Contingent valuation applied to the National System of Public Libraries of Chile

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Abstract:

The objective of this work is to present the results of the application of the Contingent Valuation Method (MVC) in the National System of Public Libraries of Chile (SNBP). This study was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Bruce Seaman, allowing us to answer the question How can we value and economically express the social benefits of public libraries?

In this sense, the relevance of this study is that the MVC has been applied sparingly in Chile, an issue that contrasts with reality at the international level, and, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first time this technique has been applied with the In order to estimate the social benefits of public libraries in a Latin American country.

For the determination of the SNBP value, two main sources were used: Economic Value and Cultural Value, which in turn were disaggregated as follows.

- *Value of use: related to the welfare derived from the direct consumption (use) of a particular good or service. To the extent that people are required to make a direct contribution, we will have observable information on the personal utility associated with the consumption (use) of that good or service.*
- *Value of non-use (passive use value): related to the well-being that people derive from the mere fact of knowing that these goods exist and are available for future own consumption or of third parties:*
- *Value option: people may be willing to pay to keep some goods in stock and retain a consumer choice.*
- *Value of existence: people may be willing to pay to conserve some goods simply because they derive a utility.*

From a representative national sample of libraries and users, it was possible to establish the economic valuation that the Chilean population makes with respect to the services provided by the National System of Public Libraries (SNBP).

1.- The Public Library System and its services

As a context of the application of the MVC[1], it is important to point out the general considerations that allow to understand the National System of Public Libraries (SNBP), in the first place its stated mission is "to contribute to the integral development of the members of a determined community and its Own identity, with the participation of the community, acting as a bridge between the accumulated culture and the free access of said community to information, knowledge and recreation "(Directorate of Libraries, Archives and Museums, 2014). Public libraries are considered as a space for reading, a cultural space for the population, that is constituted as the center of compilation of the culture of the community and its cultural heritage.

At present, the SNBP is a governmental organization part of the Directore of Libraries, Archives and Museums, its job is to provide technical, professional and financial advice to various library units, these units are mainly municipal libraries, so SNBP owns A coverage of 96% of the municipalities of the country, but also in prisons, hospitals, subway stations and multiple digital services, in this way and to achieve the objectives set, public library services fulfill cultural functions and (Meeting place of community, development of arts, scientific and technical knowledge, and collection, conservation and dissemination of heritage), social functions (different groups of the community are related, free access to information allows Voters are better informed and inequality is reduced) and educational functions (agent in permanent learning by self-training or training).

Among the services offered by SNBP are BiblioRedes (interaction between library and internet use), Bibliometro (book lending points in public transport), Regional Libraries, Bibliotren (module in the gardens of the National Library integrated with Bibliometro), Bookkeeper (book lending point within free community fairs), Teaching Corner (specialized collections for teachers), Rincón de la Memoria (compilations of local history contents), Children's Corner (rooms in public libraries Which stimulate the pleasure of reading in children) and A Book for Healing (book loans, games in paediatrics).

2.- What is the Contingent Valuation Method

The contingent valuation method is one of the techniques - often the only one - that we have to estimate the value of goods (products or services) for which there is no market. The development of this method consists in simulating a hypothetical market through a survey of real and potential users of a service, in this case, real and potential users of the SNBP. In this sense, the hypothesis is transformed into an initial question that seeks to know the willingness of people to pay, for the services to which they now access free of charge or through some partial subsidy. So, what is the maximum amount of money they would pay for the good if

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[1] This study was requested by the BiblioRedes Program to consultants Bruce Seaman, Andrea Baez, Andrea Rebolledo and Juan José Price. At Elton Price Consulting

they had to compare it? As they do with other goods. Hence the value that the average consumer has the good in question.

In this sense, the simulation of a hypothetical market, allows to develop very varied valuation approaches, ranging from the administration that needs to evaluate the initiatives proposed, to organizations concerned about the environment who wish to know the social value of the natural heritage or The courts that must impose economic sanctions on those who cause damages to collective goods. (Riera, 1994: 6).

The objective of this work is to apply the Contingent Valuation Method (MVC) to the libraries that are part of the National System of Public Libraries (SNBP). In the cultural sphere, MVC has been applied sparingly in Chile, an issue that contrasts with reality at the international level, and, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first time this technique has been applied in order to estimate social benefits Of public libraries in a Latin American country.

This analysis provides relevant information on the social benefit generated by libraries and on the relationship between that social value and the socioeconomic characteristics of those who attend it, which can improve the satisfaction of those who work in the library when they know the value of their work for the community; Relations with local governments, donors, foundations and taxpayers; And understanding of the return of public investment in this area (Holt & Elliott, 2003).

3. Evaluation Methodology

The SNBP represents a typical case of cultural property with characteristics of a goods public, which raises an interesting public management problem: we have clear measures of the cost incurred by the Chilean State for its maintenance, but we are not clear about the benefits it generates To society as a whole. Estimating this social benefit and expressing it in economic terms is fundamental for designing public policies and allocating economic and human resources in this area.

In this way, we can define that the library network of the State derives its social value from two main sources: Economic Value and Cultural Value. The first represents the monetary expression of welfare that derives a given population from the existence of a particular good, and is composed of two main sub-sources:

• Value of use: related to the welfare derived from the direct consumption (use) of a particular good or service. To the extent that people are required to make a direct contribution, we will have observable information on the personal utility associated with the consumption (use) of that good or service.
• Value of non-use (passive use value): related to the well-being that people derive from the mere fact of knowing that these goods exist and are available for future own consumption or of third parties:

- Option value: people may be willing to pay to keep some assets in stock and retain a consumer choice.
- Altruism: People may be willing to pay to keep some assets in stock so that others can enjoy it.

- Inheritance: people may be willing to pay to keep some assets in stock so that future generations can benefit from it.
- Value of existence: people may be willing to pay to conserve some goods simply because they derive a utility from the mere fact of knowing that they exist. This argument is valid in a number of areas in the cultural world, such as certain visual arts (think of the collection of a museum), scenic (whose practice must be fostered in order to be maintained in time), as well as in The case of decisions related to the conservation of historical heritage.

When observable (market) information is available, the share of social value related to the use (consumption) of a particular good, service or activity can be measured using traditional valuation methods, which document the direct costs associated with the facilities Are being evaluated and the indirect costs of the same.

3.1.- Hedonic Price Model

The hedonic price model for the valuation of environmental externalities and non-market goods was definitively formalized and promoted by Sherwin Rosen in his 1974 article in the Journal of Political Economy. However, the hedonic price method had already been applied more generally by many authors (Riera, Ibid, 8).

This model breaks down the price of a private good, depending on several characteristics. For example, the price of a home can be determined by the aggregation of the implicit prices of its characteristics and of the environment in which it is located. By econometric procedures, the weight of the variables that determine the final price of the dwelling is calculated (for example, area of the house and of the plot, typology, number of rooms, bathrooms, age, distance to the center of the city, level Atmospheric pollution or landscape attractiveness) and, under certain assumptions, the prices of these characteristics are estimated.

In other words, two identical houses, but located in areas with different levels of environmental pollution, presumably have different prices; The difference in the price of housing is considered the implicit price of variation in atmospheric pollution levels. Under certain conditions of the implicit price function, the demand function of the selected characteristic and, consequently, the consumer surplus can be identified. Thus, variations in the provision of such a characteristic (eg, pollution level) carry differences, measurable in pesos and linked to the well-being of the people.

A classic example of the use of the hedonic pricing model is the negative externality produced by aircraft over residents near airports. The value of the welfare loss due to noise and accident risk can be measured by the decrease in the price of housing for this concept (Riera, Ibid.:9).

3.2.- Contingent Valuation Method

The contingent valuation method, includes among the forms of direct valuation, the use of survey. In this sense in the MVC, the questionnaires play the role of a hypothetical market, where the offer is represented by the interviewer and the demand for the interviewee. There are numerous variants in the formulation of the question that must obtain a price for this good without a real market. A typical procedure is as follows: the interviewer asks if the maximum willingness to pay would be equal to, above or below a certain number of pesos. In case of obtaining "inferior" by answer, the question can be repeated diminishing the starting price.

Finally, one usually asks what would be the maximum price that would pay for the good, taking into account his previous answers.

The person interviewed is in a situation similar to the one faced daily in the market: whether or not to buy a certain amount of a good at a given price. The fundamental difference is, of course, that on this occasion the market is hypothetical and, generally (there are exceptions), you do not have to pay the amount it reveals. This mechanism can result in a bias, usually called strategic, that is related to the incentive or disincentive to reveal the "true" price, which has motivated some criticism of the method.

The effects on non-users can't be measured with the displacement cost or hedonic price models, but with the contingent valuation method. This places contingent valuation as practically the only reasonable procedure to measure loss of profit in people who will not immediately enjoy a singular good but who would be willing to pay something for the option of enjoying it in the future. Hence its importance in certain studies and applications (Op.Cit.:10).

3.3.- Biases

The complexity of this method entails different types of bias in which it may be incurred. Biases, and the difficulty of contrasting them with true values, are one of the main limitations of the hypothetical valuation. For much of the 1970s and 1980s, many of the contingent valuation studies devoted particular attention to detecting and correcting them.

The contingent valuation method seeks to estimate the maximum willingness to pay of an individual for the provision or improvement of a non-market asset or, alternatively, the minimum willingness to be compensated for the loss or decrease in the enjoyment of the same asset. The use of one or another modality depends to a large extent on the definition of property rights over the property to be valued. In the 1970s an interesting controversy was held between theoretical demonstration and empirical evidence. Robert Willig (1976) showed that, in theory, the values of consumer surplus obtained from the maximum willingness to pay should be only somewhat lower than those arising from questions asked in terms of the minimum availability to the compensation.

However, the numerous applications carried out to determine the size of this bias found an excessive disparity of values. Much of the effort was directed at minimizing bias through more careful wording of the questionnaire.

In addition to those already mentioned (strategic bias and divergence between willingness to pay or to be compensated), biases can be grouped into two groups: those that come from the use of surveys of population samples and those derived from the hypothetical nature of the exercise. For the former, who are the best known, economists have shared the breakthroughs with other disciplines, such as statistics and sociology. For the second group of biases, intrinsic to the hypothetical nature of the market, the main one is probably the already discussed incentives to reveal or not true value (strategy bias).

3.4.- Sampling

For the elaboration of the sampling, a simple probabilistic sampling was developed, which seeks to represent the dispersion of the libraries, their users and the surrounding population through samplings stratified by the following categories: Rural - Urban, Geographic and Sex.

In this way, the composition of the sample is based on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), and the data of users of Public Libraries. The realization of the sample was through the following formula:

$$n= \frac{k^2*p*q*N}{(e^2*(N-1))+k^2*p*q}$$

Table N°1

Libraries Area	North	Center	South	RM	Total
Rural	11	29	79	2	121
Urban	37	65	102	69	273
Total	48	94	181	71	394

In Table N°1 we can see the distribution of public libraries by macro-regions[2] (North, Center, South and Metropolitan), the Metropolitan Region, where the capital of Chile is located, is considered in itself a macroregion, in Approximately 40% of the total population of Chile lives in the region. It is a territorially compact and with a high demographic density in relation to the others.

Likewise, the highest concentration of public libraries occurs in the South macro-region and the lowest in the North.

Table N° 2

Percentage distribution	North	Center	South	RM	Total
Rural	22,92%	30,85%	43,65%	2,82%	30,71%
Urban	77,08%	69,15%	56,35%	97,18%	69,29%
Total	12,18%	23,86%	45,94%	18,02%	100,00%

Table N ° 2, allows us to size the specific weight of public libraries by macroregion. Being able to identify concentration in urban areas.

When applying the sampling formula to public library users, in relation to the national population according to CENSO 2002, we have what, the representative sample with 95% confidence and 3% error is equivalent to 1,024 people to be surveyed.

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[2] The macroregion, is a cluster of diverse regions, grouped for the operational purpose of this study. However, from a cultural perspective, these macroregions also share certain productive and identity components.

Table N°3

N	15.09 9.300
K	95%
E	3%
P	0,4
Q	0,6
n	1024

For the purposes of distribution of these 1024 users of public libraries, the percentage distribution expressed in Table N ° 2 was developed, which links geographic components and rurality and urbanity, which can be seen in Table N ° 4.

Table N°4

user libraries – distribution-sample	North	Center	South	RM	Total
Rural	29	75	205	5	314
Urban	96	169	265	179	710
Total	125	244	470	185	1024

In this sense, we have the distribution of the universe for users of public libraries, but MCV, involves the construction of hypothetical markets in indirect populations or that do not use the defined market, to be able to determine other types of values, such as for example; The values of existence.

Table N°5

N	1509 9300
K	93%
e	2,5 %
p	0,6
q	0,4
n	1076

The representative sample for this case, and adjusting the probability factors according to sex, with a confidence level of 93% and an error of 2.5% is 1,076 people to be surveyed, as can be seen in table N ° 5.

The distribution of the sample was made from the specific weight of the macroregions, already mentioned (see table N ° 6).

Table N°6

Distribution Sample non user of libraries	Population	%	sample
North	2705260	17,9	193
Center	2849250	18,9	203
South	3477350	23	248
RM	6067480	40,2	432
Total	15099340	100	1076

In this way, the study was developed based on two samplings with similar characteristics but directed to two different populations, the cut question was associated to the use of the public library in the last 12 months. Which determined whether the people interviewed were users or not.

A third derivative of sample distribution is associated with the definition of territorial isolation, occupied in Chile, in some of the country's public policies, conditions of isolation, are defined by factors of connectivity, climate, services, among others. In this way, these factors are weighed to determine the isolation of the communes, therefore we can be in communes considered rural, but without isolation, therefore, connected to services of big urban centers, or own, with favorable climates, etc. Versus urban communes but with large isolation.

Table N°7

	Resident - Non User	User	Total
Isolated community	215	182	397
Non Isolated community	861	843	1704
Total	1076	1025	2101

4.- The Results

The surveys were divided into two groups:
a. Users, ie those who visit the libraries.
b. The Residents, application of the survey in the territory, that is to say, people who live in the communes where the libraries are located and who occupy their services and non-user residents, such as people who have never used the library.

For the application of the developed questionnaire, a table was created that guides the payment vectors according to associated questions (see table n ° 8). This table shows payment vectors that have been developed in the pretest and pilot processes of the study in question, in them we can observe that there are amounts linked by questions, in this way the factors are calculated according to the approximation to binary answers.

Table N°8

Pay Vector	First Amount	Second Amount(yes to the first amount)	Second Amount (No to the first amount)
1	3,08	6,16	1,54
2	6,16	6,16	1,54
3	9,24	6,16	1,54
4	9,24	6,16	1,54
5	9,24	6,16	1,54
6	9,24	6,16	1,54
7	9,24	6,16	1,54
8	9,24	6,16	1,54

The process of applying MVC, has different scales of evaluation that cross with the availability of payment, of the people surveyed, I understand this availability, as a hypothetical exercise that develops the MVC. In this sense we present some of its results, for example in Table N ° 9, the valuation of different services of the library is discussed, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 equals one value of excellence and one of insufficiency.

Table N°9

Quality of library services	Users	Resident and Non Users
Bibliographic collection	8,4	8,1
Reding Rooms	8,6	8,2
Librarian Assistance	8,9	8,1
PC	8,1	7,2
WIFI	8,1	7,5
Training	7,5	6,6

Particularly we can observe that one of the services most valued by both sample groups is the assistance of the librarian, followed by the spaces of reading and the bibliographic collection.

On the other hand, on a similar scale, questions are generated that approximate the study to the social evaluations carried out by the sample groups with respect to assertions regarding the social value of libraries, cultural value, ie what is the relative importance Do we allocate public libraries as socio-cultural spaces?

In this sense, we can observe in Table 10 that the resident user has a slightly higher valuation than the users interviewed directly in the library, whereas the nonuser resident usually has at least 1 average point under the statements of the others two groups.

Therefore, we can observe in the above table that the highest value for the resident user group is 9.7 in the affirmation of "the importance of the library for local communities", while for users (interviewed in The library), is 9.51 for the same statement and instead for non-users,

the highest valuation is for the statement "libraries promote culture and knowledge" with a 9.26 pts.

This study in question, had a series of questions linked to various typologies of valuation, for this paper, we have only incorporated some by way of example.

Finally, it is important to note that the attendance frequency for the Public Library, for Table N ° 10, is 32% declares to attend once a month for the group of users and 27% for resident users.

Table N°10

Average agreement with the following statements (1 "strongly disagree" and 10 "strongly agree")			
	Users-Resident	Users	Resident - non users
Libraries are very important to local communities	9,74	9,51	9,21
Libraries are very important to me	9,33	8,68	5,7
Libraries promote culture and knowledge	9,55	9,45	9,26
Libraries promote democracy	8,09	7,32	6,91
Libraries promote equality	8,68	7,98	7,66
I would experience a personal loss if the public library of my commune ceased to exist	8,92	7,56	5,33
I would experience a personal loss if the libraries of Chile ceased to exist	9,19	8,64	6,63
The cost of maintaining libraries should be paid	2,46	2,5	2,54

In the MVC, the valuation process is one of the inputs that allows us to cross data with the availability of payment of the interviewees in this sense we can identify the values in pesos for the 3 sample groups.

Table N°11

	Lower limit	Average	Upper Limit
Users	2649	4649	6095
Users - Resident	4337	5799	6990
Resident - Non users	-35045	2673	26729

We can see in Table N° 11, that the average value that users are willing to pay is lower than that of residents, this may be due to the fact that residents have a higher average income than users.

Another explanation may be that users know with certainty what they value, while non-users do not have a certain answer to what they must respond, due to their lack of knowledge of services and a comparison with market services that compare, for example Book value, internet value.

Table N°12

	Usuario	Usuarios Residentes
Total	4648	5798
South	5564	7345
North	4623	5278
Non Isolated Community	4812	5565
Isolated Community	82	6303
With the same income level	5039	5845

There is a positive correlation between the quality of service and the greater willingness to pay. In this way, one of the most important values is the assistance of the librarian, strategically positions the goods and services of public libraries in the community, as a differentiated offer.

Table N° 12, shows that the resident users have a greater willingness to pay for the services, due to the monthly income received by the users, $ 453,078 (U$ 698) and $ 517,664 (U$ 798) received by the resident users.

In this way, we observe in the same table, that the correlation of valuation and availability of payment is higher in the southern macroregion for both sample groups.

5.- Willingness to pay (WTP)

The WTP can be used as a price indicator to build a social demand for the network of public libraries, and that way we could obtain the society's willingness to pay. In this paper, however, we will opt for a simpler method: we will multiply the average WTP by the number of people that make up the relevant population. In this way, based on the sample results, we will estimate the benefits at the population level.

In the case of users, we will use two WTP indicators: the WTP average of those interviewed in the library (which would give the lower limit) and the mean WTP of those who were interviewed outside the libraries but declared themselves users of the same (Which would give an upper limit). The data on the number of users at the population level was delivered by the Department of Studies of Biblioredes: 3,000,000 in the last 12 years, which gives an average of 250,000 users per year. In this way the annual social benefit would be at least, and only considering users, $ M 13,946,550 (equivalent to about 21 million dollars) and a maximum of $ 17,396,550 (equivalent to about 27 million dollars). Taking into account that the fiscal budget today is approximately 14 million dollars.

It should not be forgotten that this estimate represents a minimum quota of the social benefits of the library network, since we are not considering non-user values (for not having obtained a representative sample for this group). There are also a number of benefits that have not been explicitly considered, such as research, education and social cohesion, to name but a few. Although they could be partially incorporated in WTP (see Seaman 2006), they may be underestimated (Price, 2015: 30).
Some of the benefits of Traditional Services that we can highlight are:
• Cost savings to individuals in relation to private market costs of comparable goods and services.
• Direct benefits for users. Benefits related to the program
• Impacts on the human resources base
• Impacts on other public services and outreach
• Impacts on the creation and success of new companies. Benefits for local businesses
• Employment and wages
• Purchases and services
• Construction and extensions
• More active civic space in the neighborhood
• Other impacts on surrounding neighbors and businesses.

Thus, some of these benefits constitute externalities and others an economic impact in the form of injection of expenditure and activity in certain areas of influence, and although in the present work are not estimated directly, the estimated WTP could reflect at least partially. In fact, in this paper we estimate the WTP from respondents' answers to a valuation question, but we do not know what the motivation behind a particular WTP is (see Seaman 2006). For example, it may be that someone is willing to contribute monetarily to the library network because it believes that it provides a useful service from the point of view of literacy and the possibility of having a population better prepared to exercise citizenship (externality) And / or because it predicts that in this way a process of tourism development that generates employment and economic activity can be triggered (Price, 2015: 33).

Finally, when determining that the National System of Public Libraries is an integral part of a larger cultural network that includes Archives and Museums, we can identify the positive increase when considering users' ratings as well as having a complex system of services that provide goods Cultural at different scales and with different cultural contexts, users are

increased and associated services, cultural heritage, art, zoology, archeology, paleontology and others are increased. In this sense, the value of goods, and spaces, as well as the social relations that have generated these institutions with their respective communities expands.

In this same line, it is important to point out the valuation of compensation that could be linked to the tutelage of heritage that have the Libraries, Archives and Museums of the Country, which value is assigned by the Chilean State through the fiscal budget and which is assigned by the community , As this institution protects a common and public good as the national heritage (National Monuments). In this line of compensation, they could enter the patrimonial values linked to the declarations of National Monuments, requested by the Council of National Monuments and that are damaged by third parties.

Undoubtedly, the MVC opens a series of questions and paths of high interest for the measurement and economic valuation of cultural property guarded and managed by the Chilean State.

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Estudio de Valoración Contingente del SNBP (Informe Final) Consultora Price Elton 36

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