some of them believed their cursory explorations in ideal or preferred distributions pressed upon them. (p. 161)

However robust the available market-oriented framework, one invariant characteristic is the rhetoric of “government intervention.” Market failure models exclude a positive role for government; rather government is viewed as a last resort when markets have failed. Market failure pertains to allocating sector responsibilities and, importantly, it privileges the private sector. As [Bozeman \(2002; 2009\)](#), among others ([Anthoff & Hahn, 2010](#); [Vining & Weimer, 1990](#); [Wolf, 1987, 1993](#)), notes, markets fail and government fails and, unfortunately, the two institutions sometimes fail simultaneously. For this reason, among others, the market failure model and, indeed, much of the microeconomics-based reasoning that dominates policy analysis, provides few advantages for developing or assessing public values but often stands in contradistinction to public values theory and analysis.

Normative public value theory stands in sharp contrast to market failure theory, providing none of its advice about allocation efficiency and none of its precision in applying related economic tools to analytical tasks. Normative public value theory asks different questions, ones that do not privilege market (or government) action. The key institutional question from normative public values is as follows:

What combinations of organizations and institutions, working in what sets of interdependent relationships, and operating with what sets of policy and management instruments, seem most suited likely to achieve public values?

If this is the right question then, assuredly, the market failure model, focused as it is on strict allocation of activities between two unrealistically stereotyped sectors, cannot by itself provide an adequate approach to public values deliberations. It is important to note, however, that a recognition of the limitations of markets need not imply a commitment to government as the sole provider or even the most important provider of public values. Government may, in different cases, achieve public values, thwart them, or be irrelevant to them. Likewise, firms and markets have extremely diverse interactions with public values ([Schultze, 1977](#)).

[Donahue \(1991\)](#) tells us that market failure occurs when “prices lie—that is, when the prices of goods and services give false signals about their real value, confounding the communication between consumers and producers” (p. 18). Prices are distorted because of information asymmetries among participants in the market. The more alarming consideration is that inequality is perpetuated by the accumulation of the most pervasive asymmetries. In short, those who control the information get to disseminate the ideas that shape the market transactions.

The market failure model and the privileging of markets in policy analysis have given little, if any, purchase to public values deliberation. After providing discussions of the public sphere and progressive opportunity, we argue that the dominant neoclassical political economy framework not only fails to encourage these two public values but also undermines them. We examine an alternative framework from the field of social economics, the “embedded economy,” which is more compatible with an emphasis on public value achievement.

Normative Public Value Criteria Revisited

In the initial exposition of a theory of normative public values ([Bozeman, 2002](#)), a major element was the presentation of a set of “public values failure” criteria that are influenced by, but not equivalent to, the standard market failure model. Table 1 is an adaptation of the model, but with two new criteria added, each emphasized in the table.

Table 1. Public Values Criteria (Adapted from Bozeman, 2002).

Criterion	Definition	Illustration of public value failure and success
Creation, maintenance, and enhancement of the public sphere	<p>As a <i>public value</i>: Open public communication and deliberation about public values and about collective action pertaining to public values.</p> <p>As a <i>public value enabling institution</i>: The space, physical or virtual, in which the realization of the public sphere value occurs.</p>	<p>Failure: An authoritarian regime seizes control of the Internet or other social media in an effort to exert control of protestors and thereby thwarts open public communication.</p> <p>Success: A deliberative democracy group is established to bring together diverse stakeholders in a local environmental dispute and these stakeholders engage in free and open public values-related communication.</p>
Progressive opportunity	<p>An “equal playing field” is less desirable than collective actions and public policies addressing structural inequalities and historical differences in opportunity structures.</p>	<p>Failure: “Merit-based” policies that fail to distinguish the effects of opportunity structures on achievement.</p> <p>Success: Compensatory education programs.</p>
Mechanisms for values articulation and aggregation	<p>Political processes and social cohesion should be sufficient to ensure effective communication and processing of public values.</p>	<p>Failure: Combination of U.S. Congress’ seniority system and noncompetitive districts leading, in 1950s, to legislative bottlenecks imposed by just few committee chairs who held extreme values on civil rights, national security, and other issues.</p> <p>Success: The U.S. Congress’ seniority system reforms taking into account such factors related to relevant subject matter experience and expertise.</p>
Legitimate monopolies	<p>When goods and services are deemed suitable for government monopoly, private provision of goods and service is a violation of legitimate monopoly.</p>	<p>Failure: Private corporations negotiating under-the-table agreements with foreign sovereigns.</p> <p>Success: Uses of patent policy in allocating intellectual property rights.</p>
Imperfect public information	<p>Similar to the market failure criteria, public values may be thwarted when transparency is insufficient to permit citizens to make informed judgments.</p>	<p>Failure: Public officials developing national energy policies in secret with corporate leaders of energy companies.</p> <p>Success: City council’s widely advertised and open hearings about proposed changes in zoning.</p>
Distribution of benefits	<p>Public commodities and services should, <i>ceteris paribus</i>, be freely and equitably distributed. When “equity goods” have been captured by individuals or groups, “benefit hoarding” occurs in violation of public value.</p>	<p>Failure: Restricting public access to designated public use land.</p> <p>Success: Historical policies for the governance of national parks.</p>

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Criterion	Definition	Illustration of public value failure and success
Provider availability	When there is a legitimated recognition about the necessity of providing scarce goods and services, providers need be available. When a vital good or service is not provided because of the unavailability of providers or because providers prefer to ignore public value goods, there is a public values failure due to unavailable providers.	Failure: Welfare checks are not provided due to the lack of public personnel or failures of technology for electronic checking transactions. Success: Multiple avenues for rapid and secure delivery of income tax refunds.
Time horizon	Public values are long-run values and require an appropriate time horizon. When actions are calculated on the basis of an inappropriate short-term time horizon, there may be a failure of public values.	Failure: Policy for waterways that consider important issues related to recreation and economic development but fail to consider long-run implications for changing habitat for wildlife. Success: Measures taken to ensure long-term viability of pensions.
Substitutability vs. conservation of resources	Actions pertaining to a distinctive, highly valued common resource should recognize the distinctive nature of the resource rather than treat the resource as substitutable or submit it to risk based on unsuitable indemnification.	Failure: In privatization of public services, contractors have to post bond-ensuring indemnification, but provide inadequate warrants for public safety. Success: Fishing quotas or temporary bans allowing long-term sustainable populations of food fish.
Ensure subsistence and human dignity	In accord with the widely legitimated Belmont Code, human beings, especially the vulnerable, should be treated with dignity and, in particular, their subsistence should not be threatened.	Failure: Man-made famine, slave labor, political imprisonment. Success: Institutional Review Boards' protections of "vulnerable populations" including children, prisoners, and the mentally ill.

By this time, these normative public values model and its associated criteria are perhaps familiar to public values scholars as they have appeared in similar versions, in a number of publications (Bozeman, 2002, 2007; Bozeman & Sarewitz, 2011) and been applied in a variety of policy realms, including public health and medicine (Feeney & Bozeman, 2007; Gaughan, 2011; Slade, 2011), Internet policy (Rogers & Kingsley, 2004), environmental policy (Logar, 2011; Maricle, 2011; Meyer, 2011), and science and technology policy (Bozeman & Sarewitz, 2005; Valdivia, 2011). Thus, there seems no need to review the public values criteria thus far developed; rather, we focus on two new ones we are proposing.

There is no reason why public values or public values criteria need be immutable and, thus, revisiting the Bozeman (2002) criteria requires no particular justification other than the desire to maintain dynamism in public values research. For example, the progressive opportunity value scrutinized here has particular resonance in light of the fact that inequality has increased through much of the world since the early 2000s. Moreover, any of several putative public values may be well worth considering and we welcome others' attempts to suggest additions to the list.

Public Value Criterion: The Public Sphere

In 2007, Bozeman published *Public Values and Public Interest* a work motivated to some considerable extent by Bush-era public policies and by the early 2000s worldwide fascination with the so-called New Public Management reforms, premised on crude and underdeveloped notions about the workings of efficient markets. The efficient market hypothesis suggests that "prices fully reflect all available information. A precondition for this strong version of the hypothesis is that information and trading costs, the costs of getting prices to reflect information, are always zero" (Fama, 1991, p. 1575).

If efficient markets are characterized by full information and zero trading cost, why then is the political lobbying business a billion-dollar industry in the United States? Is it because markets are rarely efficient or is it because market efficiency is in some respect not especially relevant to achievement of public purpose? We argue that it is reasonable to consider that the United States' peculiar market inefficiencies stem not only from incomplete information about private goods' impacts but also due to incomplete or even nonexistent information about relevant public values. As Stiglitz (2012) notes, markets have no inherent moral character; thus, their capability to be efficient largely depends on the ideas and values that the public socially construes to shape them. This assertion requires us to consider precisely the types of questions that normative public values approaches pose about public values' origin, mechanisms of change, and relationships to social institutions, individuals, and collective citizens.

The Public Sphere: What Ought to Be Developed and Why

No matter the game, no matter how exalted or how pedestrian, no matter whether watched by millions or be handful of participants, every game, scotch, football, or chess requires a field of play. That field of play may be a vacant lot filled with thistles and briars, a prodigious state-of-the-art stadium or even a virtual space, but an arena is a precondition to the game. Nothing occurs in the absence of this functional space. Much the same is true with public values: with a "playing field" (institution) enabling free and open public discourse (public value), all other public values suffer potentially.

As stipulated above, the *public sphere* as a public value pertains to open public communication about public values. The public sphere is not our concept but rather has been developed by a number of scholars (e.g., Chambers, 2009; Fox & Miller, 1995; Fraser, 1990; Habermas, 1991; Somers, 1993) to describe the conceptual, physical, or even the virtual space (Castells, 2008; Gerhards & Schafer, 2010; Papacharissi, 2002) in which public values are discussed, shaped, developed, and revised. According to Benington (2010), the public sphere is

[A] democratic space which includes, but is not coterminous with, the state within which citizens address their collective concerns, and through which individual liberties have to be protected. This leads to a redefinition of public values of “What does the public most value?” but also in terms of “What adds value to the public sphere?” (p. 31)

While this is a useful conception of public sphere, it is not entirely consistent with the notion of public values used here. First, their definition seems to us to confound the public value and the institutions or particular “space” enabling the public value (in our terms, a public value institution). Second, we do not privilege individual liberty more than other public values. To be sure, individual liberty is vital in any democratic setting but so are such values as basic sustenance and public safety. Third, “collective concerns” seems a bit too encompassing. Nearly any meeting could meet the low bar of addressing collective concerns. In our version of the concept, the public sphere is a *sine qua non* for democratically formed public values and, thus, the protection of the sphere (including its creation, maintenance, and enhancement) is a core public value criterion.

Our definition of public sphere is quite a simple one: “open public communication and deliberation about public values and about collective action pertaining to public values.” The space in which the communication occurs is a “public value enabling institution.”

As seen in Table 1, an example of a public failure in the “creation, enhancement and maintenance of the public sphere” category is the use of the state’s technology and coercive apparatus to prevent communication among its citizens and between citizens and the outside world. Recently, this has occurred as nations disable the ability of rebelling, protesting, or otherwise mobilizing citizens to communicate via the Internet, social media, or cell phones (e.g., Flock, 2011; Giles & Marks, 2012; Herold, 2008; Tang & Sampson, 2012).

Trust and the Public Sphere

Public values change is predicated on both heterogeneity and the ability to bridge social distances in communication about public values. By virtue of inductive contractualism (Wenar, 2001), citizens help shape widely held values into public values. A fundamental assumption is that individual members’ willingness and ability to participate in shaping public values is in part contingent on trusting that social institutions, including government, will protect and conserve emergent public values. As Stiglitz (2012) notes, “[c]ooperation and trust are important in every sphere of society,” and it is easy to “underestimate the role of trust in making our economy work or the importance of the social contract that binds us together” (p. 121). Motivation to participate in the public sphere is, thus, contingent upon cooperation, mutual trust, and fairness (Beierle & Konisky, 2000; Mistzal, 2001) or, at least, an expectation that these are potentially achievable (Kydd, 2000).

When decision processes are perceived as stacked against some while advancing others, players may leave the game. Stiglitz (2012) notes that trust is the undergirding of social capital and that citizens participate when “people can feel confident that they will be treated well, with dignity, fairly” (p. 122). Thus, some degree of mutual respect is essential to the effective functioning of the public sphere (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002; Habermas, 1991). Inequality is especially inimical to the public sphere (Squires, 2002), in part because high degrees of inequality are almost always associated with stifled participation, and when the less equal do participate, they experience disadvantages in the articulation, deliberation, and acceptance of their ideas and values (Verba, 1987).

Inductive Contractualism as a Theory of Participation in the Public Sphere

We have argued citizens hold political beliefs contingent upon others’ beliefs (Feldman, 1988; Latané, Nowak, & Szamrej, 1990; Sinclair, 2012; Stiglitz, 2012) and upon the social and

institutional frameworks, especially media coverage (Altheide, 2002; Croteau, Hoynes, & Milan, 2011) and opinion leadership (Roch, 2005), that shape perceived social and political options. While not everyone accepts these premises, they receive considerable support in research and theory (see Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004, for an overview).

Modern social contract theory (E. Anderson, 1995, 2010; White, 2003) offers one useful framework to discuss how people come to develop ideas and participate in political discourse. Social contract theory suggests that members in a civil society behave according to perceptions of social covenant and that citizens' trust, respect, and cooperation are reinforced by equal treatment of all citizens (Silvers & Francis, 2005). Elizabeth Anderson (1999), one of the best-known philosophers of ethics espousing social contract theory, describes the relationship between equality and participation in social contract theory:

Equals are not marginalized by others. They are therefore free to participate in politics and the major institutions of civil society . . . Equals are not subject to cultural imperialism: they are free to practice their own culture, subject to the constraint of respecting everyone else. (p. 315)

Thus, it is through being recognized as equals that citizens agree to the social contract and are willing collectively to develop and adhere to the moral code in the public sphere (Wenar, 2001). The theory of contractualism suggests that in heterogeneous societies with competing value sets one might subjugate her values to those of the larger society if she "rationally calculates that it is in her self-interest to subscribe to a community moral code rather than go her own way" (Bozeman, 2007, p. 125).

The contractual theory of participation in the public sphere loses its potency when citizens' ability to participate is abridged or when resources are highly unequal and resources mitigate participation in the public sphere. Thus, the public values, public sphere, and progressive opportunity are interdependent.

Public Sphere and Attainment of Other Public Values

We argue that the public sphere value is a linchpin for other values inasmuch as it reinforces trust, respect, and cooperation, generally antecedents to accomplish joint work and consensus on public values. Furthermore, as a "precursor public value" public sphere stands in close relation to public value identified previously by Bozeman (2007). In particular, the "human dignity" public value is tied to public sphere because the latter in a sense takes into account the affirming of the importance of individuals and implicitly assumes that individual citizens will have the wherewithal (education, competence, respect, and affirmation) to participate in the public sphere. Similarly, the value "mechanisms for values articulation and aggregation" is closely intertwined with the public sphere value. While there is no necessity that open public deliberation be the only means of values aggregation (direct democracy is not always practical), it certainly seems to support effective values aggregation.

Public Value Criterion: Progressive Opportunity

The idea of progressive opportunity is captured in America's greatest myth (Degler, 1987; Stiglitz, 2012) the "land of opportunity" and in the vernacular of the "opportunity society" (Haskins & Sawhill, 2009). To reiterate, we define progressive opportunity as "the social conditions requisite to ensure that members of a society have equal ability to exploit their individual abilities and to achieve the goals they have set for themselves."

There is at least some evidence that the United States, mythology notwithstanding, is no exemplar of the progressive opportunity. According to a Pew Research Center Survey (Pew

Research Center, 2012, June 4) of more than 2,000 adults representing a cross-section of American citizens, released in early 2012, 66% believe there are strong or very strong conflicts between the rich and the poor, a near 20% increase since the previous time the question was asked just 2 years earlier.

The Pew study provides empirical heft to a growing alarm (Kuziemko & Statcheva, 2013) about inequality in the United States and objective measures of inequality corroborate the concerns expressed by the American public. The Gini coefficient (named after its inventor, Italian sociologist Corrado Gini) measures differences among values in a frequency distribution and is commonly used to measure income and wealth (e.g., Ben-Porath, Gilboa, & Schmeidler, 1997; Datt, 1999; Solt, 2009). Ranging between zero and one (or, when there is a desire to dispense with decimals, between 0 and 100), the scores reflect measures of inequality, with a higher score indicating more inequality.

According to the authoritative U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA; 2011),² the Gini coefficient for nations' family incomes ranges between .23 (Sweden) and .70 (Namibia). A score of .23 tells us little about the well-being if there were virtually no wealth or income in a nation and, by the same token, a score of .70 would likely prove acceptable if it reflected a significant gap between a nation's very wealthy lowest decile on incomes and its incredibly wealthy highest decile. But, in the real world, a world where one immediately knows the difference between say Canada (Gini = .32) and Bangladesh (Gini = .33), the statistic can be useful in analyzing trends for nations of reasonably comparable wealth and income.

As one might perhaps expect, all nations in Western Europe are substantially more equal in incomes than is the United States (CIA, 2011; Stiglitz, 2012). Somewhat more surprising, the 2011 U.S. Gini coefficient of .45 places the nation in the company of a number of countries known less for their "opportunity societies" and more for political and economic instability, including, for example, Uganda, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Ecuador (M. Fisher, 2011). However, given the point above regarding comparability, it is not necessarily a cause for alarm that the U.S. Gini index is in the same range as some desperately poor nations. It is perhaps more interesting that China (.41), for many years one of the leading countries in the race to inequality, is now more equal than the United States and that Russia (.42), increasingly unstable and in the throes of a Hobbesian form of predatory capitalism, also is more equal than the United States. Even ardent anti-socialists, ones dismissing any Scandinavian comparison with the United States, would do well to muse about the gap between the United States and such capitalist bastions as the United Kingdom (.34), South Korea (.31), Australia (.30), and Germany (.27), as well as about the fact that in each of these relatively high productivity nations, the Gini indices are trending down (toward greater equality).

Public values stand in relation to income inequality as both cause and effect. *As an effect*: when economic cleavage wreaks havoc, one inevitable consequent is at least a temporary diminishing of public values, regardless of the particular content of those values (Boyte, 2005). A key element of public values is the degree of "normative consensus" (Nabatchi, 2012). Economic cleavages may undermine normative consensus, even in societies (such as the United States) where there is limited normative consensus and where such as exists focuses on the value of economic competition (L. R. Anderson, Mellor, & Milyo, 2008; Ritzman & Tomaskovic-Devey, 1992). *As a causal agent*: when public values are insufficient to compete with well resourced and strongly organized private economic values, the weakness of public values may serve as a cause or at least an enabler of income inequality (Sen, 1997; Stiglitz, 2012). When citizens are less clear about agreed upon rights, duties, obligations, and privileges, then the social environment becomes more conducive to the substitution of unchecked and sometimes pernicious private action.

If norms and public values fail, then legalism, formalism, and public policy can sometimes serve as a bulwark against unfettered private economic interests. However, we are at a period in

U.S. history when traditional formal political institutions' abilities to serve as a guarantor of public values seem ever more impotent (Hacker & Pierson, 2010; Jacobs & King, 2009; Kelly, 2009). When public institutions abrogate public value stewardship then private interests may easily subvert even the most fundamental public values. High levels of inequality strain public institutions' abilities to conserve existing public values or to facilitate the emergence of new ones. This outcome is all the more troubling when one contemplates the role of the market as de facto or residual arbitrator of values and the possibility, supported by at least some economists (Matsuyama, 2000; Mookherjee & Ray, 2002), that the market does not simply reflect or reinforce inequality but rather depends upon it and creates it.

In considering the idea that inequality, at least at some level, could be an important social concern and an inhibitor of public values, we must at the same time consider the view that *perfect* equality is neither desirable (Morales, 1996) nor possible (Paglin, 1975). Perfect equality fails to recognize that some people work harder or are more talented. Perfect equality may be an undesirable goal for a quite different reason—namely, that contemporary levels of inequality must be understood in terms of the historical trajectory by which inequality occurred. Absent such reflection, moves to correct inequality are not adequately calibrated. Sen (1992) tells us that

[e]ven though such rhetoric (e.g. “all men are born equal”) is typically taken to be part and parcel of egalitarianism, the effect of ignoring the interpersonal variations can, in fact, be deeply inegalitarian, in hiding the fact that equal consideration for all may demand very unequal treatment in favour of the disadvantaged. (p. 1)

In recognition of the infeasibility of perfect equality as a social goal, the United States and many nations pursue, instead of perfect equality, “equal opportunity.” Unfortunately, equal opportunity goals often are insufficient to achieve a suitable degree of *either* equality or opportunity. The primary reason for the insufficiency of equal opportunity is simple and widely (though not universally) known: the conversion of opportunity into successful outcomes is not guaranteed (Sen, 1992). For some, social and political interferences challenge those conversions: some interests, groups of persons, and individuals have a long historical legacy of disadvantage (e.g., codified law that disincentives voting) that impede their ability to take advantage of “equal opportunity” in the same ways or to the extent of individuals who do not have this legacy of disadvantage.

Stiglitz (2012) in his path breaking but controversial work, *The Price of Inequality*, depicts the ways in which the wealthiest Americans have reshaped markets to allow for rent-seeking and advancing new opportunities to accumulate wealth. Stiglitz argues that by setting the conditions for inefficient markets (e.g., through private policies that promulgate rent-seeking) they in fact inform the current and future practices of the market. Moreover, he argues that the wealthiest 1% of citizens shape public values through the control of the ideas the public has access to (through media outlets) and the manipulation of politicians (through lobbying). This small sub-group of society, with all its financial power, informs the rest of the society about what it values and strives to reinforce these values in both private market actions and public policy. As Stiglitz (2012) notes sardonically,

American inequality didn't just happen. It was created. Market forces played a role, but it was not market forces alone. In a sense, that should be obvious: economic laws are universal, but not growing inequality—especially the amounts sized by the upper 1 percent—is a distinctly American “achievement.” (p. 12)

Hausman and McPherson (2006) argue that egalitarian societies work harder than others to preserve social cohesion, such that government policies and institutions actively work to maintain some semblance of equality. Typically, such societies promote massive redistributions of

goods, service, and income from the rich to the poor. Whether these redistributions are economically efficient is immaterial to their objective. In societies fundamentally concerned with just distributions, assessments must be made about to whom, what, when, and how goods and services are distributed (Stone, 2011). Accordingly, these decisions cause considerable distributive conflicts over two primary objectives: equality and efficiency. Equality concerns the fair distribution of societal goods among people (Friedman, 2002); efficiency concerns achieving the most, best, or preferable ratio of societal goods or services (outputs) to societal resources (inputs; Frederickson, 2010). To put it another way, efficiency seeks to maximize the total value of resources for members in a society (Weimer & Vining, 2009). Thus, equality is a measure of just distributions in society, while efficiency is a measure of productivity. In our best summation, distributions of social benefits, including opportunity, are inextricably linked to *societal* efficiency. Oftentimes, equality and efficiency are “thought to be in a zero-sum relationship: the more we have of one, the less we have of the other” (Stone, 2011, p. 80). But this assumption requires some scrutiny.

Okun’s (1975) leaky bucket metaphor demonstrates the trade-off between equality and efficiency: a government transfer of one dollar from the rich to the poor results in less than a dollar increase for the poor. It has been argued that this trade-off exists for at least two reasons: (a) administrative machinery to redistribute societal goods is a wasteful (or inefficient) use of societal resources and (b) the elimination of differential rewards provides disincentives for savings and investments and decreases people’s motivation to be productive and successful. If Okun’s leaky bucket theory holds, then equality and efficiency are at odds. Many scholars have argued the existence of the equality-efficiency trade-off; especially, for example, in unemployment benefits (Card & Levine, 2000; Katz & Meyer, 1990; Lalive, van Ours, & Zewimuller, 2006; Moffit, 1985; Moffit & Nichol森, 1982) that create moral hazard. As argued by Mortensen (1977), the unemployed weigh the opportunity costs of forgone leisure time and strategize to achieve the most optimal wages, when considering re-entry into the labor market. It is theorized that these considerations by the unemployed forestall their re-entry and can increase unemployment over time. In addition, Beranek and Kamerschen (2011) theorize that increases in benefits can cause the unemployed to be more selective in the choice of a new job, resulting in employment delays. In short, theory suggests that unemployment benefits serve as a disincentive to return to work.

Alternatively, others, particularly Blank (2002), argue against an inherent efficiency-equality trade-off, suggesting that both can be achieved through redistributions that are conditioned on morally acceptable behaviors. Blank argues that policies that impose behavioral requirements are unlikely to suffer the trade-off. Welfare-to-work programs provide assistance to the poor while also requiring that they participate in job search and job application programs. According to Blank (2002), such programs have the potential to “substantially reduce the inefficiencies that may be associated with a transfer, because they condition the transfer upon a behavioral response that reduces the costs” (p. 16). Thus, the benefit is received conditional upon morally acceptable behaviors, thus decreasing the possibility of moral hazard. As a specific policy example, Blank offers the experimental Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) implemented in 1994 to aid in the transition of women from welfare into employment. With a true randomized experimental design, it was concluded that the combination of financial incentive programs with job search and job support services increased both employment and income (Blank, Card, & Robins, 2000). By eliminating the potential for moral hazard, welfare to work programs can in some instances simultaneously increase equality and efficiency. Embracing progressive opportunity as a public value does not require one to abjure either equality or efficiency.

There is no equal opportunity when members of society have remarkably different levels of resources available for the exploitation of opportunity. The idea of progressive opportunity is to extend compensatory action to nearly every social realm characterized by competition or by allocation of scarce resources. In that sense, progressive opportunity is a nodal public value

because it has a salutary effect on many other public values. The question, of course, is whether there is any reason to believe that, even in a nation that has as its conceit “the land of opportunity,” there is any proclivity for the voluntary sacrifice of some individual advantage for the long-term good perhaps achievable by a commitment to progressive opportunity.

While remaining a contentious proposition, many have argued that we are all better off as a society, not “only” morally but also socially and economically, if the disadvantaged are not permanently disadvantaged. One way in which we are better off is that the public sphere becomes more vital and effective with the inclusion of able participants. In short, progressive opportunity and the public sphere are reinforcing public values.

Two New Public Value Criteria: How Connected to the Public Values Literature?

One connection of the two new public values, progressive opportunity and public sphere, to the more general public values literature is simply to recognize that they have been addressed directly or indirectly in others’ public values scholarship. As noted above, the public values topic has become much more popular in recent years and has had the good fortune to attract a wide array of excellent thinkers, especially in public administration. However, some excellent work on public values has occurred outside the public administration literature. Thus, for example, Amartya Sen (1992, 1997) provides landmark work on equality *as a public value* but did not discuss public value in the same manner or by the same definitions as used in the public administration literature. Many public administration scholars examine inequality or progressive opportunity in relation to public values and at least a few have focused on the public sphere. For example, Bruijn and Dicke (2006) discuss inequality as a public value in their analysis of liberalized utilities, Beck Jørgensen (2006) discusses the evolution of equality as a public value in Denmark, and [Nabatchi \(2012\)](#) examines the role of equality in enabling political participation.

The idea of the public sphere has less often been taken up in the public values literature. [Benington \(2009, 2011\)](#) views public sphere as so important that he defines public values in terms of the public sphere, suggesting that public values are whatever adds value to the public sphere. Witesman and Walters’ (2013) take on the public sphere is that it is difficult to even attend to public values without thinking of their connection to the public sphere. Clarke (2010) sees the public sphere and public values as so intertwined that the diminution of one diminishes the other. In short, there are threads of concern with the public sphere in a many studies of public values and even when not addressed directly some authors simply assume the public sphere when discussing social processes for judging public values.

The Embedded Economy: Rethinking the Political Economy Context of Public Values

The intuitive appeal of the word “market” owes much to its claim as the arena in which value transactions occur or, at least, exchange of valued resources. In a world of finite resources, market transactions inevitably result in variable distributions of societal benefits and burdens. To some extent, the very idea of markets implies inequality ([Walder, 1996](#)). Unsurprisingly, those persons with the greatest accumulation of assets valued in market transactions tend to acquire greater societal benefits and leave for others disproportionate societal burdens. When the institutions of government and the economy are viewed as competing and the two are at loggerheads, public values get lost in the apparent competition between institutional competitors. Arguably ([Hausman, 1989](#)), the ability of markets to function “efficiently” (in terms of supply and demand technical efficiencies at the center of the neoclassical tradition) hinges in part on ethical and moral justifications for the inequalities that inexorably result from efficient markets.

These justifications, as well as enabling frameworks for enhancing and even conducting market transactions, generally rely on both political rhetoric and public policy (Aune, 2002). However, the neoclassical economics tradition, though now in ascendance, has rivals.

The Invention of the Disembedded Economy

According to Hausman and McPherson (2006), utilitarians want to achieve through welfare economics what egalitarians want to achieve through redistributive policy and libertarians through protections of freedom—an ethical distribution of benefits and burdens such that people will continue to engage in future market transactions. The political economy tradition perhaps most closely aligned with public values is *social economics*, a splinter group in economics focused on the intersection of economic, social, and political ideas and their implications for a just society. While there is no particular methodological orthodoxy among economists adhering to this tradition, there tends to be more focus on philosophy and economic history. Social economists are among those who have developed a historically informed theoretical framework contrasting notions of the “embedded” and “disembedded” economy as an explanation of the role of markets in societies and cultures. The term “disembedded economy” seems to have originated (Stanfield, 1989) with Karl Polanyi (1957).

In their overview of the literature, Champlin and Knoedler (2004) describe the disembedded economy thusly:

[T]he economic sphere of life is considered separate from the social and political sphere, and each sphere is understood as having its own rules or laws of motion . . . The essence of disembeddedness is that the economy operates according to a natural order, but society does not. The will of human beings as expressed in cultural norms or political processes is reduced to a ‘constraint’ on the economic sphere of life. (p. 894)

Public Values Implications of the Disembedded Economy

The body of work known as “moral economy” (Arnold, 2001; Booth, 1994) draws extensively from social economics and examines the origins of disembedded economies in ancient cultures (Rothenberg, 1992; Scheidel & Von Reden, 2002) and sometimes in contemporary ones (Stanfield, 1989). Polanyi’s (1957) work provides an important point of departure for this body of work, one relevant for the study and perhaps the attainment of public values. Polanyi’s thesis is that classical economists (and, by extension, today’s neoclassical economists) treaded down an injurious path when they began to focus almost exclusively on scarcity and the efficient allocation of scarce goods and services rather than on provisioning and related view scarcity as a natural law but provisioning of basic needs as subject to unpredictable social relations. The very idea of the “invisible hand” is in part owing to Adam Smith’s criticism of mercantilism and his view of the embeddedness of economic and political realms (Rothschild, 2000). For Smith, the invisible hand is an ideal construct. However, many subsequent theorists have adopted it as an empirical explanation of transactions (though an unverifiable one).

The “great transformation” described by Polanyi (1957) is the notion of the self-regulating market and, in particular, the idea that most aspects of society can be viewed as commodities subject to monetization. According to Champlin and Knoedler (2004), industrialization led to the view of the market being fully coterminous with the economy, understandable in terms of predictable laws, even natural laws, and separate from the chaotic realms of politics, social norms, and culture. That is to say, the economy was viewed as “disembedded.” This partitioning resulted in, according to Champlin and Knoedler (2004),

a disembedded economy that not only divides social life into two distinct spheres of life but also ranks them. The economy, governed by natural a priori laws, takes precedence over the transitory, limited and possibly ill-considered activities of the “noneconomic” sector. The result is that in disembedded economy, democracy and the public interest are inevitably trumped by economic concerns. (p. 898)

If one fully equates political economy with the market, then the idea of public interest (Flathman, 1966; Held, 1970) and, perhaps, public values seems to have little meaning. The contemporary obsession with economic growth seems part and parcel of the view of political economy as optimized private interests, explaining perhaps the tenacity of the myth that “a rising tide lifts all boats” even in the face of strong contrary evidence (Danziger & Gottschalk, 1986; Edwards & Lawrence, 2013; Gladwell, 2008). As Stiglitz (2012) notes, if

America were really a land of opportunity, the life chances of success—of say, winding up in the top 10 percent—of someone born to a poor or less-educated family would be the same as those of someone born to a rich, well-educated and well-connected family. (p. 18)

Presently, the United States and most industrialized nations fall far short of the Stiglitz mark.

Conclusion: Progressive Opportunity and the Public Sphere as Public Values Cornerstones

The Ghanaian symbol Sankofa embodies the essential nature of progressive opportunity and signifies the importance of historical context for judging implications of progressive opportunity. The Adinkra symbols include one depicting a bird with its head turned backward taking an egg off its back, a metaphor suggesting the need to take from the past what will allow progress in the present and future. The history of the United States, as many Western democratic nations, is replete with episodes of neglect and exploitation of some segments of its population. Thus, in the spirit of Sankofa, progressive opportunity requires a simultaneous look to the future and analysis of the past and doing so engenders mutual respect and enables wider participation and legitimization of the public sphere.

Progressive opportunity and a healthy public sphere are inextricably intertwined. When the public sphere malfunctions and citizens are excluded (either through legal barriers or resource barriers) from effective participation in the public sphere, the idea of progressive opportunity does not apply to the excluded. It is not possible to simultaneously exclude and provide enhanced opportunity; the exclusion trumps any other form of opportunity. By the same token, inequality (at some thresholds) and inhibited opportunity almost certainly prove fatal to any attempt to improve the public sphere through more extensive or robust participation.

If a lack of opportunity is injurious to the public sphere and if a dysfunctional public sphere is, in turn, detrimental to opportunity, then how does one address the two entangled public values once one or both have been undercut? One approach is to shore up other, related, public values. Elsewhere, Bozeman (2007) suggests the importance of remedying public values failures in political interest aggregation. In the United States, one of the greatest enemies of effective interest aggregation is the undue influence of money on politics, especially in light of the development of legal precedent from the Citizens United case (Hasen, 2010). As Hasen (2012) observes, the decision, which some viewed as rationalizing case law on lobbying regulations, is best viewed as a state legitimization of a socially inefficient rent-seeking activity. The ability to spend unlimited amounts of money seems redolent of the public values failure Bozeman (2002) refers to as “benefit hoarding,” in this case the benefit in question being the ability to petition elected representatives. Unfortunately, the Citizens United case is just one of many instances in which public policies claiming to enhance participation have the effect of damaging the public sphere. A more

recent case is the spate of state government's voting policies requiring more extensive and arguably exclusionary personal identification as a prerequisite to voting, a policy Levitt (2012) refers to as "election deform."

The disabling of the public sphere is a nearly inevitable consequent of extreme inequality and the quashing of opportunity. Markets are dependent on the public sphere but are largely inured to it. While we agree that markets have no inherent morality, markets are cold arbiters (Shamir, 2008), especially if one believes that markets inherently conduce inequality (Matsuyama, 2000; Mookherjee & Ray, 2002).

While this article is chiefly normative in its goals and focus, we feel that normative studies often have important implications for empirical research (and vice versa). One area of public values empirical research requiring attention is the extent to which public values are shared (or the extent to which there are cleavages) among citizens, political officials, and public administrators. Currently, there are several studies drawing public values data from public administrators (Andersen, Beck Jørgensen, Kjeldsen, Pedersen, & Vrangbæk, 2012; Beck Jørgensen, 2006; Van der Wal et al., 2008; Vrangbæk, 2009), very few presenting data on citizens' public values (Brewer & Gross, 2005, provide relevant experiment-based data), and no studies charting the public values of elected political officials. Moreover, studies are needed comparing systematically (i.e., with equivalent data sources) citizens', public administrators', and elected officials' public values. In theoretical discussions of public values, it is all too easy to lose sight of the "on the ground" practical issues of values identification, adjudication, and implementation. With existing research, we have partial answers to the question "what are the public values" but absent research on these practicalities it will be difficult to answer the question "what can be public values?"

More research is needed on the relation of sectors and public value. While there is a robust public value research and an equally robust literature on public-private differences (Perry & Rainey, 1988; Rainey, Backoff, & Levine, 1976) and "publicness" (Bozeman, 1987, 2013; Moulton, 2009; for literature overviews, see Andrews, Boyne, & Walker, 2011; Pesch, 2008), the two literature streams are not often united. This is easily explained: Almost all the publicness literature is empirical and explanatory whereas the preponderance of public values literature is normative. Elsewhere, [Bozeman and Moulton \(2011\)](#) suggest both the need and possibilities for integrating normative questions raised by public values with empirical issues examined in studies of publicness. To this point, only a few (Miller & Moulton, 2013; Moulton, 2012; Slade, 2011) have taken up the formidable task of dealing simultaneously with public values and organizational or institutional publicness.

A weakness in almost all public values research, one easily remedied at least in theory, is that it is very much national in its focus. A reading of country-focused research shows us that Denmark is very different from the United States and the United Kingdom is different from both. But we can only draw interesting hypotheses absent research that is cross-national in its focus.

A deeper knowledge of the empirical bases and strengths of sectors and publicness is a key to better understanding of the prospects for public values in various institutional settings. Societies have only a few institutions for choice, markets and government being the most prominent. Governments can directly advance public values, and usually either do so or at least claim to do so. In democratic societies based on viable social compacts covenants among citizens almost always include references to core public values. Citizens expect that governments will support, preserve, or pursue public values (Frederickson, 1997). Markets sometimes advance public values in important ways, but do so only coincidentally. When governments subvert public values, citizens' expectations are dashed, but the point is that expectations exist and potentially affect social change. Often, when governments preside over massive public values failures, angry or disappointed citizens often seek redress, especially given a healthy public sphere. Only with better practical, empirical knowledge of the actual (as opposed to the theorized) abilities of

institutions to advance public values is it possible substantially to improve the allocation of roles among sectors and institutions. Perhaps an increased focus on the embedded economy and the proliferation of work on social economics can bring economic reasoning and public values reasoning more closely together.

When we conceive of markets solely in neoclassical terms, debating the morality of markets is not unlike pondering whether sharks have a moral sense. We may appreciate sharks' remarkable biological efficiency and their contributions to ocean ecologies, we may even have an aesthetic appreciation for sharks, but when sharks attack we do not appeal to their moral sense. We look elsewhere for succor and safety. Likewise, neither moral argument nor an appreciation of market efficiency affords a good defense against the market and its vicissitudes. By contrast, we should expect the public sphere to provide a space for moral argument, especially when a society's progressive opportunity structure gives agency to all its citizens.

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Notes

1. Benington and Moore (2011) use the term "philosophical public values" to mean much the same as our term "normative public values." We would be inclined to use their term just to avoid confusion, except it does not seem to highlight the essential difference between the usages. In our usage, public values reflect a society's core commitments and aspirations, as legitimated not only in cultural norms but also political action, ergo "normative." Philosophical is too broad.
2. In addition to drawing from the Central Intelligence Agency (2011), this overview of inequality statistics draws from and an *Atlantic Monthly* article (Fischer, 2011) based on the figures presented in the *Factbook*.

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