

# Reexamining the goals of innovation: a public value creation and improvement as summum bonum perspective

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to answer the important question relating to the actual goals of innovation through the reexamination of innovation goals. The reexamination of the goals of innovation in this paper begins with the attachment of innovation and its goals to sustainability. The precise dimensions adopted in the reexamination of innovation goals are social innovation; innovation economy; environmental innovation and technological (which often enhances the goals of other three dimensions) innovation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – In arriving at a common position/outlook/representation relating to innovation goals, an integrated argumentative methodology/framework/approach is adopted. The integrated framework helps to connect the key goal of social innovation to the realization of social sustainability and value; the key goal of innovation economy to the realization of economic sustainability and value; the key goal of environmental innovation to the realization of environmental sustainability and value and the key goal of technological innovation to the realization of social sustainability and value, economic sustainability and value and environmental sustainability and value collectively/simultaneously.

**Findings** – The integrated effects lead to public value creation and improvement as the summum bonum between innovation and sustainability. It is also argued that public value creation and improvement are further enhanced when the philosophical paradigms/approaches/doctrine of the “philosophy of action” and “philosophy of mind” are allowed to produce viable and sustainable innovation policies during preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance, which then help to make public value creation and improvement as the summum bonum.

**Research limitations/implications** – It can be complex/difficult to identify every goal of innovation, because of the broad nature. However, a simple approach can be adopted in realizing an integrated/aggregated position/outlook. This limitation was put into consideration in this paper and a justification ground was established to answer the question raised in this paper via an integrated argumentation approach, which narrows the key goals of innovation to the creating and improving public value as a summum bonum.

**Originality/value** – The originality of this paper is connected to the study gap that exists in the area of innovation goals. The actual goals of innovations are often difficult to identify and quantify. The innovative approach adopted in this paper creates the possibility for narrowing multiple goals of innovation to the creation and improvement of something special or real (e.g. public value).

**Keywords** Innovation, Sustainability, Public value, Philosophy of action, Philosophy of mind, Summum bonum

**Paper type** Conceptual paper



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## Introduction

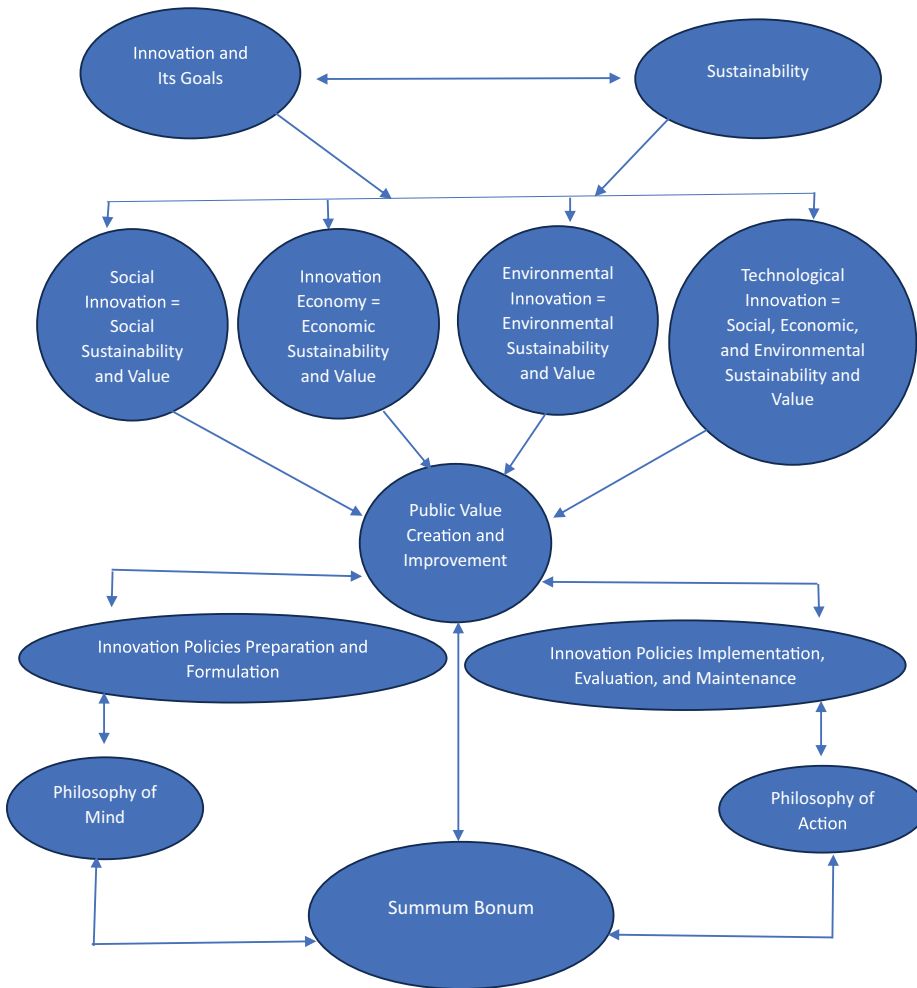
Innovation concerns thinking, conceptualizing, exploring, testing/experimenting, implementing and evaluating new ideas, ways, patterns, policies, procedures and actions for the realization of a particular set objective, such as the creation and improvement of value (Meynhardt, 2009; Osifo, 2024). Policies are essential within the innovation context and must be guided by the relevant philosophical approaches/doctrines to achieve the desired goals (OECD, 2016). Common knowledge suggests that intellectual, ideological and cultural views differ significantly across space, time and place when we try to address the concept of innovation. The goals of innovation often vary from one discipline to another, from one expert to another and even from one paradigm/dimension to another. However, one common point of agreement between different experts, disciplines, dimensions, paradigms and institutions is that the key goal of innovation should be for value creation and improvement: especially, public value (OECD, 2016; Kirchberger, 2023; Osifo, 2024).

The reexamination of the goals of innovation via the attachment to the concept of sustainability and from some selected dimensions makes the integration/aggregation to public value creation and improvement possible. The public value as a summum bonum perspective is mainly influenced, guided and articulated through the framework in Figure 1 below:

The concept of innovation has different classifications and dimensions, but this conceptual paper focuses on the attachment to sustainability. The goals of innovation are examined from the dimensions of social innovation, innovation economy, environmental innovation and technological innovation; this is basically to align with the common/popular dimensions of the science of sustainability and realize the goals of sustainable innovation and sustainable development. Innovation and its goals should have strong connections to sustainability (Kirchberger, 2023). Innovation and its goals are essential and tied to the science of sustainability because the discoveries, inventions, creation, development and approaches are crucial to realizing the goals of sustainability and sustainable development or dependent/embedded in and on them (Agoraki *et al.*, 2023). Sustainability focuses on the avoidance of waste in the social, economic and environmental aspects for creating all-round value (OECD, 2016). Sustainable development, on the other hand, focuses on the aptness of addressing the needs of today without jeopardizing tomorrow's needs (Osifo, 2024).

The science of sustainability can be mainly divided into the social, economic and environmental dimensions (Agoraki *et al.*, 2023). The technological dimension is also another dimension of the innovation and sustainability sciences, but the goals and the realization of the other common aspects (social, economic and environmental) are attached to technological innovation and sustainability (Schramm, 2017; Osifo, 2024). Clear evidence exists that the key goal of the various dimensions of innovation and the science of sustainability is to create and improve public value (Meynhardt, 2009; Meynhardt, 2009). Creating and improving public value through innovation and sustainability requires good and viable policy preparation and formulation, which must be properly implemented and evaluated to see if there is a need to maintain such policies (Rescher, 1982; Rutgers, 2015). Viable and sustainable innovation policies can emerge from preparation and formulation via the framework of the "philosophy of mind" creation eventually (Ryle, 1949). On the other hand, viable and sustainable outcomes of innovation policies can be realized from implementation, evaluation and maintenance via the framework of the "philosophy of action" creation eventually (Mele, 1997).

The Summum Bonum expression as a philosophical doctrine means or represents the ultimate and highest good (Thompson, 1881). The ultimate and highest good can be achieved through the philosophy of mind and philosophy of action because viable, sustainable and



Source(s): Author's own work

**Figure 1.** Innovation and its goals within a public value creation and improvement as summum bonum context

profitable policies can be realized through preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance (Meynhardt, 2009; Rutgers, 2015; Osifo, 2020). The ultimate and highest good can be aggregated as the primary goals of innovation via these frameworks (Ryle, 1949; Mele, 1997). The synthesis of the goals of innovation as leading to public value and its creation and improvement from one perspective can represent summum bonum; in addition, public value as the total essence, aggregation, meaning and representation of summum bonum from another perspective can represent the key goals of innovation (De Oliveira and Dos Santos, 2018). Therefore, it is meaningful to say that public value is

summum bonum and summum bonum is public value within the interplay of innovation and its goals with sustainability (Moore, 1995).

### Objective and methodology/approach

It can be complex/difficult to identify every goal of innovation, because of its broad nature. However, a simple methodology or approach can be adopted in realizing an integrated/aggregated position or representation. The key objective of this paper is to answer the important question relating to the actual goals and this question is answered by reexamining the goals of innovation. The reexamination of the goals of innovation in this paper begins with the attachment of innovation and its goals to sustainability. The precise dimensions adopted in the reexamination of innovation goals are social; economy; environmental; and technological (which often enhances the goals of other three dimensions).

In arriving at a common position/outlook/representation relating to innovation goals, an integrated argumentative methodology, approach, or framework is adopted. According to Simataa and Goosen (2024: 142–145), integration is concerned with the combination of different aspects into a whole; therefore, an integration framework in the context of innovation and its policies refers to the intermingling of relevant dimensions or aspects for sustainable future, where public value creation and improvement can represent the highest good. In some instances, the integration framework can be identified as the multidimensional approach, because the multifaceted approach allows for the possibility of making goals aggregation and integration of arguments. According to Martin (2017), the multidimensional approach is broadly about the act or procedure of evaluating and implementing an approach that is made up of more than one type, characteristic, or design such as policy, strategy, tactic, method (e.g. qualitative or quantitative method); or methodology (e.g. argumentative, content or documentary analysis). This approach is more meaningful within the context or boundary of complexity-oriented theory, phenomena or ideas such as innovation and sustainability (Dias and Luis, 2023). The adopted approach or framework aims to establish an argumentative justification for narrowing innovation's key goals to public value creation and improvement. In addition, is to verify that public value is summum bonum and summum bonum is public value, representing the ultimate and highest good within the interplay of innovation and sustainability.

Notable scholars, such as Coker (2023), have identified the integrated argumentative framework to be part of the qualitative method or tradition, which allows for high level of flexibility. He further argues that this methodology or approach is essential or relevant in the writing of conceptual papers.

### The goals of innovation reexamined

Engaging in innovation is a crucial part of human existence and innovation is majorly connected to the concept of “change” (Fu *et al.*, 2011). Just as the idea of innovation is broad and dynamic; so are innovation goals (Agoraki *et al.*, 2023). Innovation goals are said to be immeasurable and without boundary; however, a careful examination would reveal that some clear goals can be identified/attached to a particular innovation policy and its procedures (e.g. preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance (Osifo, 2020; Kirchberger, 2023). For some experts, innovation's key goal is to free the entrepreneurial spirit, and which the benefits must be shared by all or equitably distributed between the masses, societies, communities and citizens of the global village (Mckinney, 2024). From the European Space Agency (2024) perspective, innovations key goal should be for improving health and biotech, transportation and green energy (e.g. energy sustainability and resilience) with space technology. According to OECD (2016), innovation goals should be centered on finding answers and solutions to all the questions and problems/issues relating to the survivability of humanity and the environment.

These goals are all connected in one way or the other to sustainability and SDGs. In this paper as earlier mentioned, innovation goals are reexamined from the dimensions of social innovation, innovation economy, environmental innovation and technological innovation.

Social innovation focuses on social practices to meet social needs adequately and sustainably in a new way (Grilo and Moreira, 2022). The key goals of innovation from the dimension of social innovation are connected to the invention of policy framework that is required to enhance public, nonprofit and private actors to co-construct and implement socially innovative solutions in making positive impact in addressing socio-economic issues, building stronger territorial resilience and properly responding to future shocks (OECD, 2024; OECD, 2019). These key goals of innovation align with the meaning of social innovation, which is about designing and implementing novel solutions that represent conceptual, process, product, or organizational change for improving the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities (Grilo and Moreira, 2022; OECD, 2024). For these goals to be realized, relevant stakeholders must come together with aggregate and sustainable ideas for dealing with socio-economic and environmental problems for all round economic development and contribution to be made possible (Grilo and Moreira, 2022; OECD, 2019).

Innovation economy emphasizes the adoption of new strategies and paradigms to harvest sustainable benefits from the relationship between entrepreneurship and innovation, which does not concentrate on the price mechanism (Lambin, 2014). The key goals of innovation from the dimension of the innovation economy are connected to promoting and enhancing circularity; promoting and enhancing sustainable entrepreneurship and improving every stakeholder and citizen's participation in the economic process (Mckinney, 2024). This is premised on the fact that the innovation economy focuses on the attachment of innovation to entrepreneurship because it is a developing area of economic theory and applied economics, which studies the relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship (Courvisanos and Mackenzie, 2014). Another key goal of an innovation economy is the weaving of knowledge, science, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship and stakeholders' collaboration and participation for realizing sustainable economic growth (Mckinney, 2024). Experts have also identified other goal of the innovation economy to be about unraveling and solving complex socio-economic problems in a sustainable way (Courvisanos and Mackenzie, 2014).

Environmental innovation also known as eco-innovation emphasizes sustainable outcomes in products and production processes by adopting new ideas and strategies (Wulandari, 2022). The key goals of environmental innovation are related to protecting and enhancing the natural environment and they include avoiding and reducing biodiversity depletion, climate change, air pollution, soil degradation, etc. (Wulandari, 2022; Eitan *et al.*, 2023). These goals are connected to the common definition of environmental innovation as unique innovation that focuses on reducing the effects of products and production processes on the natural environment (Ozusaglam, 2012). Ozusaglam (2012) further argued that the key goal of environmental innovation is to improve and increase firm's performance in the aspect of reducing energy consumption and material usage in the production processes for the sake of enhancing and promoting sustainability or sustainable outcomes.

Technological innovation emphasizes the adoption of sustainable strategies in the production and operational processes of tech tools, infrastructure, apps, systems and products to realize sustainable outcomes (Ahmad *et al.*, 2023). The key goals of technological innovation tend to be broader, because they are connected to the realization of the goals associated with social innovation, innovation economy and environmental innovation (Wulandari, 2022; Ahmad *et al.*, 2023). A multidisciplinary evaluation of the goals of tech innovation by Osifo (2024) reveals a near similar outlook such as in social sciences (e.g. improving well-being, dignity, human rights and prosperity for all); in

humanities (e.g. promoting cultural diversity, inclusion and responsible communication) and in physical and natural sciences (e.g. reducing dehumanization, social, economic, psychological and environmental challenges).

### **Impact creation through innovation**

Innovation and its goals are essential for making an impact and projects connected to innovation should be able to create, communicate, implement, adapt and renew/update the value outlook and status quo (OECD, 2016). The aggregation of innovation goals can be narrowed to the creation and improvement value; especially, public value (Meynhardt, 2009; Osifo, 2024). The arguments to link and aggregate innovation and its goals to public value creation and improvement are for the key purpose of making and realizing sustainable impact(s) (OECD, 2009). Social innovation is mainly interested in the realization and making of impact(s), which are connected to social sustainability and value, such as the promotion and enhancement of social justice (e.g. diversity, equity and inclusion) (OECD, 2024; OECD, 2019). Other identified and desired impacts relating to social sustainability are the promotion of human dignity and rights, avoidance of dehumanization, participation and inclusion of minorities and less privileged individuals and communities, avoidance and reduction of all-round exploitation, enhancement of wellbeing, promotion of ethical standards and safeties, boosting of social enterprise, etc. (OECD, 2024).

The innovation economy is mainly interested in the realization and making of impact(s), which are connected to economic sustainability and value such as enhancing and promoting entrepreneurial process participation and inclusion; developing, managing and improving knowledge, creativity and intellectual capital and boosting of long-economic prosperity, up to date training and job creation (Courvisanos and Mackenzie, 2014). In addition, it boosts investment capital, granting access to funding for all, prioritizing intellectual capital over physical assets, expanding the investment in research and development, encouraging entrepreneurial spirit and promoting and enhancing circularity in the production and consumption processes, etc. (Courvisanos and Mackenzie, 2014; Mckinney, 2024).

Environmental innovation is mainly interested in the realization and making of impact(s), which are related to environmental sustainability and value such as the promotion and enhancement of environmental justice (OECD, 2009). In addition, environmental innovation also hopes to promote and enhance smart specialization, e-agriculture and rural development; avoidance and reduction of pollution, biodiversity and wildlife depletion, air pollution and restoration of the natural environment or habitat (Ozusaglam, 2012; OECD, 2009). Environmental innovation also aims at making positive effects relating to the environment and other aspects such as complying with regulations and norms, increasing productivity and reducing input or production costs (Ozusaglam, 2012).

Technological innovation is mainly interested in the realization and making of impact(s), which are related to social, economic and environmental sustainability and value such as the promotion and enhancement of well-being, realization of business survivability and competitive advantage and improvement of environmental protection awareness (Schramm, 2017). It is possible to properly understand this position from the framework of Smart City, which is about using digitization, AI and new power grid technologies to transform human living standards, economic and production outputs, urban electrical energy systems and general infrastructure (The Wall Street Journal, 2024). Technological innovation also aims at the improvement and realization of smart specialization, e-agriculture, e-medicine and e-health, space exploration and benefits, security infrastructure and collaboration and eradication of social problems (e.g., biases) (Schramm, 2017; The Wall Street Journal, 2024).

It is meaningful, therefore, to summarize that social innovation key goal is to realize and enhance the different objects and areas of needed impact(s) to social sustainability and value; the innovation economy key goal is to realize and enhance the different objects and areas of needed impact(s) to economic sustainability and value; environmental innovation key goal is to realize and enhance the different objects and areas of needed impact(s) to environmental sustainability and value; and technological innovation key goal is to realize and enhance the different objects and areas of needed impact(s) to social sustainability and value, economic sustainability and value and environmental sustainability and value (Brier, 2014; Vasilenko *et al.*, 2020; Weerakkody *et al.*, 2023; Mckinney, 2024).

### Public value defined

Value is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary concept and strategies to create and improve value also differ from one dimension and discipline to another because value is an issue of perception (Osifo, 2024; *The Wall Street Journal*, 2024). According to Menzel (2007), values are principles that guide our discernment and evaluation of what is good and acceptable, because they offer the normative control that guides decision-making, because value helps to develop grounds for action and reflect conceptions of acceptable or unacceptable actions. The concept of value from a multidimensional approach is connected to something highly considered useful, worthy, important, special, unique, rare, etc. Therefore, value is something that is deserving. (Osifo, 2024.) Anything that is valued is mainly premised on the subjective fulfillment of four basic needs:

- (1) gaining control and coherence over one's conceptual system;
- (2) positive relationships;
- (3) maximizing pleasure and avoiding pain; and
- (4) positive self-evaluation (Meynhardt, 2009).

It is viable to argue that the public or societal-oriented goodness of value gives public value.

The concept of public value is broad and represents different things to different experts and authorities, but the most common is that public value (PV) is the outlook on values and their impact/effects on individuals, communities or societies (Meynhardt, 2009). Public value represents a way to bring the different streams together because the creation and improvement of the "common good" cannot occur in a vacuum (Brown *et al.*, 2021). The act or science of public value is connected to value addition because it is a holistic approach to helping public managers and officials solve societal problems through collaboration and negotiation with key stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors (Meynhardt, 2009; Brown *et al.*, 2021).

Public value is commonly defined as the value that a sector, institution, organization, discipline or activity offers to society because broader societal good is informed, influenced and negotiated by public value. From the perspective of early studies, the public value concept was only related to the public sector. However, great changes occurred as progress was made, which then linked public value as one important area of the private and third sectors' discourses and characteristics. Public value is often identified as a social-psychological-based concept that changes within the boundaries of social structures and relationships because of lessons learned and knowledge gained from social structures and relationships. Public value-oriented reforms along with the lessons learned and knowledge gained are aimed and used as criteria and assets for promoting and enhancing the well-being and general good for both the individual and society. Another relevant objective and driving force within the public value context is the enhancement of the "common good", which must

be essential characteristics of managers' orientation. Currently, the public good idea has become a framework for encouraging managers to make positive impacts relating to the "common good" via their entrepreneurial engagements and other essential responsibilities. In addition, public value as a concept can be viably linked to management concepts such as sustainability, corporate social responsibility and stakeholder value because the common good is also promoted, enhanced and positively impacted through these management concepts and theories (e.g. scientific management and human resource management) (Moore, 1995; Meynhardt, 2009; Osifo, 2024).

The quest to develop a valid theory for strategy management in the public sector birthed the Public Value Theory. One of the pioneering authors in this field, Mark Moore, argues that the primary goal of managers is to create and enhance public value. According to Moore's proposed model, the "Strategic Triangle," this objective is shaped by three key aspects. The first aspect is connected to the "formulation and discernment," whose key aim is narrowed to the creation and improvement of public value. The second aspect is connected to "legitimacy and support enhancement" from the authorizing environment (i.e. a combination of elected officials and all stakeholders at different levels). Finally, is the aspect that is connected to "possession and enhancement of necessary capabilities" in the realization of goals associated with public value, which can be connected to personal or own organizations or external parties (e.g. private, third sector, international or voluntary organizations or companies) (De Oliveira and Dos Santos, 2018). However, due to the complexities, interests and unpredictability inherent in public service provision to the citizens, Moorés idea is often difficult to implement. Public value creation and improvement is not just a responsibility that falls within the confines of the public sector, but every sector; hence, innovative approaches that are proactive, sustainable, fair, ethical, cost-effective, continuous learning, reform, collaboration and consultation-oriented are often advocated (De Oliveira and Dos Santos, 2018; Osifo, 2024).

### **Summum bonum as a philosophical doctrine**

Most scholars believe that Summum bonum, which is a Latin expression was initiated and made popular by Cicero to represent the basic principle that some system of ethics must be premised upon and the determinant of what ought to be the ultimate ends of human behavior (Thompson, 1881). The Summum Bonum expression as a philosophical doctrine means or represents the ultimate and highest good as earlier mentioned. This philosophical doctrine has its weaknesses and has been criticized by different scholars; especially, its application to different situations and realities of existence or life. It is a fact/reality that what is the highest good to one might not be the highest good to another, analyzing from the position of self-interest for example (Sturt, 1900; Wolf, 1997).

The doctrine of summum bonum can be classified as an important part of moral philosophy because moral philosophy emphasizes "virtue" as the "highest good." From a classical interpretation perspective, this doctrine first appeared in the "Ethics" work of Aristotle. According to him, all inquiries and acts along with all acts and purposes majorly aim at some good. From a means-end analysis, if there is an end in all we choose to do then it is viable to combine others to the realization of a particular end, which will be the good or best of all things. Therefore, for Aristotle, every human conduct has a "master-end", which is a Summum Bonum (Sturt, 1900 and Urmson, 1988). For Plato, the idea of the highest good is equated to the highest reality because the ability to understand the highest good equals the ability to answer or resolve the most complex or ultimate question; so the idea of the highest good is above all other ideas in terms of competence, because through this framework

humans can appropriately react to the demands and questions concerning science (e.g. astronomy) justice, esthetics, religion and morality (Özkan, 2020).

From a medieval interpretation standpoint, *Summum Bonum* doctrine can be linked to many things such as righteousness, reasoning, pleasure, happiness, logic, human perfection, love and salvation. For Kant, the highest and ultimate good represents happiness distributed in equal proportion to morality when executing one's duty, which means the worth of a human and his/her worthiness to be happy; therefore, the highest good must be comprised of virtue and happiness (Engstrom, 1992). For Bentham, the highest good is when every social moral and government legislation can create positive impacts by offering the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, which he summarizes as utilitarianism; for Bentham and Mill, utilitarianism is the reemergence and inclusion of Epicurean Hedonism and Aristotelian Eudaimonism (Long, 1990).

From a contemporary interpretation standpoint, *Summum Bonum* can also be linked to different things such as rationalism, historicism, idealism, postmodernism, phenomenology, positivism, professionalism, standardization, empiricism, scientism, sustainability, efficiency and humanitarianism. The contemporary era is also identified as the era of western philosophy dominance, where analytic and continental philosophy are some of the key characteristics (Glendinning, 2006). For Husserl, the highest good is connected to communality, which is defined by members of a community having common aims(ends) and interests that are problematized and operationalized via engagement of the members in communal undertakings; because shared interests imply shared values and shared values imply shared feelings or sentiments and emotions (McIntyre, 2012). For Russell, the highest good is connected to the study of philosophy in holistically understanding the universe, because via this virtue, the mind is trained or developed to be great; in addition, the mind becomes capable of that union with the universe (Whittaker, 1945).

### Public value as a *summum bonum*

Judging from a wide range of characteristics and meanings of value, it is possible to align and approximate public value as the highest good (*Summum Bonum*). It is good to agree that the concept of value is complex and tricky. However, a viable approach to defining "value" is by mentioning and balancing the concept with synonymous concepts such as preferences, desires, needs and interests, because a value is approximated as anything of benefit or importance to a human subject. From another perspective, value can be approximated as conceptions of the desirable and influencing selective behavior; and to present value as a concept expressing the desirable, and then it is automatically separated from the undesired (Rescher, 1982: 1–7; Rutgers, 2015). Understanding how public value can be represented as the highest good, is made possible first, by the simple meaning of the concept of public value according to its pioneering authors. According to Meynhardt (2022), public value means the outlook on values and their impact(s) or effect(s) on individuals, communities, or societies; and the impact(s) and effect(s) of values on individuals, communities and societies producing and maintaining the highest or ultimate good.

Public value as an academic concept and basic representation as a public good has its apologists, variations and criticisms (Rutgers, 2015: 29–32). However, the positions that support public value as public and highest good are very common to come across. According to Meynhardt (2022: 3–5), to address the multiple criticisms relating to the concept of public value (PV), adjustments must be made regarding the too much leaning toward the public domain and the theoretical vagueness relating to "value" itself. He further argues that "value" is connected to the desirable and to individual preferences; and when experiences are shared, a "value" becomes objective in this exact manner. It is difficult for values to stand

alone, but values can especially become important for action if they are transformed into a psychological level (e.g. motivation, attitude or opinion) via the processes of evaluation; the desired transformation is made viable when they are articulated and premised on human needs, which are defined as felt deviations between an actual and desired psychological state that emanates from the motivation to act (Meynhardt, 2009). The arguments relating to the concept of public value leaning too much to the public domain and the theoretical vagueness of “values” can be answered and reconciled by linking values to care that requires the recognition or provision of a set of principles about responsibility for the good of others that should shape all human living (Noddings, 2003: 3; Held, 2006: 46; Lehtonen, 2010: 37–41).

Therefore, we can approximate public value to *summum bonum*, because it represents a sector, institution, discipline, activity or organization’s important contribution toward the common good and the quality of the relationship between an individual and this individual’s image of society (Meynhardt, 2022; Osifo, 2024). Public value can also be approximated as the highest value because it focuses on organizational values creation that enforces balanced insight into the performance of an organization about different challenges as perceived by the people who collectively form society (Meynhardt, 2009). From a broader perspective, we can also approximate public value as the highest good, because it is relationship-centeredness that focuses on the relationships that exist between the people and society or community, which must create valuable experiences and all-round goodness for humans, societies, communities, economies, environment and global village (Bryson *et al.*, 2015).

### **Innovation, public value and *summum bonum* integrated via the philosophy of mind and philosophy of action**

The integrated framework or methodology adopted in this conceptual paper creates the possibility for arguments that integrate, narrow or aggregate the goals of innovation to public value creation and improvement as *summum bonum*. Innovation and its goals are often too broad to identify or explain, hence a need for a relevant integrated argumentative framework is mandated to create a narrow understanding and representation (Jalonen, 2012). One viable integrated argumentation, which can identify and explain innovation and its goals for the creation and improvement of public value and representation of public value as a *summum bonum* can begin by establishing of a relationship/connection to the sustainability concept (Ronning, 2017). From this background, an approach that can present the relevant aspects before the integration or narrowing to a common position becomes imperative (Rohaert, 2020).

According to Rohaert (2020) and Agoraki *et al.* (2023), to talk about innovation and public value is to talk about *summum bonum*, because public value creation and improvement is the ultimate or highest good of the goals of innovation. Innovation and its goals can also be aggregated via an integrated approach by connecting them to the concept of sustainability, which in the end makes public value creation and improvement the *summum bonum* of innovation policies and procedures (Bryson *et al.*, 2015; Rohaert, 2020). This latter position is justified because the doctrine of *summum bonum* cannot be achieved in a vacuum, but by attachment or integration into substantive ideas, tested theories, something tangible, real-life situations, something real or abstract and many others such as the science of sustainability, community, organizations, individuals, nation states and phenomena/problems (Meynhardt, 2022; Meynhardt, 2009).

However, to further our argument and understanding, it is meaningful to examine innovation policies from the dimensions of preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance as pragmatic steps for strengthening the realization of *summum bonum* via the integration of innovation goals (Ryle, 1949; Mele, 1997). From a

philosophical perspective, innovation policies preparation and formulation can be aligned with the philosophy of mind, because they are more derived as “product of the mind” and from thoughts good things emerge (Ryle, 1949). Also, from a philosophical perspective, innovation policies implementation, evaluation and maintenance can be aligned with the philosophy of action, because they are more derived as a “product of action,” because from actions good things are established, enhanced and maintained (Mele, 1997). Philosophy of Action and Philosophy of Mind are two key branches of philosophy. Philosophy of Mind as a branch of philosophy focuses on the nature of the mind and its connection to the human body and external environment or world (Ryle, 1949). The philosophy of mind is quite broad and can be connected to different meanings and sub-concepts such as reasoning, most importantly, the philosophy of mind can be useful within the realm of policy conceptualization, identification and problematization such as innovation policies preparation and formulation, wicked problems identification and societal phenomena problematization (Ergas, 2013; Head and Alford, 2013; James, 2023).

The philosophy of action on the other hand focuses on the actions of individuals, in creating differentiation between passivity and activity, freewill, deliberate and complex actions and other connected questions and issues (Mele, 1997). The philosophy of action is also quite broad and connected to different meanings and sub-concepts such as goals/objectives realization. Also crucial is that philosophy of mind can be also useful within the realm of policy implementation, operationalization and improvements (e.g. innovation policies implementation, evaluation and improvement); finding sustainable solutions to wicked problems and societal phenomena and managing and increasing of outputs and performance (Peters and Fontaine, 2022). The need for innovation policies preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance to be guided by philosophical paradigms or doctrine is to help in realizing the ultimate good, which is public value (Meynhardt, 2009).

The imperativeness and validity of the “philosophy of mind” and “philosophy of action” within innovation policies preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance to help in the realization of the public good can be justified within the broader theory/idea of the “philosophy of innovation.” In her work *Philosophy of Innovation*, the well-known author Carol J. Steiner highlighted that the diminishing role of traditional science and the growing importance of individuals within the “science of innovation.” She argues that for innovation to succeed, unconventional individuals must take a central role, rather than relying solely on conventional science or engineering. The “philosophy of innovation” is a product of the “philosophy of human nature,” which was propounded by Martin Heidegger. According to him, human nature is made up 3 elements:

- (1) it is human nature to be practically engaged in a complex world rather than rationally engaged with a conceptually simplified world;
- (2) it is human nature to be real (i.e. unconventional, uncommitted to one's doctrine/paradigm) at least some of the time; and
- (3) it is human nature to engage in cooperation and collaboration.

In most cases and settings, the qualities that define good science are always in opposition to human nature. In the evaluation of phenomena and problems without connection to nature, the scientist or researcher tends to miss the broader view and perspective needed for successful innovation. The realness of human nature can create openness to alternative viewpoints, which also leads to better cooperation rather than competitive interaction. This in total leads to respect for individual uniqueness, value for human experience and positive

result actualization for the creation and improvement of public value within the framework of innovation (Nelson, *et al.*, 1993; Steiner, 2003).

According to Coghlan (2011), philosophical and scientific paradigms support the synthesis of thoughts (philosophy of mind) and action (philosophy of action) for the creation and improvement of public value as the summum bonum of managerial innovation goals. The failure of most innovation and reform ideas to focus on public value creation and improvement as the highest good is traceable to non-adoptability of viable integrated frameworks or methodology. According to Virtanen and Jalonen (2024), the failure to adopt an integrated conceptual framework within the boundaries of innovation and reform has done a great disservice to the ability of public services to address societal betterment via the creation of public value, which can strengthen democracy. They further argue that an integrated framework helps to make sense of the public value creation and improvement flows in the context of innovation policies preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance (e.g. politics that encompasses public policy and public service goal attainment and public service outcomes). Therefore, the argument in this conceptual paper strongly supports the position that the “philosophy of mind” and “philosophy of action” can guide and integrate innovation policies from relevant perspectives (e.g. policy preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance) in realizing and enhancing public value as the summum bonum of the goals of innovation.

The concept of value within the interplay of innovation and sustainability equals the aggregation of environmental value, economic value and social value (The Wall Street Journal, 2024). From a broader perspective, the realization and enhancement of environmental value, economic value and social value can also be made possible through tech innovation; most significant, is that the aggregation and application in relevant ways lead to public value creation and improvement (Osifo, 2024; The Wall Street Journal, 2024). It is meaningful to conclude here that a viable integrated framework or methodology is useful for making or realizing the desired impacts on individual, community, societal, economic and environmental good within the interplay of innovation and sustainability.

### Conclusion

This conceptual paper tries to answer the complex and important question relating to the actual goals of innovation. To answer this complex/important question, an integrated argumentative methodology or approach is adopted via which the goals of innovation are reexamined. The integrated framework helps to narrow innovation policies, procedures and their goals to public value creation and improvement as summum bonum (i.e. the highest or ultimate good). The integrated argumentative framework is justified because innovation goals are many or even unaccountable. The task in this paper was started by developing a connection/relationship between innovation and its goals to sustainability. From the perspective of innovation and its goals, public value can mean or represent different things to different experts or authorities. The same goes for the concept of summum bonum (i.e. the highest or ultimate good) because what is a summum bonum to one could differ to another and what is a summum bonum in one situation, space, time and place could also differ to others. However, a good argumentation that narrows the key concepts and their relatives to the actualization of the focused objective of this paper was established.

Innovation and its goals were understood or studied from the dimensions of social innovation, innovation economy, environmental innovation and technological innovation. The adopted integrated argumentative framework in this paper helped in linking the key goal of social innovation to the realization of social sustainability and value; the key goal of innovation economy to the realization of economic sustainability and value; the key goal of

environmental innovation to the realization of environmental sustainability and value and the key goal of technological innovation to the realization of social sustainability and value, economic sustainability and value and environmental sustainability and value collectively/simultaneously. The integrated impacts/effects of all these lead to public value creation and improvement as the summum bonum between the interplay of innovation and sustainability. It is also argued in this paper that public value creation and improvement are further enhanced when the philosophical paradigms/approaches of the “philosophy of action” and “philosophy of mind” are allowed to produce viable and sustainable innovation policies during preparation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and maintenance. This later position helps to create a solid guide in helping to make public value creation and improvement the summum bonum of innovation goals. Therefore, a justification ground was established to answer the question raised in this paper via an integrated argumentation, which narrows the key goals of innovation to the creation and improvement of public value as a summum bonum.

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