

Relational leadership and co-production

Excerpt from: Relational leadership – an analytical lens for the exploration of co-production

Schlappa, H., Imani, Y. Nishino, T. in: Loeffler E. and Bovaird, T. (2021) Handbook of Co-production, 2021, Palgrave

Introduction

In this chapter we argue that asking ‘who is in the lead’ generates a useful analytical perspective for the exploration of co-production processes which are characterised by complex, multi-layered relationships between organisations, professionals and citizens. Ospina and Foldy (2016, 2) argue that “shifts from pyramids to webs and from production to co-production change the nature of public leadership”. Yet public leadership research has been slow to respond as it largely remains grounded in hierarchical and heroic leadership perspectives, which cast leaders as powerful individuals able to control and direct others, despite the extensive discourse on these collaborative forms of public governance, networks and systems (Denhardt and Denhardt 2015, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, Osborne 2010b). This “leader-centred” approach offers an “incomplete picture” of the realities of collaborative service provision (Ospina and Foldy 2016, 2-3). Hence more theoretical and empirical studies are required to develop a leadership concept that encompasses “processes, context, and complexity and to consider actors beyond formal leaders, arenas beyond the bureaucracy, and levels of analysis such as the interorganizational and systems of networks” (Ospina 2017, 2). In other words, leadership is increasingly recognised as a social, collective and relational phenomenon where no individual or a group is in full control.

The co-production literature suggests that both professionals and citizens need to share control over the co-production process to achieve their goals but does not offer conceptual tools that would guide research and practice. One of the key questions for co-production research, and the one that we take up in this chapter, is which collective model of leadership would be suitable for co-production research that is concerned with interrelated and emergent processes for achieving common goals? A relational leadership perspective promises important insights into how leadership between professionals and citizens is enacted in contemporary public service systems. From this perspective, “leadership is collective work and can be identified when members of a group find a path forward, commit to it, and adapt to changing circumstances” (Ospina and Foldy 2016, 4). This conceptualisation seems pertinent for public service contexts that are characterised by complex and reciprocal relationships between managers, professionals and service users. Furthermore, focusing on the relational dimension of leading public services asks us to explore the tensions that arise between professionals and citizens, with the aim of looking for how these can be used to inform the service co-production process.

This chapter is organised as follows. First, we offer an overview of limitations of the mainstream public leadership perspectives. This is followed by a brief review of distributed leadership theory, from which we develop an analytical perspective that focuses on context, motivations and power. These dimensions are then applied to different levels and different

stages of co-production using a case study to illustrate the main points of our argument. We then construct a model which shows that context, motivations and power are valuable analytical dimensions for the exploration of the levels and stages of co-production. We conclude with a brief discussion of the implications for co-production research and practice.

Limitations of mainstream perspectives on leading public services

Reviews of the mainstream literature show that leader-centred, transaction and transformational perspectives on leadership still feature in public administration research (Van Wart 2003, Van Wart 2013, Vogel and Masal 2015). The transactional perspective on leading gained popularity with the advent of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm that promoted the principal-agent relationships and economic rationality which favoured leadership models that focused on achieving efficiency, effectiveness and economy. This emphasis on performance management cultivates dyadic relationships between leaders and followers where reward is contingent on the efforts made to achieve defined goals (Bass 1990, Moynihan and Thomas 2013). NPM-inspired leadership concepts gave preference to leadership styles that promised the achievement of pre-defined outputs at the expense of recognising and addressing challenges that are 'wicked', i.e. requiring the sharing and meshing of knowledge between people and across institutional boundaries (Clark 2014).

Such a perspective on leading seems to have limited application to co-production for two main reasons. First, current methods of integrating service delivery across professional disciplines and organisations through networks and alliances requires a leadership that shares vertical and horizontal accountability. Second, the notion of citizens as passive consumers of services has been discredited in critiques of the underlying logics of NPM, where the complexities of human abilities, needs, and motivations were assumed to be subordinated to management principles rooted in the logics of linear and mechanistic processes (Osborne 2010a). A recent systematic review of the public leadership literature suggests that an instrumental-rational approach to leading supports this argument and also shows that such a perspective belies the 'active role' citizens play in public service design and delivery (Vogel and Masal 2015).

Edwards and Turnbull (2013) contrast the transactional leader as someone working within a given culture to achieve pre-determined goals, with the transformational leader who changes culture and sets new directions. Transformational leadership theory emphasises the ability of leaders to set out a vision that inspires followers to produce mission-related results even in heavily constrained situations. It is the dominant perspective in public leadership discourse (Ospina 2017), mainly due to its promise to bring about innovative and performance enhancing change (Andrews and Boyne 2010). At its core, transformational leadership is concerned with organisational change and networks of leadership relations which cross organisational and professional boundaries (Currie and Lockett 2007). While there is a focus on relationships and interactions, the emphasis still remains on the authority of the leader and his/her ability to engage and influence followers. Thus it is assumed that transformational leaders, by appealing to the collective values of followers, impact on organisational culture, employee motivation, performance and reform (Bellé 2014). One of the limitations of this school of leadership research is that the agency of the leader, his/her competencies and skills, tend to be over-emphasised while the context in which leadership is enacted receives limited attention (Fitzgerald et al. 2012, Vogel and Masal 2015). Strongly institutionalised public service

settings with high levels of professionalization have been found to constrain severely the capacity of leaders to lead (Teelken et al. 2012). Ferlie (2012) argues that complex organisational and sectoral contexts require a negotiated, team-based approach to leading that can engage the often conflicting motivations, values and practices of multi-professionalised service provision settings: “This form of leadership is mixed, messy and at times mundane...” (ibid. p.250).

We cannot do justice to the diverse discourse on public leadership here (for a review see Ospina 2017, Van Wart 2003, Van Wart 2013) but these dominant perspectives tend to be rooted in the notion that leaders are the source of leadership and perform their roles within organisations in pursuit of goals that are pre-defined in political and managerial arenas. Service co-production, however, is not primarily concerned with the management of organisations, it is about the collaborations between professional and citizen co-producers. They take place within, as well as outside, organisational boundaries and occur at different levels and different stages of the process (Nabatchi et al. 2017, Bovaird and Loeffler 2012). This means that goals can only be partially pre-determined and that their achievement requires joint deliberation and co-ordinated action between professionals and citizens. These new realities highlight the limited value of the leader-centric perspectives in explaining how leading happens in contemporary public services.

Distributed leadership theory

Distributed leadership theory reflects the emphasis co-production theory attributes to collaboration and offers a perspective on leading that supports the exploration of collaboration between professionals and citizens. Theory of distributed leadership perceives leading as an activity which is inherently dispersed within teams and organisations (Gronn 2002). In a co-production relationship, professionals do not, and perhaps should not, aim to assume a privileged position in relation to citizens, casting them into the role of followers of an appointed, or self-appointed, leader with power. Leading co-production is therefore a shared responsibility, asking professionals and citizens to combine their skills, resources and authority to accomplish a particular task. Bolden et al. (2008, 11) define distributed leadership as: “...a less formalized model of leadership where leadership responsibility is dissociated from the organizational hierarchy. It is proposed that individuals at all levels in the organization and in all roles can exert leadership influence over their colleagues and thus influence the overall direction of the organization”. Within a variety of terms used to describe this phenomenon, shared and distributed leadership are the most common (for a review see Bolden 2011). Despite the different assumptions about how leading is shared or distributed, both terms build on the notion that leadership is an emergent property of interacting individuals and that expertise is found among all the actors involved who are enabled to contribute to the process without being controlled by a few individuals in privileged positions (Bennett et al. 2003). Conceptualising leadership of the co-production process therefore requires attention to sensemaking, persuasion and negotiation between professionals and citizen co-producers. The literature points to different mechanisms through which leadership functions might be shared. For example MacBeath et al (2004) show that distributed leadership can be characterised as involving delegation and negotiation between actors in ways that leads to incremental and opportunistic adoption of leadership roles according to the skills and knowledge of those involved. Spillane (2006) points to differences in distribution of leadership

functions, such as collaborative distribution, where individuals work together in time and place to execute leadership routines, collective distribution where actors operate interdependently to fulfil leadership functions, or coordinated distribution where individuals' work is guided by superior authority to ensure sequential completion of leadership routines. Studies on leadership of schools, for example, show that leadership functions are exercised not only by senior managers at the apex of the organisation, but extend to everyone who takes the initiative, influences other people and is involved in shaping the direction of a process (Woods 2015, Woods 2016), thus offering all three variations of distributed leadership offered by Spillane. In this perspective "context and the practice of leadership make up and change one another" (Ospina 2017, 280).

While distributed leadership theory resonates with the nature of service co-production, its conceptual frames requires an extension because distributed leadership theory is premised on the principle that leading is shared among professional staff working for an organisation - the notion that citizens are among those who enact leadership on process and outcomes of collaborative actions is not acknowledged in the distributed leadership literature. We propose to fill to address this by using an extended relational leadership perspective as an analytical lens for the exploration of leading in co-production.

Relational leadership in co-production: three analytical dimensions

A narrow focus on institutions, and by extension the professional values and regulatory powers they are governed by, underplays the importance of citizens in the co-production of services. One of the key distinctive features of the co-production concept is an explicit emphasis on collaboration between professionals and citizens. Thus, explorations of co-production processes require a focus on relational dynamics to explain what actually takes place when professionals and citizens come together to co-produce a service.

The relational leadership perspective (Hosking et al. 2012, Ospina et al. 2012) adopts a social constructionist position and regards realities as "multiple, local-historical constructions" (Van der Haar and Hosking 2004, 1020). Analysis informed by this strand of relational leadership perspective combines a focus on interactions, in which relational realities are co-constructed, with a critical approach towards conceptualizing power as emerging in contested, perpetual relational processes (Hosking 2007a). 'Power' is considered to be both relational and paradoxical, in that it is both enabling and constraining at the same time (Hosking 2007a, Van der Haar and Hosking 2004). This means power shifting to an individual enables her/him to influence, or make, decisions but at the same time that power is constrained by other individuals' power, resources, knowledge and expertise and many other factors.

A relational leadership perspective encourages us to conceive the co-production process as inherently negotiated, emergent and reliant on a range of actors who may have both common and contrasting motivations, and are able to exercise power, which in turn is moderated by the context in which these relations occur. Conceiving co-production in such a way supports Bovaird's (2007) argument that compares co-production processes to a complex adaptive system (Stacey 1996) in which professionals, users, communities and politicians create multi-purpose, multi-level and multi-agency relationships through which the service process is negotiated from planning to delivery and evaluation. In adopting relational leadership, we

assume that co-production is not characterized by 'equal and reciprocal relationships' between professionals and citizens, neither is it primarily about professionals instructing, controlling and directing citizens. Instead, leading co-production is perceived as a process between professionals and citizens which is shaped by the *context* in which it occurs, the *motivations* they bring to the collaboration, and the *power relations* between the co-producers. These dimensions are interlinked but for analytical purposes we separately define them below.

Context: lightly structured

Understanding leadership as a relational process recognizes that the process of leading cannot be separated from its context (Dachler and Hosking 1995). In other words, leadership is both shaped by, and shapes, the structures in which it is enacted. Conceptualizing leadership in this way allows for a better understanding of what might make an effective context in which co-production can take place. This context would vary depending on whether the service is core or complementary (Brandsen and Honingh 2015), whether it is produced at a collective, group or individual level (Nabatchi et al. 2017) and the extent to which citizens are involved in service commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation (Bovaird and Loeffler 2016).

The concept of *light structuring* (Hosking et al. 2012) allows us to draw some inferences in regard to key characteristics of a context that would support service co-production. Hosking highlights the need for a minimal structure, so that participants are enabled to have open discussions that lead to learning and action. How much structure is 'enough' would depend on factors such as legal and regulatory requirements, professional codes of conduct, resources and accountabilities – to name but a few of such contextual factors. But such light structures could potentially create their own problems, too. For example, when urgent decisions are required, light structures may lead to excessive discussions that prolong reaching consensus. Co-producers might also agree that hierarchy would be essential to facilitate co-production in penal or emergency services (Tuurnas et al. 2016, Alford 2014). Nevertheless, we argue that those leading the process should aim to minimize the contextual influences which constrain discussions and actions between co-producers. The constraints imposed by governments and public agencies can be extensive, but professionals have some discretion over how to mitigate against institutional contexts that have been found to dominate the co-production process (Steen and Van Eijk 2015, Van Eijk and Steen 2014b, Tortzen 2015) and they exercise some control over such constraints with the aim of creating a 'light structure'. But the task of creating a light structure context for co-production is not solely the task of paid professionals. Citizens also shape the context in which services are co-created, which might include the conception, design, delivery as well as the evaluation of co-produced services (Bovaird and Loeffler 2016, Loeffler et al. 2012).

Motivations: expect and accept differences

The complex range of motivations which citizens and officials bring to the co-production relationship are open to influence and change according to the context and purpose of co-production (Fledderus et al. 2014, Fledderus and Honingh 2016, Van Eijk and Steen 2014a, Van Eijk and Steen 2016). Exploring the motivations of co-producers could include their interpretation of the social symbols referred to above, as well as the experiences, knowledge

and expertise that they bring to the co-production process. This involves an examination of the potential tensions arising from negotiating a shared vision about a projected future, namely agreeing on “what would work and how to achieve it” (Bovaird and Loeffler 2007). This also includes finding out about each other’s interests, perspectives and limitations, something Cunliffe and Eriksen have described as “finding out who you are and who we are” (2011, 1427).

The values professionals and citizens bring to co-production are important to such explorations, not only because values underpin motivations, but also because values arise through the co-production interactions and their impact is contingent on the context in which these interactions happen (Joas 2000, Stacey 2007). A relational leadership perspective focuses on value sets, agendas and experiences that influence the co-producers and challenges assumptions about the interests of professionals being dominant.

Creating an open dialogue between co-producers about the content or purpose of their interactions means to expect and accept differences. Hence, surfacing motivations is likely to expose tensions about what each party expects from the co-production and would form an important element of an analysis about how co-producers negotiate and agree what would work and how to achieve it. Co-production research therefore needs to take a critical stance towards assumptions that the desire and the ability to determine processes and outcomes reside within independent individuals.

Power: negotiated, dynamic, emergent

The exploration of relational dynamics in co-production needs to be sensitive to how actions and behaviours of assumed powerful professionals correspond to actions and behaviours by citizen co-producers. Power is an inseparable and paradoxical aspect of human relations, in that it both enables and constrains individuals as they try to meet their own demands and expectations, and the demands and expectations of others, which could be different (Elias 1991). Therefore, power is relational and emerges in contested perpetual processes by interdependent agents - hence they both enable and constrain each other, depending on the expectations and actions of others and their own (Stacey 2007, Hosking 2007b, Van der Haar and Hosking 2004). This means when power shifts to an individual, it enables her/him to influence or make decisions, but at the same time that power is constrained by other individuals' power, resources, knowledge and expertise. Power differentials can also result in ‘inclusions’ and ‘exclusions’, as over time, actors tend to form some degree of cohesion and develop a collective identity (Elias 1991). Thus, the more powerful actors can affect others’ decision making and actions in their circle (Stacey 2007). Complementary perspectives on power such as top-down, individual and co-operative power (Woods and Woods 2013) offer rich insight for the analysis of interactions between professional and citizen co-producers.

Understanding that power is not static but negotiated between people who collaborate to achieve shared objectives is integral to the analysis of how co-production is being led. Although citizen co-producers are often portrayed as being ‘un-empowered’ (Steen and Van Eijk 2015, Van Eijk and Steen 2014b), we argue that power shifts between professional and citizen co-producers according to their expertise, knowledge, resources, position as well as the levels and stages of co-production. The relational leadership perspective allows us to

explore issues concerned with power dynamics at individual, group, and collective co-production processes. This shifts assumptions of relationships between co-producer from one where the professional 'is in the lead' to one where leadership and associated expressions of power are negotiated, dynamic and emergent.

Relational leadership at different levels of co-production

Nabatchi et al (2017) develop a typology of co-production in which the question of 'who is involved' helps distinguish between three different levels of co-production. At individual level, professionals and citizens work together directly to generate services or benefits for the citizen in most cases but can also create benefits for third parties. At group level, professionals work with a group of citizens to create services or outcomes that benefit them directly or are of benefit to the wider community. At the collective level, professionals work with segments of the population to produce benefits for specific groups or the whole community. To illustrate how a relational leadership perspective supports the structured analysis of co-production processes we apply our three analytical dimensions to the case of Altena (Schlappa, 2017, Schlappa 2016) to illustrate how to support an analysis of the co-production process.

Co-production in Altena

Altena's history as a mining and manufacturing town on the edge of the Ruhrgebiet in Germany stretches back over several centuries. The town's prosperity began to deteriorate in the 1970's and by 2012 the number of jobs had declined by almost 50% while the population shrank by 43% to 17,300 inhabitants. The ongoing loss of economically active residents resulted in a high proportion of older people in the population as well as rapidly falling property values, reduced municipal revenues, deteriorating services and physical infrastructures. Due to a high financial deficit, Altena was put into 'special measures' in 2002 when its budget became subject to governmental control.

A study funded by a charitable foundation created an opportunity to explore how Altena might address its challenges. Over a period of two years, researchers facilitated collaboration between municipal staff, politicians and citizens, creating a future-oriented strategic framework called 'Altena 2015' which in 2007 became the basis for all municipal decision-making. This framework consisted of 10 strategic priorities and 317 actions addressing a wide range of problems, from reducing housing stock to improving the town centre. The continued engagement of civil society was the overarching strategic priority and a not-for-profit organisation was founded by civil society, business and public sector actors to oversee and guide strategy implementation.

One of the first actions resulting from the strategy process was to establish a centre for volunteering, led by older people and based in a building owned by the municipality. By coordinating existing volunteer activity, a wide-ranging programme of services was organised. This included visitation services to reach isolated or sick elders, art and craft courses, after school clubs, language courses for refugees, reading circles, DIY workshops and much more. Physical improvements were also organised, such as improving public seating, creating a communal barbeque on the riverbank, and brightening up the city centre with plants. There

was no project budget to resource these activities. Collaboration between volunteers and officials was based almost entirely on support in kind, which included adjusting mainstream service provision, so that volunteers could complement public services where possible.

A pivotal project which nurtured co-productive relationships early on was the pedestrianisation of the main shopping street. For many years, retailers and residents had called for improvements but, due to the dire financial situation, proposals for improvements were postponed regularly. A scheme for pedestrianisation was developed in meetings between officials, councillors, residents living in the centre, shop owners and trade bodies. To implement the scheme the mayor called on citizens to get their 'hands dirty' and arranged for street closures at weekends. With machinery, tools and building materials provided by the municipality and local construction companies, the first 200 metres of the street were re-surfaced in 2007 by residents, traders, municipal workers and politicians. It took three further years for the 800 metres long street to be turned into an attractive pedestrianised zone. In the course of the project, traders made available their privately-owned parking areas, so that these spaces could be integrated into the pedestrian streetscape which now includes planting and seating areas that are maintained by both the municipality and the volunteer exchange.

In 2013 the municipality secured a small amount of funding from the *Land* (regional) government to temporarily pay shop owners a small fee when they made an empty retail unit available for a period of 6 – 12 weeks. Local entrepreneurs could rent the units, all of which were in prime locations along the recently pedestrianised retail street, for €2 per square metre. The municipality then handled the contractual arrangements with property owners. This 'pop-up shop' initiative created six permanent new retailers in the town centre and now forms part of the economic development services provided by the municipality.

Table 2 - Applying dimensions of relational leadership to different levels of co-production

	Context	Motivation	Power
Individual	Professional and shop owner come together to explore how retail space can be made available for the planned 'pop-up shop' initiative.	Professional and shop owner share motivation to increase footfall and enhance attractiveness of town centre.	Professional and shop owner have the power to make concessions to reach agreement or to walk away with no deal.
Group	Groups are formed according to collectively agreed priorities, such as the volunteer exchange, 'pop-up shops' or pedestrianisation. Groups use formats and processes that reflect the nature of the initiative and preferences of participants.	Working groups are attended according to expertise and interest of participants. Citizens and professionals might have very specific and differing motivations and they find ways to collaborate to achieve these.	Professionals and citizens negotiate the ideas and priorities in working groups and jointly agree the rules which govern their work
Collective	Workshops which include professional, political and civil society actors are facilitated by independent experts. 'Blue sky thinking'	Strategic perspectives are deliberated. Professionals and citizens share the goal of improving the quality of life in their town, even though their	Actors have different expertise, influence and views on priorities but none dominate the collective co-production process

	and radical departures from status quo are encouraged	motivations for doing so might differ	
--	---	---------------------------------------	--

Table 2 illustrates a 'light structure' which allows co-producers to contribute at each level of co-production. We can also see that motivations to collaborate can range from strategic to very specific goals and that these are likely to differ between professionals and citizens. What the relational leadership perspective highlights is that differing motivations are bounded by goals that co-producers generate in a light structure context. The power to contribute, block or withdraw can be found on both sides. The example of Altena illustrates that power relations are not always controlled by transformational leaders or experts as acknowledged professionals in their field. Instead we see that professionals as well as citizens can be powerful actors and that their respective powers are subject to negotiation at all levels of co-production. In the next section we explore how context, motivation and power help us to explore the main stages of co-production.

Relational leadership at different stages of co-production

Building on the work by Bovaird and Loeffler (Bovaird and Loeffler 2016, Bovaird 2007), Nabatchi et al. (2017) combine three levels of co-production with four stages of the service cycle. These stages reflect the temporal nature of co-production: co-commissioning, the collaborative identification and prioritisation of services by professionals and citizens; co-design, the creation and planning of a service; co-delivery, joint activities between professionals and citizens through which a service or public good is provided; and co-assessment, the monitoring and evaluation of services. We now illustrate how a relational leadership might assist us in analysing the leadership in relation to the following 4 stages of co-production.

Co-commissioning

In the case of Altena the context for co-commissioning was characterised by an openness to new ideas and senior officials being prepared to experiment with new ways of deciding what should be done. 30 years of continuous decline had made it plain that the municipality was insufficiently 'powerful' to bring about needed changes on its own. Citizens were asked to share responsibility for identifying what needed to change and had the power to decide alongside politicians to determine the strategic priorities. Citizens felt strongly about retaining and improving services while officials were desperate to reduce liabilities for oversized services, buildings and public spaces. The co-commissioning process therefore was conflictual, and the facilitation by independent experts was an important element in the development of the Altena 2015 strategy which set out strategic priorities citizens and officials could agree on. This stage of co-production relates most clearly to the collective and group levels because all citizens were able to contribute to strategic deliberations, and at group level citizens took the lead in the working groups, which developed detailed proposals such as the volunteer exchange, 'pop-up shop' and pedestrianisation initiatives described above.

Co-design

The volunteer exchange is a good example of service co-design. When the decision was taken that there was a need to co-ordinate third sector responses to problems, there was no structure or process that citizens or professional could adapt to create this new service. Instead actors were faced with severely constrained municipal resources and fiercely independent voluntary organisations. Thus, the context for co-designing a new service was challenging and complex but had limited institutional constraints. Both officials and citizens wanted to increase volunteering, especially by older people who made up a large proportion of the population as they felt that volunteers were one of the most important yet under-used resources available to address the multitude of social and environmental problems in Altena. Only through sharing resources and knowledge was this achievable. Citizens had the power to bring under the umbrella of the volunteer exchange a wide range of organisations, and the municipality had the power to make resources available and provide support in regard to financial management, insurance and communications. Co-design in this case was in part a collective but mainly a group level activity. While the local voluntary sector was canvassed for its views, a small group of activists, together with politicians and professionals from the municipality, designed the blueprint for the volunteer exchange.

Co-delivery

Pedestrianising the central shopping street was a priority for citizens and municipality and over the years a number of plans had been drawn up, but none had come to fruition. There was no 'master plan' which the municipality tried to deliver, hence the context for engaging citizens in the scheme was flexible. The municipality put in place organisational measures, such as road closure orders, provided insurance, materials and supervised the use of machinery while shop owners and citizens, including volunteering municipal officials, took up old surfaces and paved the street. Professionals did have a leading role in ensuring that relevant construction standards were met, and in doing so both affirmed power relations between professional and citizen but also reversed institutional power relations, for example 'instructing' the mayor how the paving had to be installed. Not all shop owners and residents living in the centre were strongly motivated to contribute, but those actively involved were able repeatedly to co-deliver this physical improvement over four consecutive years. Although there was a collective dimension to co-delivery, in this case the primary level of co-production was at both the group and the individual levels.

Unlike co-commissioning and co-design, this stage of co-production was characterised by professionals being in the lead, setting out what should be done and how it should be done, with citizens as followers. But they co-delivered in a 'light structure' where professionals had no positional power over volunteers, and the co-producers shared the motivations to enhance the street with a minimum of funding. Another interesting observation in regard to this stage of co-production is that co-delivery does not necessarily result in public goods or services. The 'pop-up shop' example illustrates that municipal professionals and shop owners can co-design the opportunity for an entrepreneur to deliver a private service. Such a service is co-delivered because the municipality handles the contractual and insurance matters on behalf of the shop owners to enable the entrepreneurs to provide a service that customers then pay for.

Co-assessment

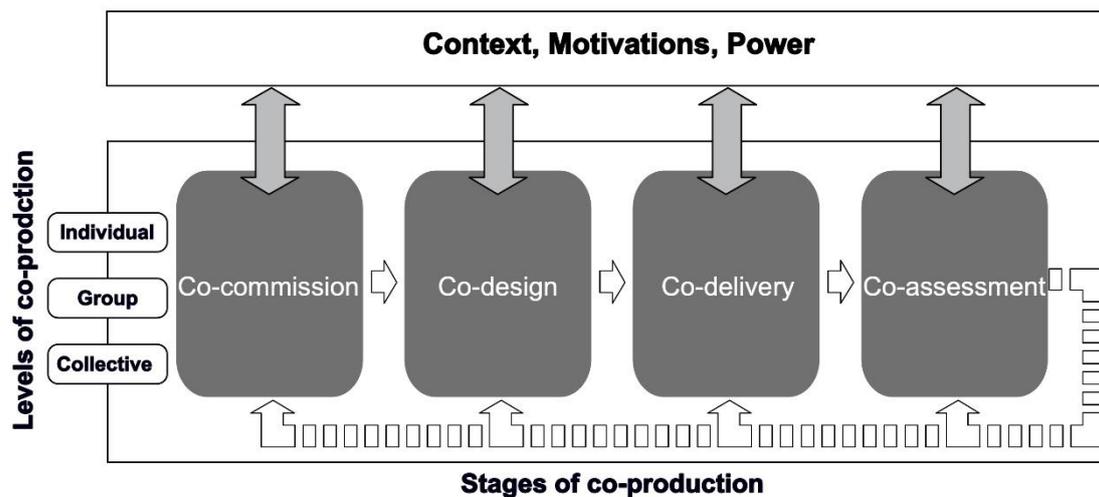
In the case of Altena there are no formal processes that would facilitate co-assessing the services. Instead citizens and professionals are undertaking an ongoing assessment as to whether services require improvement or change. The volunteer exchange is continuously

adjusting its service offering in response to need and to new volunteering initiatives that spring up. Its organisational structures, in contrast, have remained largely unchanged; it remains entirely run by volunteers and the municipality continues to provide premises, financial and marketing support, while financial resources come from external funders. The shopping street is in a constant process of change, driven by citizens and shop owners. Volunteers lead on the management of the planting of containers, new flower containers are added and sometimes removed. They established and now maintain a new seating area and small open space with support from the municipality. Decisions on improvements emerge from informal exchanges between shop owners, residents and volunteers and are agreed informally with officials from the municipality, who in turn activate formal procedures to facilitate the desired changes. The 'pop-up shop' initiative is now part of the economic development services offered by the municipality but continues to operate on the co-commissioning, co-design and co-delivery principles set out above.

These examples suggest that the context in which professionals and citizens assess the services they have co-produced is not dominated by a particular framework or rules, rather co-producers seem to make corrections as they see fit. While citizens and professionals might not fully share values and perspectives, they share an interest in making sure that the services to which they contribute actually work. Each is contributing according to their abilities and interests, based on what appears to be a rather 'subjective' assessment of what needs to be done. This short case study would suggest that such assessments may not be collaborative in nature, but they are not hierarchical or conflictual either, pointing to a relational approach towards solving the knotty problem of making judgement about what works and how well it works.

These examples around the Four Co's in the Altena case study illustrate how the question of 'who is in the lead?' raises questions around power, motivation and structure as key variables for the analysis of the different stages and levels of co-production. In adult social care, for example, the individual level might be the predominant level at which co-production happens, including the commissioning and assessment of services when thinking about individualised care budgets. A different example would be housing services where we might expect a stronger emphasis on co-producing through groups. What our analysis shows is that a context which provides flexibility for actors to shape the co-production, shared motivations to achieve agreed goals, and negotiated power relations are important analytical dimensions for all stages and levels of co-production. The model below illustrates this. It also shows that co-production is not a linear or one-directional process, but rather that every stage in the co-production process has the potential to feedback learning on how to improve it. Given the dynamic complexity of collaborative service provision, it would be reasonable to assume that learning is communicated informally and opportunistically by citizens and professionals to stakeholders, thus subordinating formal to informal feedback and action mechanisms.

Figure 1- Dimensions of relational leadership perspective in co-production



Analysing co-production through the lens of relational leadership enables us to draw inferences about barriers and facilitators in relation to levels and stages of co-production. The examples given here suggest that leading in co-production processes requires a context which resembles a 'light structure' in which citizen and professional co-producers can deliberate on their goals and motivations in groups, the wider collective of stakeholders, as well as individually. Negotiating power relationships can encompass issues of governance, involving the electorate and political representatives at the collective level, as well as the agreement of rules on how the deliberation should happen among professionals and service users at the group level or individual level. Motivations seem to differ among citizens as well as professional co-producers but being able to relate individual interest to previously agreed higher goals would appear to facilitate a sharing of leadership functions among co-producers.

Implications for research and practice

In this chapter we proposed three analytical dimensions rooted in relational leadership theory for exploring leading at different levels and stages of co-production and illustrated some of the main theoretical implications of these distinctions. In the next section, we discuss two additional challenges for theory and practice.

Changing professional mindsets

Dominant mindsets about values, attitudes and beliefs are difficult to change, as they form an inherent part of people's identities and their understanding of how the world works. We need to stimulate a discussion about how organisations and professionals can work better with citizens to achieve desired outcomes. Co-production practice requires organisational processes and individual skills that depart in significant ways from mainstream established practices. In the context of public leadership, Alford and O'Flynn (2012, 241) suggest that professionals need to be skilled negotiators, influence formal and positional power, and understand and relationships through "shared goals, trust and empathy", and to be able to

navigate environments with dispersed power configurations. Alford and O’Flynn refer only to professionals, but their argument also resonates with the principles of relational leadership and practices that involve both professional and citizen co-producers. Identifying practices that support the co-production of services and promulgating them through the academic and practitioner channels promises an immediate impact. The analytical lens presented here would be applicable to a wide range of services at different levels and stages of service provision.

Exploring motivations of citizen co-producers

Changing professional mindsets might help overcome some of the formidable barriers associated with professional practice such as risk aversion, fear of losing status and control, and the difficulties in evidencing the benefits of co-production (Bovaird and Loeffler 2012, 45-49). However, it is conceivable, and this volume contains a range of examples that citizens might refrain from co-producing even when professionals encourage them to do so, thus becoming a barrier to co-production themselves. This may not be the result of particular actions taken by professionals or of the context in which co-production is enacted but be rooted in citizens’ motivations. Studies on citizens’ motivations to co-produce show that they are not simply maximising material benefits as assumed by public choice theory but show complex combinations of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as well as social and expressive values (Alford 2002, Vanleene et al. 2015). Research on volunteering provides perhaps the

most exhaustive analysis of what motivates citizens to contribute to the provision of services (Rochester et al. 2010, Gaskin 2003) but as Pestoff reminds us, the citizen co-producers who are the users of the service are different from volunteers in that they not only contribute to the provision of the service but also directly benefit from the service (Pestoff 2017). How this might play out at different levels and stages of co-production is an area that would benefit from further research.

Despite its contribution to co-production theory, our analytical lens has its own limitations. We have drawn primarily on the social constructionist strand of the relational leadership discourse (Hosking 2011, Ospina et al. 2012, Ospina 2017). Therefore, other relational leadership perspectives, such as the one that explores emotions (e.g. Ashkanasy et al. 2012) might generate additional analytical frames. Future empirical studies will also add to the analytical framework presented in this chapter, both in adopting novel methodologies and developing fresh insights.

References

- ALFORD, J. 2002. Why do Public-Sector Clients Coproduce? Toward a contingency theory. *Administration and Society*, 34, 32-56.
- ALFORD, J. 2014. The Multiple Facets of Co-Production: Building on the work of Elinor Ostrom. *Public Management Review*, 16, 317-340.
- ALFORD, J. & O'FLYNN, J. 2012. *Rethinking Public Service Delivery*, London, Palgrave.
- ANDREWS, R. & BOYNE, G., A., 2010. Capacity, leadership and organisational performance: testing the black box model of public management. *Public Administration Review*, 70, 443-454.
- ASHKANASY, N. M., PAULSEN, N. & TEE, E. Y. 2012. Extending relational leadership theory: the role of affective process in shaping leader-follower relationships. In: UHL-BIEN, M. & OSPINA, S., M. (eds.) *Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives*
- Charlottesville, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- BASS, B. M. 1990. From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18, 19-32.
- BELLÉ, N. 2014. Leading to make a difference: A field experiment on the performance effects of transformational leadership, perceived social impact and public service motivation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 24, 109-136.
- BENNETT, N., WISE, C., WOODS, P. A. & HARVEY, J. A. 2003. *Distributed Leadership*, Nottingham, National College of School Leadership.
- BOLDEN, R. 2011. Distributed Leadership in Organizations: A review of theory and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 13, 251 -269.
- BOLDEN, R., PETROV, G. & GOSLING, J. 2008. *Developing collective leadership in higher education*, London, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.
- BOVAIRD, T. 2007. Beyond Engagement and Participation: User and community co-production of public services. *Public Administration Review*, 846-860.
- BOVAIRD, T. & LOEFFLER, E. 2007. *The public governance implications of user co-production of public services: A case study of public services in Carrick, UK*, Paper given to the ASPA Annual Conference in Washington.
- BOVAIRD, T. & LOEFFLER, E. 2012. From Engagement to Co-Production: How users and communities contribute to public services. In: PESTOFF, V. A., BRANDSEN, T. & VERSCHUER, B. (eds.) *New Public Governance, the Third Sector and Co-production*. London: Routledge.
- BOVAIRD, T. & LOEFFLER, E. 2016. User and Community Co-production of Public Services: What does the evidence tell us? *International Journal of Public Administration*, 39, 1006-1019.
- BRANDSEN, T. & HONINGH, M. 2015. Distinguishing different types of co-production: A conceptual analysis based on the classical definitions. *Public Administration Review*, 76, 427-435.
- CLARK, M. 2014. A relational perspective on public sector leadership and management. *The International Journal of Leadership in Public Services*, 10, 4-16.
- CUNLIFFE, A., L. & ERIKSEN, M. 2011. Relational Leadership. *Human Relations*, 64, 1425-1449.
- CURRIE, G. & LOCKETT, A. 2007. A critique of transformational leadership: moral, professional and contingent dimensions of leadership within public services. *Human Relations*, 60, 341-370.
- DACHLER, H. & HOSKING, D. M. 1995. The primacy of relations in socially constructing organizational realities. In: HOSKING, D. M., DACHLER, H, GERGEN, KJ (ed.) *Management and Organization: Relational alternatives to individualism*. Aldershot: Avebury/Ashgate Publishing Co.
- DENHARDT, J. V. & DENHARDT, R. B. 2015. *The New Public Service: Serving, not steering*, London, Routledge.
- EDWARDS, G. P. & TURNBULL, S. 2013. A cultural approach to leadership development evaluation. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15, 46-60.
- ELIAS, N. 1991. *The Society of Individuals*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- FERLIE, E. 2012. Concluding discussion. In: TEELKEN, C., FERLIE, E. & DENT, M. (eds.) *Leadership in the public sector: Promises and pitfalls*. London: Routledge.

- FITZGERALD, L., FERLIE, E., MCGIVERN, G. & BUCHANAN, D. 2012. Respond and Deliver? Change leadership in complex organisations. In: TEELKEN, C., FERLIE, E. & DENT, M. (eds.) *Leadership in Public Services: Promises and pitfalls*. London: Routledge.
- FLEDDERUS, J., BRANDSEN, T. & HONINGH, M. 2014. Restoring Trust Through the Co-Production of Public Services: A theoretical elaboration. *Public Management Review*, 16, 424-443.
- FLEDDERUS, J. & HONINGH, M. 2016. Why people co-produce within activation services: The necessity of motivation and trust. An investigation of selection biases in a municipal activation programme in the Netherlands. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82, 69-87.
- GASKIN 2003. A Choice Blend: What volunteers want from organisation and management. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.
- GRONN, P. 2002. Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 423-451.
- HOSKING, D. M. 2007a. Not leaders, not followers: A post-modern discourse of leadership processes. In: SHAMIR, B., PILLAI, R., BLIGH, R. & UHL-BIEN, M. (eds.) *Follower-centred perspectives on leadership: a tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- HOSKING, D. M. 2007b. Not leaders, not followers: A post-modern discourse on leadership processes. In: SHAMIR, B., PILLAI, R., BLIGH, R. & UHL-BIEN, M. (eds.) *Follower-centred perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl*. New York: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- HOSKING, D. M. 2011. Telling Tales of Relations: Appreciating Relational Constructionism. *Organization Studies*, 32, 47-65.
- HOSKING, D. M., SHAMIR, B., OSPINA, S. M. & UHL-BIEN, M. 2012. Exploring the prospects for dialogue across perspectives: . In: UHL-BIEN, M., OSPINA, SONIA, M. (ed.) *Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives* Charlotte, NC: New Information Age Publishing Inc.
- JOAS, H. 2000. *The Genesis of Values*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- LOEFFLER, E., TAYLOR-GOOPY, D., BOVAIRD, T., HINE-HUGHES, F. & WILKES, L. 2012. *Making Health and Social Care Personal and Local: Moving from mass production to co-production*, Birmingham, Governance International.
- MACBEATH, J., ODURO, G. K. T. & WATERHOUSE, J. 2004. *Distributed Leadership in Action: A study of current practice in schools*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership.
- MOYNIHAN, D. P. & THOMAS, J. C. 2013. Citizen, customer, partner: Rethinking the place of the public in public management. *Public Administration Review*, 73, 786-796.
- NABATCHI, T., SANCINO, A. & SICILIA, M. 2017. Varieties of Participation in Public Services: The who, when and what of co-production. *Public Administration Review*.
- OSBORNE, S. 2010a. Delivering public services: Time for a new theory? *Public Management Review*, 12, 1-10.
- OSBORNE, S. P. (ed.) 2010b. *The New Public Governance? New perspectives on the theory and practice of public governance*, London: Routledge.
- OSPINA, S. & FOLDY, E. G. 2016. Collective Dimensions of Leadership. *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy and Governance*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_2202-1.
- OSPINA, S., FOLDY, E. G., EL HADIDY, W., DODGE, J., HOFMANN-PINILLA, A. & SU, C. 2012. Social change leadership as relational leadership. In: UHL-BIEN, M., OSPINA, SONIA, M. (ed.) *Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives*. Charlotte NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- OSPINA, S. M. 2017. Collective leadership and context in public administration: Bridging public leadership research and leadership studies. *Public Administration Review*, 77, 275-287.
- PESTOFF, V. A. 2017. Enhancing co-production or muddying the waters? The devil is in the details. *IIAS Study Group on Co-production*. Washington.

- POLLITT, C. & BOUCKAERT, G. 2011. *Public Management Reform*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- ROCHESTER, C., PAYNE, A. E. & HOWLET, S. (eds.) 2010. *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- SCHLAPPA, H. 2016. Doing things differently: Co-producing responses to urban shrinkage. In: NEILL, W. B. V. & SCHLAPPA, H. (eds.) *Future Directions for the European Shrinking City*. London: Routledge.
- SCHLAPPA, H. 2017. Co-producing the Cities of Tomorrow: Fostering collaborative action to tackle decline in Europe's shrinking cities. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 24, 162-174.
- SPILLANE, J. P. 2006. *Distributed Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- STACEY, R., D 2007. *Strategic management and organisational dynamics: The challenge of complexity to ways of thinking about organisations*, Pearson Education.
- STACEY, R. D. 1996. *Complexity and Creativity in Organizations*, San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler.
- STEEN, T. P. S. & VAN EIJK, C. J. A. 2015. 'Why is this citizen layman entering my domain?!' The effect of autonomy, organizational support, and red tape on public professionals' openness towards co-production. *IIAS Conference on Production*. Nijmegen.
- TEELKEN, C., FERLIE, E. & DENT, M. (eds.) 2012. *Leadership in the Public Sector*, London: Routledge.
- TORTZEN, A. 2015. When Municipalities Lead Co-production: Lessons from a Danish case study. *Kunnallistieteellinen aikakauskirja*, 4, 292-308.
- TUURNAS, S., STENVALL, J. & RANNISTO, P.-H. 2016. The impact of co-production on frontline accountability: the case of the conciliation service. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82, 131-149.
- VAN DER HAAR, D. & HOSKING, D. M. 2004. Evaluating appreciative inquiry: A relational constructionist perspective. *Human Relations*, 57, 1017-1036.
- VAN EIJK, C. & STEEN, T. 2014a. Why People Co-Produce: Analysing citizens' perceptions on co-planning engagement in health care services. *Public Management Review*, 16, 358-382.
- VAN EIJK, C. & STEEN, T. 2016. Why engage in co-production of public services? Mixing theory and empirical evidence. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82, 28-46.
- VAN EIJK, C. J. A. & STEEN, T. P. S. 2014b. Why People Co-Produce: Analysing citizens' perceptions on co-planning engagement in health care services. *Public Management Review*, 16, 358-382.
- VAN WART, M. 2003. Public Sector Leadership Theory: An assessment. *Public Administration Review*, 63, 214-228.
- VAN WART, M. 2013. Administrative Leadership Theory: A reassessment after 10 years. *Public Administration*, 91, 521-543.
- VANLEENE, D., VERSCHUERE, B. & VOETS, J. 2015. Co-producing a nicer neighbourhood: why do people participate in community development projects? *Paper presented at the IIAS Study Group on Co-production*. Nijmegen.
- VOGEL, R. & MASAL, D. 2015. Public leadership: A review of the literature and framework for future research. *Public Management Review*, 17, 1165-1189.
- WOODS, P., A. 2015. What is Democratic Leadership? In: GRIFFITHS, D. & PORTELLI, J. (eds.) *Key Questions for Educational Leaders*. Burlington, Ontario: Word and Deed Publishing.
- WOODS, P., A., & WOODS, G., J. 2013. Deepening Distributed Leadership: A democratic perspective on power, purpose and the concept of self. *Leadership Education*, 2, 17-14.
- WOODS, P. A. 2016. Authority, Power and Distributed Leadership. *Management in Education*, 30, 155-160.