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Rethinking Models of Evaluation: Sustainability as the Goal of International Cultural Organisations[1]

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Abstract

The purpose and conduct of organisational evaluation is variously defined and understood. With the shift to the 'new managerialism' and the steady advance of audit culture in the public sector, evaluation models have proliferated but they are often narrowed to crude measures of impact and performance. They subject people to unhelpful, top-down forms of appraisal and accountability in the interests of transparency and economic efficiency with little respect afforded to the multiple perspectives and divergent goals of the actors involved. There is often a lack of clarity about *what* is being evaluated and from *whose* perspective.

This paper traces the development of the Cultural Value Model (CVM). It was developed as part of UK-wide research programme aimed at rethinking how we assess the value of cultural activities. The primary objective of the CVM is to provide an analytical and methodological framework for re-conceiving models of evaluation. In particular, it shifts the frame of analysis away from impact to value. Our project aimed to deliver a robust, evidence-based understanding of the changing cultural value of the British Council (BC) and BBC World Service (BBCWS). These publically funded international organisations are an integral part of the UK's diplomatic infrastructure and subject to stringent accountability measures to satisfy diverse stakeholders. They are experiencing rapid and convulsive change in response to financial, technological and geopolitical forces and their purpose and value is being questioned.

In the paper we argue that the CVM, in fostering a more engaged, participatory approach to performance evaluation challenged and even subverted existing practices but with mixed results. In the case of the BC, it generated a high degree of interest and engagement to the extent that it is currently being adopted and integrated into organisational practices. In contrast, the BBCWS were more resistant to innovation believing that their audience ratings and internal reviews suffice. The flexible adaptability of the CVM presents an opportunity for other organisations to move from away from top-down performance and impact assessment towards a more inclusive, reflective and sustainable model of value. However we need to get a better understanding the organisational constraints that obstruct innovation if more participatory models of learning, monitoring and evaluation are to intervene in social and organisational processes and achieve sustainable models of good practice.

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1. Introduction

Evaluation can be understood as the 'systematic application of social research procedures in assessing the conceptualization and design, implementation, and utility of social intervention programmes' (Rossi & Freeman, 1985 page 19). It is a rapidly evolving field (Green & McClintock, 1991) with a dizzying array of innovation in the application of new methods, techniques and approaches constantly emerging (Hites et al., 2013; Miller & Fredericks, 2006; Mills, Crone, James, & Johnston, 2012). With the advance of neo-liberal forms of governance, and associated forms of 'new managerialism' and audit culture, accountability and transparency have moved centre stage in public sector organisations (Deem, 1998; Shore, 2008). New technologies of governance require new methods of accountability. But methods are not neutral tools. Methods are performative. They shape and in turn are shaped by social and organisational factors (Gillespie, 2013). Impact evaluation is but the latest manifestation of neo-liberal forms of governance and has become a pervasive activity in organisational culture but its rationale and benefit are questionable (Epstein & Klerman, 2012). How is it possible to attribute impact to an identifiable and measurable cause? How relevant are non-measurable variables? Can evaluation indicators be established for the important qualitative aspects of organisational, social, cultural life (Bell & Morse, 2008, 2011)?

The current interest in the development of evaluation structures which focus on participatory methods and on complex cultural phenomena comes out a growing dissatisfaction with neo-liberal forms of accountability and impact measurement (Coll-Serrano, Carrasco-Arroyo, Blasco-Blasco, & Vila-Lladosa, 2012; Daigneault, Jacob, & Tremblay, 2012). When it comes to international cultural organisations Like the BC and BBCWS, measuring the impact of cultural activities poses very particular challenges, especially if seeking to monetise culture and attribute an economic value or a return on investment (Skuse, Gillespie and Powers, 2012; Gillespie, 2011). The Cultural Value project funded by the AHRC sought to rebalance a prevalent focus on measuring the instrumental value of culture with a greater attention to the intrinsic value of cultural activities. (Gillespie and Bell et al., 2014).

2. The Cultural Value Project – seeking a method

Culture, as Raymond Williams pointed out in *Keywords*, is one of the most complicated words in the English language (1976: 87). Add to it the term value, which is almost equally polyvalent, and we are faced with a considerable analytical and methodological challenge. Our project aimed at understanding the changing cultural value of the BBC World Service (WS) and the British Council (BC) at a critical moment in their history. These key national-to-global institutions have been the voice and face of Britain overseas for some eight decades, connecting overseas publics to the UK and in so doing bringing a range of economic, political and cultural benefits to Britain. Our main argument is that cultural value – the communicative, connective and creative benefits that these organisations generate in interaction with their audiences and users – is the catalyst of all other forms of value. However, it is not recognised as such because economic and other instrumental forms of value dominate current thinking and models of assessment. Our Cultural Value Model (CVM) redresses this imbalance and provokes new ways of thinking about and doing assessment.

Until recently, WS and BC were funded by Grant-in-Aid by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as two key cultural components of the UK's diplomatic infrastructure. Since April 2014 the BBCWS has been funded by the licence fee payer as part of the BBC's Global News Division. The BC now only gets only 25% of its funding from the FCO. Such shifts in funding and governance, combined with the impact of new communications technologies and new configurations of global publics, mean that these organisations are at a critical time of change. Their value is being questioned from a number of directions. How can the use of public money to benefit overseas publics be justified at a time of domestic austerity? Economic returns and accountability, concepts of culture and ethos, the very concept of public service itself, are issues at the centre of public debate about how we understand and value these organisations (Gillespie and Bell et al 2014).

BC and BBCWS are very well known and respected abroad. But 'at home' in the UK, awareness of their activities is negligible. Little academic research has been done into the cultural value they generate and channel, although this project was able to build upon seven year's prior research into WS at The Open University (Gillespie and

Webb 2012). Our project connected in a dynamic way two key components of cultural value set out by the AHRC's remit to develop a deeper: i) 'understanding cultural value in an international setting', and (ii) 'foster reflective individuals and engaged citizens'. It was an ambitious project in aiming not just to deliver a new academic understanding of the ways in which BC and WS in their interactions with users and audiences generate cultural value abroad and at home, but a practical product to help these and other organisations conceive and assess cultural value. This paper is centrally concerned with describing the development of the Cultural Value Model or CVM. In the following sections we will describe what the research team understood by the term Cultural Value (CV). We discuss why it emerged as important to understand CV in measurable terms in organisations that are tasked with providing cultural relations activities and international news. We show how the measurement of value (in both quantitative and qualitative terms) can contribute to a wider discussion concerning the assessment of organisations of all kinds in terms of their performance and impact. We demonstrate how the assessment of 'value' as distinct from performance and impact, provides a different vantage point and from which to analyse contemporary organisations and professional practices. Building on this we will describe the development of the CVM and demonstrate how it was applied within projects at the BC and BBCWS. Finally, we will discuss how our findings contribute to the discussion about the assessment of organisations more generally.

We use the term 'cultural value' to encompass the multi-dimensional nature of the benefits that BC and WS bring to citizens overseas and in the UK via their interactions and activities. Cultural value has many components but at the heart of the matter are the *creative, communicative and connective benefits* that these organisations bring to audiences and funders, as well as to the organisations themselves and other stakeholders (Negus and Pickering 2004).

Why is measurement of value important and how does this question link to wider questions about measurement of performance and impact in organisations? Over the last forty years business and management science has moved from metrics gathering to performance measurement to impact analysis and increasingly to value appraisal. As Holden has argued, the value of culture is difficult if not impossible to

measure by statistics alone (Holden, 2004) and the importance of value over more established assessments such as performance has been noted (Ong & Chen, 2014). What others have suggested and we have argued is that value is not readily definable or quantifiable. Value is judged differently according to the perspectives of specific people, groups or organisations in which hierarchies of value are established. But when it comes to cultural value it is often assumed that universal and objective standards should and must prevail. The task of CVM assessment is to take these apparently opposing positions into account. The CVM can support contradiction and paradox and in so doing avoids the pitfalls of either subjectivist or objectivist accounts of cultural value by bringing them into dialogue.

2.1 Cultural Value and Assessment

If value is a concept of growing importance in the assessment of organisations and their performance then the measurement of value must be key to this assessment. The point and use of a CVM is to provide stakeholders within and their partners outside an organisation with an approach to assessment of the value of the work they are engaged with. If they do not get an 'added-value' from the CVM then there can be little defence for investing in it in the first place. Users are at the heart of both these organisations. It is their very raison d'etre so our model also places assessment by audiences and users at the heart of the model. In line with the contemporary concern with empirical and participatory assessment, the CVM emerging from this research represents a shift in intention on a number of scales:

- A shift from the monitoring of others to the understanding of ourselves
- From assessment of performance and impact to assessment of value
- From unrealistic and painful striving for continual excellence to managing sustainable balance

These are all major objectives of the CVM described in this paper.

2.2 Research Setting

In order to develop our model and to reflect multiple perspectives of 'value' in each organisational context, we needed an ethnographic understanding of the culture of each organisation (Gillespie and Webb, 2012). Such an understanding included not only an analysis of their histories and relationship to government but also how they

imagine and engage their users and audience and how they measured their success or failure – the methods used to evaluate their practice and how diverse data sets were put to use for different purposes (Gillespie, 2013). It also include an analysis of the changing face of organisational work under the impact of new technologies, the manner and delivery of projects, team and personal reflections on management styles and organisational change. We wanted to gain a broad sense of the working practices of each organisation. A rounded assessment of these elements formed the basis for subsequent modelling.

In October and November 2013 we ran workshops for staff and stakeholders in the BC and BBCWS. The workshops were organised making use of an approach called Imagine (Bell, 2011; Coudert & Larid, 2011; Kalopedis & Plan, 2007; Maher & Plan, 2006) which is specifically designed to help groups, by use of simple diagrams called Rich Pictures, to come to agreement about issues and concerns which are of common interest to all group members. The Imagine methodology is also a basis for criteria assessment making use of a diagrammatic form of composite indicators called an amoeba although at the outset this was not expected to be the foundation of the CVM. Rather, Imagine was applied purely as a means to surface values of importance to the cultures of each organisation.

2.3 Key themes from the BBC World Service and British Council

The first Imagine workshop on the 29th October 2013 involved the BBCWS.

The 31 participants when divided into five groups were asked to set out issues that were of importance to them and tasks which they felt needed to be addressed by their organisation. The list of concerns is set out in Appendix 1.

Following the workshop presentations by the groups the researchers assessed the list for repeated, high frequency and high importance issues emerging from the day (i.e. those which were most often mentioned and those which raised a high degree of group interest during plenary sessions). For the BBCWS the issues were as follows:

- Ensuring Legacy
- Managing Global reach
- Remaining Relevant to audiences
- Building bridges of International Understanding

- Balancing continuity and change

The second Imagine workshop on the 5th November 2013 involved the BC. The 34 participants when divided into six groups were again asked to set out issues of importance and tasks that needed to be addressed.

As with the BBCWS workshop, the researchers drew out a short list of high frequency and high importance factors. These were as follows:

- Managing Legacy

- Coping with Scale – from local to global

- Widening participation via Digital development

- Maintaining/ensuring Trust – partnership and commercial tensions

- Challenging the commodification of culture

- BC ambition to be thought leaders not just conduits of UK culture

- Measuring impact

- Promoting Innovation

- Encouraging Flexibility

Any model representing the value of the organisations would need to be responsive to the issues raised by the two groups. For our purposes the lists developed at the two Imagine Workshops would form the basis of the collectively highly regarded human activity and this was seen as being discreet components, indicative of the cultural value of the organisations.

3. Developing the CVM for BBCWS and BC

Having gained insights on the current practices and activities of the BBCWS and BC our concern was to find a means to model these assessments and represent them as components of CV that related closely to the goals and targets that they ae trying to achieve. The model brought into dialogue the components of value identified in the Imagine workshop and our prior historical and ethnographic knowledge and experiences of the two organisations. In line with our research objectives we wanted to develop a robust analytical and methodological framework in order to understand CV in the BBCWS and BC had been imagined and demonstrated in the organisations. We wanted to do this based on the workshops, a number of highly focused digital

projects and on the long-term familiarity of the members of the research team with the two organisations.

The development of the CVM can be explained in terms of five distinct Parts – each one often iterated following practice, demonstration and review by stakeholders in the BBCWS and BC. The five Parts are described next.

3.1 The outline model design

As already noted, the workshop model applied for the BC and BBCWS was an adapted version of the Imagine methodology. Imagine is at one level a means to help groups assess matters of common importance (see for example Eisle, 2003). It is also a means to develop a diagrammatic, non-aggregated composite indicator known as an amoeba (originating with the work of Ten Brink, Hosper, & Collin, 1991). The essential and non-reducible requirements for the development of an amoeba diagram are:

- Segments of discrete interest such as the differentiation of internal and external environments for an organisation (e.g. Management, Production, Market, Wider world)
- Vectors (hereafter known as Components or Component spokes in the diagram) which can be used to assesse each segment (e.g. Management might be assessed in terms of a series of values including: leadership, policy effectiveness, empathy, drive, enthusiasm, etc.)
- A qualitative or quantitative indicator to assess each Component
- A known Band of Equilibrium (BoE) or 'balanced' value for each Component (this is explained in more detail shortly).
- A measurement process which provides dots on each Component spoke and which, when linked produces the 'amoeba' shape.

If these five elements are in place then an amoeba diagram can be constructed – such as that which is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Amoeba diagram
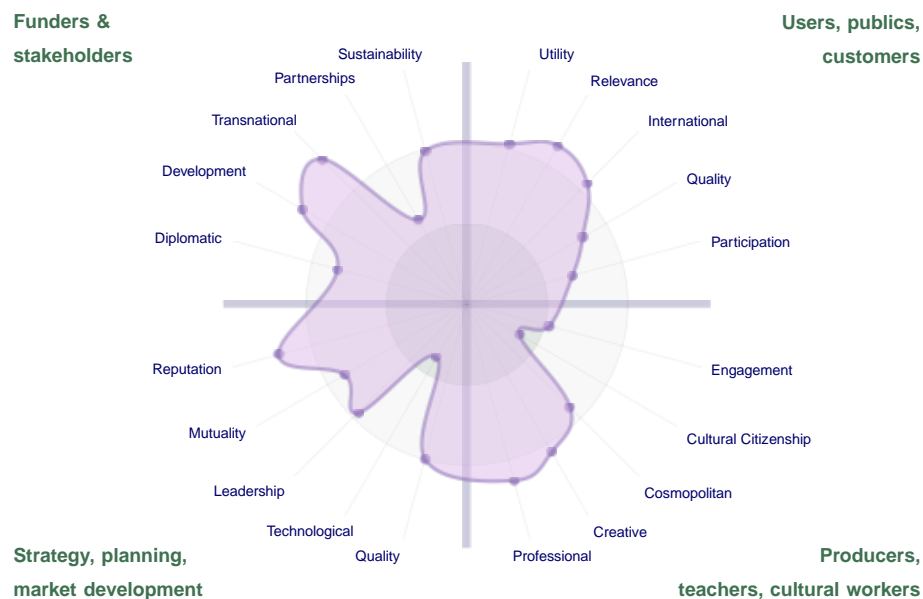
In this amoeba diagram there are four segments of discrete interest: Funders and stakeholders; Users, public, customers; Producers, teachers, cultural workers and Strategy, planning, market development. Each segment has a number of Components – such as: utility, relevance, international, quality and participation in the segment for Users in the top right hand corner. Each Component has been measured and a score included. The score or worth of each Component is indicated by the 'dot' on each Component spoke. The Components all share a band of equilibrium (or BoE) which is shown by the shaded ring. If a point on a component is measured to be within the ring then the component is said to be in equilibrium – it is sustainable. If the point is within the inner circle of the ring (e.g. cultural citizenship in the Producer, teachers, cultural workers Segment) then the Component is said to be unsustainable by deficit. If the dot on a Component is outside the outer ring of the BoE (e.g. Relevance in the Users, publics, customers Segment), then the Component is unsustainable by excess. When the various points are joined up the distinctive amoeba shape is produced.

The main presentational power of the amoeba is in its nature as a non-aggregated diagrammatic composite indicator. What do we mean by this? When dealing with systemic qualities (e.g. welfare or happiness or development or sustainability) single

indicators will not adequately assess the complexity of the context. In such circumstances one response is to combine single indicators or even indexes of indicators in a composite.

The search for a systemic and multi-dimensional portrayal of a complex reality results in indicators being combined in composites and as such present arrays of linked but conceptually segregated domains. A composite indicator should, if it is doing its job really well reveal in one indicator or even number the results of the array ("the answer is 42!"). If this is going to work well then the composite is theoretically underpinned by a conceptual structure which allows different indicators to be included, in some manner amalgamated and provided with a weighted value in the combining. The composite should in some way represent in a comparative manner the qualities and values of the item being studied.

Because of the nature of the combining of a variety of values in one overall 'score' composites are all technical in character. They are seen as having wide ranging value and cover a spread of domains, for example from the Shannon-Weiner Index (Simon Bell & Morse, 2008 pages 24 - 26) for measuring biodiversity (comparing number of species in sample and number of individuals in each species in sample) to the Human Development Index (for a critical review see Tonn, 2007) (containing three indexes of health, education and living standards). Clearly the contrast between these two is vast but it demonstrates the wide-ranging appeal and apparent value of the composite (evident in fields as diverse as economy, social analysis, environment, technology and agriculture).

The power of the composite is its capacity to abbreviate and span. This is also the key weakness. The technical engineering of the final number will always require a considerable number of assumptions to be made regarding the weighting of components, the relative value of factors and the exclusion of some items. All such issues are invisible to the external observer or non-technical person. For this reason a composite is in danger of misuse (e.g. inaccurate data for the requisite components), misapplication (e.g. application to non-relevant contexts) or erroneous conclusion (e.g. the misreading of the indicator for the context in question).

One way around the single figure composite is to amalgamate various indicators, still in their atomic form within a schema or diagram. This allows an overall, visual and readily assessable analysis of a diversity of indicators whilst at the same time maintaining independence for each and avoiding anonymity of factors. The amoeba diagram is one such device. In the amoeba the various components are retained and not 'lost' in a composite value, they are visible in the diagram and the composite, the overall 'indicator' is expressed in the shape of the amoeba. In much the same way that composite indicators of a more conventional form can be compared and valued (for example GDP or Gross Domestic Product indicators are regularly compared and contrasted both historically for nation states and between nation states, league tables emerge and relative worth is graded) amoeba diagrams can also be assessed and valued. As well as the potential for diagrams between organisations or projects to be compared to each other, a 'good' amoeba would be represented by a shape where all the components points are located within the BoE ... in this case the amoeba tends to the shape of a circle within the BoE ring. Any amoeba shape that is not like this can be seen as being more or less unsustainable. The knowledge of the message of the amoeba composite is instant, visual and conclusive.

3.2 The definition of Segments

The selection of the amoeba as the basis for the CVM was arrived at during a research team meeting in late 2013. At this meeting one member of the Team provided a schema that showed the organisational structure of the BBCWS as a systems map. The map, when considered at a higher level of abstraction was seen to correspond to four cardinal points: the External and Internal elements of the BBCWS; strategic and audience facing components. The four cardinal points when superimposed on the map provided four segments and this in turn led to the opportunity for an amoeba structuring process.

The organisational structure is shown in Figure 2 and the overlay of the segments is shown in Figure 3.

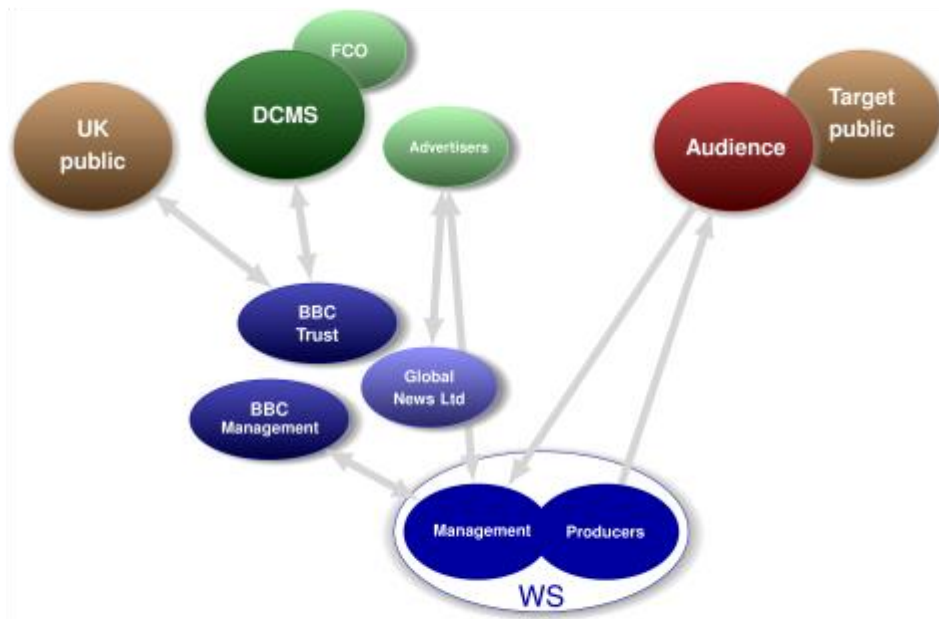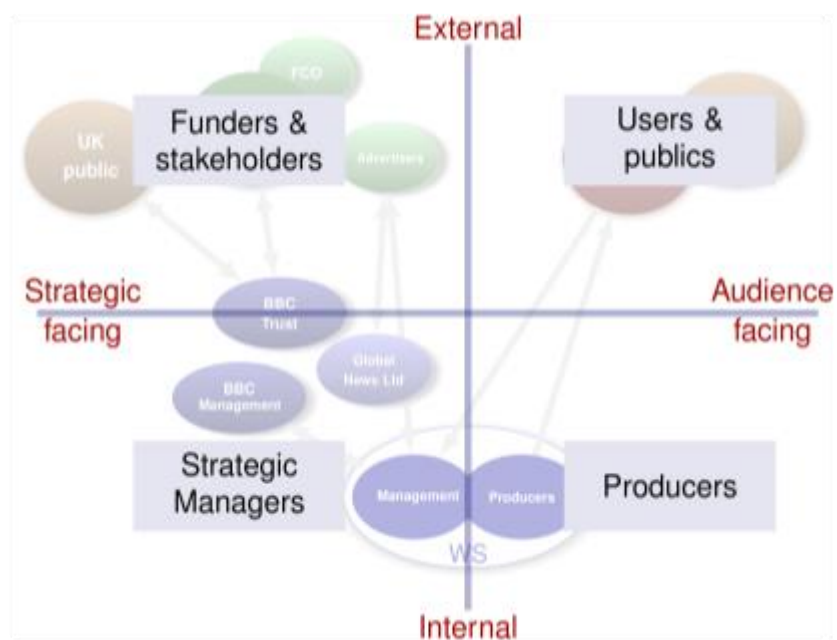Figure 2. BBCWS organisational structure: systems map

Figure 3. BBCWS segments – the 'Field Map' of the CVM

In Figure 3 the four segments are shown to correspond to significant and distinct elements of the BBCWS system and environment. A similar modelling exercise was undertaken for the BC and a comparable structure emerged (although different in terms of the detail of the Components and Segments).

With the establishment of the background or 'Field Map' for an amoeba diagram, the research team could seek to continue to adapt and apply the Imagine approach in order to develop the CVM. The next step in this process was the agreement on the Components which would provide the essential value measurement for the diagram.

3.3 The definition of Components

As noted in earlier sections of this paper, the Components provide the spokes for the CVM and represent the segregated sense of value of the members of the BBCWS and the BC. Value in our definition is not readily derived from literature or cultural theory; rather it emerges from the practical conceptualisation of the members of the organisation and the immediate stakeholders. Earlier we described the preliminary workshops which we ran in October and November of 2013 and from which a number of Tasks and Issues emerged as being of specific relevance as segregated and discrete hints towards a sense of the value of each organisation. We wanted to develop up to five value components for each Segment of the CVM. Why five? In order to make a valid and comparable assessment of the changing value of the BBCWS and the BC we wanted to chose a small but manageable set of Components which would allow the two organisations to assess significant and discrete elements but not at the same time be overwhelmed by a plethora of Components in the amoeba composite. We made the judgement (based on the use track record of the Imagine methodology) that around five Components per Segment and therefore around 20 components per four Segment CVM would provide the necessary level of granularity and detail to the modelling exercise without at the same time overwhelming the CVM user with unnecessary detail and confusing complexity for the interpretation of the diagram. The numbers; five Components per Segment and four Segments per CVM were not to be seen as fixed or absolute, rather they would provide a guideline for CVM developers. Arguments could always be made for more or less Segments and, similarly more or less Components.

Although the Workshops with BBCWS and BC in October and November 2013 would provide a good basis for the development of Components, this was not to be the single or even most important basis for Component development.

The Components need to be meaningful to the BBCWS and BC – they really need to emerge from what we might call the 'value story' or 'value narrative' which the members of these organisations and their near stakeholders tell each other. Applying an approach which we call Value Analytics – which places multi-perspectival value analysis using participatory methods at the heart of all evaluation activities - we constructed the initial set of Components for both the BBCWS and BC from three sources:

1. the Tasks and Issues emerging from the initial workshops.
2. The observed and understood expressions of value as emerging from the various case studies which we were undertaking with the two organisations. These case studies were of the history of the two organisations and also of five digital projects (British Council: Learn English MENA Facebook, South Asia Season; BBC World Service: 100 Women, Olympics 2012 and Syria). These projects would form the basis for our various versions of the CVM.
3. The long-term understanding of the two organisations represented in the knowledge of the various members of the Research Team.

Further, the developing sense of the meaning and worth of each Component was tested at various seminars and workshops held with members of the two organisations at events in February, March, April and May of 2014. For these events it was understood that each Component would require a detailed description.

It should be emphasised at this point that the development of the Component spokes for the CVM and the assessment of their current value within each project was a constant and iterative process. As members of the Research Team and, more importantly, members and stakeholders of the BBCWS and BC learned about the CVM and provided their insight into the values of the various Components so these Components and their related assessment changed. At a higher level, as the development of the specific versions of the CVM was adapted to each project so the number and types of Segment also changed over time. This iterative development process is an important feature of the CVM and the Value Analytics which is instrumental in its development. A Component is rarely 'fixed' in the same manner as, for example the elements of a conventional composite indictor could be said to be fixed. A key concept behind the CVM and established in Value Analytics is that

value is dictated by the balance of views of those engaged with or serviced by the organisation – the main stakeholders. This balance can be said to be fixed (in a relative fashion) when the stakeholders who comprise the group of those engaged or serviced by the organisation have settled on the Component balance which they feel is representative of the Cultural Value of the organisation or project.

In our research our research team were leading in the development of the CVM and necessarily led in the development of the Components as headlines, glossary narratives and relative value within the specific context. As the CVM developed and as more members of the stakeholder group for the various BBCWS and BC projects were engaged in the development of the Components in workshops and seminars, so these elements of the CVM changed and developed. For example, with the 100 Women project the initial sketch of the various Components in the amoeba diagram is shown in Figure 4. A few weeks later, taking more views into account and considering the perspective of these stakeholders a computer-generated version emerged and this is shown in Figure 5.
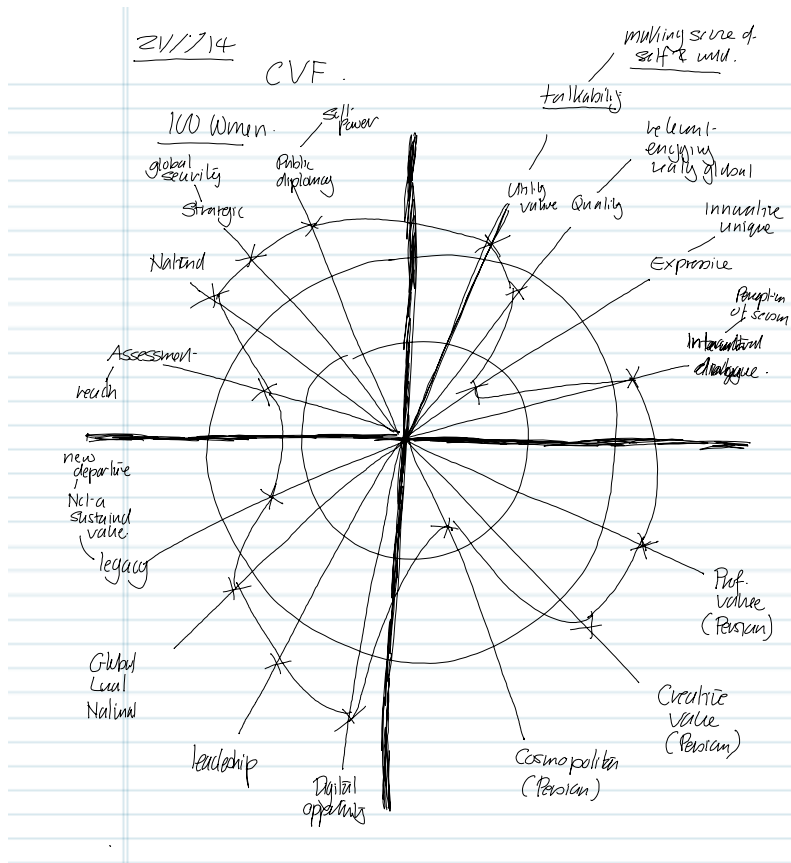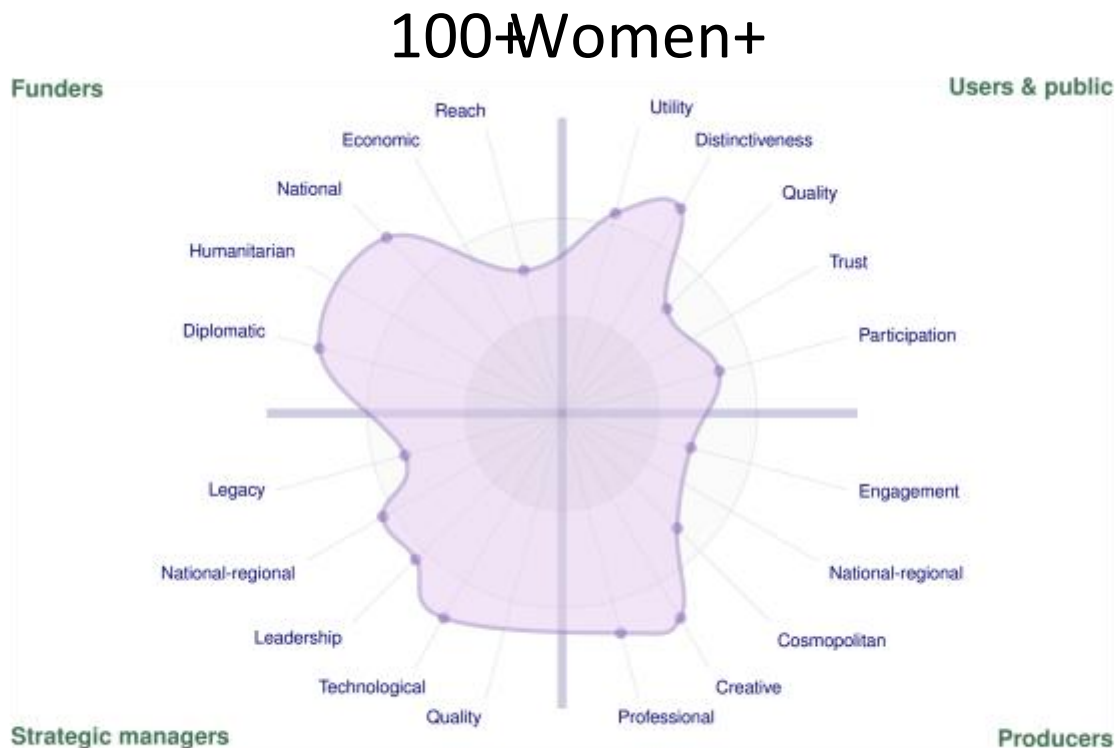
Figure 4. 100 Women

Figure 5. 100 Women – a little later

The differences between the two diagrams are many and critical. In a sense the CVM is a constant work in progress – developing and adapting as the stakeholder community behind it develops and adapts. In a deeper sense the CVM is stable and representative. It is stable in that our experience indicates that around 70% of the Components remain constant between any two given presentations (and it should be kept in mind that all indicators change – even such fundamental indicators as unemployment assessment and GDP). It is representative in that it can be seen to accommodate the values of stakeholders and be expressive of the elements of the project or organisation which concerns them.

Most fundamentally, what does Figure 5 say, what does it add to the 100 women projects self-assessment? Without going into too much detail four main themes emerge:

1. The amoeba demonstrates a tendency to exceed – this excess is shown by the number of dots on Components outside the outer circle which we call the Band of Equilibrium (more on this later). 9 of the Components are exceeding the Band and although that shows excellent work it also marks a potential lack of sustainability for future, similar projects.

2. Only 8 of the Components are in or near the Band. This means that the minority of Components are in balance.

3. The model is a model of excess performance with no Components under-performing (within the Band).

4. Excess is particularly evident in the Funders and Strategic managers Segments but less evident in the users and public and producers Segments. This may be fine but does this suggest that the self-assessment of value indicates a focus on meeting the exaggerated aspirations of funders? Could this ultimately mean a dropping off of focus on audiences?

These are provocative observations which we would argue are suggested in the interpretation of the amoeba.

We will say more about the interpretative and evaluative use of the CVM later in the paper.

3.4 The establishment of the Band of Equilibrium

Key to the development of an amoeba is the Band of Equilibrium – BoE. The BoE is one of the main innovations in the Imagine use of amoeba diagrams and represents a major development for the CVM.

The concept supporting the BoE is that any value, indicator or metric will have a range of possible scores – represented on the amoeba diagram as a point on a Component spoke. In developing the amoeba the stakeholders are asked not just to nominate and agree a range of Components but also to agree two critical scores – the lower and upper range of a sustainable score.

For example, if we were dealing with a Component which reflected audience participation in a given broadcast. The stakeholder group may agree that they will know, within an error range of one or two thousand, roughly how many people will individually engage with the interactive social media which supports the broadcast. The stakeholders may feel that the total engagement could be as much as 40,000 (given room for error as previously suggested). The stakeholders are then asked to suggest a lower and upper band score which would be 'sustainable'. This is a tricky term and one which requires some discussion in its own right. Sustainability is famously hard to define and lends itself to vague and occasionally patronizing or

even melodramatic description (e.g. 'the best we can do', 'your responsibility to yourself' and 'the world we hand to our kids'). A sustainable return on an indicator tends to mean that the indicator is in a form of balance and that this return can be relied upon to be repeatable again and again. It may not be 'ideal' or 'excellent' but it is good enough and, if repeatable, very much fit for purpose. In our example here the stakeholder team may say that if the possible range of social media interactions is 0 – 40,000 then the BoE might be represented by return in the range of 25,000 (the lower limit) to 30,000 (the upper limit). Measured returns in this range would conform to the Band.

Our point is, and this is a point emphasised by previous use of the BoE in numerous projects, each Component when provided with a BoE allows the stakeholder team to gain a sense of the individual worth of each Component and a sense of if this worth is fit for purpose or is in some way in deficit or excess of a sustainable return. When twenty or so such Components and related BoE scores are assembled, the final diagram representing not just the current valuations of each Component but the relative worth of each Component valuation set against the BoE provides a very rich assessment of the overall project/ organisation or what ever form of agency is being assessed. However, the BoE is not always so quantifiably produced as suggested in the example provided here relating to social media hits. Often a Component will be of a qualitative nature (e.g. Esteem, or Reputation or Creativity) and valuation of such a Component in a specific context by the relevant stakeholders needs to be achieved by means of a narrative and an agreed positioning. For example, here are the valuations of three Components taken from the Project managers segment of the British Council South Asia Season project.

Engagement: (low/medium)

Contact across the season with audiences low but with target contacts high

Professional: (high)

 Project workers were exposed to (unprecedented) wide range of people and countries, learned a great deal and built good professional networks. There was evidence of good teamwork across the organisation and sectors – draws on different aspects of BC – satisfying priorities for integration as set out in the Global Operating model

> **Cosmopolitan: (medium to high)**
>
> Staff played bridging role between places, cultures and languages but UK and global SA diasporas were not effectively mobilised – limited diversity – tended to involve well-known UK diaspora figures in arts and literary scene so arguably didn't manage to open up range and nature of people interacting

In this example the Engagement Component was scored as low to medium (probably just in the lower range of the BoE) because the targeted contacts were engaged but the wider audience was not so involved. The Professional Component was rated as high (probably above the upper limit of the BoE) because the project delivered professional benefits beyond those expected and, therefore, probably beyond those which could be reasonably expected to emerge in future. Finally, the Cosmopolitan Component was rated as medium to high (probably within the upper limit of the BoE) because the project was only partially successful in engaging plural and multicultural audiences.

As with the Components, so with the BoE – the nature of the band and its valuation will be expected to change with the change in the stakeholder group who agree it. Over time it would be expected that the BoE would shift and develop. If it is seen as being too easy to achieve then the worth of the lower limit of the BoE may be raised. If the Component is seen to be redundant or irrelevant, then it and its BoE will be exchanged for a new, more relevant Component.

The main theme is that the BoE allows a group of stakeholders to make self-assessment of sustainable value and to make this across a range of Components which in sum represent the snapshot of the Cultural Value of the project or organisation at that time.

3.5 Innovating Imagine and Modelling Constellations – snap shots of value

The nature of the CVM as presented at our final event for the British Council on the 20th May 2014 has shown some innovation on the basic Imagine / amoeba model. Firstly and invisible to the reader of the diagrams, the structure of the CVM has adapted and changed as stakeholders have been engaged and the Research Team has improved its grasp of the changing nature of the CVM. Segments have been questioned and their titles simplified, Components have been adjusted and even

removed, valuations of the BoE have been repeated and adjusted as the understanding of the meaning of the worth of each Component has changed. Also, the change from amoeba to constellation is more than a change in label and aesthetic. The sense of a constellation lends a new insight to the overall diagram. The implicit meaning of an amoeba is a blob, a changeable and, shape-wise, meaningless shape. A constellation on the other hand has implicit and explicit meaning in the shape. As: 'a recognizable pattern that is traditionally named after its apparent form or identified with a mythological figure' (Google dictionary) a constellation suggests meaning in the shape. The shape can appear cruciform or ellipse, circular or crescent. The shape will imply a meaning derived from the nature of the Components which are highlighted by the shape. The shape may provide a nudge to a behavior change (e.g. "I am uncomfortable with the irregularity of the shape", "I really thought we would represent as a fuller circle", "This crescent shape is really surprising").

Two examples of the revised and updated CVM are shown in Figures 6 and 7.
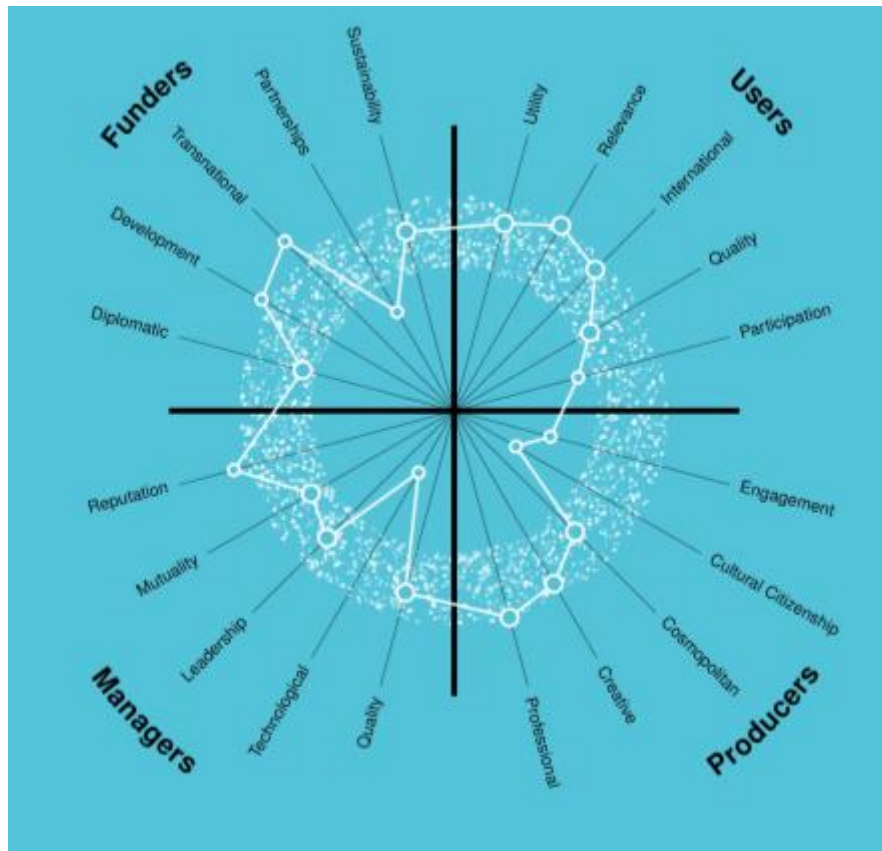
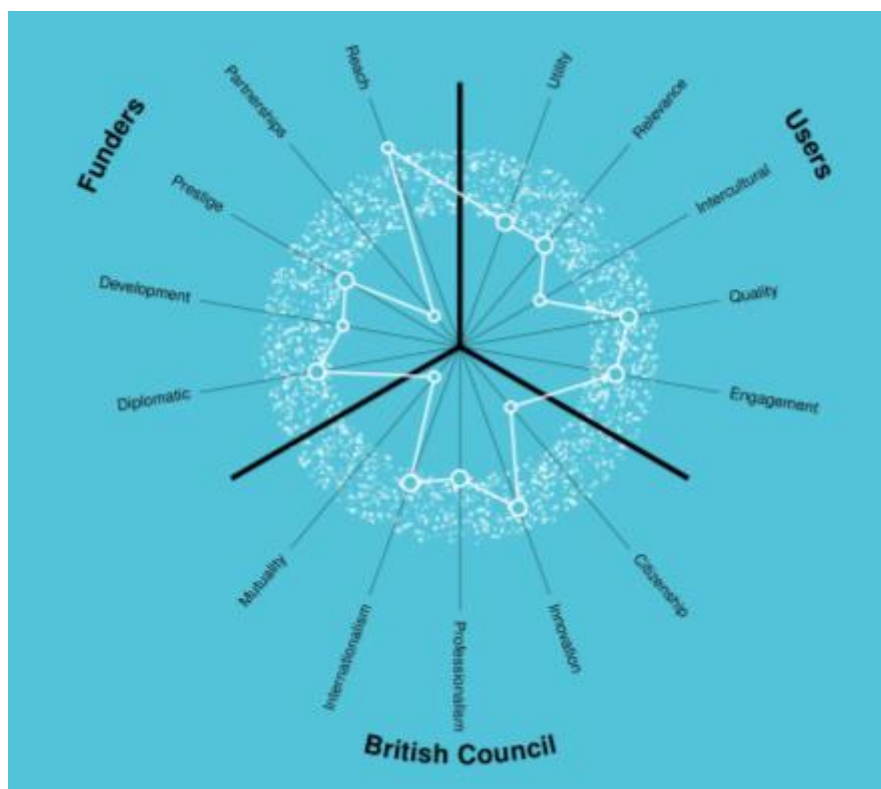Figure 6 Constellation CVM South Asia Season

Figure 7 Constellation CVM MENA

In Figure 6 the British Council South Asia Season project is shown now as a Constellation Diagram appears slightly cruciform is outline with 13 of the 20 Components in or near the BoE (now shown as a Milky Way). Although there are some clear under and over performing Components, much of the diagram shows as in equilibrium.

The Figure 7 constellation of the MENA project shows further adaptation. In reflection the project team agreed that three segments were more accurate as describing the project context – rather than four. The 15 Components are spread equally among the three Segments and the shape of the constellation, as with Figure 6 is cruciform. In this case the under performing Components are more clearly below the BoE (e.g. Prestige and Citizenship) but 10 of the 15 Components are in or near the BoE and this does not suggest a project in crisis but clearly the five significantly 'out' Component valuations need to be reviewed in order to see if there are implications for this and /or other projects.

4. Conclusion

In this paper we have set out the development path and some of the outcomes of the use of the CVM. We believe that the following implications emerge:

Firstly, at the time of writing, response to the CVM by BBCWS and BC stakeholders have been mixed but the Constellation diagram appears to provide an at times contentious but stimulating overview of project work. This was the intended response. If the Constellation does not stimulate discussion and interest then its existence is called into question as a provocative intimation of value.

Secondly, there has been some quite encouraging interest in the interpretation of the meaning of the Constellation in both organisations but particularly the BC. This is reflected in the BC's use of the CVM in the assessment of subsequent major global festivals, cultural programmes and interventions including: The UK-Iran Season of Culture, Shakespeare Lives in 2016, The South Asia Digital Libraries Revolution Programme. The BBCWS proved to be more resistant. This is mainly because they have a large audience research department that in their view suffices for purposes of evaluation for editorial and accountability (to the FCO) reasons. It gives them regular measurements - from audience ratings to page views to retweets to Facebook analytics (Gillespie et al 2010). Despite this, producers tend to pay most attention to numerical measures and although qualitative data is gathered, producers actually don't pay very much attention to it.

Thirdly, the BoE has proved difficult to achieve but has produced some encouraging responses. To consider an assessment of value set against a sustainable position remains a comparatively novel approach to the BBCWS and BC project teams. There is a generalised challenge here around the concept of a visual interpretation acting as a spur to deeper conjecture. The BoE is a potent visual means to explore variations from accepted or assumed levels of sustainability. Prior to this however, groups and teams need to engage with familiarisation of the concept. Without some prior understanding of the summative nature of the visual the group conceptual movement from assessing the BoE to understanding its various messages can be messy and defensive.

Fourthly, the Constellations are 'snapshots' by specific stakeholders at specific times. Comparison of the snapshots is limited at the time of writing but the project team

would be interested to develop a series of snapshots of one or several similar projects in order to achieve a longitudinal analysis or Constellation Moview of value change.

Fifthly, the CVM represents an additional assessment task for teams in the BBCWS and BC. There are already well-established performance and impact assessment procedures in each organisation and to adopt CVM requires both faith in the value of the additional work and time to undertake it.

In conclusion, the CVM can be seen as part of a more generalised interest in the use of diagrams and visualisation techniques in evaluation and a movement away from the tyranny of basic metrics. We see this as representative of a maturing of evaluation impact culture and a move towards a more systemic and sustainability orientated conception of organisational value.

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