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Finding Value in Relational Proximity:
A Case Study from Turkish Local Governance

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how muhtars, as elected neighbourhood representatives in Turkey, *(co-)create* public value by contributing to well-being outcomes in their communities. While muhtars are legally grounded in the administrative system of Turkey, their everyday presence and relational proximity to citizens position them as hybrid actors. As hybrid actors, they navigate between legal duties and the communities' needs. Drawing on transformative service research and public value theory and informed by value co-creation logics, the study examines how muhtars interpret their roles and engage in value co-creation within structurally and politically constrained public service environment.

The research adopts a qualitative case study approach focused in Bornova, İzmir, based on semi-structured interviews with muhtars. A theory-informed content analysis grounded in transformative service research and public value theory, is conducted with expansion to context-sensitive well-being outcomes, followed by a contingency analysis.

Findings reveal that muhtars operate with dual identity roles as the Service Facilitator and the Citizen Advocate. However, the transformative value often emerges through the Citizen Advocate in the presence of political and operational constraints. The study argues that muhtars, through their position as everyday mediators within the public service system offers insights for designing with and for inclusive, responsive and relational governance.

Keywords: Transformative Service Research, Public Value, Muhtarlık, Local Governance, Designing for Public Services

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Abbreviations

AKP: Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)

CHP: Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)

GDL: Goods-Dominant Logic

NPM: New Public Management

PSE: Public Service Ecosystem

PSL: Public Service Logic

PSDL: Public Service-Dominant Logic

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SDL: Service-Dominant Logic

SEGE: Socio-Economic Development Index

TSR: Transformative Service Research

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

The world we live in and the world we experience are not always the same. While numerous opportunities may exist, they are often unequally accessible as they are filtered through social, spatial, and institutional layers that shape the realities of citizens (Bourdieu, 1986; North, 1990; Sen, 1999). The house, district, city, region, country, and continent that are spatial, and at the same time social layers that influence our ability to interact with the world (Lefebvre, 1991). Even living under the same roof does not guarantee a shared experience for all its inhabitants. How, then, can we expect a city or a country to provide a common experience for all its inhabitants? While such a question may seem too abstract for a designer to tackle, it is in fact essential.

The social, spatial and institutional layers, influences how public services are accessed and how public value is experienced. From the national to the local, these layers of governance create gaps in service provision, often leaving gaps between intentions and community realities (Hill & Hupe, 2022). While governments may provide broad strategies, the delivery and relevance of services often depend on how effectively they fit into local contexts. This raises another question: how can local governance structures better align public services with communities' needs and values?

Governments are legally tasked with promoting public good, tasked with identifying societal needs and responding through resource allocation and service provision. However, their responsibilities are not only legal or economic, they are deeply ethical (Cooper, 2012; O'Flynn, 2007). Public authorities have an obligation to pursue equity, participation, and well-being (Bozeman, 2007). These obligations pave the way toward what Moore (1995) termed public value, the production of outcomes that are beneficial, democratically legitimated, and delivered in a sustainable manner.

In Turkey, one such structure is the muhtarlık system, a local administrative unit embedded within neighborhoods, governed by elected muhtars. As the closest public figure to citizens, muhtars operate at the intersection of the community, local government, and central

administration. Though historically rooted in administrative tasks, muhtars today are increasingly recognized as relational actors, capable of shaping citizen engagement and contributing to local governance (Massicard, 2022; Şahin & Turan, 2022). Despite this, muhtars are often overlooked in academic literature concerning public value creation. This framing also invites a service design lens. Services, when viewed through the logic of service-dominant logic, are not delivered but shaped by interactions, experiences, and meaning-making processes rather than solely outputs (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008). The muhtar's role can be understood as a design node in the broader public service ecosystem, a point where needs are interpreted, services are translated, and institutional intentions are experienced through lived reality.

This thesis situates itself in the gaps between the layers of governance in public service provision; between the strategic planning and everyday reality, and, formal structure and informal practice. Muhtars are positioned not as case studies of administration, but as living, acting actors within the negotiation of public value. The research that follows investigates how muhtars navigate their roles and how their work can inform more grounded and transformative models of governance.

1.2. Research Motivation

This study stems from both academic and personal motivation. As a designer and researcher-to-be, raised in one of İzmir's neighborhoods, the situated understanding of the local dynamics, trust structures, and community interactions that shape muhtarlık have been observed. Observation did not only exist within situated reality but also reflected upon the disconnect between institutional structures and lived realities through this thesis.

In the existing literature that engages with muhtars, most attention has been directed at legal-institutional frameworks or economic efficiency, within public administration discourse. However, recent contributions, such as that of Şahin and Turan (2022) point to a different potential by positioning muhtars and their offices as a social innovation node. This framing paves the way to understand how muhtars, if so, create public value and their role in transformative governance. The study is therefore motivated to empirically explore how muhtars engage in value creation practices within their communities; and second, to investigate whether their existing role holds potential for integration into public service

design. By doing so, the research seeks to contribute to the understanding of local governance and to the ongoing discussions around innovation in public service delivery.

1.3. Research Goals and Research Questions

This study aims to address the above mentioned gap by examining the role of muhtars as locally embedded public actors. Drawing from public value theory, transformative service research, the research explores how muhtars interpret, mediate, and potentially co-create value in their communities. The investigation is not only concerned with how muhtars perform their formal duties, but how they engage in relational practices.

Research Aim: To explore the role of muhtars in the creation of public value in İzmir's neighborhoods by utilizing Transformative Service Research (TSR).

Research Questions:

1. How do muhtars contribute to the creation of public value in neighborhoods of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality?
2. How do muhtars perceive their role in public value creation?

1.4. Research Scope

This study focuses on the role of muhtars in public value creation within the context of İzmir's Bornova district. It explores how these locally embedded actors interpret and negotiate their responsibilities as both elected officials and community members. The empirical scope is bounded geographically within one metropolitan municipality in Turkey and institutionally within the governance dynamics between the neighborhood, district, and metropolitan municipality levels.

The research does not aim to produce generalizable findings across all muhtarlık units in Turkey. Instead, it aims to develop a situated understanding of how muhtars contribute to local governance through their everyday practices, relationships, and constraints. The insights generated are analytically generalizable in the sense that they aim to engage with and extend relevant conceptual frameworks of transformative service research (TSR), public value theory, and value creation logics through empirical findings in the given specific context.

The scope of the study is limited to the perspectives and practices of muhtars themselves. While the broader dynamics between citizens, municipalities, and state are addressed through the conceptual frameworks, they are explored through the interpretive lens of muhtar's narratives. Citizens and other institutional actors are not directly engaged as participants within this research. Therefore, the study examines public value creation from the position of these actors and their contributions within the local governance ecosystem.

1.5. Thesis Structure Overview

This thesis is structured into seven chapters, each chapter addressing a different aspect of the study and aimed to build up logically to provide the reader a comprehensive understanding of the process.

Chapter One - Introduction. This chapter provides the background of the research, motivation, research goals and therefore, research questions, scope of the research, an overview of the overall structure of the thesis, and ethical considerations, which are expanded later in the research design chapter.

Chapter Two – Literature Review. This chapter provides the theoretical understanding and evolution of the theories and frameworks utilized in the research. While discussing the existing literature, as they are drawn from different academic discourses, the aim is to provide an understanding of the literature while connecting it to the research focus. The chapter ends with an overview of the connections the existing literature provides.

Chapter Three– Research Design. This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted in the study. It presents the research strategy and aligning with this strategy, researcher's positionality. The research methods are explained, including an overview of the analysis to provide a holistic understanding of the research method applied. The research target and the reasoning behind the methodological choices made are explained for a cohesive understanding for the reader. A subchapter provided for the framework used in the study, TSR, and alignment to the ethical reflexivity it requires. This is followed by data collection details, researcher reflections are provided, as suggested by the strategy and positionality.

Chapter Four– Case Study. This chapter outlines the research site, grounded in the frameworks and theories used, aimed at providing a detailed understanding of the research

site, and offering further justification into the research site selection. This chapter is essential as the research is informed and built upon frameworks and theories from different academic discourses, and it demonstrates how the knowledge has been applied into the real-world.

Chapter Five- Results and Findings. This chapter consists of data collection results, data analysis process, and a detailed explanation of the analysis conducted. The outcomes of the contingency analysis, through a contingency matrix, are provided alongside the coding framework for an ease of understanding of the data provided. The section includes the interpretations of the findings and a contextualized TSR framework based on the data. A closer look is provided into the narratives shared by muftars with attention to anonymization and translating the narrative to English. The chapter ends with a summary of findings to frame the empirical findings within the existing literature.

Chapter Six- Discussion and Implications. This chapter provides further discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature and practical implications built upon the findings. Recommendations for future studies, informed by the limitations of the study, are provided.

Chapter Seven- Conclusion. As the research process is finalized, this chapter provides an overview and contributions.

1.6. Ethical Consideration

This research was designed with a strong emphasis on ethical reflexivity, consistent with the interpretivist stance and the principles of TSR. The study involved adult participants, muftars who are elected. No minors or legally vulnerable groups were included. All participants were provided with full information about the study's purpose, the nature of participation which is voluntary, and their right to withdraw at any time.

In recognition of the cultural and political sensitivities present in the Turkish context, verbal informed consent was obtained before and during interviews. This approach, explained in detail in research design chapter. Efforts were also made to ensure anonymity in the reporting of participant data, including the use of general descriptions and whilst sharing the narratives from the interviews. Ethical practice in this study extended beyond procedural compliance to include ongoing attention to trust, participant comfort, and the relational nature of data co-construction (see section 3.1 and 3.1.1).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Public Value

At the end of the 20th century New Public Management (NPM) approach came to light bringing private sector practices into the public sector as traditional public administration approaches have been challenged and deemed to have weaknesses (O'Flynn, J. 2005; Stoker, 2006). NPM emphasized efficiency and effectiveness and tried to achieve these objectives by introducing competition and customer service into the public sector as well as the private sector's managerial approaches (Hood, 1991). NPM's strong emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness framed government activities through an economic lens (O'Flynn, 2007) that can lead to the public sector overlooking broader societal goals and values and the public sector falling short in their responsibilities (Arellano-Gault, 2010). Therefore, the introduction of private sector practices into the public sector had implications to be dealt with.

NPM's focus on efficiency and as a result, the possibility of neglecting broader societal goals has led to new approaches in public management. Mark Moore (1995) introduced the theory of public value, shifting the focus of public management to the achievement of broader goals rather than just efficiency. The theory of public value by Moore has placed public managers as the seekers of public value production. He explains that public value is created when public managers use the resources to produce outcomes that are valuable to the public (Moore, 1995), representing the shift in the public management approach of efficiency of the results to an expanded focus on socially desirable results.

Moore's reasoning behind placing such importance on managers has been explained in his seminal book *Creating Public Value* (1995). Any institutional reform is not in total function unless the management aligns with it, even though NPM has been "characterized as a wave of reforms" by Christensen et al. (2007, p. 128), the success of institutional reforms will often be affected by the manager (Moore, 1995), regardless of fragmentation in the given institutional reform. Therefore, understanding the role of public managers and their processes in creating public value is essential to fully understand how public value is generated.

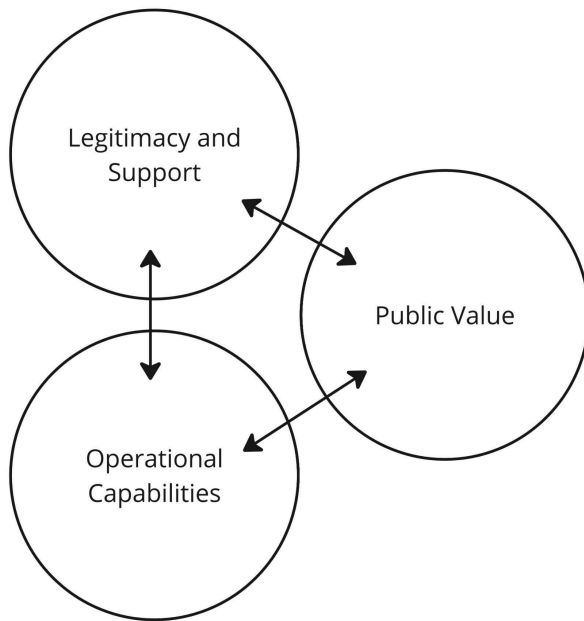


Figure 1. *The strategic triangle*

Note. Adapted from “ Moore, M. (1995). *Creating public value: Strategic management in government* (Figure 1). Harvard University Press.

Public managers or public servants who create public value are not entities that exist on their own within the value creation process. Moore’s strategic triangle (Figure 1) explains the process of public value creation in operable conditions in practice for public managers. The process of public value creation starts with the public manager establishing a specific conception of the public value they aim to achieve through their efforts, requiring them to review the conditions that can be improved. These conditions to be improved through the utilization of government assets have to generate value for the individuals and society, as that would create the public value. Given that public managers are not the only actors within the creation process, the creation of public value needs legitimacy and support to establish this creation. Laws, political parties, resource allocations and community attitudes towards the public value to be created are what the legitimacy and support consist of, and it is the authorizing environment for the creation of the public value. This suggests that the public value offering must be politically sustainable by attracting sufficient support from political

and other stakeholders as a whole (Moore, 1995; Samaratunge & Wijewardena, 2009). Following that, the manager has to have the operational capabilities to realize the value creation. The public value creation process requires resources such as financial, technological and human capital as well as organizational capabilities for the implementation and delivery of the public value. The manager needs to ensure this feasibility (Moore, 1995).

To summarize Moore has defined public value as to be produced by public managers in public organizations with his normative theory. While focusing on managerial behavior and the way managers drive improvement through their actions and decisions, he acknowledged that “value is rooted in the desires and perceptions of individuals” (Moore, 1995, p. 52). While the normative public value theory by Moore states that public value is created by the manager for the citizens, Meynhardt (2009) expands the public value concept with a non-normative form from where Moore has touched on.

Meynhardt’s public value expansion starts from a definition that has been popular “Public value is what the public *values*.” (Talbot, 2011). This definition suggests public value is determined by what people consider valuable as a collective. However, Meynhardt takes the public value into a further relational context. Expansion of “Public value is what impacts on values about the ‘public.’” (2009, p. 205) by Meynhardt suggests that public value is not the value created that is valued by the public but is influenced by how people are relating to the ‘public’. It is derived from people’s relationships with the public. This relational context, as this is a non-normative approach for defining public value, also suggests that the impact is not always in positive regard as it can be easily associated with the contrary. It can also exist in a negative regard (Meynhardt, 2009).

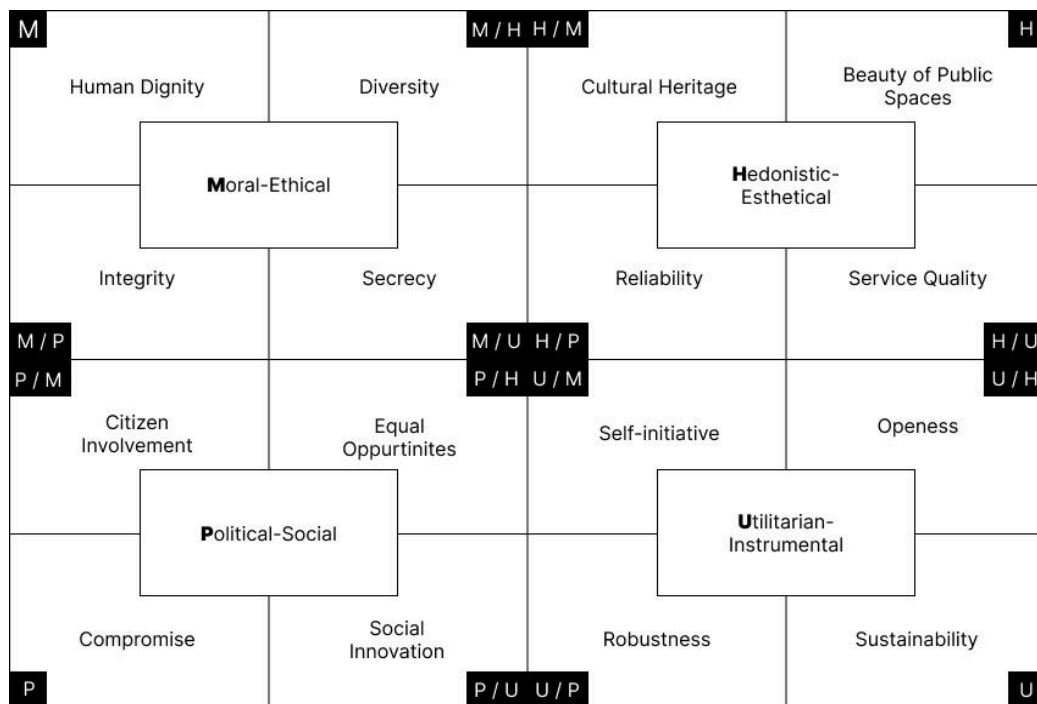


Figure 2. *Public value landscape*

Note. Adapted from “ Meynhardt, T. (2009). Public value inside: What is public value creation? *International Journal of Public Administration*, 32(3-4), 192-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900690902732632>, Copyright 2009 by Taylor & Francis. Originally Figure 2.

Meynhardt’s (2009) relational definition of public value is based on a psychological foundation. His association with basic needs theory has given four dimensions for understanding public value: Moral-Ethical, Political-Social, Utilitarian-Instrumental, and Hedonistic-Aesthetical Values. These dimensions provide a framework for evaluating public value by linking it to basic human needs. Building upon Jørgensen and Bozeman’s empirical study (2007) regarding the understanding of public value by the public sector in a democratic society, Meynhardt also provided a public value landscape for evaluation (Figure 2). The landscape's purpose is to help researchers and practitioners recognize where to look for public value while acknowledging that the landscape can be “enlarged” to fit into different societal contexts as suggested, “If a value is not in peoples’ minds, it is not ‘real.’” (Meynhardt, 2009, p. 211). Therefore, the landscape that is built on basic needs, empirical studies and the ‘public’ provides navigation, however remains open to expansion.

2.2. Value Co-Creation

Surrounded by many tangible and intangible artifacts, value is created through interactions between two entities. While one entity provides an artifact, the other one consumes or utilizes the artifact. Within this value creation process, 'service' happens (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008). As this definition is somewhat vague, it reflects how the understanding of the value creation process has evolved over time in service research.

Traditionally, economies were rooted in goods, which are the tangible artifacts produced to be consumed or utilized. The goods-dominant logic (GDL) is rooted in this traditional understanding of economic and marketing theories. According to GDL, goods are the value carriers. The producer of the good embeds the value in it, and the value is transferred to the consumer when exchanged (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The value the artifact is carrying is defined by the provider side, and the consumer has been viewed as the receiver of it. In public management, a similar understanding existed when it comes to public value creation as seen in Moore's work (1995). He stated that public managers create value through what they deem could be improved and would be valuable to society, similar to the goods-dominant understanding of value creation. The provider entity, which is the public manager in Moore's theory, is the one creating the value and the public, like customers in GDL, receives the value passively. While one entity creates value, the other entity through utilization or consumption, receives the value. This concept of value creation in goods-dominant logic, referred to as value-in-exchange, suggests that once a product is sold, value is created by the consumer through ownership. However, this understanding of the value creation overlooks today's realities as services become the force that shapes economies, rather than goods.

While the world moved towards a service-driven economy, service-dominant logic (SDL) emerged (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008). SDL proposes that the value is not embedded in the good as GDL suggests. SDL emphasizes that value is co-created through the interactions between the providing and the consuming entity rather than the value being provided by one side, embedded in the goods (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). While products are the value carriers in GDL, they are enablers for delivering services in SDL. What makes services possible are operant resources such as knowledge, skills, and relations, which are intangible. These intangible artifacts have to be present for services to be established and they can be wrapped around a tangible artifact, as in goods. As value is co-created by both sides in SDL, it

expands the understanding of value creation into a relational context (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). As services are being shaped through intangible artifacts such as operant resources, GDL's value-in-exchange is not sufficient to explain the relational context of value creation in services. Consequently, SDL explains that value is created through the interaction between two entities around the experience that are shaped by the operant resources, and it is referred to as the value-in-use.

Building upon this work, Vargo et al. (2017) explored how value-in-use does not sufficiently explain how the value is realized. They highlight that exploring the consumer side is needed, as they argue value can not be created far from the consumer before it gets delivered to them. Similar to value-in-use, the co-creation of value is relevant in this context. However, they emphasize the consumer side as the consumer's needs, expectations, and past experiences shape how value is realized on their end. This understanding suggests a new approach to understanding value's emergence in this relationality, referred to as value-in-context. Meynhardt's definition of public value in a relational context (2009) appears to help understanding the relationality of value creation in SDL. While Meynhardt explores the understanding of the value in a public setting from a psychological foundation of the individual, Vargo et al. (2017) highlight that the value appears on the consumer's side, making both arguments shaped around relationality.

The value creation discussion in service research and public management is distinct yet relatable to one another. Thus, the value creation discussion in the public service context has also been present. SDL's emphasis on value co-creation through interactions paved the way to view how value is created in public services. Osborne et al. (2013) have stated that the value creation processes that are present in SDL can not be transferred to the public sector directly, as the public sector has different characteristics from the private sector. Public services consist of multiple stakeholders, rather than just the provider and the consumer, or better worded, citizens. Public services involve policymakers, public service organizations, citizens, law enforcement, social services, etc., and this makes it more complex to grasp the value creation process. The value to be created in this context requires negotiation between these stakeholders, unlike only two entities in SDL's value creation process. The definition of success for a service that is provided and willingness to be a user on the consumer side are some of the distinctive characteristics of the private and public sectors as well (Osborne,

2017). And most importantly, the public sector has broader societal goals while delivering services, unlike the private sector. Therefore, public service-dominant logic (PSDL) has been proposed by Osborne et al. (2013) and adapted into the context of public service delivery, followed by the transition to public-service logic (PSL) (Osborne, 2017).

In summary, while Service-Dominant Logic has significantly shaped how to think about value creation through relational and experiential lenses, it can not be applied directly to public services, and it requires adaptation. The complexity of the public sector means that public value cannot be understood solely through two-sided service interactions. Instead, it requires a broader perspective that accounts for contextual, institutional, and societal dimensions.

2.3. Emergence of Value in Public Services

As value creation and its assets have been discussed in the discourse of service management with the evolution towards a co-created value creation understanding, Osborne's (2017) work on understanding value creation in public service ecosystems has been influenced by the discussion but adapted into the public service setting. Starting from a point of public service-dominant logic (PSDL) (Osborne et al., 2013), where value creation happens with both the citizens and the service provider, public services are taken out of the frame of providing value from only the provider's side. The value creation in PSDL is explored relationally in experiences between the two entities. Citizens are not only recipients of value but are co-producers of the value. This framing of value creation is in line with the latter understanding of value creation of public service logic (PSL) (Osborne, 2017; Osborne et al., 2022), moving value creation to service ecosystems that involve the understanding that public service delivery consists of multiple, dynamic, and interdependent stakeholder relations.

In PSDL, the initial efforts to understand value emergence in public services, Osborne et al. (2013) have looked into value emergence in the private sector, which is service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). As PSDL is looking into value emergence in public settings, the ongoing management approaches such as New Public Management (NPM), have been challenged. NPM, being a management approach that looks into public service delivery from the transactional outputs such as efficiency and effectiveness, would frame public services as

one-sided value creation. However, PSDL frames public services as being co-produced by two entities between the public service organizations and service users. This has taken citizens from being passive recipients of value to being co-producers of it. This attempt to frame value creation on a co-production basis has challenged NPM. However, public service systems are recognized as more complex than the context provided by PSDL.

Public service logic (PSL) introduced a deeper understanding of the public service systems (Osborne et al. 2022). Osborne (2017) argued that a shift is needed from PSDL to PSL to deepen the understanding of the public services' context. PSL recognizes that the value is not only provided by the public service organizations, but it is created through the interaction between service users and providers that are situated within broader institutional, political, and societal environments.

One distinct characteristic of PSL is that it differentiates co-production and co-creation. While PSDL involves citizens as co-producers, PSL offers co-production as an attempt to involve the users in the design and delivery of public services. Co-creation, on the other hand, is about the outcomes and experiences of the service users, which has been recognized in the value emergence discourse in the private sector by Vargo et al. (2017) and referred to as value-in-context. The value-in-context presence in public services argues that it emerges through the interaction between the provider and user entities with an emphasis on citizens' needs and expectations (Osborne, 2017; Grönroos & Voima, 2013). PSL also highlights the complexity of stakeholders when it comes to defining and experiencing the public value, as public services also involve elected officials, service providers, and communities. The complexity of stakeholders in public services requires the negotiation of the public value, as it may differ among the stakeholders and what they deem to be valuable.

2.3.1. The Public Service Ecosystem

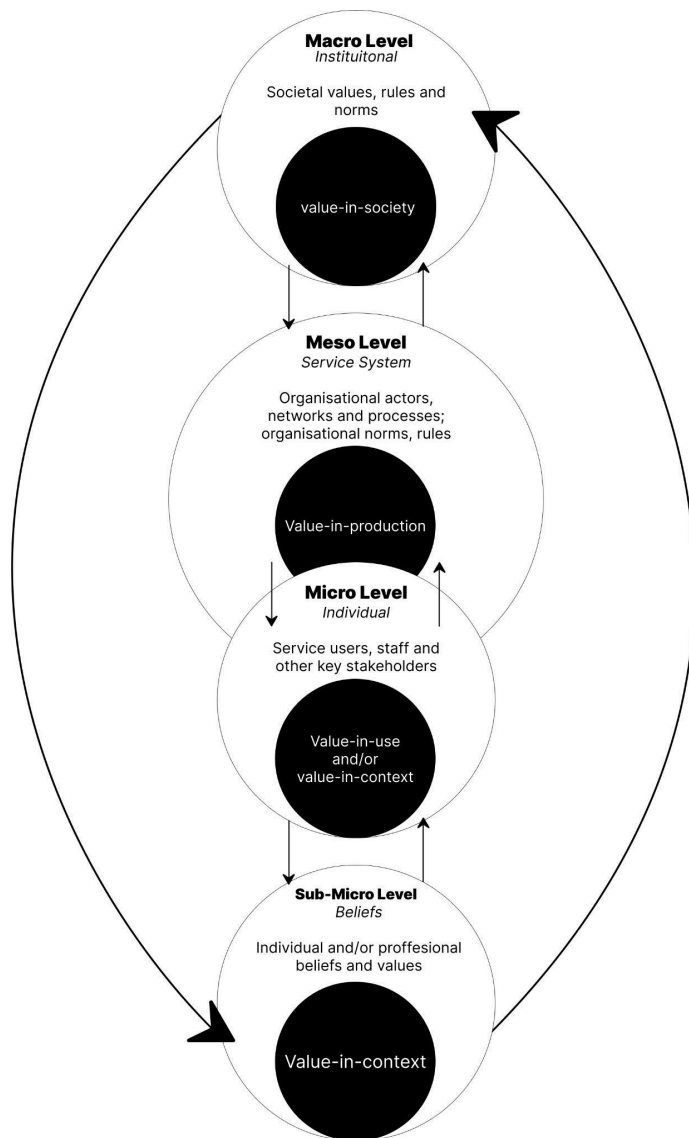


Figure 3. *Public service ecosystem and emergence of co-created value*

Note. Created by the author; adapted from Osborne et al. (2022) and informed by Bozeman (2019), Grönroos and Voima (2013), Strokosch and Osborne (2020) and Vargo et al. (2017).

Osborne et al. (2022) introduced the Public Service Ecosystem (PSE) in order to grasp the complexity of value creation in public services. The PSE framework looks into four levels of the public service system (Figure 3), drawing upon the analogy of the ecological

ecosystem. Macro-level, being the broadest level, reflecting the institutional level, is looked upon with a public value lens theoretically. The institutional level consists of societal values, rules, and norms that can be reflected in policies and legal frameworks that shape the public value creation. Osborne et al. (2022) argue that public managers at this level can have limited impact as they have to operate within the given operating environment through institutional frames. However, they also acknowledge that this is not a definite situation and can be challenged. This is where value-in-society emerges. The value created at this level is not from service use but from aligning public services with democratic values and societal well-being (Bozeman, 2019).

The second layer is the meso-level, focused on the service level, looking into public service organizations and networks within the organizations. Public managers are deemed to be more effective within this layer as they can utilize networks and engage with the local community. Value creation within this level is referred to as value-in-production, as the utilization of networks would allow space for co-designing public services and therefore, co-producing the value. The use of networks allows for engagement that could benefit the process with experiential knowledge. Additionally, the co-production of public services with citizens can create value even without coming to the service delivery phase, as it can allow space for civic confidence, social learning, and trust building among co-producer citizens (Osborne et al., 2022)

The third layer, referred to as the micro-level, is where engagement happens with the service directly. This is the individual level of the ecosystem. Value in this layer can emerge as value-in-use, which is the experiential dimension of interaction with the service, and value-in-context, depending on the alignment of the service provided with the individuals' value definition that is shaped by their life circumstances, preferences, and expectations (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Strokosch & Osborne, 2020). Therefore, the public service that is provided must account for the diverse needs and realities of the public, as the value emerges within these different realities on an individual level.

The last layer, the sub-micro level, captures the importance of the individual's personal and professional beliefs. This level refers to the influence of these beliefs on how individuals perceive and contribute to value creation in public services. Just as societal beliefs shape value at the macro-level, individual beliefs shape how value is understood and co-created at

the personal level. Osborne et al. (2022) refer to this level as sub-soil level in other words, deriving it from the ecological ecosystem analogy reflecting the values that are held deeply by ecosystem stakeholders. These beliefs, whether distinct or close to each other, exist within all the people who are present in the public service ecosystem. Drawn from behavioral public administration, it emphasizes how human behavior and cognition influence the public service processes. While the previous works on the emergence of value-in-context by Vargo et al. (2017) and Osborne (2017) relate to the value emergence at this level, it is not clearly defined in the literature.

In summary, PSE has brought an understanding of how value is co-created through answering where, with whom, and through which means. The complexity of the public service sector and, therefore, the necessity of understanding how value emerges within this ecosystem is important, especially when the public sector's broader societal goals are considered. This complex system of value co-creation, better understood with the provided PSE, highlights an important perspective. Negotiation has to take place in order to create value within different levels of the ecosystem, in order to have a value emergence that is equitable, serving the public sector's broader societal goals.

2.3.2. Public Services and Well-Being

Public Service Logic has looked into public service delivery and emphasized that value is co-created through interactions between service providers and users. The Public Service Ecosystem (PSE) has further expanded this view by situating the public service delivery, that is complex in nature, within layered and interactive systems ranging from society level to individual beliefs. The dimensions of the value emergence in public service within PSE help understanding the outcomes that public services can create. As laid out in Osborne et al.'s (2022) work, these value emergence dimensions, value-in-exchange, value-in-production, value-in-use, value-in-context, and value-in-society, relate to short-term and long-term outcomes across the service level. Even though the authors have acknowledged that the reality of the value creation process is more complex than only having a temporal lens, as short-term and long-term, they provide an understanding of the outcomes.

Value-in-production that emerges during co-design or co-production of service processes may contribute to capacity building and confidence for the attendees. Value-in-use is shaped by

the interaction with the service, and value-in-context is rooted in the alignment of the service with the individual's needs and expectations. The emergence of these two coming together, interrelatedly affects well-being through the service. Value-in-society serves to the broader societal goals of the services by looking into how the public service acts as an enabler for democratic values and the impact of the services on a collective level. This highlights the value creation in public services that produces outcomes that extend beyond the service interaction and can lead the way for overall societal well-being.

Within PSE, public services are not only seen as functions that serve efficiency of services as within the NPM's understanding, but public services also serve towards broader societal goals such as well-being. While serving towards a broader goal, co-creation can serve as a negotiation tool that the public service ecosystem requires for value creation. However, co-creation can not be depended on to improve public outcomes. Sørensen et al. (2021) argue, as also highlighted in PSE (Osborne et al, 2022), that within the public value creation, it might be assumed that it is clear what the value is standing for, however it is not as clear as individuals and communities beliefs upon what is valuable or important for the society differs. Co-creation opens the space for negotiating the *value-to-be-emerged* within different levels of the value creation process. With all the differences within the co-creation space, one thing might need alignment: What is the *value-to-be-emerged* for? The debate around co-creation, especially within a system as complex as the public sector, also brings the question of whose voices are heard while negotiating to reach the value-to-be-emerged.

As von Heimburg et al. (2021) argue, public services are not just delivery mechanisms but are embedded in democratic societies. Democratic societies carry a responsibility to enable human flourishing, reduce inequities, and inclusive citizenship (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999; von Heimburg et al., 2021; Young, 2000). In their view, the purpose of public services is not limited to efficiency but lies in the potential to serve the common good, especially by enhancing the capabilities of individuals and communities. Co-creation that fails to include marginalized or vulnerable groups may reinforce inequality, however, thoughtfully designed participatory processes can redistribute resources alongside dignity and meaning (von Heimburg et al, 2021). Co-creation can become a tool for creating the *value-to-be-emerged* through collaborative sense-making and shared purpose. This is also present in

Arellano-Gault’s (2010) argument regarding the public sector being centred around equity and social purpose within his criticism of NPM, as it is focused on efficiency as a public management approach.

2.4. Transformative Service Research: Well-being to *Socially Impact*

Transformative Service Research (TSR) has emerged to investigate the relationship between service systems and the well-being of individuals and collectives. Anderson et al. (2011) refer to it as service research with a focus on generating “uplifting change” and enhancing the well-being of individuals, communities, and the broader service environment. TSR moves beyond service metrics such as service quality and satisfaction, instead placing well-being at the core (Anderson et al., 2013; Anderson & Ostrom, 2015). This positioning of service highlights how service systems can act as enablers of transformation.

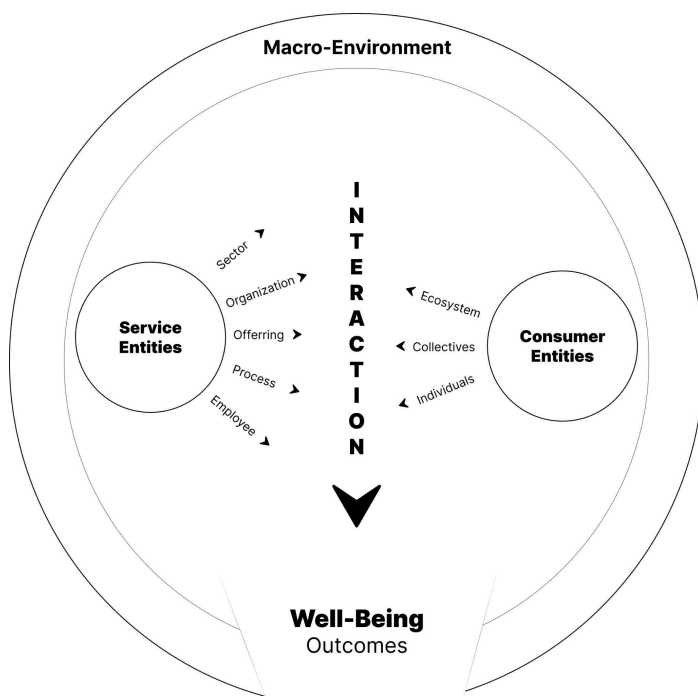


Figure 4. *Transformative service research framework*

Note. Adapted from “Transformative service research: An agenda for the future, by L. Anderson, A. L. Ostrom, C. Corus, R. P. Fisk, A. S. Gallan, M. Giraldo, M. Mende, M. Mulder, S. W. Rayburn, M. S. Rosenbaum, K. Shirahada, and J. D. Williams, 2013, *Journal of Business Research*, 66(8), p. 1204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.08.013> Copyright 2013 by Elsevier. Originally Figure 1.

Anderson et al. (2013) propose a framework (Figure 4) that structures the relationship between service and consumer entities. The framework helps to navigate the transformative impact that services can have on consumers. Within this framework, service entities and consumer entities exist in an environment surrounded by the macro-environment. Macro-environment does not only surround the interaction between the service and the consumer entity, but also affects it. The macro-environment components that are significant within TSR include public policy, culture, technology, and economy as they influence both the service and the customer entities. Anderson et al. (2013) highlight public policy as a component of the macro-environment, as the public policy is bound to serve the good of the public by nature and therefore is highly relevant in a research setting where well-being is at the core. The interactions between the service and the consumer entities, surrounded by the macro-environment, are not defined by the engagement during the service provision. It is defined as the exposure of consumers to any of the service entities at any point in the value co-creation process and not only during the service provision.

Service entities within the framework of TSR range within a spectrum from macro to micro level service entities. Service entities include sectors, organizations, service offerings, the processes associated with these services, and the employees who deliver them. Consumer entities are also ranges within a spectrum of micro to macro as they consist of individuals, collectives, and ecosystems. Anderson et al. (2013) illustrate how service entities can significantly influence the well-being of any consumer entity; shaped by how a service is provided by individual service employees, the structuring of a service process, the design of a specific offering or service, and the policies and decisions made by organizations or sectors. The consumer entities differ in how their outcomes are shaped through these interactions, as they range in three levels. While an individual-level consumer entity may involve outcomes reflected on a personal level, the collective level can be reflected in a family or neighborhood, therefore shared values come into play in shaping the outcome. The ecosystem level refers to the influence of service entities on the natural environment, which also includes humans within it, and therefore the outcomes' range differs as well.

TSR differentiates itself from generic service research, topics such as metrics around customer satisfaction are not the focus, and prioritizes well-being outcomes that are especially relevant within the field of service research. Rather than addressing all possible

outcomes, TSR focuses specifically on those related to service employees and consumers, since organizational well-being has already been widely studied in existing literature (Anderson et al., 2013).

TSR focuses on eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. While eudaimonic well-being refers to the development of human capabilities, long-term flourishing, and reductions in disparity, drawn conceptually from Sen's (1999) work on human development and Ryff's (1989) model of well-being. Hedonic well-being outcomes are drawn from Diener's and Lucas (1999), related to immediate affective responses such as happiness, satisfaction, and emotional relief. This distinction allows the framework to reflect upon both short-term and long-term emotional responses that service experiences and broader structural and developmental processes may have an impact on, due to the acknowledgment of macro-environment's influence. This dual focus allows space to evaluate services not only for what they deliver materially but also for what they enable socially. This emphasis on individual and collective well-being resonates with Meynhardt's (2009) view of public value as grounded in psychological perceptions and relational experience of what serves the common good. In practice, this can be seen as paying attention to how services support the agency and inclusion through well-being outcomes.

Hall et al. (2014)'s proposed a conceptual TSR framework highlighting factors that influence service experience by situating individual well-being within broader social systems, highlighting how community context, social hierarchies, and psychological profiles interact with service systems to influence well-being outcomes. As Hall et al. (2014, p.2) note, "our layered approach allows for analysis of the granularity of daily life," which helps to examine how various factors within service design and delivery influence individual and collective well-being. Hall et al. (2014)'s work on TSR and Meynhardt (2009) both put importance on subjective experiences in shaping perceptions of value and well-being, offering complementary lenses for understanding the everyday impact of service systems.

TSR's understanding of service interactions and multi-level well-being outcomes aligns with broader perspectives in public service discourse, such as PSL and PSE, which conceptualize value creation as a relational and contextual process (Osborne, 2017; Osborne et al., 2022). These alignments suggest a potential alignment between service science and public

administration in exploring the role of services in promoting well-being. Therefore, it reveals the potential for TSR to contribute to the transformation of public services, aligning with the broader societal goals.

Focusing on well-being as both an outcome and a guiding principle, TSR's framing can allow space for exploration into how service ecosystems can be designed to promote equity, inclusiveness, and collective well-being (Fisk et al., 2018). These concerns are present when it comes to Moore's (1995) positioning of public managers as creators of socially beneficial outcomes that are legitimated and publicly valued. So, public value alignment with societal goals can be achieved with a TSR lens to complement PSL and PSE by highlighting the intentional, ethical and long-term responsibilities of public actors. Together, these frameworks can offer a vision of public service that is capable of shaping better futures.

Recent contributions have pushed TSR further, reframing well-being not just as an outcome to be measured but as a foundation for systemic change when it is embedded in how services are designed and delivered. Alkire et al. (2020) informed TSR on how social impact is created and by whom, by bridging social entrepreneurship, service design, and TSR. They argue that by bringing multi-level well-being and social impact to the core, and supporting this with elements from social entrepreneurship and service design, service systems can become spaces for social transformation. Social entrepreneurship's focus on prosocial motivation and community engagement, when combined with service design tools and methods, increases how responsive service systems are and enables them to take on systemic challenges and support marginalized groups (Alkire et al., 2020). This happens by embedding transformation not just in the delivery, but in the design of services too. This bridging helps TSR evolve from just focusing on outcomes of well-being to asking with whom and how well-being is realized. It allows the exploration of both provider and consumer entities' needs in ways that are inclusive and iterative, emphasizing transformation not only in outcomes, but also in the process of how people collaborate and engage.

Keränen and Olkkonen (2022) highlight the role of social activism in TSR, emphasizing meaningful transformation depends on actors who are willing to challenge dominant structures and speak for alternative narratives that can drive transformation. They see activism as a critical but underutilized perspective in service research, one that works through

confrontation and collaboration. Furthermore, Varman et al. (2021) introduce a framework that distinguishes between two practices shaping transformative service, which are justice and agape. While the justice practice is embedded in formalized and regulated coordination, industrial, or market logic; the agape practice is rooted in unconditional care and love, enabling transformative services that foster solidarity and collective flourishing due to its relational, further away from calculative roots, for value creation.

These contributions through expansion of TSR framing are important in understanding how certain service entities can navigate transformation through their social presence. They broaden the understanding of TSR by reframing service systems as political, moral, and relational spaces. In doing so, they reveal the connection of well-being outcomes to social impact, that does not only rely on the service delivery but highlights the importance of human agency, the relational and experiential knowledge when it comes to transformative potential.

2.5. Local Governance in Turkey

The New Public Management approach in public administration has been a global reform. Initially starting in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the NPM-influenced approaches have been experimented by the United States, Australia, Canada and China (Shah, 2006). Issues revolving around overall financial management, local government administrations and accountability of the government in Turkish public administration have led Turkish public administration to shift towards practices that align with NPM principles.

Criticism around the integration of private sector techniques into public services of NPM and eventually causing reduced accountability in the public sector has been recognized by Dunleavy and Hood (1994). The accountability issue has been remedied through citizen empowerment as one of the incentives (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994, p. 11). NPM also viewed citizens as customers of the public services due to the mirroring of private-sector. While the private sector aims for customer satisfaction, the public sector in the context of the NPM approach similarly emphasizes aligning public services with citizens' needs, through improvement of responsiveness and service quality. The customer-centric approach in NPM requires responsiveness and understanding of the citizens' needs in order to align the public services. Therefore, NPM requires a dynamic public sector. NPM's other principle is the

disaggregation of public sector units by breaking down large bureaucracies into smaller units (Hood, 1991). The decentralization practices have the potential to strengthen local governments. Local governments being closer to the citizens creates a more responsive and closer touch to citizens, allowing space for citizen empowerment.

NPM's principles, which involve the disaggregation of public sector units, an emphasis on private-sector management styles, and a focus on efficiency and effectiveness (Hood, 1991), have also been reflected in Turk's alignment with the new management approaches introduced through time. The transition to NPM has started with the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018. The contents of the law was in alignment with the efficiency and effectiveness of NPM, as it suggested strategic and performance-based management in public administration (Demir, 2021). Following Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018 in 2003, Turkey's management reforms in local governance have been influenced by the above-mentioned principles of the NPM in the following years. Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 enacted in 2004, Municipality Law No. 5393 enacted in 2005 and Municipality Law No. 6360 legislated in 2012 are the legal frameworks where the NPM approach's influence is visible. In these legal frameworks, key reforms are around decentralization, strengthening local governments and result-focus orientation aimed at improving efficiency and accountability in public service delivery.

Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018 enacted in 2003 defined its purpose in Article 1 as:

The purpose of this Law is to regulate structure and functioning of the public financial management, preparation and implementation of the public budgets, accounting and reporting of all financial transactions, and financial control in line with the policies and objectives covered in the development plans and programs, in order to ensure accountability, transparency and the effective, economic and efficient collection and utilization of public resources (Law No. 5018, 2003, Art. 1).

The reform that has started in the context of broader public administration, such as administrations under the central government and local administrations within Law No. 5018, has led the way to restructuring local governance in Turkey throughout time. The current

structure of administrative divisions in local governance is categorized under two structures: units under the central administration and units which are under the local administration.

Turkey is divided into 81 provinces and these provinces are managed by governors (*vali*) appointed by the central government. Provinces are established and consist of multiple districts, which are managed by district governors (*kaymakam*), also appointed by the central government. Structure within the local administration varies based on their population density. Provinces with less than 750,000 population have Special Provincial Administrations and Municipalities. Provinces with over 750,000 population have Metropolitan Municipalities and Municipalities of the districts. Under the local administration, there are also neighbourhoods and villages. Through elections for local governments, citizens also elect a representative for the neighbourhood called *muhtar*.

Differentiation between the central administration and local administration can be explained as the units under central administration as governor (*vali*) and district Governor (*kaymakam*) are appointed while the local administration units are elected by people living in the area. However, the *muhtars* that are elected in local administration elections by village or neighbourhood residents operate under central administration. The responsibilities of *muhtars* also vary whether they are operating in a Metropolitan Municipality or a Municipality that also has Special Provincial Administration due to the restructuring of local governance in 2012.

Building upon the Law No. 5018's definition of the strategic plan, which refers to "the plan includes medium and long term goals, basic principles and policies, objectives and priorities and performance indicators of public administrations" (Law No. 5018, 2003, Art. 3), the following year Law No. 5216's strategic management approach has been built upon this definition to ensure metropolitan municipalities' administrations are carried out effectively and efficiently. Metropolitan municipalities' responsibilities were expanded legally with this emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency. Municipality Law No. 5393 enacted in 2005 imposed additional responsibilities to municipalities while aiming for a more democratic approach in local governance (Yılmaz & Güler, 2017). Given the legislative navigation, the local governments transitioned to adopt a more proactive and participatory management approach compared to previous practices (Demir, 2021).

While these two legal frameworks were to help develop authority and service capacity for municipalities, Municipality Law No. 6360 was legislated in 2012 and enacted in 2014 to restructure the local governance. This law expanded the jurisdiction of metropolitan municipalities to their current state. The metropolitan municipality became the main provider of local services and was also responsible for the development of the provinces (Oktay, 2017). While metropolitan municipalities became the main provider, smaller administrative units were also demolished such as villages that had been existing in these provinces. Law No. 6360 removed town municipalities and villages from their legal entities by either merging municipalities or turning villages into neighbourhoods. This centralization aimed for a more streamlined and effective governance. In conclusion, the ongoing efforts regarding decentralization and strengthening local governments with Law No. 5216 and Law No. 5393 have been affected when the Law No. 6360 was enacted in 2014.

The centralization of the local government has reduced citizen engagement by diminishing the autonomy of local entities, which were previously facilitating direct interaction and participation with citizens. The enacted law 6360 brought criticism in the matter, as it abolished certain legal entities, and it was claimed that this re-centralization would create barriers to local participation (Adıgüzel ve Tek, 2014) and hinder the ability of citizens to engage effectively with governance. The democratic connection to elected representatives has been deemed to be weaker in metropolitan municipalities due to losing access to smaller local administrative units (Erbay, 2017). When it comes to the advantages, metropolitan municipalities are more likely to get investments for their provinces (Oktay, 2017). However, as Oktay (2017) states, metropolitan municipalities have more opportunities to attract investments to the area, which could result in improved development of the area. However, there is a risk that these investments, coming from global or national economic actors, may not always align with the specific needs of the local community. Moreover, the abolition of smaller local units, as criticized by Adıgüzel and Tek (2014), worsens this issue. With the re-centralization process, which has resulted in metropolitan municipalities losing villages and smaller administrative units, there is an even greater likelihood that these investments will not address local needs.

2.5. Muhtarlık

Muhtarlık is a public administration unit established in 1829 during the Ottoman Empire's rule. While the establishment of the unit was part of the reforms to modernize and centralize the Ottoman state administration, it was this new unit that took the administrative responsibilities previously managed by other entities. Before its establishment, religious leaders were responsible for the tasks that the muhtarlık unit later took over. Muhtarlık unit at the time was responsible for issuing certificates, recording the settlers in the neighbourhood, participating in tax collection, taking care of marriage and military services, preventing the settlement of people who are unfavorable to the neighbourhood and ensuring relations between the neighbourhood and the central government (Ortaylı, 2011, s. 109). Throughout its history, the unit has been repealed and its responsibilities have been distributed among the municipality, certain law enforcement agencies, government bodies etc. However, this created a gap in the local governance due to residents of neighbourhoods' needs that were not met and the unit has been re-established (Aydoğdu & Tuncer, 2018).

The muhtarlık as a local administrative unit is governed by elected officials called *muhtar*. According to Law No. 2972 on Local Administration Elections, the electoral procedures for muhtars are regulated within the broader framework of local elections, which are held every five years. Candidates who are running for the muhtar position are required to be Turkish citizens, at least 18 years old, and must not have been convicted of any disgraceful crimes and they need to be literate. Most importantly, candidates should be *actively residing* in that neighbourhood. While earlier regulations required candidates to reside in the neighbourhood at least one year prior to the elections, this requirement is not explicitly stated in the current Law No. 4541.

Law on the Establishment of Neighbourhood Muhtar and Elder Committees in Cities and Township Law No. 4541 was enacted in 1944. In this law, the responsibilities of the muhtar were duties around the civil registry, military service, taxes, election assistance, primary education supervision, poverty certifications, residence documentation and public health. The Council of Elders acts as an advisory and decision-making body that assists the muhtar in neighbourhood or village administration. While some of these duties were expected to be

performed by muhtars, some of them were expected to be assisted or performed by the members of the elder committee.

According to Municipal Law 5393, muhtars are responsible for identifying and addressing neighbourhood needs in collaboration with residents. However, resident participation is deemed to be voluntary. Muhtars are required to liaise with municipal and governmental institutions, advocating for concerns regarding their neighbourhood. Law also states that the municipality the muhtar is in liaison with is responsible for addressing the needs of the neighbourhood and the needs of the Muhtarlık (Muhtar's office). While doing so the municipality is required to *try to ensure* the services align with the neighbourhood's needs. The municipality that is required to provide support and assistance to muhtars is conditioned 'to the extent of its budgetary possibilities'. However, a qualitative study conducted through focus group discussions with muhtars revealed that the phrasing 'budgetary possibilities' leads to inconsistent support (Akpınar, 2017).

The responsibilities of the muhtar expand outside of the liaison regarding the common needs of the neighbourhood, but also the responsibilities that were appointed by Law No. 4541. Although the law is still valid, the e-government system has changed the tasks that muhtars have to perform first hand. Citizens can access these services provided by muhtars online and this has raised questions regarding the necessity of the muhtars in the digital era especially in city centers (Uğur & Kızılkaya, 2023). Law No. 5393 assigns responsibility to muhtars for collaborating with residents to identify the needs of the neighbourhood or the village. However, resident participation remains voluntary, and there is no further guidance for elected individuals on how this collaboration should take place (Şahin & Turan, 2022).

The collaboration expected from muhtars to fulfill their duties towards identifying the needs of the locals can be traced to how these individuals are elected. Muhtars get elected through the networking opportunities within their communities. As Massicard stated (2022) muhtars' knowledge is experiential. Their knowledge is rooted in them being residents of the neighbourhoods they are living in. The resident part of their identity, which is a prerequisite for them to run for the elections by Law No. 4541, allows them to have everyday relationships with the residents. While Law No. 4541 does not state the required previous

residing time of the candidate prior to elections, being known in the community is one of the key aspects that shapes the relationship with locals as a candidate.

Massicard's (2022) investigations have also highlighted that elected muhtars stated that to be elected you need to establish trust with the residents. This establishment of trust comes through a long presence in the neighbourhood and the interactions within the community over time that results in trust building. Muhtars are individuals who gain social trust through personal connections in the community as well. This personal connection plays a role when the collaboration is needed to fulfill the duties through community engagement. Their daily presence managing the community and also being a part of the community as a resident allows them to be closer to the local issues. Muhtar, taking its legislative powers through elections comes to play with the social connections they established through time. Their presence resulting in social trust is crucial for participatory governance at the local level.

The nature of how this local administrative unit is shaped allows muhtarlık to hold potential for transformative social innovation due to their geographical, social, and relational proximity to the residents of the neighbourhood. As Şahin and Turan (2022) argue, the ambiguity of muhtars legal responsibilities and their positioning between the local government, central administration, and the residents gives them flexibility. This flexibility allows the unit to serve as a bridge between different levels of governance, fostering participatory governance and communicative interactions that are essential for citizen engagement. Muhtars ability to repeatedly interact with residents and stakeholders provides a valuable mechanism for ensuring continuous engagement in local decision-making (Şahin & Turan, 2022). The locations of muhtars' offices in every neighbourhood as an accessible space for all residents also create space for making up for top-down governance models and enhancing the policy cycles that are supposedly people-oriented. However, while muhtarlık as a unit has the potential to support social transformation, their reliance on informal mechanisms rather than institutionalized frameworks presents both an opportunity and a risk according to Şahin and Turan (2022). This highlights the need for reforms that can enhance muhtars adaptability while maintaining its community-driven core.

There are over 50.000 muhtars on duty bridging the citizens, local government and central government (Ministry of Interior, n.d.). The number of units highlights their significance in

local governance. While the digital era introduced digital services that reduced the number of administrative tasks muhtars have to fulfill, their presence is extending beyond legislation. Due to the nature of muhtars, they play an active role in community engagement, participatory governance and social transformation through innovation while continuing to represent the state at the most local level. Their extended responsibility in community engagement allows them to address local needs effectively, and creates potential for ensuring responsive governance at the neighborhood and village levels creating an opportunity for transformative governance.

2.6. Muhtars as Co-Creators of Public Value

Muhtarlık as an administrative unit can be understood through the lenses of public value theory and value co-creation frameworks. Moore (1995) argues that success in the public sector depends on the creation of public value, the legitimacy and support from stakeholders, and the operational capacity to deliver services. In this view, delivering outcomes that citizens value contributes to building trust and legitimacy throughout the process (OECD, 2017).

Meynhardt (2009) complements this view by defining public value as relational, emerging from individuals' experiences within social relationships and structures. Value co-creation frameworks highlight that value is co-created through interactions between service providers and users (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Within this context, muhtars and citizens co-create value as muhtars fulfill their formal duties through engaging with their communities.

Within the public service system, PSE as an informant framework, public value shaped by Moore (1995)' strategic triangle and Meynhardt's (2009) arguments and understood deeper with the value co-creation framework of PSL, suggests that muhtars as locally embedded public actors co-create value with their communities. TSR expands the value co-creation process by emphasizing well-being outcomes that would emerge from service and consumer entities interactions (Anderson et al., 2011, p.3; Anderson et al., 2013). While previous research examined the legal ambiguity and social roles of muhtars in Turkey (Massicard, 2022; Şahin & Turan, 2022), there is little understanding of how they co-create public value or contribute to well-being within their communities.

Prior studies have not applied TSR, value creation logics and looked further into the environments to understand muhtars' role in public value creation. This study aims to address that. Integrating these frameworks to explore muhtars as co-creators of public value through engaging with citizens and their operations in value co-creation processes as the generation of such well-being outcomes through creation of public value, and has the potential to transformative capabilities.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted within this study. The study adopts a qualitative case study strategy rooted in public value, transformative service research (TSR) and supported by concepts from value creation logics and public service ecosystem (PSE) framework.

This chapter consists of details of the research strategy and theoretical positioning provided with the researcher's positionality in Section 3.1 and 3.1.1. Section 3.2 explains the research method and reasoning behind the qualitative case study method, including the role of theory in shaping the interview guide for the data collection and analysis. Section 3.2.1. introduces the researcher's reflections during the data collection, acknowledging the reflexivity needed for the qualitative research undertaken (Krieger, 1991; Finlay, 2002; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Section 3.3 introduces the research participants and sampling logic, followed by the relation to the literature used in the roots of the study. Section 3.4 outlines the data collection procedures, including ethical considerations relevant to the cultural, institutional and theoretical context of the study.

3.1. Research Strategy

This study adopts an interpretivist strategy and is designed to understand how public value is co-created and negotiated within the muhtarlık as it aims to understand the everyday practices and situated experiences of muhtars in relation to their neighborhoods and local governance structure in Turkey. The interpretivist orientation positions reality as a socially construct and informs it through how people act based on their interpretation of their environment, institutional settings, and relationships (Schwandt, 2000; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Therefore, the strategy of this research positions the researcher as a co-creator of meaning alongside participants rather than a neutral observer. This is also consistent with interpretivism's emphasis on the legitimacy of situated knowledge, which is reflected in this study by the participants' knowledge as well as the researchers' positionality. As Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006) acknowledged the legitimacy of the situated knowledge, they also highlighted the potential that it can complicate and at the same time expand academic perspectives. In summary, the epistemological foundation places this study within the interpretivism research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2019).

The guiding methodological layers of this study are visualized in Figure 5, which is adapted from the updated version of the Research Onion developed by Saunders et al. (2023). In this version, research approaches such as deduction, induction, and abduction are represented unlike the earlier version (Saunders et al., 2019) and it allows for a clearer positioning of the abductive reasoning applied in this study.

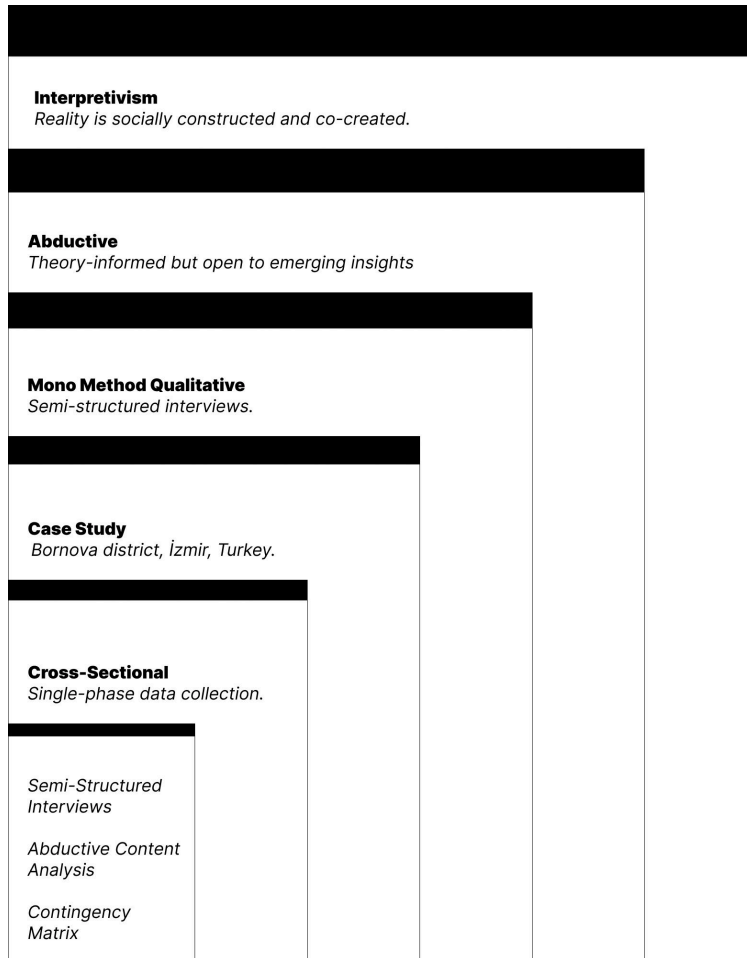


Figure 5. *The research onion applied to the case study in this research*

Note. From " Created by the author; adapted from Saunders et al. (2023), developed from Saunders et al. (2019).

Given the interpretivist research strategy, the study applies a mono-method qualitative design, using semi-structured interviews as the data collection technique. The research follows a case study strategy, with a focus on a specific district, Bornova, within İzmir Metropolitan

Municipality. This district case enables in-depth exploration of how muhtars operate in their role. Case study strategies are appropriate for an interpretivist perspective as they allow for capturing real-world complexity through contextualization with in-depth inquiry (Yin, 2018). The choice of this setting allows this study to focus on the muhtarlık as an administrative layer of Turkey's decentralized and re-centralized and at the same time, politically complex governance system. However, the case of choosing a district that is governed by the same political party as the metropolitan municipality serves to reduce potential political tension that could influence the dynamics.

This study adopts a cross-sectional case study design, which could lead to the perception of understanding muhtars' experiences and value contributions at a particular moment in time. However, the semi-structured interview questions did not explicitly focus on temporal change, it was anticipated that participants would naturally contextualize their responses by referring to how their roles, community dynamics, and relationships with institutions had evolved over time. This expected emergence allowed the research to capture temporal narratives despite being based on single-phase data collection, as participants were encouraged to reflect on their roles, neighborhood dynamics, and institutional relationships.

The study is conceptually grounded in public value theory (Moore, 1995), TSR (Anderson et al., 2011; Anderson et al. 2013), and supported by concepts from value creation logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Vargo et al., 2017; Osborne et al., 2013; Osborne, 2017) and PSE framework (Osborne et al., 2022). As Hartley et al. (2016, p. 10) emphasize the empirical approaches needed that explore public value, this study responds to that by exploring how muhtars navigate their responsibilities, challenges, and community relationships in ways that contribute to public value creation through a case study shaped by semi-structured interviews.

Finally, the interpretive stance is also reflected in the interview guide design, which explores how muhtars define their roles, engage with residents, interact with municipal authorities, and express aspirations for future change. While the interview guide was informed by predefined theoretical constructs, particularly from transformative service research and public value theory, it was designed to allow for flexibility and the emergence of context-specific narratives due to their semi-structured nature.

The overall research approach aims to enable both conceptual consistency and sensitivity to the lived experiences of muhtars, aligning with Hartley et al.'s (2016) call for public value research that connects theory to empirical sense-making in the real-world. Additionally, Mick's (2006) definition of transformative research that is defined by framing the research by a fundamental problem or *opportunity* that improves life in relation to its environment, such as conditions, demands and potentialities, which are in the roots of TSR, has been addressed in this study.

3.1.1. Researcher Positionality

As a master's student in Service Design Strategies and Innovation, I approach this research from an interpretivist stance, drawing on multiple frameworks to explore how muhtars perceive and perform their roles in local governance. My education in service design, combined with my personal familiarity with the field site, shaped both the design and interpretation of this study.

I was born and raised in a neighborhood in the district of Bornova, which is studied in this thesis. Although I currently reside outside Turkey, I accessed participants through the close relation networks, which allowed and enabled me to draw on relational familiarity and therefore, a degree of proximity. These connections helped with trust-building and openness for the research execution, which are essential for engaging with participants like muhtars as local actors. However, this proximity also required attention to reflexivity, as it *inevitably* shaped the interview dynamic and the meanings co-constructed during the research process.

As Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012) highlights, interpretive research often begins with something that the researcher wants to understand further, either from their personal experience or literature, and evolves through an iterative process of reflection between the two. This study emerged in this way, shaped both by the familiarity and curiosity I carry, and the theoretical interest in how value in public is created, especially when it is so close to *home*.

From an interpretivist perspective, reality is viewed as socially constructed and context-dependent. This research aims to explore how participants, muhtars, interpret and give meaning to their roles. At the same time, I acknowledge that knowledge in this study

was not gathered from participants, but it was co-constructed through shared dialogue that is shaped by our overlapping cultural background, local knowledge, and social networks (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Berger, 2013). This co-construction of knowledge shaped the data therefore findings, but also evolved the analytical lens I utilise to interpret participants' experiences. Additionally, my identity as a Turkish researcher currently based abroad may carry assumptions about neutrality, affiliation, or power. These dynamics may have influenced what participants chose to share but also how they framed their responses.

Rather than treating positionality as a limitation, I follow arguments that it should be explicitly acknowledged as part of the research process (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity was embedded in the design through transparent reporting, iterative question development, and critical and numerous reflections during data exploration and analysis. In doing so, I aim to contribute to a ethically grounded and contextually situated understanding of public value creation and local governance practice.

3.2. Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore how muhtars contribute to public value creation as locally embedded public actors. The case study is bounded within a single district under İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Bornova, selected for its socio-economic measures and the researcher's contextual familiarity. The research draws on TSR, public value theory, and is informed by value creation logics to guide data collection and analysis as aforementioned in Section 3.1. Case study methodologies are suitable for the analysis of complex and context-specific systems of governance and public administration (Agranoff & Radin, 1991; Yin, 2018), allowing for in-depth analysis of localized service interactions and stakeholder relationships. Given the complexity of the muhtarlık institutions that are positioned between local governance, central state, and community, this approach enables analysis of both structural positioning and everyday relational practices.

3.2.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Data collection for this study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with nine muftars. This approach enabled depth, and flexibility, and allowed for a shared structure while leaving room for unanticipated insights. Semi-structured interviewing is widely used in interpretivist research traditions where the focus is on capturing meaning-making, social interaction, and the lived experience of participants.

The interview guide was developed based on the study's conceptual foundations. It was divided into four sections as in Table 1. While interviews were designed to be conversational and interpretive, the transcribed data were later analyzed using content analysis, which allowed for coding, based on the theory-informed categories, while remaining open to new meanings that emerged from the fieldwork.

Table 1. *Structure of the Interview Guide Based on Literature*

Interview Section	Focus	Literature Link
Background & Daily Role	Personal context, responsibilities.	TSR & Public Value Theory
Community Needs & Interaction	Engagement with residents, needs, and collaboration.	TSR & Value Co-Creation
Institutional Relationships	Perceptions of support from municipalities.	Public Value Theory
Aspirations & Reflections	Desired changes, challenges, ideal outcomes.	TSR & Public Value Theory

A pilot interview was conducted before the formal data collection, which led to the refinement of language and sensitivity to politically charged terms, which is an important step in a context like Turkey. Topics related to the political landscape were not introduced by the researcher directly. These topics were allowed to emerge organically, if and when participants chose to bring them up. These adaptations were beyond practical reasoning but reflected an ethical commitment to creating a respectful and trust-based dialogue, in recognition of the co-constructed and context-sensitive nature of qualitative inquiry, given the context of the research site.

3.2.2. Theory-Informed Coding Framework

All interviews were audio-recorded with verbal consent and transcribed in full, unless there was a problem with connectivity, which is reflected in the transcriptions. Although the coding structure for this study was initially informed by existing literature, particularly the well-being outcomes from TSR, this framework was applied abductively. Abductive reasoning allows researchers to iteratively revisit data through theoretical lenses while remaining open to empirical findings (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). This allowed for structured and theory-informed coding while maintaining sensitivity to context-specific meanings and emerging insights from participants' narratives. Content analysis within data units is particularly useful as the goal is not only to understand the meaning but to go beyond to examine how specific codes relate and interact across the dataset.

Table 2. *Theory-Informed Contextualized Codes*

Code	Short Description	
Eudaimonic Well-being	E1	Improved Access to Services
	E2	Empowerment
	E3	Inclusion
	E4	Social Capital
	E5	Reducing Inequality
	E6	Trust in Institutions
	E7	Literacy
Hedonic Well-being	H1	Relief from Burden/Stress
	H2	Sense of Safety
	H3	Community Joy or Pride
	H4	Reduced Loneliness / Isolation
	H5	Gratitude or Emotional Comfort
Identity	I1	Neighbourhood Service Facilitator (Provider)
	I2	Citizen Advocate (Consumer)
C	Constraints	

Codes were refined or reinterpreted through continuous engagement with (1) participant narratives, (2) contextual knowledge of Turkish local governance, and (3) theoretical interpretations of TSR-related well-being outcomes. For example, while eudaimonic well-being was exemplified in terms of literacy, access, and decreasing disparity (Anderson et al., 2013) it came to include trust in institutions, and inclusion to reflect the context-specific meanings that emerged from the muhtars' narratives. Similarly, hedonic well-being was expanded to include community pride and joy, and sense of safety, rather than exemplified well-being outcomes in TSR.

Approximately 300 data units were identified and coded using Google Sheets (see Appendix 1). Emphasis was placed on recognizing cross-case patterns rather than attributing insights to individual participants, aligning with an analytic generalization approach common in interpretive case studies (Yin, 2018). A contingency matrix was developed to explore how different identities, *Citizen Advocate* vs. *Service Facilitator*, co-occurred with specific well-being outcomes and constraints. This structure supported an understanding of identity and public value contributions without converging findings into individual case narratives.

To ensure trustworthiness and transparency, the coding process was documented, reflexively informed, and contextually responsive. The patterns and relationships were interpreted through an iterative process of theoretical engagement and empirical reflection, in line with the logic of abductive and case-based content analysis. Consequently, the coding framework reflects both what theory suggested and what the context demanded and acknowledges that meaning in public service work is co-constructed, politically embedded, and locally grounded.

In summary, this study was held with an interpretivist stance, where meaning is co-created through dialogue between the researcher and participants, shaped by theoretical frameworks as well as the researcher's positionality. This commitment has been present in the entire research process.

3.3. Research Target

This study focuses on muhtars, elected neighborhood representatives who operate as the most local level of governance in Turkey's administrative system. While they are legally tasked with duties, they also fulfill informal yet critical roles rooted in their proximity to residents and their presence in the neighborhoods they serve. As in nature they are hybrid actors, their position allows them to uniquely navigate between formal institutional structures and lived neighborhood realities (Massicard, 2022; Şahin & Turan, 2022).

The research was conducted in Bornova, a district within the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, selected for several reasons. (1) Bornova ranks among the highest in Turkey's 2022 Socio-Economic Development Index (SEGE), which provides its position on the district-level development across Turkey (Acar et al., 2023). The SEGE report includes 56 variables ranging from education, healthcare, municipal finance, innovation, and quality of life. While the index does not directly assess the performance or efficiency of public service delivery, it reflects the structural and socio-economic conditions under which services delivery is most likely to be affected from. The district's political alignment with the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality is also taken into account for reducing potential political friction that might otherwise influence service coordination, which further strengthens its selection as a case study site. This decision was particularly important given that public value creation and service delivery occur within a politically charged macro-environment, as recognized in TSR as well as highlighted in the strategic triangle.

A total of nine muhtars, each representing a different neighborhood within Bornova, were recruited through network-based outreach and snowball sampling. Initial access was made possible through the researcher's relational ties in the city, a necessary condition in trust-sensitive fieldwork contexts as stated also in positionality, however reflexivity was maintained. Snowballing proved effective in reaching participants who might otherwise be hesitant to participate due to the institutional roles they embody may often require formal neutrality but are informally shaped by political and social dynamics (Berger, 2013).

Table 3. *Overview of Interview Participants: Residency, Muhtar Tenure, and Gender*

Participant	Residency in Neighbourhood	Muhtar Tenure (Elected)	Gender
M1	Lifelong Resident	2nd Term	Male
M2	Approx. 45 years	2nd Term	Male
M3	Lifelong Resident	1st Term	Male
M4	Approx. 40 years	3rd Term	Male
M5	Lifelong Resident	1st Term	Male
M6	Lifelong Resident	1st Term	Female
M7	Approx. 20 years	1st Term	Female
M8	Approx. 55 years	2nd Term	Male
M9	Lifelong Resident	1st Term	Female

Tenure presented in table 3 is reported based on the number of elected terms of the participants. Slight generalizations were made regarding neighborhood residency duration to enhance confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. These measures are adopted to ensure ethical research practices.

Participants availability and access influenced the efforts that were made towards variation in gender, years of service, and neighborhood profile. All participants had previously lived in the neighborhoods they serve, ranging between approximately 20 years or throughout their lives. Participants had been elected through local municipal elections, fulfilling the legal and experiential criteria of the role, through residency, and as it is emphasized in the literature on muhtar candidacy and neighborhood-level representation (Massicard, 2022).

The research participants were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw, their verbal consent was obtained before and during interviews. In recognition of local norms and sensitivities, given the positionality, written and signed consent was not requested. In the Turkish context, signing official documents can carry sociopolitical weight and may raise concerns or hesitation, that can also jeopardise trust and effect openness. Therefore, choosing verbal consent reflects a reflexive and context-aware ethical approach, aligned with the principles of building trust and respecting participants' comfort within the fieldwork.

3.3.1. Ethical Reflexivity and the TSR Lens

Transformative service research (TSR) also brings an ethical sensitivity that shaped how this research was designed and conducted. In line with TSR's orientation, the ethical practice was not limited to procedural compliance such as obtaining informed consent but extended to considering how these procedures are perceived and experienced by participants (Azzari and Baker, 2020). As above mentioned, the act of signing documents may carry socio-political weight, potentially leading to mistrust or bring up associations with state surveillance or bureaucratic control, therefore the choices made for the process are informed and justified within TSR.

The research adopted a relational and contextual approach to ethics, consistent with TSR's commitment to *uplifting* engagement. The research participants were verbally informed about their rights, and consent was revisited during interviews to create space for ongoing dialogue. This perspective aimed to encourage working with participants rather than on them, maintaining the trust that is built due to proximity provided as stated above, and making room for interpretation, comfort, and mutual understanding throughout the process.

3.4. Data collection

Data collection took place in March 2025 through semi-structured interviews with nine muhtars, each representing a different neighborhood in Bornova district, İzmir. Eight out of nine interviews were conducted via online video calls, as one of the interviews had connectivity issues and made it impossible for a reflective interview session after a point, due to the researcher's geographic distance. Interviews lasted between 32 and 82 minutes, with an average duration of 46.5 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Turkish and recorded with the participants' verbal consent, obtained both before and after the recording started, consistent with relational ethics.

The interviews were transcribed in full shortly after each session. The interviews produced 312 individual data units, which were later coded and analyzed. These units form the basis of the empirical analysis that are presented in the following chapters.

3.4.1. Researcher Reflections

In line with Krieger's (1991) acknowledgement and Finlay's (2002) argument that reflexivity is not optional but essential for qualitative inquiry, this section presents reflections recorded during fieldwork following the conclusion of each interview. These notes provide an understanding of how my presence, background, and social positioning shaped my perception of participant responses, rapport, and the direction of our conversations, highlighting the co-constructed nature of the data itself.

Throughout the interviewing process, later followed in the analysis process, I kept ongoing reflections to examine how my presence as a researcher and community insider shaped both the data collection process and the content of the interviews. These reflections were essential in maintaining methodological transparency and ethical responsiveness, particularly given the socio-political sensitivity of some topics discussed.

In several interviews, shared locality, and therefore the created proximity and trust facilitated openness, with *participants expressing appreciation for the opportunity to share their views*. However, there were also moments of hesitation, especially when discussing municipal authorities or politically sensitive topics. These moments of hesitation, once captured, were followed up with an affirmation of the data anonymization. However, taking the Turkish political landscape into consideration, it has influenced the receptiveness of the reassurance. The follow-up questions, especially around topics that brought hesitation, and the depth of disclosure asked by the researcher were often shaped by the level of rapport established by that point in the interview. One participant explicitly stated, "...if I were to say this personally, I would say different things, but as a muhtar, I can't." This reflected hesitation alongside how participants managed their role in public conversation, balancing personal opinion with *felt institutional responsibility*.

Some interviews were influenced by challenges such as poor internet connectivity, and noisy environments. In one case, the lack of a video call diminished rapport and made it harder to maintain a reflective conversation. Other interviews were influenced by, as I interpreted, gendered interactions, such as when a female muhtar paused to ensure eye contact before continuing, which is a moment that highlighted the relational expectations of the interaction, and my own shortcomings in providing enough space to provide for the expectation.

I also noticed differences in narrative style across participants. While some spoke in personal terms, others used collective pronouns as “we”, framing their work as institutional rather than individual. In some cases, my own biases, including concern about how issues like drug use or neighborhood image would be perceived, initially made me hesitant to ask certain questions, only to find out that participants willingly elaborated once the topic was brought up.

These field dynamics shaped both the depth and tone of the data and are acknowledged as part of the interpretive process. Reflexivity was used not only during data collection but also during analysis, where I remained attentive to how power, trust, and identity shaped what was shared, which led to numerous critical reflections.

4. CASE STUDY: MUHTARS IN İZMİR

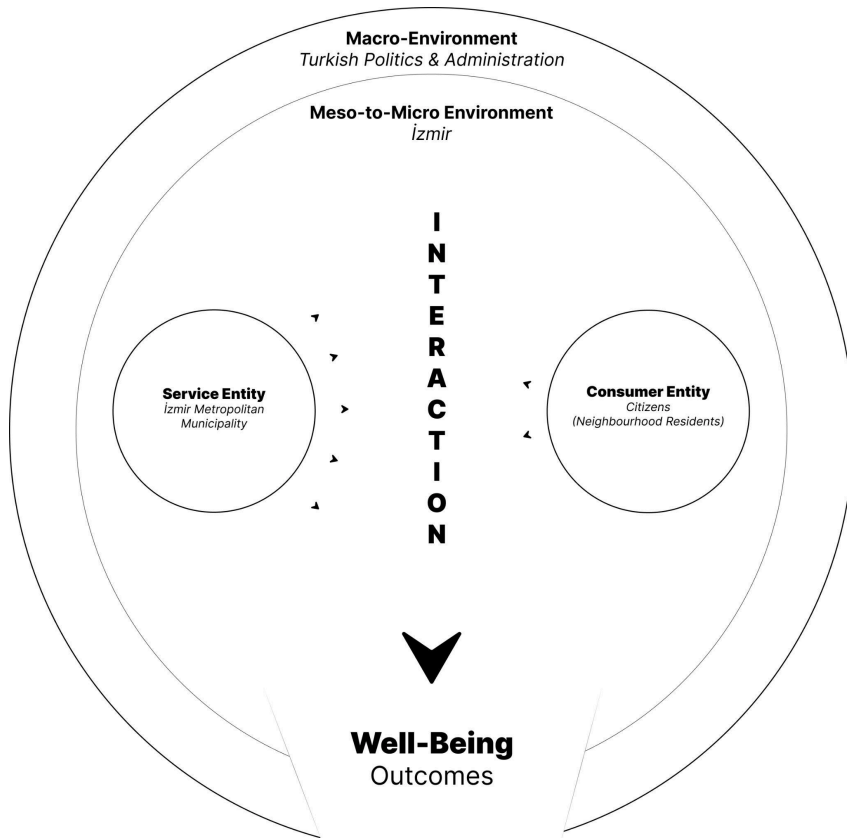


Figure 6. *Adapted TSR framework contextualized for the case study*

Note. Figure created by the author, adapted from Anderson et al. (2013) and informed by Moore (1995), Osborne et al. (2022), Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008) Grönroos and Voima (2013), Strokosch and Osborne (2020) and Vargo et al. (2017), Osborne (2017).

This case study informed by the public service ecosystem (PSE) (Osborne et al., 2022), service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008), and public service logic (PSL) (Osborne, 2017) to structure the local governance in which public value creation takes place in İzmir (Figure 6). These frameworks used to inform the distinction between macro, meso, and micro environments of value co-creation. However, these perspectives are not adopted as primary lenses for this study. Instead, they support the conceptual framing of the empirical context, enabling an understanding of how public service is embedded within the broader

governance landscape, primarily guided by public value theory (Moore, 1995) and transformative service research (TSR) (Anderson et al., 2013), for the empirical investigation as the focus is on how public value is co-created through interactions and how well-being outcomes emerge as an outcome. While TSR provides critical insights into macro-environmental influences and focuses on well-being, TSR does not explicitly offer a detailed structuring of meso and micro-environment dynamics. For this reason, the PSE model is conceptually drawn upon to inform the understanding of service entities at the case studies selected research site.

4.1. Macro-environment: Turkish Political and Administrative Landscape

The macro-environment of this study is shaped by the political and administrative landscape of public service delivery in Turkey, as outlined in Section 2.5. Beginning with decentralization efforts inspired by New Public Management (NPM) principles in the early 2000s, there is a shift toward re-centralization with the enactment of Law No. 6360. This law demolished smaller municipalities and expanded metropolitan municipalities' authority by expanding jurisdiction, contributing to the re-centralization of governance structure that may influence the operational autonomy of local governance actors (Adıgüzel & Tek, 2014; Erbay, 2017). This shift may have created tensions between local governance empowerment and the realities of actually *re-centralized* governance, narrowing the operational autonomy of local governance actors in certain areas, such as the site of this study, İzmir.

This study's macro-environment, the Turkish political and administrative landscape, has been shaped by the long-term rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) at the national level, while the *main opposition party*, the Republican People's Party (CHP), governs the metropolitan municipalities such as İzmir. This political contrast is shaping the authorizing environment as it can affect how metropolitan municipalities operate, potentially influencing access to financial resources, regulatory flexibility, and consequently, public service delivery.

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality emphasizes participatory governance, citizen engagement through a connection to sustainable development goals (SDGs) within their strategic planning documents (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2019; 2024), which is important to highlight. This study does not focus on these strategies' effectiveness, but their visibility in official documents can be seen as a way for local governments to position themselves within a

macro-environment shaped by re-centralization. While we cannot conclude that these strategies are a response to macro-environment's influence, their focus on participation may be interpreted as efforts to strengthen bottom-up approaches for local governance.

The macro-environment framing here provides the political and administrative background for the local governance therefore, the local public service system, where the service entities, the consumer entities, and the muhtars interact. Understanding these contextual dynamics is essential for understanding how public value is co-created within İzmir's local governance setting.

4.2. Meso-to-Micro Environment: The City of İzmir

As the macro-environment of the public service delivery is defined in the previous chapter, the meso and micro-environments are to be defined in this chapter, as this is where the public value is negotiated and co-created for the context of this study. Drawing conceptually from PSE, service delivery and citizen engagement are situated within this space between service and consumer entities, as TSR is informed and defined with interactions.

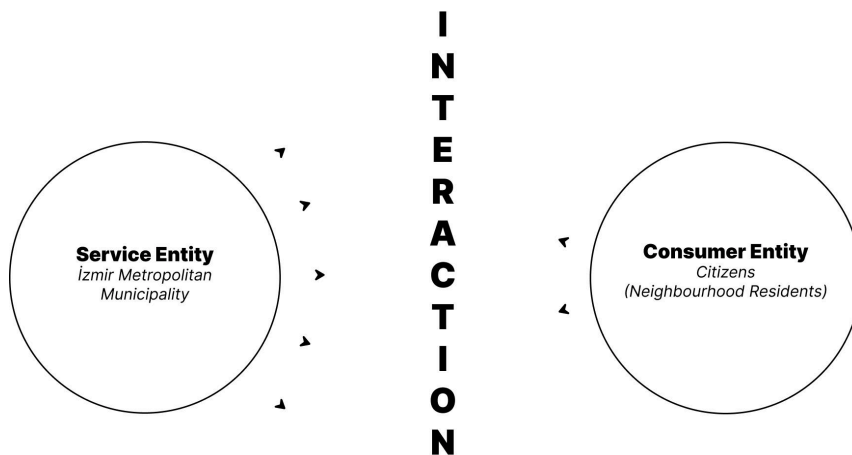


Figure 7. *Value co-creation arena*

Note. From " Adapted from the author's Figure 6, which was developed based on Anderson et al. (2013), Moore (1995), Osborne (2017, 2022), Vargo & Lusch (2004, 2008), Grönroos & Voima (2013), Strokosch & Osborne (2020), and Vargo et al. (2017).

In this study, this interactional space is understood as the *value co-creation arena* (Figure 7), informed by SDL and PSL, and aligned with TSR's well-being focus. This space allows value emergence through relational processes and not only through the service provision stage, but as TSR highlights that every interaction between a service entity and a consumer entity shapes the well-being outcome. This highlights the citizens, muhtars, and municipal institutions' co-creation of how they shape outcomes in response to needs and everyday realities. Although the empirical focus of the study moves between the meso to micro-environment, the co-creation of public value and well-being outcomes is embedded within the macro-environment, as TSR acknowledges.

4.2.1. Service Entity: İzmir Metropolitan Municipality

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality is positioned as the primary service entity shaping service processes, citizen engagement mechanisms, and strategic public value initiatives at the metropolitan scale, which are operating within the legal frameworks established by the 5216 Metropolitan Municipality Law and the 5393 Municipality Law. As these laws are enacted, İzmir's governance is directed by long-term strategic planning (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2019; 2024).

The metropolitan municipality's service delivery happens across a range of public services, such as urban mobility systems coordinated by ESHOT, water and wastewater management through İZSU, environmental protection initiatives, social welfare programs, cultural development activities, and participatory governance structures. The strategic planning of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality includes financial allocations (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2024), and while these allocations may show the municipality's service priorities, the exact sources of funding, such as municipal income, state support, and possible external funding depend on yearly budget decisions and economic conditions.

It is important to highlight that İzmir, as a metropolitan municipality, is capable of attracting greater levels of investment compared to smaller municipalities, as highlighted by Oktay (2017), for the development of the area. İzmir Metropolitan Municipality's strategic approach to public service delivery is structured around five goals that show connections to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These five goals consists of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 13

(Climate Action), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by emphasizing inclusive participation and social support programs (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2024).

While İzmir's alignment with SDGs positions the municipality as part of a global development agenda as a local service provider, it is important to consider whether such strategic framing *also serves to attract external investments*, potentially prioritizing global priorities over aligning with the specific needs and lived realities of local communities, which is highlighted by Oktay (2017) in metropolitan governance contexts. Therefore, although İzmir's strategic framing emphasizes sustainability, equity, and participation, the creation of public value and well-being outcomes will depend on how effectively these goals are interpreted and situated within everyday governance and interactions in the local context.

However, İzmir's role as a service entity cannot be fully understood without considering the political macro-environment that frames the local governance in Turkey. While national authority has been held by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), İzmir has been consistently governed by the Republican People's Party (CHP), the main opposition party. This political contrast has the potential to shape İzmir's authorizing environment, such as affecting the resource transfers from the central government.

Bornova, a district of İzmir, was selected as the empirical setting for this study based on both socio-economic and political considerations, as stated in section 3.3. This political alignment was to minimize potential friction between district and metropolitan governance structures, enabling the study to focus more directly on the relational processes of public value co-creation without the influence of political conflicts. However, this study does not assume that political alignment ensures the *needed* collaboration. The district selection as Bornova provides a more controlled context to explore interactions that happen under, anticipated to be more, stable conditions.

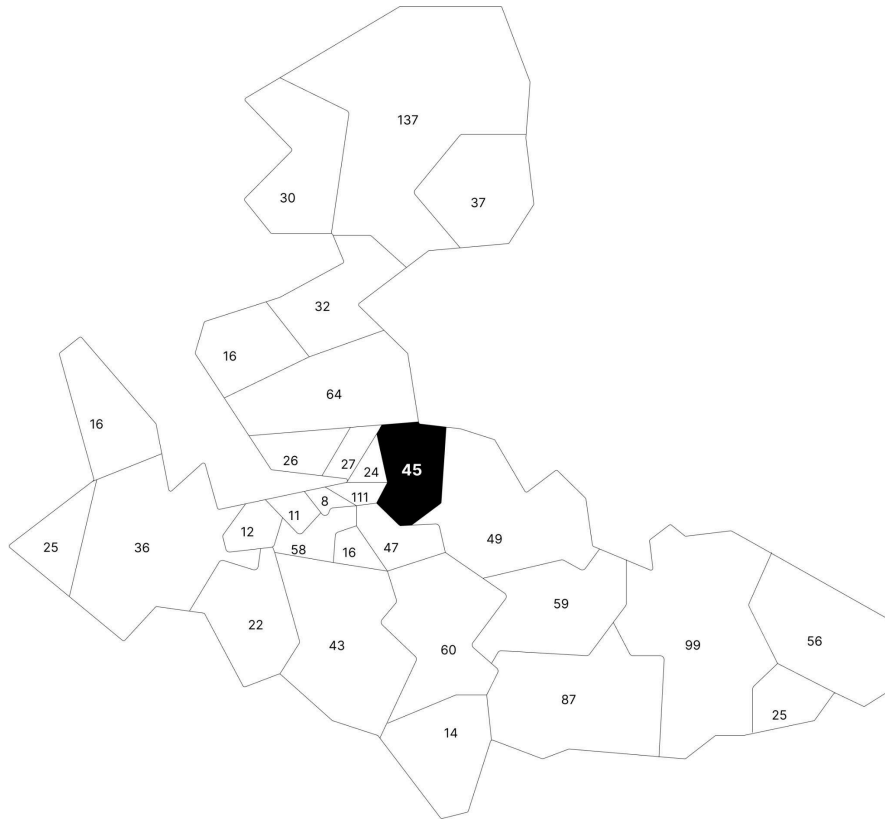


Figure 8. *İzmir Metropolitan Municipality administrative boundaries and Bornova district with the number of muhtarlık units*

Note. Figure created by the author based on Muhtarlıklar Dataset (İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, n.d.)

Conceptually, the selection of Bornova is also grounded in the strategic triangle. As a municipality, Bornova (Figure 8) operates autonomously under national law, but within a local governance environment in which İzmir Metropolitan influences certain operational fields, such as urban planning and service coordination. While İzmir is not a legal authority, its role shapes aspects of Bornova’s public value co-creation efforts. However, while Bornova provides the neighborhood-level context for this study, the primary public service entity remains İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, as outlined in the literature review, due to the local governance structure in Turkey.

4.2.2. Consumer Entity: İzmir Citizens, Neighbourhood Residents

Citizens of İzmir residing within the neighborhoods of Bornova are positioned as consumer entities. Consumer entities are understood not as passive recipients of services, but as active co-creators of value, whose interactions with service entities shape outcomes through the value co-creation, as SDL, PSL, and Meynhardt's relational public value definition. As individuals, they interact with municipal services based on their needs, socio-economic realities, and life circumstances. At the collective level, neighborhoods function as social and administrative units. Through this collective functioning, elections are held and they elect a muhtar who are legally tasked to express the communities needs, negotiate and address them within local governances service system, as understood by the literature. Although this study did not take citizens as participants through interviews or surveys, the study recognizes that public value emerges relationally through interactions between citizens, service entities, and as well as intermediary actors, muhtars. As discussed in the literature review sections, understood through the emergence of value in public services and relational public value definition, value co-creation takes place within social contexts where citizens' experiences, perceptions, and actions play a role in the creation process.

The role of citizen representation is especially important in the Turkish context as muhtars are elected through elections, they represent the voice of local citizens. However, as Massicard (2022) emphasizes, a muhtar's legitimacy is not only based on these elections held. Their legitimacy is also built and strengthened over time through close social ties, daily interactions, and personal trust within the community. Citizens' relationships with muhtars, as neighbors, intermediaries or better yet, 'bridges', and trusted figures are key to understanding how public value is co-created at the neighborhood to districts, and city level.

4.2.3. Muhtars: In Between

Unlike the metropolitan municipality or citizens, muhtars are recognized as both the administrative and social life of the areas they serve. They are elected through formal elections, under Law No. 4541 and regulated by Law No. 5393. This provides them with institutional legitimacy. However, beyond their legal status, their everyday presence in the community also gives them strong social legitimacy (Massicard, 2022). From the perspective

of Moore's strategic triangle of public value (1995), muhtars operate in the space between their formal authority, defined by their authorizing environment, and their operational capacity. Their official responsibilities, which are rooted in legislation, define their formal role. However, their ability to perform these duties requires *more than formal structures* as there is no legislative guidance for it (Şahin & Turan, 2022). Therefore, it is based on their social relationships and networks within their communities. Meynhardt's relational view of public value (2009) is also relevant within the muhtars' context as value is not only created through services, but also through meaning, trust, and shared understanding.

Drawing from SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), this study sees the operational capacity of muhtars as made up of two types of resources. Operand resources refer to the visible, material aspects like muhtar offices, legal duties, and official tools. Operant resources are intangible aspects like trust, experiential knowledge, and social networks. As Massicard (2022) emphasizes, muhtars are elected through the social embeddedness in their community, which is achieved by the presence in the neighbourhood through residency, which is also legally required. Therefore, it can be interpreted that operant resources pave the way to operand resources. These operant resources are also present as understood by Şahin and Turan's (2022) argument on muhtars' ability to interact with stakeholders repeatedly. These relationally shaped, *actually co-created*, operant resources can allow them to expand the operational capability, as well as the provision of needed legitimacy and support from the authorizing environment.

This duality, shaped by their resident and legal identity, does not fit into one category of an entity within TSR. They are not only a service entity or only a consumer entity, they potentially embody aspects of both entities. According to this, this study takes an interpretive approach to muhtars' roles, seeing their identities not as fixed but as shaped by context. It treats muhtars as potentially hybrid actors and seeks to explore how public value is co-created and negotiated through their interactions within this duality. The following chapter presents the empirical findings that investigate these in the research site.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Data Collection Results

The findings from nine semi-structured interviews from Bornova, İzmir, were collected in March 2025. The interviews ranged from 32 to 82 minutes, with an average duration of 46.5 minutes. The nine participants of the study detailed in section 3.3 were either lifelong residents or long-term residents of the neighborhoods they currently serve. The tenure, reflecting the terms that they have been elected, ranged from one to three terms. While the sampling logic and interview process are detailed in the research design chapters, this section provides a summary of the resulting data, which consists of over 300 coded units representing the perspectives and experiences of interviewed participants.

There has been no removal of data; however, as reflected in the research design section, and the reflexive approach taken into consideration, the 312 data units included the background information of the participants to provide a reliable and consistent result. The decision was made to keep all of the data units that consist of background information, even though reflections and framing of the answers by participants differed. This decision is in line with this study's commitment to contextual depth and recognizing that the participants' framing of their responses was shaped by their histories, positionalities, and relationships within their communities.

5.2. Data Analysis

As outlined in the Research Design chapter, section 3.2.2, the transcribed interviews were coded using a theory-informed content analysis approach. The coding framework is rooted in TSR and public value theory and informed by value creation logic, the framework focuses on well-being outcomes, that are whether intended or realized well-being outcomes. Distinguishing intended and realized well-being outcomes is essential, as throughout this chapter, value co-creation is reflected upon with the *value (co-)creation* term rather than value co-creation. This wording style is intentional as it aims to reflect both the theoretical, interpretive nature and participant sample of this study.

While value co-creation implies a mutual and interactive process between service and consumer entities, the participants in this study were only muhtars. Given this, the analysis

captures the ways in which muhtars themselves frame, intend, or attempt to (co-)create value, even in cases where the actual realization of that value from the citizen side cannot be fully understood, given the limitation of the study. As outlined in the previous chapters, muhtars are elected and socially embedded residents. Their social proximity and everyday familiarity with the community inform how they identify needs, respond to them, and communicate the outcomes through their given narratives' interpretation. However, constraints from political, institutional, or operational capabilities can limit whether those intentions and attempts translate into realized well-being outcomes. Therefore, *value (co-)creation* is used as a way to hold space for both the symbolic and practical dimensions of understanding value within this study. This framing aims to contextually ground the interpretive stance of the study and is narrated through the muhtars' lived experiences.

The coding framework, rooted in TSR's exemplified well-being outcomes, reflects Sen's (1999) work on human development and Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being, Diener's and Lucas's (1999) hedonic well-being definitions, has been expanded while immersing in the data. As outlined in the research design chapter, this expansion of well-being outcomes allowed by an abductive approach within this study was shaped through participants' narratives, theoretical interpretations, and contextual knowledge of Turkish local governance, as mentioned. Consequently, the coding framework was grounded locally, co-constructed with the participants, and made into the context-sensitive version in line with the interpretivist stance.

5.2.1. Analysis Process and Exploration

The analysis process, lightly mentioned in the research design chapter, has been iterative in nature. Immersing in interviews allowed for contextual alignment of the well-being codes in the case study's setting. Throughout the immersion and analysis process, reflections were recorded for consistency and reliability. The coding was conducted within 312 data units in Google Sheets. The data units were formed from the transcripts that contextualize the interaction processes.

After the well-being outcomes were contextualized and the final set of codes was established through immersion in the data, each data unit was reviewed individually. A binary value of 1

and 0 was assigned to codes. Value 1 for the present code, and 0 to those that were not present (see Table 4 for a simplified representation, the full coding table is available in Appendix 1). This approach enabled a systematic mapping of code across all 312 data units.

Table 4. *Example of Coded Data Units Used in the Analysis*

No.	Data Unit	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	...
A1	"Quote"	1	0	0	...
A2	"Quote"	1	1	0	...
A3	"Quote"	1	0	1	...
A4	"Quote"	1	0	1	...
A5	"Quote"	0	0	0	...

Note: This is a simplified representation. The full coding matrix, including all codes and data units by number, is provided in Appendix 1.

Following the binary coding, (1) code frequencies were calculated to determine how often each code appeared across the dataset. (2) Using each of these codes' frequencies, the expected co-occurrence for each pair of codes was then assessed by multiplying the codes individual probabilities of occurrence. This approach is based on statistical independence and is rooted in probability logic (Osgood, 1959; Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). (3) These expected co-occurrences were then compared with the actual co-occurrences, which were assessed using a count-based function that identified instances in which both codes were marked as "1" within the same data unit. (4) By comparing actual co-occurrences to expected co-occurrence frequencies, the analysis aimed to identify code pairs that occurred together more frequently than would be expected by chance, which would suggest a potential relationship between them. (5) To support reliability and consistency, a ratio of actual to expected co-occurrence was calculated. Code pairs with a ratio of 1.2 and higher than expected were considered significant for further reflection and highlighted green in the contingency matrix (See Table 5). It is also important to note that these ratios and code frequencies, more broadly, are not interpreted as measures of quantity or quality of public value and therefore the well-being outcome. Rather, they function as a tool for identifying patterns of association across the dataset, enabling a structured approach.

The results of this analysis through a contingency matrix enabled exploration of which well-being outcomes (see Table 6) and identity roles such as Service Facilitator (I1) Citizen Advocate (I2), and constraints (C) tend to co-occur. This analytical step supports the study’s aim to understand more than code frequencies, but how they meaningfully relate within the lived context of muhtars' work and public value (co-)creation with a well-being outcomes focus. This structure revealed patterns of association, highlighting where value (co-)creation efforts were present, overlapping, or constrained.

Table 5. Contingency Matrix of Code Co-Occurrences

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	I1	I2	C
E1		0.111	0.106	0.453	0.206	0.202	0.074	0.371	0.152	0.063	0.024	0.115	0.533	0.420	0.310
E2	0.112		0.026	0.109	0.050	0.049	0.018	0.090	0.037	0.015	0.024	0.028	0.129	0.101	0.076
E3	0.099	0.038		0.105	0.048	0.047	0.017	0.086	0.035	0.015	0.006	0.027	0.124	0.097	0.073
E4	0.436	0.138	0.119		0.204	0.200	0.073	0.367	0.150	0.062	0.024	0.114	0.528	0.410	0.310
E5	0.231	0.071	0.067	0.234		0.091	0.033	0.167	0.068	0.028	0.011	0.052	0.240	0.190	0.142
E6	0.212	0.032	0.029	0.199	0.083		0.032	0.163	0.067	0.028	0.011	0.051	0.240	0.180	0.139
E7	0.090	0.051	0.035	0.077	0.038	0.022		0.060	0.024	0.010	0.004	0.019	0.086	0.067	0.051
H1	0.439	0.083	0.083	0.356	0.202	0.196	0.090		0.123	0.051	0.019	0.093	0.432	0.339	0.255
H2	0.135	0.067	0.032	0.167	0.109	0.083	0.029	0.170		0.021	0.008	0.038	0.177	0.140	0.104
H3	0.058	0.016	0.029	0.080	0.026	0.022	0.004	0.038	0.013		0.003	0.016	0.073	0.057	0.043
H4	0.022	0.006	0.019	0.032	0.010	0.006	0.006	0.016	0.010	0.016		0.006	0.028	0.022	0.016
H5	0.103	0.045	0.029	0.141	0.074	0.061	0.022	0.103	0.061	0.022	0.016		0.134	0.110	0.079
I1	0.580	0.103	0.125	0.522	0.234	0.270	0.093	0.436	0.151	0.064	0.022	0.125		0.490	0.370
I2	0.410	0.138	0.096	0.470	0.210	0.170	0.061	0.340	0.190	0.064	0.029	0.150	0.420		0.290
C	0.340	0.064	0.051	0.270	0.144	0.170	0.019	0.276	0.115	0.045	0.010	0.061	0.350	0.330	

Actual co-occurrence

Expected co-occurrence

Table 6. Coding Framework with Expanded Definitions

Code	Short Description	Expanded Definition	
Eudaimonic Well-being	E1	Improved Access to Services	Actions that help residents access services such as municipal and public services, social aid, health or education.
	E2	Empowerment	Content about actions that enable residents to become more informed, independent, or active in civic life.
	E3	Inclusion	Content about increasing the visibility, participation or integration of marginalized or socially excluded groups.
	E4	Social Capital	Content about actions or dynamics that build mutual trust, solidarity, or cooperation among communities.
	E5	Reducing Inequality	Content about efforts aimed at narrowing gaps in opportunity or well-being between residents.
	E6	Trust in Institutions	Content regarding building trust in public institutions, including by acting as a bridge between citizens and municipal/government bodies.
	E7	Literacy	Content regarding helping residents better understand and navigate bureaucratic, legal, digital or administrative systems, thereby increasing autonomy.
Hedonic Well-being	H1	Relief from Burden/Stress	Content about resolving everyday challenges, reducing hassle, or ease emotional or practical burdens.
	H2	Sense of Safety	Content about actions that make the neighborhood feel safer and secure or reduce uncertainty.
	H3	Community Joy or Pride	Content about events or actions that spark shared celebration, pride, or happiness within the neighborhood.
	H4	Reduced Loneliness / Isolation	Content regarding creating opportunities for social connection, particularly for those at risk of isolation.
	H5	Gratitude or Emotional Comfort	Content regarding residents express appreciation or emotional support, or where muhtars offer emotional support, reassurance, or comfort.
Identity	I1	Neighbourhood Service Facilitator (Provider)	Muhtar is framed as a local authority or service provider as someone who organizes, delivers, or coordinates services, rooted in formal and legal administrative tasks
	I2	Citizen Advocate (Consumer)	Muhtar is framed as advocates and relational intermediaries, focusing on expressing citizen needs and mobilizing support through social networks, informal negotiation, and action beyond formal administrative channels.
C	Constraints	Content regarding political, legal, structural, institutional or operational challenges that prevent the muhtar's ability to deliver intended value.	

5.3. Co-Occurrence of Well-being Outcomes

As the findings will be interpreted given the context of the study in the next sections regarding the relation of well-being outcomes to identity and constraints, this section provides a descriptive overview of how well-being outcomes co-occurred across the dataset.

Based on the contingency matrix created for comparison of actual co-occurrence with expected co-occurrence (see Table 5), certain well-being codes were observed to co-occur more frequently than their expected rates, suggesting potential relational significance in how these outcomes emerged by the narrative provided by the participant and co-constructed with the positionality of the researcher. As noted above, the code pairs that were considered for further reflection are the ones with a higher ratio of actual co-occurrence than expected, highlighted green. While the contingency matrix identified several code pairings that exceeded the threshold ratio for co-occurrence, this section presents only selected pairs, focusing on those that offered the stronger relationships. Some pairings that met the threshold were excluded due to prevent interpretive redundancy.

Community Joy and Pride (H3) and Reduced Loneliness/Isolation (H4) have shown a strong co-occurrence nearly five times more than expected. This suggests that community joy often accompanies opportunities for social connection that can emerge from celebratory practices at the neighbourhood level. H4 has also shown a strong relationship with Emotional Comfort (H5), which allows for the interpretation that the social connection paves the way for emotional support and gratitude or vice versa.

H4 and Inclusion (E3) are closely linked, which reinforces that efforts aimed at the visibility and integration of marginalized, socially excluded groups correlate with reducing loneliness, especially the ones that are at risk, and meaningful as socially excluded or marginalized groups can be at greater risk. E3 and Community Joy or Pride (H3) often appearing together also suggest that efforts around inclusion may foster neighbourhood-level happiness and pride.

Empowerment (E2) and Literacy (E7) have shown strong alignment, actions taken towards enabling residents to become more informed, independent, or active in civic life often involve supporting their autonomy through helping them understand and navigate through complex systems. E2 was also associated with Sense of Safety (H2), which implies that an effort

aimed at supporting civic voices may provide a sense of security. E2's alignment with Gratitude or Emotional Comfort (H5) *shows the recognition of these efforts by residents*.

Empowerment (E')'s similar co-occurrences with Reducing Inequality (E5) and Inclusion (E3) highlight the role E2 plays in bridging disparities and Reducing Inequality (E5) which was tied to both Relief from Stress (H1) and Sense of Safety (H2), indicating well-being outcomes of equity-focused actions. Reduced Inequalities (E5) and Comfort (H5) together with E5 and Inclusion (E3) underscore that reducing these disparities may build recognition and emotional support within the muhtars' context.

Literacy (E7) aligned similarly with Reduced Isolation (H4) and Relief from Burden/Stress (H1), which reflects on navigating bureaucracy, such as administrative and legal systems, reduces burden and social isolation, or better yet, residents at a higher risk at social isolation may experience more stress and need more navigation for the bureaucratic systems.

Social Capital (E4) co-occurred with Community Joy and Pride (H3), Reduced Loneliness/Isolation (H4), and Emotional Comfort (H5). These findings highlight the relational value of trust in enhancing community well-being. The presence of Social Capital (E4) alongside emotional and social outcomes points to the importance of relationship building in providing joy, connection and emotional comfort. This reflects the emphasis in Meynhardt's (2009) relational public value theory, where trust and meaning-making are seen as the core dimensions of public value beyond service efficiency.

The strongly observed patterns of co-occurring well-being outcomes should be understood as reflections of how muhtars perceive and express their everyday practices within their communities. Since the well-being outcomes were coded from muhtars' own narratives, they provide insight into how they understand their roles in facilitating connection, inclusion, emotional support, and access to services. The relational nature of public value, within this study's context, that is emphasized through trust, social capital, and everyday interactions is central to how muhtars frame their impact. These findings highlight how muhtars interpret their contribution to public value (co-)creation in lived and relational experiences, rather than claiming measurements of well-being.

5.4. Muhtar Identity Roles and Value (Co-)Creation

Muhtars, formally elected under legislation and also long-term residents of the communities they serve, suggest a question under the TSR framework. Do muhtars function as service entities or consumer entities with advocacy roles? This section aims to explore that by assessing the co-occurrences of well-being outcomes with identity roles, Service Facilitator (I1) and Citizen Advocate (I2). Analyzing the relationship between identities and well-being outcomes allows understanding how muhtars navigate with their dual positionality and how they (co-)create public value in their neighbourhoods.

As stated above, the frequency of occurrence of a code is not interpreted as the objective measurement of its importance; therefore, identities' occurrences are also not interpreted as to which one is more legitimate. However, the co-occurrences with well-being outcomes allow an understanding of which identity plays more role.

The same threshold logic applied in the previous section, comparing actual to expected co-occurrences and focusing on ratios 1.2 and above was used here to identify meaningful associations between identity roles and outcome codes. This distinction is important due to the difference in frequency of the identity codes individually across the dataset. While Service Facilitator (I1) appeared more frequently across the dataset, with 0.79, Citizen Advocate (I2) frequency appeared to be 0.69 (see Appendix 1). This can be interpreted as while the Service Facilitator (I1) has been more present in the narratives, the Citizen Advocate (I2) has shown more relations to well-being outcomes as highlighted in the contingency matrix (See Table 5.). This suggests that although the Service Facilitator was more present, the Citizen Advocate may be more strongly tied to well-being outcomes, therefore, as Figure 9 illustrates, their practices and embedded presence align them closer to the consumer entity side.

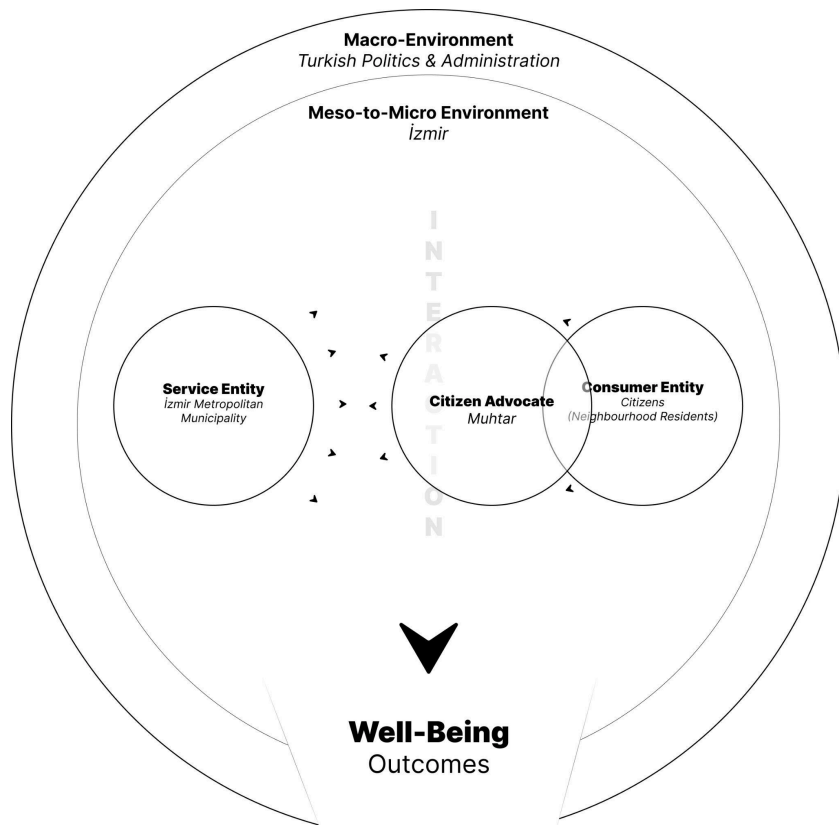


Figure 9. Contextualized TSR framework based on muhtar identity findings

Note. Created by the author; adapted from Anderson et al. (2013) and developed through empirical findings.

Citizen Advocate (I2) reflects the resident part of their identity and was associated with Empowerment (E2), Sense of Safety (H2), Reduced Loneliness/Isolation (H4) and Emotional Comfort (H5). Each of these codes showed co-occurrences above the held 1.2 threshold and they were above 1.3. These associations point to the part of muhtars' role that is not defined by the institutional authority as the Service Facilitator (I1) but by their presence, therefore relational proximity, accessibility as well as advocacy.

Sense of Safety (H2) reflects how muhtars are accessible and trusted figures in the community, often acting as points of contact in cases of need or stress. Sense of Safety (H2) also emerged from narratives that reflect not only a formal responsibility but an emotional contact built on relationality.

Co-occurrence with Reduced Loneliness/Isolation (H4) and Emotional Comfort (H5) highlights the relational proximity of muhtars to their communities. These outcomes appear from the everyday presence of muhtars in residents' lives. Their role in personal concerns and emotional reassurance resonates highly with the relational well-being lens in TSR. These findings also reflect Meynhardt's (2009) view of public value as a relational outcome.

These outcomes do not emerge from formal service delivery, they emerge from being there, listening and intervening in ways that reduce vulnerability at any level and strengthening the social fabric. *Citizen Advocate* (I2) operates on informal procedures rather than formal ones, aligning with arguments from the literature (Şahin & Turan, 2022). These associations reflect that muhtars are not acting as only formal service providers, which would take them further from the service entity, but as the co-occurrences show, they operate on their embeddedness into the community from their residency. This is also reflected in the literature by Massicard (2022) and Şahin and Turan (2022) by their emphasis on proximity, familiarity and daily presence.

5.5. Constraints

The empirical findings in this study mostly focus on how muhtars contribute to public value and, through that, well-being outcomes; their intentions or efforts often shaped or limited by structural and institutional constraints. The constraints (C) code aimed to capture where participants' intentions and efforts have been limited. Even though constraints (C) were present across the dataset, their co-occurrence with well-being and identity codes generally remained below the 1.2 threshold except for Trust in Institutions (E6). This finding reveals itself. It suggests that when muhtars are unable to meet the needs or expectations, this is not because they are not engaged in provision and delivery as they are present in the narratives, but due to other factors as explained. This finding shows that citizens' trust in municipal and public institutions, as well as muhtarlık as an institution, is more prone to diminish if not evoked. Constraints (C) can accumulate into broader perceptions of public institutions' failure in meeting needs, even when the muhtar might remain trusted on the personal level. This chapter examines the constraints more in detail, starting with constraints within operational capabilities that are shaped by the operand and operant resources of muhtars. Afterwards, it expands to consider Constraints (C) at the macro and meso-to-micro levels of governance.

5.5.1. Constraints on Operational Capabilities

Constraints on operational capabilities emerged as a theme across interviews, reflecting how muhtars navigate responsibilities regarding support or resources expected for and from their role. These constraints are often emotional and institutional and shape how muhtars see their capacity to respond to neighborhood needs and expectations.

“... I mean, we are not actually responsible for these incidents, but since the residents of the neighborhood can reach us (muhtars) as the closest, you have to deal with these incidents one-on-one. We are muhtars. We try to do our best to help as much as we can. We cannot keep up, we cannot be enough. There are places where we fall short. My neighborhood is a bit big and troubled. So we can't keep up there, we can't keep up, we can't be enough. There are places where we fall short.”

This quote captures a recurring theme about muhtars' accessibility, yet there are instances where they can not meet the demand whether it is due to a lack of operand or operant resources that are shaping the operational capability. Despite not being formally responsible for certain problems, they become the contact because of their proximity. Participants frequently emphasized the lack of resources, which can further increase this pressure:

“... We have these problems a lot. We try to explain these to the municipality. We do, but of course, we don't have an excavator. We don't have savings, we don't have anything so that we can do it.”

“They assume that the muhtar knows everything. The muhtar is between the state and the citizen. S/he conveys problems to the other side. But the muhtar does not have a budget. S/he doesn't have an excavator. How is s/he supposed to do ...? S/he has no team. We keep trying to explain this to the citizens over and over, but still, they end up blaming the muhtar.”

These quotes reflect how muhtars are caught between expectations and institutional limitations, carrying the accountability in citizens' perceptions. This is present in many interviews. Accountability is personalized, even when responsibility may be institutional. As one participant stated with a metaphor: “We're like the suspension system of the state. We take on everything for them.” The muhtar becomes the buffer on behalf of the system that is beyond them, as they are facing the citizens and their demands and frustrations when needs and expectations are not met. Therefore, this is seen in one of the participants' quotes on how this extends over into the personal lives:

“...when I come home and the phone won’t stop ringing. Just as I’m about to walk through the door, people start calling. (Partner) says, ‘Stop it already, don’t pick up anymore.’ But I tell (partner), we’re here to serve people. Maybe someone’s been arrested, maybe they’re sick, maybe there’s a fire. I have to answer.”

Accountability is personalized and evokes a sense of responsibility in muhtars that goes beyond their legislative tasks, however they might take it on.

5.5.2. Constraints on Macro and Meso-to-Micro Environment

Understanding the muhtars' value (co-)creation process through well-being outcomes aligns with the politically charged macro-environment recognized by TSR. Drawing from the literature review, which contextualizes local governance in Turkey, this section presents findings that highlight how macro-environment influences meso-to-micro environments. Political factors, such as political culture and administrative structure, shape how metropolitan municipalities and muhtars (co-)create value, in line with the alignment of Moore’s authorizing environment (1995) understanding. The findings indicate that political influences at the macro-environment are reflected in the operations and interactions occurring at the meso and micro levels.

The findings indicate that political influence is present that results in uneven responsiveness to local needs. While these may not be a direct influence of macro-environment, they illustrate how broader political culture filters down into everyday governance. As one muhtar describes:

“I’ve been applying for months, but nothing is being done. When someone from a political party speaks up, it gets done right away. It feels like we’re being trampled on. I’ve been dealing with this issue for so long, but as soon as a politician steps in, especially if there’s going to be an opening ceremony, the place is fixed up immediately. Honestly, it’s upsetting. Why did we have to raise it so many times, and still nothing happened? It’s been left waiting for months. Don’t we have any influence at all?”

Another participant highlights the perception that public service delivery’s dependence on political and economic gain:

“Every politician comes here with their own agenda... In our society, let's say, there's never really service aimed at the public good, but rather service aimed at profit. There's no service for the community. We experience these problems a lot here.”

These quotes highlight the constraints faced, but also hints at a broader sense of skepticism towards the political culture. Although the challenges are present in the meso-to-micro environment, their roots may be rooted in political practices that might prioritize visibility and party loyalty over equitable service delivery.

Another constraint emerging from the data concerns how national and municipal political affiliations influence perceptions of the safety and effectiveness of formal complaint mechanisms, like CÍMER (the Presidential Communication Center), a direct channel to the central state. Although CÍMER is intended to function as a transparent and responsive platform for citizens, fears around its usage and more broadly, formal communication of complaints, are present. One muhtar illustrates this hesitation:

“The process is like this, I hear it from my citizens. They come to me and say, ‘Muhtar, I have a problem.’ I say, ‘Let's come together, sign a petition, take it to the municipality, or even to the presidency if needed.’ But then they say, ‘We don't want to get into trouble, muhtar, you know?’ Even if it's through CÍMER or another channel, their names are recorded, and threatening language is used toward these people. That's why there are a lot of problems. Then they (residents) start playing it safe, they go around the official process. It's like they say, ‘I told you about the issue, now it's your responsibility.’...”

This quote also highlights broader fear of surveillance that may suppress citizen voices and shift the pressure on muhtars, who are left to navigate the political, bureaucratic and systemic processes. At the same time, another muhtar acknowledges the choice not to use CÍMER to maintain cooperative relations with the municipality:

“We communicate things to the municipalities. Of course, there's this platform, CÍMER in our government. But since we work directly with the municipality, we usually don't use CÍMER for such matters. We're in close contact with the municipality. A more aware citizen might still report through CÍMER. But since many citizens don't know how, we often do it ourselves. For example, a resident might say, ‘There's a collapse in front of my door,’ or report a water leak. Actually, responses come faster through that (CÍMER) system.”

This suggests that muhtars may intentionally avoid escalating local issues to the national level, in order to preserve working relationships and situate themselves further from potential tensions.

Political affiliation can act as a gatekeeper to essential services, as illustrated above as well. In such cases, political tensions not only shape bureaucratic procedures but also directly influence the well-being of local residents. One muhtar reflects this dilemma in a conversation about establishing an essential public facility:

“...Through other means. (They say,) ‘Muhtar, you bring in votes for the AKP, not for the CHP, but I’ll still handle your issue.’ But you’re supposed to handle it anyway. As a muhtar, it’s my duty to bring my citizens’ needs to you, right? And it’s your duty to respond. But if you’re not doing that, what am I supposed to do? ... Should I lock the neighborhood down? ... We really struggle with these things.”

This quote illustrates the misalignment between democratic accountability and partisan loyalty. Services are not denied but implied to be delivered on conditions, depending on the political capital held by the muhtar or neighborhood. It reinforces the broader political culture that political affiliations influence citizens’ lived experiences of access to essential services.

Constraints around financial resources emerging from the narratives are the impact of distribution of resources, particularly in contexts where metropolitan municipalities are governed by opposition parties and the impact is experienced at the neighborhood level. The financial constraints are deeply political and expressed by muhtars as:

“...But when it comes to getting results, the answer is always the same: ‘There’s no money in the municipality.’ They say they’ll do it when the state pays them fully. It’s almost a joke. I tell citizens, ‘You’re on the list, they’ll get to it.’ But I can’t tell them the truth. I’m trying to protect the municipality. But I want the municipality to protect me too.”

“There used to be state funds sent to municipalities. Now they say the municipality has debt, so payments are cut. That’s not my problem; that’s between the state and the municipality. But it affects us. When funds were flowing, no one asked where the money was going.”

Political tensions also shape the everyday environment in which muhtars operate, contributing to a sense of uncertainty and fear as well as instability. These broader dynamics

have been referred to as a direct connection between macro-level political actions and a sense of safety in the local context.

“As soon as they took the Istanbul Mayor, the dollar surged. People started to panic. Right now, the biggest concern in my neighborhood is the economy.”

Another muhtar illustrates how this political environment contributes to the uncertainty across levels, macro to meso-to-micro:

“I was at the AKP district office trying to explain our problems. They told me, ‘Muhtar, things are chaotic right now, wait.’ But I have 100 people coming to me. I go to the municipality alone, and they push it back to the districts. Meanwhile, villagers accuse me ‘Muhtar, are you threatening us? Did you issue demolition orders on our homes?’ I’m stuck in the middle. People tell me things in private, but when the state or municipality arrives, they deny it. We’re left carrying the blame. ...It’s the political atmosphere.”

These experiences show the tensions of street-level governance practices, being caught between limited institutional resources and the needs of the public (Lipsky, 1980). The muhtar is positioned within a re-centralized, partisan political structure and community expectations for responsive governance, while lacking the resources to do so.

5.6. Summary of findings

The findings of this study highlights and expands what has been argued in the existing literature on muhtarlık and local governance in Turkey. Scholars such as Massicard (2022) and Şahin & Turan (2022) have shown that muhtars function as both administrative figures and socially embedded actors. This study confirms that by showing how emotional comfort, inclusion, and reduced isolation are deeply connected to muhtars’ relational presence and not only to their formal responsibilities by the associations present within the differentiated identity codes. This everyday engagement reflects the informal, trust-based relationships described by Massicard (2022), where legitimacy is not derived from institutional power alone but from long-standing community familiarity, as reflected in the participant table regarding their residency.

However, the relational strength often emerges within highly constrained environments. Akpınar (2017) and Oktay (2017) arguments combined, muhtars operate without consistent

resources, and this is reflected in participants' repeated expressions of frustration with lacking resources. The legislative phrasing that assistance from municipalities will be given "to the extent of its budgetary possibilities" often presents that it influences the operational capacity of muhtars. Interpretation through Moore's strategic triangle (1995) allows the conclusion of: while operational capacity is weak, in formality, and the authorizing environment ambiguous due to many reasons with political contamination being one, legitimacy is maintained largely through personal relationships and social capital in the context of muhtars.

These tensions are not only institutional but political. Several participants described how political affiliations can affect service delivery, (co-)creating value, therefore the well-being outcomes, aligning with TSR's politically charged macro-environment argument and expanding with empirical findings. The central and local governments dynamics may favor visibility and partisan alignment over equity and it is aligning with how the authorizing environment is not neutral but shaped by political culture and centralization, both in macro and meso-to-micro environments. In this context, muhtars become 'suspension systems' of the limited institutional responsiveness from metropolitan municipality and central government and between the citizens' unmet expectations. They absorb citizen frustration which aligns with Lipsky's (1980) argument of street-level bureaucrats as managing systemic shortfalls through personal cost, as some participants narratives' suggest.

Importantly, the findings allow us to re-situate muhtarlık within the public service ecosystem (Osborne et al., 2022). While muhtars are often treated as meso-to-micro level actors, the data suggests they operate across different levels of given environments. They translate macro-environments political tensions, such as central-local governments' political friction and distrust of formal complaint mechanisms, into meso-to-micro environment adaptations and responses. Their narratives show movement between value-in-society by framing concerns about equity, value-in-production by trying to facilitate or influence service delivery, and value-in-use/context by responding to specific needs of the individuals' and community needs. Additionally, the personal investment shown by participants such as answering calls late at night, navigating out of legislative tasks with limited support speaks to the sub-micro level, where personal and professional beliefs shape how public value is (co-)created.

Through the lens of transformative service research (Anderson et al., 2013), muhtars can also be seen as agents of well-being and informal transformation. These well-being outcomes did not get delivered through formal programs, but made possible through relational labor, community engagement, and emotional accessibility, as data associations suggest. Despite operating within constraints, muhtars have the capability to contribute to what Anderson et al. (2011) call “uplifting change,” reinforcing that transformation in public service does not always come from innovative institutional structures, but also from continuity, presence, and as it is open to discussion, from care, highlighting the long standing presence of muhtarlık unit in Turkish local governance.

These findings challenge traditional understandings of how value is created in the public sector. While Moore’s public value theory focuses on managerial actions, and public service logic and public service ecosystem emphasizes co-creation and complexity of the system, this study shows how value can emerge from informal and relational interactions, as TSR suggests. Especially, in spaces where institutional clarity is ambiguous, due to given reasons. Muhtars, through their dual positionality and proximity to residents, are constantly negotiating between these constraints and local needs. Their role is a reminder that public value can emerge from being known, being reachable, and being there, and *co-created*.

6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

6.1. Discussion

This study aimed to explore (1) how muhtars contribute to public value in the neighborhoods of İzmir and (2) how they perceive their role in doing so. Drawing from TSR and public value theory, the findings illustrate that muhtars navigate in between formal service provision and deeply relational community engagement. This duality, aligned with the Service Facilitator (I1) and Citizen Advocate (I2) has shown the ties to different forms of value creation, resulting in well-being outcomes with *Citizen Advocate* showing more associations.

Alkire et al. (2020) argument of social entrepreneurship and service design into TSR has highlighted that transformation is not only through the well-being outcome but also present in design, governance and therefore delivery of the services. Keränen and Olkkonen (2022) and Varman et al. (2021) emphasise on activism, agape and justice practices' cruciality in transformative service systems. The finding of this study aligns with these arguments as muhtars, especially when acting as Citizen Advocates (I2), they navigate through structural gaps, face inequity and engage in trust-based relational interactions that reflects the transformative practices highlighted in these arguments. Where transformation emerges from emotional investment rather than legislative tasks, and the "being there" for others hints at the practice of agape. Similarly, their informal advocacy and negotiation within politically contaminated environments aligns with Keränen and Olkkonen's (2022) framing of everyday activism where actors challenge dominant structures through situated and relational action.

In this study, the concept of public value, whether intended or realized, captured from muhtars narratives is due to data not assessing the citizens' perception directly. From an interpretivist stance, intended value is not only an aspiration and it reflects meaning-making, relational positioning, and active efforts to enhance well-being, even when value realization is constrained. This aligns with Blocker & Barrios (2015), who emphasize that value is socially constructed and can emerge through agent-led practices that challenge dominant structures.

Applying Blocker and Barrios's (2015) distinction between habitual value and transformative value is also important to understand the findings. While habitual value is aligned with

hedonic well-being codes (H1-H5), eudaimonic well-being code (E1-E7) aligns with transformative value. While hedonic outcomes serve towards maintenance of order of everyday life, they may not significantly shift social structures where the transformation may emerge from. However, eudaimonic well-being outcomes involve longer term changes, therefore socially impactful outcomes, given the description of projective orientations of these actions. Where projective orientation is present, individuals do not only maintain order but act towards a new future, such as through empowerment, inclusion and reducing inequalities given the context.

As Citizen Advocate paves the way to transformational value, and not only by associating with eudaimonic but as well as hedonic well-being outcomes, muhtars can facilitate uplifting changes that shift how residents understand themselves and their communities, highlighting Meynhardt's public value definition: "Public value is what impacts on values about the 'public.'" (2009, p. 205).

The findings of this study reveals potential directions for service design, specifically in contexts as the research site where operational capacities are constrained. While muhtars do not explicitly design the services, their everyday practice through the findings highlighted the relational engagement, the social proximity as well as spatial proximity, and how they play out in the value experienced by the community. Especially in their Citizen Advocate (I2) role, they respond to needs through relational abilities. While the formal service structures run into constraints as well as the informal, designing for the relational conditions muhtars possess may support meaningful engagement in local governance contexts.

As findings of the well-being outcomes have not been interpreted in quantity or quality but rather association, claiming muhtars are capable of co-creating transformational value, therefore transformation, is a contribution for TSR. The studies emphasise on how they intend, attempt and take action under significant political and operational constraints is valuable, even if not always sufficient due to the possibility of value not being realized. It is important to recognize this dimension of service interactions especially in macro-meso-micro environments where formal service structures may be limited or unevenly distributed due to political contamination.

6.2. Practical implication

While muhtars do not formally design the facilitated services, the findings of this study suggest that their everyday practices, especially when operating through the Citizen Advocate identity, shape how public value is (co-)created within neighbourhoods. Especially in instances where constraints are present; their presence, accessibility, and responsiveness enable a form of informal service experience that aligns with the relational emphasis in TSR (Alkire et al., 2020; Blocker & Barrios, 2015). These insights allow for reflecting upon how existing relational practices can inform responsive service design in governance environments where operational and political constraints are present. The study also aligns with Blocker and Barrios (2015) in showing how transformation can occur outside of structured through situated practices that are outside of structured service systems.

Blocker and Barrios (2015) emphasize that service design needs to consider the instances where value emerges in non-linear ways, especially when actors do not have direct access to resources, such as muhtars. The muhtarlık context, as they are significant in perceptions of public services through mediation, their work reflects multi-level transformation as Blocker and Barrios define. While they do not directly transform the system, they are shaping how the system can be perceived. This everyday practice of muhtars form the value experience in local governance.

Service design literature emphasizes the moments of interaction between the service systems and the user as touchpoints (Kimbell, 2011; Stickdorn et al., 2018). However, while most public service touchpoints may remain bureaucratic in nature, muhtars differ given their nature. Sangiorgi and Prendiville (2017) argue that service design for public services needs a shift towards society-centered design, through understanding service systems as socio-political environments and embedding relational capacities within as part of systemic transformation. Junginger (2015) also calls for designing public services around human roles, where actors bring meaning, values, and personal interpretation to their work, such as muhtars as the findings suggest. Recognizing muhtars' nature allows for interpreting it as they already function as such. Designing with and for this unit may be a challenge for public institutions, however if the aim is to move beyond efficiency towards responsiveness and transformation, the possibilities are present. This study, rather than aiming to intervene with

design into the organizational system from the outside, looked at what is already there as suggested (Juninger, 2015), how actors like muhtars are already engaging in everyday meaning-making and informal shaping of service, offering a starting point for thinking about design as recognition at first.

6.3. Future studies

This study explored muhtars value (co-)creation process as outcomes of well-being given their narratives and interpretation through experiential knowledge. This provided insights into how public value creation is intended, realized and constrained. However, the study remains limited to a muhtar's perceptions while public value and well-being outcomes are on a basis of relational exchange, therefore, future research would benefit from the citizen perspectives. This would allow the analysis to move towards how the public value is received, recognized or even resisted. While Meynhardt's (2009) public value definition has been acknowledged, future studies could adopt this definition in order to see public value grounding in citizens' meaning-making through their experiences.

This direction also holds implications for how we think about service design in public governance contexts. While this study drew on transformative service research and highlighted how muhtars operate through relational responsiveness, emotional proximity, and situated presence, it did not examine how these qualities are experienced directly by those they aim to 'advocate' for. Future studies could take up this question by exploring whether citizens recognise these efforts as service, care, or governance or whether these practices are invisible, expected, or misunderstood. This would contribute to service-dominant logic debates around value-in-use and value-in-context (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), particularly in where constraints are present and present due to political contamination.

Future research could examine the service entity perspective as this study did not aim to examine the wider institutional actors that shapes and constrains muhtars' efforts. The examination on how these formal service entities interpret, support, or conflict with muhtars' roles can situate the understanding of value co-creation across the wider public service ecosystem. This focus can speak back to service design literature, which navigates practitioners to begin with understanding the design legacies that are already embedded in existing structures. In this case, muhtars are already part of those legacies. Studying both

citizens and formal institutions could reveal how the public service system is experienced in practice and whether designing for these existing, informal structures, such as muhtars, can enable more inclusive and grounded forms of transformation in public service delivery and local governance.

7. CONCLUSION

This thesis explored how muhtars contribute to public value within the neighbourhoods of Bornova, İzmir, through the public value theory and transformative service research, informed by value (co-)creation logics. Analyzing the narratives of participants, the study provided into how relational and situated practices, which are often overlooked, can provide meaningful forms of service and public value through everyday practices in local governance.

The findings reveal that muhtars operate through their dual identity as Service Facilitators and Citizen Advocates. While one is grounded in the legislation, the latter is grounded in their community relationships. Muhtars as *Citizen Advocates* contribute to well-being outcomes in their neighbourhoods through the value (co-)creation process. The duality in their identity positions muhtars as hybrid public actors, closer to consumer entities within TSR and they navigate both bureaucratic systems and given the local realities of their neighbourhoods, everyday life.

Applying and expanding TSR to muhtarlık contexts, the study contributes to the understanding of how transformational value can emerge from informal and trust-based interactions. This is especially important in politically contaminated environments where the formal service structures may fail to deliver services equitably. The findings also highlight that muhtars provide suspension in this gap between the institutional structures and citizens' needs with personalized accountability in the process.

Practical implications refers to how service design can be approached in local governance, built on the literature and suggesting designing with and for existing actors, like muhtars, who are already practicing situated responsiveness. In order to get to a more inclusive meaningful service innovation, service design can recognize and support the existing relational conditions of muhtars.

As a conclusion, this study contributes to reframing public services and public service actors, aiming to offer a deeper understanding of *Public Value Co-Creation* in local governance, rooted in presence, trust, lived experience and therefore social transformation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Data Set

No.	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	I1	I2	C
A1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
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A5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
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A7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A8	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
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A222	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A223	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
A224	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A225	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A226	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A227	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A228	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
A229	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A230	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A231	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A232	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
A233	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A234	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A235	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A236	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A237	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A238	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
A239	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A240	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A241	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A242	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
A243	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A244	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
A245	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
A246	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
A247	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
A248	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
A249	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A250	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A251	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
A252	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A253	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A254	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A255	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
A256	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
A257	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1

A258	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A259	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A260	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
A261	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
A262	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
A263	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
A264	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
A265	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
A266	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
A267	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
A268	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
A269	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
A270	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
A271	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
A272	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
A273	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
A274	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A275	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A276	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
A277	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
A278	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A279	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A280	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
A281	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
A282	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
A283	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A284	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A285	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A286	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A287	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A288	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
A289	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
A290	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A291	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A292	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A293	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A294	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A295	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A296	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
A297	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
A298	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
A299	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
A300	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

A301	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
A302	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
A303	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
A304	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
A305	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
A306	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
A307	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
A308	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
A309	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
A310	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
A311	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
A312	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total Occ.	211	51	49	209	95	93	34	171	70	29	11	53	246	193	145
Frequency	0.68	0.16	0.16	0.67	0.30	0.30	0.11	0.55	0.22	0.09	0.04	0.17	0.79	0.62	0.46