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Do young citizens' expectations shape engagement activation with the public sector? Proposing a model to link expectations, engagement and tangible growth

Abstract

There is growing literature documenting the positive outcomes of engagement arising from the direct involvement of citizens in administrative processes. However, little has been done assessing the impact that engagement has on economic and social growth. Building on theory of intangible assets as applied to the public sector, this paper focuses on the relationship between expectations, engagement (as an indicator of intangible value), and tangible growth, and suggests a model for exploring the global impact of citizen engagement through international comparisons between Northern and Southern European countries. The specific target is young citizens. Data from the World Bank are used for valuable indicators on economic and social growth at the macro level of countries and data from the European Social Survey are used to elaborate indicators of the intangible value of engagement.

Keywords

Engagement, expectations, intangibles assets, public policies, public sector

1. Introduction

There is growing literature documenting the positive outcomes of engagement arising from the direct involvement of citizens in the assessment of needs and in deliberation about practical solutions (Adams & Hess 2001; Head, 2008; Yang & Pandey 2011). However, little has been done assessing the impact that engagement has on economic and social growth, as also on how citizens' expectations about the system and about specific areas of growth can affect their involvement in public life.

Building on theory of intangible assets as applied to the public sector (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2015; 2017), this paper focuses on the relationship between expectations, engagement (as an indicator of intangible value), and tangible growth, and suggests a model for exploring the global impact of citizen engagement through international

comparisons between Northern and Southern European countries. The specific target is young citizens.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, the paper elaborates on the idea of engagement conceptualized as an intangible asset, and thus, the specific co-production form of engagement is dealt with. Second, the concept of expectation is explored with special attention to the types of expectations that can be useful for identifying governmental actions that should follow in expectations management strategy. Finally, based on these conceptual elaborations and on the revision of the mental process of engagement, a model is suggested for exploring causal relations.

2. Engaging young citizens in the public sphere

The decline in confidence levels that citizens have in their governments (Eurofound, 2013; Canel, 2015; European Commission, 2016) has been delicately harmful in young people, who have been especially punished by financial fluctuations and immobility of labor market. Crick's statement is in this sense meaningful:

You and I all want to be good citizens, particularly for others to be good citizens, particularly for young people to be very good citizens, yet surveys, common observation and the content of the media all show that many or most of our fellow citizens are losing the desire, the will and the means to be active citizens (2010: 16).

Active citizenship is imbued with values such as empowerment, autonomy or self-confidence, that is, a citizenship committed to the environment and able to contribute to its own welfare and social atmosphere, from his neighborhood to a wider sphere (Blunkett & Taylor, 2010: 26).

Some researchers (see for instance Putnam, 1995; Blunkett & Taylor, 2010) have paid special attention to data that show a lower participation of young people and greater disaffection for the political system if contrasted with older citizens. However, there are also studies that don't agree with the assertion that youngsters are increasingly away from public life issues. Based on Latin America reality, in 2010 a UNICEF study argued that:

Increasingly, adolescents are engaging with NGOs, governments, and local community groups not only to advocate for their own rights, but to work for social justice for other groups of people, promote causes such as environmental sustainability, and to improve civic life through media and outreach campaigns (2010: 8).

A plausible explanation for the difference between Putnam's (1995) and Blunkett et al.'s (2010) claims and that derived from the data provided by UNICEF is that all these three sources might not be referring to engagement in the same way. In fact, there are different perspectives to look at engagement.

2.1. The approach to engagement in this paper

Scholars have approached the concept of engagement from two different perspectives: a) as an attitude of citizens and; b) as the object that should be activated by public organizations, what has been called by some "citizen involvement efforts" (Yang & Callahan, 2007).

With regard to the first approach, scholars try to explore and determine how engagement is activated and expressed in an individual person. For instance, Adler and Goggin understand citizen engagement as the "activities by ordinary citizens that are intended to influence circumstances in society that is of relevance to others, outside of their own families and circles of close friends" (2005: 241). Therefore, "an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (2005: 241). Cooper understands there is citizen engagement when there are "people participating together for deliberation and collective action within

an array of interests, institutions and networks, developing civic identity, and involving people in governance processes" (2005: 534).

Teorell et al.'s contribution (2007) focuses on the actions or activities of ordinary people who somehow aim at influencing political outcomes in society, and suggest a typology of activities to cover five dimensions focused on the activity of citizens: (1) electoral participation; (2) consumer participation e.g. donating money to charity, boycotting and political consumption, as well as signing petitions; (3) party activity (to be a member of, active within, do voluntary work for or donating money to a political party...); (4) protest activity, such as strikes; (5) contacting organizations, politicians or civil servants.

Whereas the first approach is interested in the expressions of engagement, the second one looks at the actions undertaken by organizations to develop citizen engagement. Marlowe et al. (2005: 4) define citizen engagement as "the variety of efforts that a public institution makes to that what it is aspiring to achieve is consistent with the needs, aspirations and values of the citizens who fund it and the citizen whom it serves".

This paper focuses on the second approach, looking at engagement as something that should be promoted by the institutions, and hence, at the specific actions that can be undertaken by public organizations. It works on the assumption that being committed to an organization, either civically or politically, implies an official source to be involved in fostering that commitment. To the extent that it is the eventual involvement what ultimately concerns public organizations, this paper takes insights from the first perspective but only in the extent that analyzing how engagement is activated and expressed in an individual person helps determine the impact that specific governmental involvement efforts might have. From the different extant forms of engagement, this paper focuses on that of co-production, which will be presented next.

2.2. Engagement as an intangible asset

This paper conceptualizes engagement as an intangible asset in the public sector, and hence it analyzes how a government, in its attempt to engage citizens, can create value which, though intangible, could have a real and tangible positive impact.

According to RAE (Real Academia Española) "intangible" is what "cannot be touched". Applied to assets, Kaplan and Norton (2004) understand an intangible asset as the knowledge owned by an organization which creates a differential advantage within the market. Intangible assets, therefore, provide a competitive advantage to the organization that manages them; and applied to this present research, it is not unreasonable to state that different public administrations would be perceived differently by their publics according to their capacity to foster engaged citizens.

Research on intangible assets in the public sector is an emerging field. The most specific and developed definition of intangible asset in the public sector has been provided by Canel & Luoma-aho (2017, in press) as "non-monetary asset (without physical substance), that enables and gives access to tangible capital, built on past events (and linked to the behavior of the organization), which gives rise to a resource which is identifiable/separable from the organization from which a future (long-term) benefit/value (social, monetary, etc.) is expected to flow both for the organization as well as for stakeholders/citizens.

For the purpose of this research two features of this definition are taken into account: first, the future (long-term) benefit/value (social, monetary, etc.) that is entailed in an intangible asset; and second, the fact that it is both sides who are benefited, what implies that any governmental engagement efforts should end up in something which is of worth for both sides, the organization and the citizen.

Parting from the statement that management of intangibles assets is a source of value creation (Kaplan and Norton, 2004), improving the management of intangible assets would

lead to an improvement in financial assets. Despite the fact that public organizations do not have a financial nature – their decisions are not about figures or profits (Stevenson, 2013), we argue in this paper that better management of intangibility is associated with tangible growth.

2.3. What engagement means

Following the approach indicated at the introduction of this paper, we will only highlight those scholar's definitions which are focused on the role that governments play in fostering citizen engagement. As already mentioned, Marlowe et al., (2005) understood citizen engagement as the efforts made by governments. In a similar vein, Claes and Hooghe extended this idea in their study titled *Citizenship Education and Political Interest*, where the civic engagement is understood as directly related to education and is described as the efforts made by the educational system, for “ideally the expectation is that citizenship education will boost political interest, and thus also the likelihood of civic and political engagement” (2009: 3).

The contribution of Yang and Callahan to this perspective is especially relevant. In 2007 they referred to the term "citizen involvement efforts" as "the activities initiated by the government to promote citizen participation in administrative decision-making and management processes" (2007: 269).

From this definition it can be stated that the decision to participate is, ultimately, the response of a citizen to an initiative of the administration: the commitment, whether civic or political, is associated to the attempt of the public administration to generate it. Citizens need an extra motivation that leads them to be willing to be involved in the public domain and to be participative. Therefore, for a public sector organization to build, develop and own the intangible asset of engagement, a proactive effort is required to activate citizens; this effort can take different forms, and in the next section the form of co-production is discussed.

2.4. Engagement and co-production

Literature on coproduction is huge, and in this paper only the concept is introduced in order to set the basis for the dimension of the intangible asset engagement: it refers to the capacity of the public administration to involve citizens in administrative processes. Bovaird (2007) has collected different definitions of coproduction in what regards to public services delivery, one of them is the one provided by Ostrom: “the process through which inputs used to provide a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not in the same organization” (Ostrom, 1996: 1073, cited in Bovaird, 2007: 847). Joshi and Moore focus on the "institutionalized co-production" form, understood as the “provision of public services through regular, long-term relationships between state agencies and organized groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions” (2003: 1, cited in Bovaird, 2007: 847). Bovaird complete this last definition broadening the spectrum to any sector and including the co-production activity to both service users and other members: “the provision of services through regular, long-term relationships between professionalized service providers (in any sector) and service users or other members of the community, where all parties make substantial resource contributions” (2007: 847).

Therefore, co-production has to do with citizens' and public sector managers' (also called professionals) collaboration in producing public services; for this collaboration to be effective, a citizen's participation is critical, as also full involvement of authorities.

The benefits of this practice are several: people can develop experiences with public services; to the extent that they gain decision making capacities, they are given power. In addition, in a coproduction process, the community is provided with resources so that

citizens can better address common problems (Bovaird, 2007). The co-production allows the administration to combine resources in times of budget constraint and, therefore, save costs. These two benefited sides help to link engagement in its form of coproduction with the notion of intangible asset.

3. Bringing in the notion of expectation to engagement research

The notion of “expectation” helps to explore the connection between satisfaction, communication and trust in the binomial citizens – public organizations relationship. To know what citizens expect from public institutions (in order to satisfy those expectations), can contribute to reduce the gap between what they desire and what they actually end getting. For Creyer and Ross (1997) unmet expectations, unrealistic expectations and expectations nonexistent could be the cause for gaps between what public managers think they have achieved and what citizens perceive it has been actually achieved.

An expectation could be taken as an attitude which exists towards public organizations: most people have an opinion about public services, even if they are infrequent users (Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011): when there is no experience, opinion can be built based on information taken from a third party.

What citizens expect of public services –though “public services” is a very broad term– is crucial for Public Administration management and, while empirical research linking expectations with engagement is not very extent, there is a growing and fruitful academic interest in citizens' expectations about services (Roch & Poister, 2006; Van Ryzin, 2004, 2006; James, 2009; Poister & Thomas, 2011 cited in Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011). In addition, some authors have also renewed their interest in the study of citizen satisfaction (Van Ryzin et al., 2004; James, 2009 cited in Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011: 1438) and more specifically, with public services (Bouckaert et al, 2005; Van de Walle et al., 2008 cited in Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011: 1438). The model proposed in this paper lays on the idea that public organizations would manage better (and thus, produce more growth) if they are aware of what their stakeholders expect from their public policies. It is next discussed what expectation means and how its management might shape citizen engagement.

3.1. What does expectation mean?

It is appropriate to start with Gärdenfors's idea that expectations play a crucial role in everyday reasoning (2005: 1): "We all have expectations", through which "we are able to reason and draw conclusions". For example, “you expect there to be a floor when you enter a room; you expect a door handle not to break when you press it; you expect your morning newspaper to arrive on time; and you don't expect Sears to assemble a lawn mower" (Gärdenfors, 2005: 1). You can expect many things happen and we also hope that others do not happen.

Expectations have to do with the future time. An expectation can be conceived as constructing predictions of what will happen (Podnar & Golob, 2007; James, 2009, 2011); that is, expectations work as “beliefs, reference points, standards, or prototypes against which judgments, comparisons, and interpretations are made and as reflections of organizations' institutional contexts” (Olkkonen, 2015: 52).

Based on Olkkonen and Luoma-aho, it can be said that predicting the future is supported by some kind of knowledge. It may be derived from values and beliefs that are associated with institutions or services (like for instance, the satisfaction that is associated with a stable political system). It can also be based on empirical knowledge: what we believe that will happen is linked to information or comparisons derived from experience. While the first ones are associated only to the individual, what implies that they can be modified or canceled by own causes unrelated to the organization, those expectations derived from

experience or information are more moldable by external factors. This means that the organization has the power to change what citizens expect from it.

3.2. Types of expectations

Before explaining the types of expectations, it is important to highlight the difficulty of having a good classification. Fortunately, Olkkonen and Luoma-aho (2014b: 88) have made a great compilation, in which they have taken into account the field of study to which each type belongs (Consumer research, Service quality research, Service management, Information system management, Relationship management, Service management and Relationship management). In order to explain this issue, we will rely on these two authors and their four major categories of expectations. Their typology allows to associate the source of a specific expectation (what it is based upon) with what public authorities should subsequently do.

Thus, the first category is based on values, and it indicates a level of what should be. This is the case with normative and ideal expectations. The latter are closely related to what is desired.

The second category classifies the expectations based on the information, that is, on the knowledge, on the data that we have about the service that we are going to judge. The types of expectations that fall within this category are numerous: (i) precise (consciously formed); (ii) realistic (a level that is possible to meet); (iii) explicit (a level based on actual attributes); (iv) official (based on official information); (v) unrealistic (indicates a level that is impossible or highly unlikely to be met, i.e. based on incorrect information) and; (vi) fuzzy (based on a vague feeling, i.e. insufficient information).

The third category is the expectation which is based on experience: (i) experience-based (what should be able to be achieved); (ii) predictive (indicates a level based on a likely scenario under certain settings); (iii) implicit (based on what should be possible elsewhere and by other actors); (iv) comparative (indicates a level based on comparisons with similar competitors); (v) brand-based (brand-comparisons); (vi) adequate (indicates the minimum level where satisfaction is maintained) and; (vii) minimum tolerable (based on the lowest level where satisfaction is maintained).

Finally, the fourth category refers to the field of personal interests. The (i) deserve, (ii) desire and (iii) unofficial expectations indicate a level based on personal or individual wishes. They are based on what we selfishly consider appropriate or desirable.

Understanding the different types of expectations, Olkkonen and Luoma-aho argue, can help public organizations to identify ways of action. For example, "expectations for organizational behavior might be different whether the expectation is based on a normative, value-based evaluation or a predictive, experience-based evaluation" (Olkkonen & Luoma-aho, 2014b: 90).

The study of expectation types sets a very broad framework of action, which means that the information obtained from the public is essential to understand whether or not it is possible to change a bad expectation about a specific service. Therefore, if a citizen has a bad experience with public services, confidence is low, and he/she will tend to think that what the administration will offer in the future will be at least as bad. However, if the institution understands the needs of the citizen and is interested in improving the demands made by the public, the institution may finally change people's perception.

In the process of changing perceptions about what to expect, communication becomes critical, and therefore, a key issue for a better attempt to involve citizens in the public life is expectations management.

3.3. Expectations management

Olkkonen and Luoma-aho (2014a and 2014b) have worked extensively on expectations management, and it is on these authors' work that this research is largely built on. They argue that expectations management is a crucial part of organizational communication and public relations management (2014a). Expectations management is "an organization's ability to manage its own understanding of what is expected of it, especially in terms of different expectation types and their differences in relevance and priority" (2014a: 233).

Public institutions must learn to manage and identify expectations since all citizens expect something from them. Public administration, especially the local one, is constantly exposed to the judgments of citizens and, in the end, it is those judgements what will influence trust, engagement and even reputation (Chung, 1977; Suchman, 1995; Olkkonen & Luoma-aho, 2014a; Olkkonen, 2015).

Carbonell and Rodriguez-Escudero (2013) provide an example that, although it is applied to job satisfaction, is also useful to interpret to what extent expectations management is crucial in people's actual behaviors and feelings. These authors have identified that when citizens experience ambiguity or conflict in the transaction carried out with organizations, they may feel disappointed and dissatisfied, so a negative impact develops in a different sense from what they initially hoped to achieve.

It is necessary to clarify that managing expectations is a way to understand people's desires and, through managing this information from a strategic approach, to try to achieve the highest satisfaction; it is a guide, a help, not a way of manipulation.

Therefore, expectations management can help governments to learn what actions should be developed to promote engagement in young citizens and, following the argument of democratic theory, build "good citizens" who would contribute to a better society.

4. Measuring the impact of governmental actions

4.1. The process of becoming engaged

Scholar research has explored the mental process which is behind engagement. Delli Carpini (2004) suggests that the process is composed of four steps, ranging from what is most implicit in human beings (ideas), to what is most explicit (behavior). Individual convictions, he states, derive from (1) the democratic norms and values and reside in the sense of obligation that each one believes he/she has with society. These convictions are a mixture of (2) attitudes and beliefs: our overall view of the world makes us build our own political ideology, our views on public issues and our idea of individual and collective commitment. It is once our psyche has been organized, thanks to the information we get from the environment, and we have clear concepts in which we believe in, that we are able to build (3) opinions to understand the political context in which we live. Finally, the last level is reached: action, (4) engagement.

Dahlgren (2005) explained the citizen engagement process within the framework of the "civic culture", taking as a starting point the notion that citizens are social agents. Consequently, he says, the engagement process starts in the self-consciousness of being entitled to participate in the public sphere, and concludes with social participation (action that identifies with the commitment). In between, motivation, experience, interaction with others and empowerment, are stages that complete the process.

The reason why we bring here the mental process of engagement is because one of our arguments is that looking at engagement from the "co-production" perspective, and understanding it as an intangible asset, imply that public administration authorities must know how commitment develops. As "we should not expect a spontaneous combustion of commitment" (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina & Jenkins, 2002: 2), because to be a good citizen might need some additional help (Galston, 2001; Keeter et al., 2002), it is essential to

understand the mechanisms that are activated in the mind before trying to promote engagement.

The model that is proposed in this paper understands that citizen engagement is an intangible asset that, in order for it to be triggered, different processes are required to happen: personal values, political and civic culture, knowledge and opinions (where expectations play a decisive role) are the prerequisites steps to obtaining participation and social involvement in public life. We suggest that the Public Administration should consider each of the steps that encourage commitment. Thus, fostering the commitment of citizens is a laborious process that begins in the formation of people through information properly managed and communicated.

4.2. A key issue: What aim do we (as public organizations) pursue and should attempt at? Citizen engagement expressions

By “expressions of citizen engagement” we understand the actions carried out by the individuals that demonstrate their willingness to get involved. But scholars debate about what should be taken as expressions, and while some Scholars have looked at these expressions majorly understanding them either as political or in a broader social view.

Putnam’s classical approach to engagement (1995) belongs to the first view. According to him, engagement is expressed in such actions like reading newspapers, attending public meetings, voting, trusting in government, committing to a union, or to a religion, civic or fraternal organization. In sum, for Putnam engagement has to do with acting in political live.

But scholars like Ekman and Amna (2012) claim that there are other forms of participation (again this term is used by the authors as synonymous with commitment) which imply a certain latent engagement, like donating money, supporting for the establishment of schools or clean water supply systems in developing countries, research on cancer and heart disease, recycling and the organization in the distribution of cars to go to work in a respectful way with the environment. These scholars’ focus of citizen participation is related to an obligation to help others through social activities that make life easier, rather than to a political view.

Therefore, participation in public life, as a volunteer or via social actions and deliberations in public life, is taken as the most representative form of engagement expression. According to some authors (Carpini et al., 2004), it is thanks to participation increase that social capital and growth of the sense of legitimacy of the constitutional order may occur. But how to measure the levels of commitment? What is the best way to assess the extent to which citizens are involved? How to compare engagement in different societies? The difficulty that is faced in responding to these questions lies precisely in the fact that some expressions of engagement are latent, and thus not so easy to compute as political participation is. What expresses political participation is, for instance, election turn-out across years, or the number of volunteers working for a political party in an election campaign. As data is collected at a specific time and the process is repeated every four years, it is easy to obtain an accurate picture and compare it with previous or subsequent stages. However, measuring the will of society is more complicated. Solidarity is an act that fluctuates over time, and is composed of different tasks which are dispersed and difficult to be computed via indicators. The model dealt with in the next section includes some variables that could be taken into account to measure not only explicit but also latent forms of engagement.

5. Proposing a model for exploring causal relations between expectations, engagement and tangible growth

Building on the above theory review of the concepts, a model is suggested to explore comparatively causal relationships between expectations, engagement and tangible growth. The model will be applied in a research project which has as object of study the central government, and comparisons will be made between Northern and Southern European countries. Major research question is: what expectations are associated with engagement increase (intangible value) as also with tangible growth? Ultimately, the aim is to provide governments with information about what and how specific expectations should be managed for a higher impact on growth.

The target is young citizens: they will be the citizens of tomorrow and their attitudes, perspectives and commitment can provide much information to governments about how to face current and future societal challenges. More specifically, this research will focus on the group known as Millennials, young people between 15 and 25 years.

Three assumptions, derived from the theory part above discussed, are at the basis of the suggested model:

- People shape their expectations according to the values they have, the information they receive, the experiences they go through and their own specific interests;
- The impact of governmental actions can be expressed not only on explicit forms of participation and deliberation but also on implicit and latent forms.
- Intangible assets such as engagement (in its co-production form) may have an impact on tangible growth.

Our study attempts to:

- a) Find out whether a relation could be established between latent and explicit expressions of young citizen engagement to get them involved in co-production actions.
- b) Find out whether a relation could be established between intangible value (as expressed in engagement) and tangible growth.
- c) Collect cross-country comparative data to verify the differences and similarities that exist between their tangible growth data and the expressions of engagement of their corresponding citizens.
- d) Provide governments with baselines to manage young citizens' expectations in order to increase the latter's capacity to create both intangible and tangible growth.

Therefore the model consist of three columns. The first one shows the expectations variables, the second the engagement variables and, finally, the third column shows the values for economic growth.

The aim in this article is to provide with a list of variables that could be the basis for elaborating indicators that could yield measurements for the different concepts explained above: expectations, engagement and growth. Two sets of data are analyzed. First, data from the World Bank are examined for valuable indicators on economic and social growth at the country macro level. Second, data from the European Social Survey are examined to identify the variables that could indicate the level of expectations and of engagement in both explicit and latent forms. The list of variables are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. List of variables

<i>Expectations variables</i>	<i>Engagement variables</i>	<i>Economic growth</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Political system <u>allows people to have a say</u> in what government does •Political system <u>allows people to have influence</u> on politics •Politicians <u>care</u> what people think •How <u>satisfied</u> with life as a whole •How <u>satisfied</u> with present state of economy in country •How <u>satisfied</u> with the national government •How <u>satisfied</u> with the way democracy works in country •How <u>happy</u> are you 	<p>Related to politics: Political forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How <u>interested</u> in politics •Able to take <u>active role</u> in political group •Easy to <u>take part</u> in politics •<u>Contacted</u> politician or government official last 12 months <p>Related to social/community: Latent forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Worked</u> in political party or action group last 12 months •<u>Worked</u> in another organization or association last 12 m. •<u>Signed petition</u> last 12 months •Taking part in a <u>lawful public demonstration</u> last 12 months •<u>Boycotted</u> certain products last 12 months •<u>Take part in social activities</u> compared to others of same age •Important to <u>behave</u> properly •Important to <u>help people and care for others well-being</u> •Important to <u>follow traditions</u> and customs •<u>Member, participated, donated money, voluntary in...</u> sport club, trade union, business/profession/farmers/consumer/humanitarian/environmental/peace/animal/religious/science/education/teacher/cultural organization, political party, social club...) •<u>Help others</u> not counting voluntary organizations •<u>Discuss</u> politics/current affairs •To be a <u>good citizen</u> (how important... to support people, to vote in elections, to always obey laws, to form independent opinion, to be active in voluntary organizations, to be active in politics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •GDP • Exports of goods and services (% of GDP) • Imports of goods and services (% of GDP) • Unemployment (% of total labor force)

Source: Own elaboration with data from the European Social Survey and from the World Bank

Based on this framework, future research will conduct path analysis and statistical regressions to explore relations between variables. Table 2 gathers some initial exploratory data with the values for some of the variables for three Northern European countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden) and three Southern European ones (France, Portugal and Spain). A slight pattern seems to appear by which the first group countries give higher values than the second group for expectations, as well as for intangible value (engagement in both political and latent forms) and for economic growth. This might indicate that a positive relation exists between expectations and growth (both intangible and tangible). As stated, this is only a very exploratory data collection that deserves great elaboration, with proper indicators and factor analysis.

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Table 2. Exploratory data on countries values

	<i>Expectations variables</i>	<i>Engagement variables</i>		<i>Economic growth</i>	
	Political system <u>allows people to have a say</u> in what government does ¹	POLITICAL FORMS: How interested in politics ²	LATENT FORMS: <u>Worked</u> in a non-political organization or association last 12 months	GDP (2015) RANKING TAB	(%) TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT
FINLAND	NOT 8,6% M 13,4% C 0,8%	VI 10,4% QI 46,5% HI 32,8% NI 10,4%	YES 40,6% NO 59,4%	Nº43 (231,950 m. of US \$)	8,2% (of total labor force)
NORWAY	NOT 3,5% M 20,6% C 0,4%	VI 9,9% QI 39,7% HI 41,4% NI 9%	YES 29,5% NO 70,5%	Nº28 (386,578 m. of US \$)	3,5%
SWEDEN	NOT 3,5% M 20,6% C 0,4%	VI 18% QI 49,5% HI 25% NI 7,4%	YES 36% NO 64%	Nº22 (495,624 m. of US \$)	8,1%
FRANCE	NOT 16,9% M 13,5% C 1,4%	VI 15,4% QI 33,9% HI 33,6% NI 17,1%	YES 17,6% NO 82,4%	Nº6 (2,418,836 m. of US \$)	10,4%
PORTUGAL	NOT 24,9% M 13,5% C 3,1%	VI 9,9% QI 31,2% HI 26,4% NI 32,5%	YES 11,7% NO 88,3%	Nº44 (198,923 m. of US \$)	16,5%
SPAIN	NOT 23,3% M 9,5% C 1,3%	VI 11,3% QI 29,7% HI 36,2% NI 22,8%	YES 22% NO 78%	Nº14 (1,199,057 m. of US \$)	26,6%

¹ NOT = Not at all; M = Medium; C = Complete

² V.I = very interested; Q.I = quite interested; H.I = Hardly interested; N.I = Not interested at all

Source: Own elaboration with data from the European Social Survey (ESS)

6. Concluding remarks

This article aims to shed light on the hypothesis that expectations management contributes to the development of stronger and committed relationships between young people and the public administration and subsequently, it contributes also to tangible growth. Through relating the three pillars, the model seeks to measure the impact of governmental efforts to increase engagement on citizens capacity, and assumes that not explicit forms of engagement are required for citizens being willing to get involved in co-production actions. To the extent that co-production involves benefit for both sides (citizens and administration), this research will contribute to building citizen engagement as an intangible asset in the public sector.

Based on literature review, with data from the World Bank and the European Social Survey, the suggested model includes a comparative analysis of macro-level data from Northern and Southern European countries with values that indicate the level of expectations (with items that refer what citizens expect from the political system, politicians, the economy, democracy and the government), the level of engagement (with items that allow to measure political forms –such as active role in political groups or contacting politicians– as well as latent forms –such as the relevance given to help people and care for others well-being, to be a good citizen, donate money or voluntary in a sport club) and the level of tangible growth (macro-economic indicators such as unemployment rate and national gross product).

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From the exploratory provided data a relation between the suggested variables seem to hold. The Northern European countries score higher in expectations, engagement and growth than Southern European countries, suggesting, first, that high expectations might be associated to high citizen involvement in public life; and second, that it is in countries of higher economic growth where also there is higher engagement. The opposite holds: those countries with lower expectations are less engaged and have lower economic growth.

The second step that is expected to follow in this study will be focused on empirical observations, and subsequently, regression and factor analysis will be conducted to elaborate indicators that ultimately might help to: calibrate gaps between public sector organizations and citizens' perceptions; to elaborate route guides for communicating citizens what is expectable from a specific public policy; and to design the subsequent governmental actions. Ultimately, in assessing the tangible growth which is associated to the capacity of a specific government to involve citizens in administrative processes, these indicators will foster competitiveness amongst governments to provide public value to the society they work for.

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