USER CO-PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: EFFECTS ON TRUST

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1 |

Introduction

Introduction

The concept of *co-production* of public services has experienced a true revival in the last decade. Whereas the term received some scholarly attention in the beginning of the 1980s (e.g. Brudney and England, 1983; Parks et al., 1981; Whitaker, 1980), it has lately become a mainstream topic (Pestoff et al., 2012). The expectation is that when citizens are actively involved as co-producers of public service delivery, it results in better quality, but also in a better relations among citizens and between citizens and government (Bovaird, 2007; Brudney and England, 1983; Levine, 1984; Ostrom, 1996; Pestoff, 2009; Verschuere et al., 2012). The economic malaise as a result of the credit crisis in 2007 increased the salience of co-production even more. Because of shrinking budgets, governments had to prepare citizens for upcoming, rigorous cutbacks in the quantity and quality of public services. Citizens could no longer expect the government to provide all the services that were developed during better times. In order to uphold a comprehensive welfare state, the government would need the support of the local level – including citizens, local organizations and decentralized governments. The UK government was perhaps the first to communicate this idea explicitly under the umbrella of the ‘Big Society’ in 2010 (Cameron, 2010). In 2013, the Netherlands followed with revitalizing the notion of the ‘participation society’, emphasizing same themes such as more responsibility for citizens and room for citizen initiatives (King’s speech, the Netherlands, 2013). Not only in Europe, but also in the United States and Asia, there is a call for more citizen involvement in the delivery of public services (Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, 2014).

Although the diminishing size of public budgets is clearly one of the reasons that concepts such as co-production have been embraced by policy-makers, other arguments for citizen involvement in service delivery play a role too. The idea of the ‘Big Society’ can actually be traced back long before the financial troubles started. The voter turnout for the British national elections in 2001 had reached a stunning post war low, whereas local elections attracted even less citizens. This led to concerns about legitimacy of democratic institutions and public trust in decision-making processes (Jochum et al., 2005: 9). The solution brought forward for so-called ‘Broken Britain’ was ‘civic renewal’: stimulating citizens to take part in governance, such as the management and scrutiny of public services. In other words, to restore trust of citizens in public service delivery and governmental institutions, citizen participation needed to increase, specifically in concrete, local issues rather than in abstract, political settings.

The idea that co-production can be an avenue to foster public trust was already put forward in 1984 by Charles Levine (1984), who regarded this as one of the ‘promises of co-production’. He argued that if citizens and public service staff share responsibility and take decisions together during service delivery, this will lead to more responsiveness towards and more commitment among citizens (Levine, 1984: 185). As a result, the trust attitude

of citizens towards public service delivery and government is expected to improve. Furthermore, Ostrom (1996: 1083) argued that ‘the experience of co-production also encourages citizens to develop other horizontal relationships and social capital’. In other words, the positive experience of cooperation will also lead to an improved relation between citizens – potentially increasing levels of so-called ‘generalized trust’.

However, Levine (1984) also explicitly warned the public sector that ‘if the use of citizens in service delivery is treated as a marginal activity by public agencies, then we should not expect co-production to be a very effective instrument for improving the competence or commitment of citizens’ (Levine, 1984: 185). Nowadays, one may indeed wonder whether governments, in time of austerity, use co-production as a cover for cost reductions instead of treating it as a way to genuinely integrate service users into design and delivery procedures. The classic ‘ladder of participation’ of Sherry Arnstein comes into mind: when citizens are asked to participate, but virtually lack the power to influence any decision-making, participation comes close to nonparticipation and manipulation in the worst case (Arnstein, 1969).

The attractiveness of the concept of co-production (and other related terms) appears to have won the battle against these early warnings. Think thanks, especially in the UK but also elsewhere in Europe, inform policy makers about the high potential of co-production and help to implement new, co-productive forms of service delivery. Here too, the expectation that co-production will be able to increase trust and social cohesion is frequently addressed (Boyle and Harris, 2009; Löffler et al., 2012; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, 2012). Meanwhile, academic research picks up and analyses local, innovative examples of co-production that seem to confirm this thesis (Bovaird and Löffler, 2012; Needham, 2008). Yet, regardless of their value, these small case studies often lack solid theory as well as empirical rigor. It seems to be that co-production is being implemented at a larger scale without knowing how it exactly affects the relation between citizens and public institutions. Specifically, little is known about the mechanisms and conditions that could explain if and why there is a relation between co-production and trust. Therefore, it is necessary to *critically assess the expected relationship between co-production and trust in service delivery, trust in (local) government, and generalized trust*. This is the main goal of this study, which leads to the main research question of this study: *to what extent does co-production of public service delivery by users lead to trust in service delivery, trust in (local) government and generalized trust; and by which mechanisms and conditions can this relationship be explained?*

Before describing the added value – in terms of theoretical, methodological, and practical relevance – of this study and the research design in more detail, the concept of co-production will first be put in historical context. By looking at the shifting role of public service users in the past century, the puzzle that is under scrutiny in this study will become clear.

The role of public service users

The involvement of citizens in the delivery of public services has always been present. For instance, in the early modern period (1588-1795), a part of the Dutch citizenry was obliged to make rounds as night watches twice per month (Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau, 2014). Also, every household had to provide one individual that helped with so-called ‘ice-biting’ (i.e. keeping the city canals ice free) in the winter. In the same vein, Dutch residents have always been responsible for the maintenance of waterways that cross their land. In many countries including Belgium, Germany and Canada, citizens are still expected to keep adjoined public pavements and private pathways clean from snow by law. And the long history of volunteering at the local fire brigade and military (i.e. the French reserve army) can perhaps be regarded as examples of co-production too. There are definitely numerous cases in recent history where citizens participate in the delivery of public services. But then the question can be raised: if co-production is something of all times, why now all the attention?

This has everything to do with the development of comprehensive welfare states during the 20th century and specifically with changes in the way the associated inclusive welfare services are managed and governed. Osborne (2006) argues that these changes can be captured in three consecutive dominant modes of Public Administration and Management (see also chapter 2). First, a longer era of ‘traditional’ Public Administration (PA) during the period from the nineteenth century to the early 1980s; then a ‘transitory’ stage of the New Public Management (NPM) until the beginning of the 21st century; and a new, ongoing mode of the New Public Governance (NPG). PA can be described as a hierarchical mode of governance, where the ‘rule of law’ and administration of set rules and guidelines dominate, and the bureaucracy and the professional have a central role in public service delivery. This mode of governance prevailed especially in the post-war period, characterized by the idea that government needed to take care of citizens ‘from the cradle to the grave’. As a consequence, citizens were not expected to actively take part in the delivery of services, but they were regarded as passive consumers.

The role of public service users changed when the NPM became the dominant mode of governance. This was a reaction to criticism on the ‘old’ PA, including the ineffectiveness of ‘Big Government’, high density of rules, limiting the freedom of public officials, and a lack of attention to incentives to perform (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994). The NPM entails *inter alia* that the public sector would benefit from adapting private-sector management; more emphasis on input and output control, including performance management; and the introduction of the use of markets, competition and contracts for the delivery of public services. Ideally, the role of users in the NPM would be that of a rational customer: one who can choose the service that seems to be performing best for the lowest price. Interestingly, the introduction of reforms based on the New Public Management was also fed by concerns about public trust and responsiveness of public services (O’Flynn, 2007) (see chapter 2).

Governments, so critics claimed, would have to regain trust through providing more choice, democracy, and transparency (OECD, 2010).

However, the NPM also had to withstand severe criticism, for instance about its theoretical basis, about the benefits of its practical implementation, and about its intra-governmental focus. Importantly, NPM-style changes included mechanisms such as control and compliance that are essentially an expression of distrust (Van de Walle, 2010). Specifically, empirical research is also unable to find effects of NPM-induced reforms on quality of services and levels of trust (Kettl, 2000; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). Rather, in some sectors, such as health, policies inspired by the NPM movement may actually have led to decreased trust (Taylor-Gooby, 2008). Osborne (2006: 384) argues that the NPM does not take into account that current society is increasingly characterized by 'a plural state, where multiple inter-dependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services and a pluralist state, where multiple processes inform the policy making system'. In contrast, the New Public Governance (NPG) focuses on interorganizational processes (instead of the policy system or interorganizational management); emphasizes service processes and outcomes (rather than policy implementation or service inputs and outputs), and focuses on trust or relational contracts as main governance mechanism (and not on hierarchy or market). In this framework, there is more attention for the role of society and specifically, the role of service users, who are an inevitable part of the service process. Instead of passive customers or rational consumers, they are now regarded as active co-producers, who play a crucial role in the provision of services in a relation with staff of public service organizations. This focus on personal interaction would help to build trust, as it takes into account the affective side of trust, rather than solely focusing on the cognitive, rational side of trust (Taylor-Gooby, 2008).

In this study, the focus is on the NPG and specifically on the role of users as co-producers. The question is, of course, whether this change in the mode in governance towards the NPG will indeed be more effective in constituting an affective bond between citizens as service users and public institutions, or better in creating social cohesion in society. There are reasons to remain sceptical about this claim. An often heard critique on the idea of co-production is that it is used as a cover for budget cuts: as long as co-production means cost reduction for government, it is embraced, but other than that, there is no real urge of governments to involve citizens in service delivery. Still, even when co-production is not driven by the absence of governmental provision of services, co-production does entail an increase in effort by citizens in the delivery of public services. Moreover, this increased effort does not automatically mean an improvement in the quality of services. This leads to the following puzzle: why would co-production increase trust when it often means that citizens have to do more effort for receiving public services compared to other forms of service delivery?

In order to research the relation between co-production and trust, it is necessary to provide some background on the two concepts. Although they are discussed and defined in an

elaborate fashion in chapter 2, it is useful to shortly discuss the concepts at this point, which will be done in the next section.

Defining co-production¹

The definition of co-production has been a focal point of many discussions. The study's ambition is not to provide the definition that makes all other superfluous. It is useful however to position the definition in this study within the broader spectrum of different usages of the concept of co-production.

Ostrom and her colleagues were the first to coin the term co-production in the context of public service delivery. They defined co-production as follows:

...the mix of activities that both public service agents and citizens contribute to the provision of public services. The former are involved as professionals, or 'regular producers', while 'citizen production' is based on voluntary efforts by individuals and groups to enhance the quality and/or quantity of the services they use (Parks et al., 1981).

This definition is fairly broad, but it does provide some first clarifications about the meaning of co-production. First of all, the definition makes clear that co-production is about collaboration between citizens and public agencies. This differs from literature that focuses on 'co-production' between organizations and public agencies, also referred to as co-management and co-governance (Brandsen and Pestoff, 2006). Secondly, the definition mentions a contribution on the part of the citizens to the service, which seems to indicate *active* involvement. This makes it different from clientelism or consumerism, where the role of the user remains passive, and the service is delivered by the staff of the public service organization. This also implies that the user directly benefits from co-production, although there may be circumstances where co-producers participate for the sake of others, such as co-production by family members of children or elderly (Pestoff, 2009). Finally, the definition mentions the production or provision stage of public service delivery. Co-production, as interpreted in this study, refers to direct contributions to the implementation of a delivered service, and not to participation through deliberation or advocacy, e.g. on representative councils. There are two reasons to use this former, narrower interpretation. The first is that, if advocacy is included, co-production cannot be distinguished from any kind of participation in a professional context. Second, the activities, experiences and skills involved in advocacy differ quite strongly from those in the direct production of a service.

1. This section is based on Brandsen & Honingh (forthcoming), with permission.

These choices can be illustrated using the example of activation services for unemployed welfare recipients – which will be the case under scrutiny in chapter 4 and 5.

- If individual welfare recipients or groups of recipients work with the staff of the public service organization responsible for the activation service, it is co-production. If the organization works together with other organizations, it is not.
- If welfare recipients are actively involved in the implementation of the activation programme – for instance, by being involved in the organization – it is co-production. If they only passively receive job training, it is not.
- If welfare recipients are actively involved in the implementation of the activation programme, it is co-production. If they sit on a representative council of welfare recipients, it is not.

There are some other considerations about the definition of the concept of co-production, which will be discussed in chapter 2.

Co-production and trust

Trust in this study is defined as ‘the belief that others, through their action or inaction, will contribute to my/our well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon me/us’ (Offe, 1999: 47). There could be very different reasons for people to trust others – it could be based on previous experiences, on reputation, on dispositions, etcetera (Rousseau et al., 1998). In chapter 2, it is argued why co-production would be beneficial for trust.

However, when co-production is presented as a tool to improve citizens’ trust in government and society, the underlying assumption is that it is indeed possible to find an effect of experiences of service delivery on trust attitudes. In his dissertation, Van de Walle (2004) concludes that we should actually abandon this ‘micro-performance’ hypothesis. He presents a number of arguments for this conviction. For instance, people have opinions about government and institutions even if they had no bureaucratic encounters. It is more likely that the image of public institutions, for a large part formed by media, influences people’s attitudes. Also, the experiences people do have do not necessarily have a causal relation with people’s assessment of government and institutions. People might have a predisposition that is either positive or more negative towards public institutions (Kampen et al., 2006), which might be better explained by social-historical context than by actual experiences with public services. Does it then make sense to expect that co-production has any effect on trust?

Recent work on the relation between the process of service delivery and trust seem to indicate it does make sense. Van Ryzin (2007: 532) states that ‘traditional performance measures do not necessarily capture the dimensions or features of service quality that matters most to citizens’. In his subsequent work, Van Ryzin (2011, 2015) argues that (perceived) performance might actually have little influence on trust. To the contrary, *processes* might be

much more important for citizens' trust than actual outcomes. Specifically, beneficial aspects of process, such as fairness, participation, equity, respect and honesty might matter to people as much as outcomes. Empirical research indeed shows support for this thesis (Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; Van Ryzin, 2011, 2015).

Thus, in order to assess the impact of co-production on trust, it is necessary to focus on how co-production changes the process of service delivery, instead of (solely) focusing whether the outcome is influenced by co-production. Chapter 2 (theoretically) and chapter 5 (empirically) will specifically deal with this issue.

Theoretical, methodological and practical value of this study

In their article 'Co-production: The State of the Art in Research and the Future Agenda' Verschuere et al. (2012) discuss the challenges for future co-production research. They see both theoretical and methodological shortcomings of past research on co-production. How current study copes with these challenges is discussed in the next two sections. In the third section, it will be discussed what kind of practical implications can be expected of this research.

Theoretical value

The expectation that co-production leads to trust is rarely supported by theoretical arguments, and it seems therefore driven by ideological motives. This study attempts to move beyond these motives and aims to develop solid theoretical arguments for the relation between co-production and trust in service delivery, trust in government and generalized trust. To a large extent, this means opening the 'black box' that now exists between these two variables. In other words, which conditions and mechanisms could explain a change in trust as a consequence of co-production? Finding these conditions and mechanisms requires a perspective that takes the entire *public service system* into account (Osborne, 2010), which includes different stages of public service delivery (initial, process and evaluation phase; see chapter 2) as well as different levels of actors (users, organizations, institutions; see chapter 3). In order to comprehend the factors that play a role in each phase and at each level for the relationship between co-production and trust, this study integrates different strands of literature.

The starting point is literature on Public Governance and co-production, specifically the work on the NPG (Osborne, 2010) and traditional co-production literature (Brudney and England, 1983; Parks et al., 1981). As Verschuere et al. (2012) remark, co-production is a key element of this 'emerging paradigm'. Services can no longer rely on hierarchical service

delivery by professionals and staff of public agencies, but are increasingly co-produced by citizens and communities. This means that within the NPG, the unit of analysis is not exclusively public policy implementation (as it was in the 'old' PA), or on public service organizations (as it was in the NPM), but on the whole public service system – including the role of individual users and communities as co-producers of services.

Three stages of public service delivery are important to understand the effect of co-production on trust at the individual level. To understand the effect of these three stages, this study makes extensively use of insights from different strands of *psychological theory*. For each service delivery phase, different psychological theories are relevant. For the *initial phase*, theory on human motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000) will be used, while social learning theory (Bandura, 1997) will be employed to formulate testable expectations for the *process stage*, and attribution theory (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003) is eventually used to formulate hypotheses for users' attitudes in the *evaluation phase*. To understand the effects of collective co-production, theories on collective action will be used in addition to psychological theories. For this, this study mostly builds on work from Ostrom (2000; Pestoff, 2014) and Tilly (2005b). These theories will also provide insights to possible unfavourable conditions for creating trust, such as extrinsic motivation and free-riding behaviour.

Furthermore, three levels of actors are important to understand the effect of co-production on trust. Because of its emphasis on the existence of a plural and pluralist state, the NPG is explicitly concerned 'with the institutional and external environmental pressure that enable and constrain public policy implementation and the delivery of public services' (Osborne, 2010: 9). As a consequence, this study does not focus on individual level mechanisms only, but also on processes that take place at the *organizational* and *institutional* level. In other words, a multilevel approach is adopted to provide the best understanding of the process of co-production. This approach will be informed by organizational and institutional theories, which are useful to gain insight in how public service organizations act in a context where they have to cope with influences at the institutional level, as well as with the involvement of citizens and communities. Therefore, this study employs insights from Contingency Theory (Thompson, 1967) and Neo-Institutional Theory, in particular the idea of isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Applying these theories to the study of co-production reveal some crucial problems for organizations dealing with co-production, which might negatively affect the possibility to foster trust among users.

These issues are empirically assessed using different methods (see next section). This empirical research will also lead to other factors that may determine how co-production affects trust. On the basis of these new insights, the study will provide input towards a more sophisticated model to test the relation between co-production and trust in service delivery, trust in government and generalized trust.

Methodological value

Verschuere et al. (2012) find that most of the research on co-production is based on case studies, limiting the scope of the findings. Partly as a result of these case study designs, mostly qualitative data have been collected. This obstructs comparative work, especially because the concept of co-production is used so differently. Thus, Verschuere et al. (2012) conclude that research on co-production would benefit from larger methodological diversity. The past few years, scholars have started answering this call by introducing a variety of methods to the field of co-production, such as Q-methodology (Van Eijk and Steen, 2014), natural experiments (Jakobsen, 2013) and large-N surveys (Bovaird et al., 2015; Clark et al., 2013). The research for this study, which took place during the upcoming of these new approaches, adds further diversity to the methods applied to the study of co-production.

This study adopts a mix of quantitative, hypothesis-testing research and qualitative, hypothesis-building research (Haverland and Yanow, 2012). A large part of the research (chapter 4 and 5) is based on a specific case – a co-produced activation programme in the Netherlands. The focus on this case helps to understand the context and mechanisms of co-production in detail. Small-N survey research is used to test whether theoretical mechanisms may indeed provide an explanation for the relation between co-production and different types of trust. In addition, qualitative research, based on an interpretative approach, is applied to see whether there are factors that have not been identified by the theoretical chapters (2 and 3). Following the study on the activation programme, an experimental vignette study is used to test attribution effects (i.e. self-serving bias) in co-production, by comparing non co-produced services with co-produced services (chapter 6). Van Ryzin (2011: 757) argues that such experiments are the ‘only way to know for sure’ whether citizens judge civil servants on the service process or on service outcomes. Furthermore, an experimental design is perfectly suited for exploration, as it assures high internal validity. If the effect is not found in such a controlled setting, it is unlikely to be found in reality.

In conclusion, the methodological approach taken in this study aims for high internal validity, albeit at the expense of external validity.

Practical value

Expectations of co-production are high. For some, it is mainly a way to make effectively use of the resources – including time, money and behaviour – of service users in order to maintain the same quantity and quality of public services. But to others, co-production also has an inherent value: regardless of the outcome, citizens *should* be involved in the way they receive public services. Co-production is then regarded as an alternative to other forms of political participation and as an extension of contemporary democracy (Eriksson, 2012;

Pestoff, 2009). By gaining more influence on the public services they receive, citizens will ideally build a more responsive relation with public service agencies and (local) government. However, there is still too little known about the potential risks of user participation in service delivery (cf. Needham, 2008). For practitioners, it is therefore crucial to understand under which conditions co-production might lead to better relations between users and service providers – and what might happen when these conditions are not satisfied.

In order to investigate relevant conditions, some basic (policy) assumptions about co-production will be critically assessed in this study. One of those assumptions is that *citizens are motivated to co-produce* (see chapter 2 and 3). Often, it is taken for granted that users are motivated to be involved in service delivery, or at least that they *should* be motivated – whereas in practice, lots of different motivations might exist (Alford, 2009a). When practitioners do not understand this variety of motivations, policy instruments may be used without or even with reverse effects – for instance, monetary incentives may crowd out intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Another assumption is that *everybody gets involved in co-production equally* (see chapter 4). There seems to be an assumption that co-production is able to improve democratic governance by involving a more representative part of society (Pestoff, 2009). However, research on the background characteristics of co-producing citizens show strong biases (Clark et al., 2013; Jakobsen and Andersen, 2013). A third assumption is that *organizations always desire users to co-produce* (see chapter 3 and 5). Even if it is acknowledged that citizens might not always want to co-produce, it is at least assumed that public service organization will benefit from it and are eager to involve citizens in service delivery. Co-production might also be very risky for organizations and could produce organizational uncertainty (Etgar, 2007; Osborne and Strokosch, 2013). This might be one of the least theorized and investigated assumptions about co-production and demands critical scrutiny. A last assumption is that *co-production will always lead to more satisfaction and trust than no co-production, when holding the outcome constant* (see chapter 6). This relates to the assumption that every user would like to co-produce. It might be more realistic to assume that some are not eager to co-produce and would rather opt for ‘classical’ service delivery by public agencies. This could mean that even if co-production is successful, these citizens still will be less satisfied with the service. For example, an elderly care organization in the Netherlands had to deal with fierce criticism when they started with an experiment to point family members of patients at their responsibility to become active in the organization (Stoffelen, 2013). Alternatively, the situation might occur that the process of co-production is actually quite successful, but that positive outcomes are, unexpectedly, not attained. For example, welfare recipients actively participate in the delivery of an activation service, aiming at a return to the labour market, but no jobs are found. Who is then responsible for this outcome? Citizens can be disappointed that all their efforts were for nothing, or they can be angry with the public service organization for not facilitating the process well enough.

Therefore, it would be good for practitioners to understand how citizens react to different outcomes of co-production.

A critical assessment of these assumptions will provide valuable information for policy makers and staff of public service organizations about the potential gains and risks of implementing co-production. They will be systematically addressed in the form of a set of questions in the final section of this study (chapter 7). These questions could be used to guide the efforts of governments and PSOs in designing and organizing co-production of public service delivery.

Sub questions and outline

The main question of this study is *to what extent does co-production of public service delivery by users lead to trust in service delivery, trust in (local) government and generalized trust; and by which mechanisms and conditions can this relationship be explained?* In order to provide a satisfactory answer to this question, both theoretical and empirical work is required. Five sub questions have been formulated, which together represent the main body of this study (see Table 1). The first two sub questions are theoretical studies, whereas the last three are

Table 1. Sub-questions and outline

1. What are mechanisms that can explain the relation between co-production and trust? (Chapter 2)
<i>Published in Public Management Review as: Restoring trust through the co-production of public services: a theoretical elaboration.</i>
2. What compels organizations and users to pursue co-production? (Chapter 3)
<i>Published in Public Policy and Administration as: User Co-production of Public Service Delivery: an Uncertainty Approach.</i>
3. What are the characteristics of users involved in co-production? (Chapter 4)
<i>Forthcoming in International Review of Administrative Sciences as: 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.</i>
4. What are mechanisms and conditions that explain the relation between co-production and trust? (Chapter 5)
<i>Published in International Journal of Public Sector Management as: Building Trust Through Service Co-Production</i>
5. To what extent does the evaluation of co-produced services depend on the result of the service? (Chapter 6)
<i>Published in International Journal of Public Administration as: Does user co-production of public service delivery increase satisfaction and trust? Evidence from a vignette experiment.</i>

empirical studies. It should be noted this study represents a collection of articles. All chapters have been or are to be published in international, peer-reviewed journals. This brings the advantage that all chapters could be read independently. The disadvantage is however that there may be some redundancy: the reader will find definitions and arguments repeated throughout the study.

The first sub question deals with the mechanisms that can be distilled from literature that potentially explain the relation between co-production and trust (chapter 2). The starting point of this theoretical elaboration is the assumptions made in co-production literature, after which it is tried to support these assumptions with logical explanations. It proposes a three phase model to investigate the effect of co-production on trust. Also, some first arguments are brought forward that point at the possibility that the relation between co-production and trust is not as straightforward as often thought. In other words, chapter 2 sets the agenda for the rest of the study.

Sub question 2 unravels the assumption that public organizations will always desire users to have the possibility to co-produce (chapter 3). Again, this is a theoretical chapter. Here, it will be argued that for public service organizations co-production might very well result in an increase in uncertainty. The strategies that organizations choose to deal with this uncertainty will have an influence on building trust. This chapter emphasizes the importance of adopting a multilevel approach to the study of co-production, consisting of the user, the organizational, and the institutional level.

Sub question 3 is engaged with the question: what are the characteristics of users who are involved in co-production? In this empirical chapter (chapter 4), the focus will be the initial phase of service delivery. In two ways, this chapter is important. First, in order to know whether co-production leads to trust, it is necessary to know what the initial levels of trust are before co-production commences. Second, for policy makers and professionals, it is important to know the motivations and characteristics of co-producing users (in comparison with non co-producers), in order to make more effectively use of policy instruments to encourage (or perhaps discourage) citizens to co-produce. In order to study this, the case of work corporations, a co-produced activation programme for long term unemployed is introduced.

Sub question 4 is an empirical question: what are mechanisms and conditions that explain the relation between co-production and trust (chapter 5)? It deals with the process stage of public service delivery. In the previous chapter, the baseline of trust – i.e. the level of trust before co-production has started – is investigated. In chapter 5, it is analysed whether there has been a change in the initial levels of trust among participants of work corporations. Also, it aims to find out whether these changes can be explained by the mechanisms described in chapter 2. Some of the conditions mentioned in chapter 3 will also be investigated. Furthermore, through more interpretative, qualitative research other important conditions for building trust through co-production will be extracted from the data.

The final sub question emphasizes the evaluation phase of co-production: to what extent does the evaluation of co-produced services depend on the result of the service (chapter 6)? To answer this question, it is necessary to have a research design which allows variation in outcome, but holds the process of co-production constant. Because this is difficult to arrange in real life settings, an experimental vignette study was constructed. The theoretical framework of this chapter builds heavily on self-attribution theory and in particular on the psychological effect called self-serving bias.

The final, concluding chapter (chapter 7) will provide an answer to the main research question. Also, it will explicitly discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions of the study: which new insights did the study give? Furthermore, it discusses limitations of the research and paves the way for future research: which direction(s) should research on co-production be heading? The chapter ends with elaborating on the practical implications of the study and provides practitioners with important factors that need to be considered when implementing co-production.

2 |

Restoring trust through the co-production of public services: a theoretical elaboration

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Abstract

Co-production, the involvement of clients in the delivery of public services, is believed to foster trust. However, there is insufficient research on this topic to prove what is at present merely an assumption. This chapter gives theoretical insights into this relationship. First, it is identified that co-production relates to identification-based trust. Second, the most important theoretical mechanisms are identified that link the two concepts: increasing self-efficacy and the creation of trust networks. A third step is to move towards a more contingent perspective. This involves not only favourable conditions, but also obstructions to trust-building, such as crowding-out motivations and free-riding.

Introduction

The (debated) decline in public trust in government during the 1980s and 1990s fed concerns about the responsiveness of public services (Misztal, 1996; Nye et al., 1997). Governments, so critics claimed, would have to regain trust through providing more choice, democracy, and transparency (OECD, 2010). In many countries, governments tried to bridge the gap with citizens through public sector reforms which were often based on the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm. Governments would benefit from a more market-oriented approach and private-sector styles of management, treating citizens as ‘consumers’ rather than clients (Hood, 1991). Ironically, reforms inspired by NPM included mechanisms such as control and compliance that are essentially an expression of distrust (Van de Walle, 2010). Research is also unable to show that these kinds of management transformations lead to an increase in trust levels (Kettl, 2000; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004).² More recently, alternative approaches to service delivery have been introduced that move away from the self-interested consumerist approach of NPM and towards a different conception of the user. For example, Public Value theory acknowledges that ‘[t]he social values inherent in public services may not be adequately addressed by the economic efficiency calculus of markets’ (Hefetz and Warner, 2004: 174), while the New Public Governance paradigm emphasizes partnership and collaboration instead of competition (Osborne, 2010). At the heart of these discussions, there is a notion that citizens should no longer be treated as passive clients or consumers, but as (potentially) active co-producers of the services they receive. Examples of co-production can be found in diverse sectors: residents unite with the police in neighbourhood watch schemes to combat crime and tackle antisocial behaviour (Fleming, 2005); tenants plan and manage social housing through housing cooperatives (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012); volunteers in care services supplement the resources of professional staff, such as parents in child care; patients actively engage in making decisions about their preferred lifestyles and medical treatment (Hyde and Davies, 2004).

Making users an integral part of the service delivery process would, according to this view, be more effective in restoring trust in governments, but also in increasing social cohesion and raising levels of social capital (Barker, 2010; Bovaird and Löffler, 2012; Ostrom, 1996; Pestoff, 2009), a claim already made in the early 1980s (Brudney, 1984: 479; Levine, 1984: 130). The basic assumption is that the change in the nature of the relationship will result in a change in attitude, specifically towards more trust (or less distrust).

2. These authors agree that it is very hard to show the (causal) relationship between public reforms and citizens’ attitudes towards government with available data, but do argue that there is no evidence that these reforms were able to restore public trust. Besides methodological explanations, only few others are given for the absence of an effect. One is that the citizens have apparently a preference for service provision by public bodies instead of private parties; therefore, privatization did not lead to an increase in trust.

However, empirical research to support these propositions is scarce. Such effects are desired, sometimes assumed, but largely unproven. This is at least partly because of the lack of a systematic theoretical basis to clarify causal relationships and test the presumed effects. This is probably because such ‘social’ effects are often treated as a by-product of co-production rather than the main outcome. Therefore, harsh though it may sound, it is probably fair to say that in its present form the relationship between co-production and trust remains an ideological assumption. Moreover, the two concepts are often not clearly defined, at least not when confronted directly. The term co-production has been employed in different contexts and for different events, and its use appears to differ along the geographical lines (Pestoff, 2012). The concept of trust, too, has been described as ‘elusive’ (Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994), with much confusion over its exact definition (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). To move beyond this stage, it is necessary to address a number of theoretical issues that, at least with regard to co-production, have received little systematic treatment in the literature (cf. Verschuere et al., 2012). Specifically, it is important to specify (a) the concepts of co-production and trust and (b) the social and psychological mechanisms that link the two. Hence, the above-mentioned empirical gap will not be solved here, but a first theoretical framework is presented to pave the way for future systematic research.

Accordingly, this chapter will first discuss the two main concepts. For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to be precise and narrow in our scope. We will briefly touch upon three questions. Who is defined as a co-producer? What is trust? And why is it important? Then we will argue, in line with Van de Walle (2010), that co-production of public services is based on a different form of trust from other approaches to service delivery. This is followed by an elaboration on two mechanisms that could explain the relation between co-production and trust. Finally, a simple model is described in the end which provides a starting point for an empirical study.

Defining co-production

The term co-production was coined by Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues in the 1970s. Originally, they developed the term to describe the possible relationship that exists between the ‘regular’ producer (street-level police officers, schoolteachers, or health workers) and ‘clients who want to be transformed by the service into safer, better-educated or healthier persons’ (Ostrom, 1996: 1079; see also Parks et al., 1981, for an overview). At that time, the involvement of users in all sorts of services often appeared to go unnoticed (Parks et al., 1981; Whitaker, 1980). From an economic perspective, it was argued that the ‘clear distinction between consumption and production underlying most economic theory is not easily applied to the service delivery process’ (Brudney and England, 1983: 60). Nevertheless, in practice, the market logic of NPM was preferred to the alternative of co-production.

Recently, however, there has been a steep increase in scholarly and practical interest in the concept of co-production. Needham and Carr (2009) summarize the developments that explain this renewed attention:

- A decline in support of target-based and process-driven models of service delivery
- A wish for higher service efficiency because of fiscal pressure
- An increase in the awareness of 'user-generated' knowledge
- A desire to strengthen local democracy
- A tendency to personalize social services through the effective participation of the people who use them

The academic interest generated some important publications which have led to the emergence of a mature research field (Alford, 2009a; Bovaird, 2007; Brandsen and Pestoff, 2006; Pestoff et al., 2012). These works include a lot of different usages, contexts, and settings of co-production. The relationship with trust will be dependent on particular choices in definition. For example, talking about co-production and trust at the governance level clearly diverges from the individual level of clients. This is the first delineation we make.

Co-production is defined here as *an arrangement where both clients and 'regular' producers contribute a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services*. Following Alford (2002), we distinguish clients from volunteers and citizens. Clients would like to receive private value from services, i.e. the benefits of service provision are directly consumed by the user. Therefore, the motivations of clients to co-produce are different to those of volunteers and citizens, who receive public rather than private value. Volunteers do not necessarily benefit from putting effort into an organization. They are suppliers rather than consumers. Citizens also differ from clients. Where a client's relationship with the provider is constituted by service encounters, a citizen's relationship with government is through all sorts of rights, obligations, and accountabilities, such as voting and other forms of political participation (Alford, 2009a). Hence, individuals who can only exercise partial citizenship rights, such as asylum seekers or children, can act as co-producers too (Strokosch, 2013).

Clients may be paying customers, beneficiaries (such as welfare recipients), or 'obligatees' (such as taxpayers or prisoners). They usually perform a mixture of these roles (2009a). It is contested whether an obligatee could fall under the definition of co-production. Brudney and England (1983) maintain that co-production is regarded as cooperation, which should be voluntary and not be forced upon citizens. This implies that compliance should not be regarded as co-production. Alford (2009a: 22) argues, however, that scholars confuse compliance with compulsion. He maintains that 'compliance is where people act *in accordance with agency requirements*. They can do so either voluntarily or because of compulsion' (emphasis in the original). Importantly, by delimiting the concept to strictly voluntary behaviour, an important group of clients will be excluded, especially if trust is the topic of interest. Just as it has been shown that people who start to volunteer already have high levels of trust (Stolle, 1998), co-production could be more common among high-trusters. This could be

particularly the case when co-production is presented as a choice. Therefore, we should also look at clients who co-produce through compulsion, because trust building can take place mainly here.

What is more, we delimit co-production to the stage of service delivery, also described as *co-delivery* (Bovaird, 2007) or the ‘responsive’ and ‘operational’ levels of public policy (Klijn, 2010). We do not discuss co-production of the formulation process. According to some, this limitation actually denotes the real nature of co-production as it ‘is the antidote to the idea that we endlessly need to ask people’s opinion, before handing the service back to the professionals to deliver, since people will be involved in delivery as well’ (Boyle and Harris, 2009: 17; see also Brudney and England, 1983). To others, co-delivery should complement other stages of participation (Percy, 1984; Pestoff, 2009).

Within co-production, the service delivery *process* plays a crucial role in evaluating the service as a whole. Since users are actively engaged in the process, the perception of it becomes much more important. Take for example IKEA, the well-known Scandinavian furniture manufacturer, where customers are expected to assemble at least a part of the product, such as a bookcase, themselves. Not only the looks and sturdiness of the bookcase count, but also how long it took to construct it yourself. Therefore, management theories argue that low levels of trust can be restored by improving the (perception of) quality of services – which comprises much more than the actual output (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003).

Finally, we focus on *public* services. Public services refer to all services, regardless of the actual provider, that are financed at least partly by public funds. Hence, it also includes private companies that are carrying out certain services, or third sector organizations that collaborate with government. Increasingly, nonprofit or so-called hybrid organizations are involved in service provision too (Evers, 2005).

Obviously, treating users as co-producers represents a ‘radical reinterpretation’ (Bovaird, 2007) of their relation with ‘regular’ providers. Where the traditional Public Administration (PA) framework posits the public sector as a sole provider of services, co-production acknowledges the importance of efforts of users (and organizations) too. In contrast to NPM, co-production emphasizes the inseparability of production and consumption of services, and thus processes above ready-made products (Klijn, 2010). Such a fundamental shift in the user-provider relationship has implications for the way trust in society is built. Before addressing this, we need to clarify precisely what we mean by trust and why we find it important to investigate.

Defining trust

There seem to be at least two important elements of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998: 394–395): benevolent expectations and the willingness to be vulnerable. Offe’s definition captures both

elements: 'trust is the belief that others, through their action or inaction, will contribute to my/our well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon me/us' (Offe, 1999: 47). At least two conditions should be present for trust to be meaningful. First, if there is no risk of betrayal, there is no need for trust (Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994). Service delivery usually entails some vulnerability for users. For users of enduring services in particular, stakes are high: faulty health care may have a negative effect on a patient's well-being; unresponsive public housing services may result in homelessness; and failing reemployment programmes could lead to despair among jobseekers. The second condition refers to interdependence, where the interests of the truster will not be met without reliance upon another (Rousseau et al., 1998). Because the degree of interdependence differs between types of service delivery (hierarchical, market, co-production), the nature of vulnerability and trust alters as well (Sheppard and Sherman, 1998). This, in turn, has implications for the way clients and organizations try to develop trust. We will return to the differences in interdependency between types of service delivery in the next section.

On the one hand, trust is a 'risky investment', as it inevitably 'extrapolates from the available information'; and on the other hand, it is a mechanism which fulfils a crucial function in every interaction (Luhmann, 1979: 24, 26). Indeed, not locking your bicycle in the city centre because you trust all citizens not to steal it is a very risky action (at least in the Netherlands). Blind trust can be risky or even naïve. Yet, absence of trust would eventually lead to social isolation (Yamagishi, 2001). Without trust, transaction costs increase substantially in the form of contracts and supervision (Williamson, 1983). Thus, a certain level of trust would ease cooperation between citizens and increases social cohesion in communities (Ostrom, 2000; Seligman, 1997). The merits of trust for society have been shown repeatedly. In high-trusting societies, people are happier and healthier, economies are more prosperous and governments more responsive (Fukuyama, 1995; Inglehart, 2001; Knack and Keefer, 1995; Putnam et al., 1994; Uslaner, 2002). Trust also seems a good remedy against corruption and crime (Bjørnskov, 2006; Buonanno et al., 2009). Furthermore, governments will not have to use coercion or force for each decision when they enjoy enough trust (Gamson, 1968). A lack of trust in government leads to tax evasion and unlawful activity, which will have an impact on the extent of monitoring and enforcement (Tyler, 1990). Therefore, it seems legitimate to believe that, at least at the community level, trust has positive connotations.

With these encouraging effects of trust in mind, NPM-style reforms were expected to increase trust in service delivery by increasing its poor performance which, in turn, would lead to more trust in government. In the same vein, co-production would help alleviate the alleged democratic deficit, on the national as well as at the local level (Bovaird, 2007; Pestoff, 2009). However, expectations appear to be even more ambitious. Parallel to New Public Governance, where public services are regarded in a 'holistic way to address complex needs and as an instrument for social inclusion' (Osborne and Stokosch, 2013), Public Value Theory maintains that co-production of service delivery could lead to public value, which

could be expressed in trust (Alford, 2009b). These claims could be traced back to Ostrom's argument that 'the experience of co-production also encourages citizens to develop other horizontal relationships and social capital' (Ostrom, 1996: 1083). Where trust in service providers and trust in government is a form of *particularized* trust, aimed at a particular person, organization, or institution, the trust described here is often called *generalized* trust, i.e. trust in people in general, or strangers. Generalized trust is often regarded as an important feature of social capital (Offe, 1999: 51). It is especially this type of trust which would drive people to interact with each other without the necessity of high transaction costs that would be made in a low-trust environment (Fukuyama, 1995). Hence, co-production is expected to lead to trust at different levels. Going from the more specific to the more general, we can distinguish, in addition to trust at the service and government levels, trust at the generalized level.

The bases of trust

Where does trust comes from? Lewicki and Bunker (1996) distinguish three foundations of trust: *calculus-based* trust, *knowledge-based* trust, and *identification-based* trust. Calculus-based trust is rooted in a calculation of another's rewards for being trustworthy (such as job promotion) and costs of not being trustworthy (such as loss of reputation). Knowledge-based trust is based on the amount of information one has to predict future behaviour and intentions. The more and better the information, the more likely trust will evolve. Lastly, identification-based trust forms when both parties (the truster and trusted) identify with each other's goals and effectively understand and value the other's wants. It is therefore not essentially cognitive, like calculus- and knowledge-based trust, but emotional.

Van de Walle (2010) argues that although at first sight NPM-induced reforms drove trust out of traditional bureaucratic interactions because they were based on distrust, such as contracts, fragmentations, performance targets, and audit and control instruments, this has not necessarily been the case. According to Sheppard and Sherman (1998), market systems are characterized by 'shallow' dependence relations: the service provider is responsible for the service delivery, and the role of the user is restricted to receiving the service; and the importance, range, and number of points of contact between the user and provider are limited. Grounded in public choice theory, NPM treats the service providers as self-interested maximizers and brings about a sceptical view on the 'public service ethos'. Moreover, it assumes that interests of two actors are never the same. Hence, it would be too risky for service users to trust officials to act on their behalf and provide high quality services, so users should control public service delivery through different instruments. According to Van de Walle (2010), these instruments or mechanisms created calculus- and knowledge-based trust instead of identification-based trust. Controlling, short-term contracts and competition

increased calculus-based trust relationships, while knowledge-based trust relationships were improved by performance management and more transparency through disaggregation. Ideally, dissatisfaction with services could be made visible by citizens through withdrawal – i.e. choosing a better service provider. These penalizing instruments are necessary for trust production in market systems (Sheppard and Sherman, 1998: 428). Organizations could also gain trust by deepening their relations with users (becoming less ‘shallow’).

Traditional bureaucratic service delivery emphasizes highly formalized rules and standardization of practices. Clients are confronted with a lack of information about the motives and actions of service providers. Arguing from Weberian theory that public officials work in the public interest, people can trust them to do their best to follow the rules and help out. Likewise, professionals such as teachers and health care workers could be trusted on their distinct knowledge and skills due to expert education and training (Kremer and Tonkens, 2006). Honesty and integrity are important attributes for public officials in order to gain trust (Sheppard and Sherman, 1998: 427). For clients themselves to improve service delivery in the traditional model, they would have to follow standard complaint procedures. Although Van de Walle (2010) maintains that NPM-style reforms may have diminished identification-based trust that was rooted in traditional service systems, we rather argue that this trust was based on what Zucker (1986: 65) calls *process-based* trust and *characteristic-based* trust. In the case of the former, the truster believes that the trustee will act as he/she did before. In other words, trust is based on a high level of predictability. Bureaucratic service delivery tries to ensure predictability through the use of routines, rules, and standardization. The latter relates to the assumption that ascribed characteristics are a good reason for trusting someone. Professionalism relies on this form of trust. The fact that someone is a professional, should say enough about his or her skills and qualities.

Following Sheppard and Sherman (1998), such a hierarchical relationship can be characterized by its deep dependence. One particular risk associated with this relational form is that of *cheating*, which could occur because of the knowledge gap between professionals and clients. For example, a doctor could have a preference for a particular treatment and does not consider other therapies which are unknown to the patient. Another risk entails the possibility of abuse, which arises because deep dependence creates an environment where an authority can determine the fate of the clients (‘fate control’). This risk has been made painfully clear by numerous incidents of child abuse in youth care, child care, and religious institutions in several European countries. These shocking events have undoubtedly led to a decrease in trust in those services. We observed that after a major child abuse case in the marketized sector of child care in the Netherlands, the involvement of parents in the delivery of child care has become increasingly important.³ Improving the market or professional skills

3. Based on interviews done in the field of child care in Amsterdam and Nijmegen as part of the FP7 research project Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in Favour of Cohesion (www.wilcoproject.eu).

was thought to be insufficient to gain the trust of parents. This leads us to the third base of trust.

With the introduction of the framework of co-production of service delivery, identification-based trust becomes the most important form of trust. As said, recent theories on public service delivery and management reject the notion of self-interested provider and maximizing consumer and, building upon network theory, move towards trust-based steering and collaboration (Van de Walle, 2010). Within the framework of New Public Governance, clients of public services are no longer seen in a top-down relationship but as partners who co-deliver services in an interactive way (Osborne, 2010). This interdependency puts interactions between the provider and users as the primary means of achieving trust (Klijn, 2010).

Sheppard and Sherman (1998) note that the risks of interdependence are poor *coordination* and *misanticipation*. The efforts of both the service provider and the clients must be effectively coordinated. Tasks should be clearly divided. When citizens assist the police for the sake of a safe neighbourhood, the former are required to keep an eye on suspicious behaviour and report any instances in a clear fashion, while the latter have to provide an efficient information system where these reports can be submitted. Misanticipation refers to ‘the risk that, without specific instructions, one will not be able to anticipate the other’s needs or actions’ (Sheppard and Sherman, 1998: 425). For the public agency as well as the client the expectations and goals of co-production should be clear. For example, a neighbourhood watch volunteer might expect that the police force will provide assistance whenever he or she asks for it. A volunteer could act on this expectation – e.g. threatening suspects with police assistance – even though the police may only give backup in certain circumstances. This misanticipation could lead the volunteer to distrust the police and refrain from notifying them at all. Sheppard and Sherman (1998) therefore state that communication plays a crucial role for developing trust in interdependent relationships. Indeed, when clients co-produce, trust is built during the process, where users should be able to communicate their values, goals, and wants to the providers through direct participation. This gives users (partial) control over the services they receive.

It should be noted that risks related to hierarchical and market types of service delivery are not absent in the context of co-production, although they might be less relevant. Lewicki and Bunker (1996) argue that identification-based trust only develops after calculus- and knowledge-based trust has been formed – in other words, it takes time. Hence, also within co-production, instruments such as professionalization and monitoring might be useful, especially at the start of the process. For example, citizens should be able to rely on professional guidance when they (at the time) are lacking the capacities themselves. When co-production depends on the involvement of a group of users, monitoring could rule out free-riding behaviour, increasing trust among the group. However, monitoring has the risk of crowding-out intrinsic motivation and obstructing trust-building (Frey and Jegen, 2001; see below).

Table 1 shows how different modes of governance relate to different forms of trust.

Table 1. Modes of governance and bases of trust

	<i>bureaucracies/ professionalism</i>	<i>marketization</i>	<i>New Public Governance</i>
<i>role of clients</i>	customer	consumers	co-producers
<i>base of trust</i>	process, characteristic	calculus, knowledge	identification
<i>maintained by</i>	authority, rules, standardization, routines, voice through formal procedures	contracts, control, exit	networks, interactions, voice through direct participation

It is clear by now that co-production alters the relationship between a service user and the provider of that service and therefore the way in which trust is built. The exact mechanism that could explain this needs clarification, however. In the next section, we will do so by distinguishing two main mechanisms, self-efficacy and trust networks. The former is exclusively related to the relationship between the single user and the provider, whereas the latter also takes relationships among (networks of) individual clients into account (cf. Bovaird, 2007). These mechanisms will be theoretically linked to the trust-building capacity of co-production.

Trust-building mechanisms: self-efficacy and trust networks

Increasing self-efficacy

One of the mechanisms that theoretically explains the relationship between co-production and trust is through increasing users' perception of self-efficacy. Co-production would be better suited to achieve the merits of participatory democracy, as described by Pateman (1970) and others. Drawing on the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, they emphasize the benefits of participation in terms of self-actualization. Through direct participation in politics, citizens learn to recognize a public interest, in addition to private self-interest. Moreover, the experience of participation in decision making itself would attach the individual to his or her society and increase the feeling among individual citizens that they belong in their community. Very important in this respect is that 'the individual's actual, as well as his sense of, freedom is increased through participation in decision making because it gives him a very real degree of *control* over the course of his life and the structure of his environment' (Pateman, 1970: 26). This sense of freedom is known as (internal) political efficacy, i.e. the sense of being capable of influencing the political sphere.

The main hypothesis here is that if citizens have the feeling that their actions have no effect at all, alienation and a loss of trust in political institutions will be the result (Dalton, 1999). More generally, a lack of efficacy is expected to have a negative effect on trust, whether

it is political trust, trust in service delivery, or generalized trust. Increasing a person's control over life will make him or her less vulnerable to risks. People who feel many events in their lives happen outside their own span of control (through luck or faith, for example) will feel more vulnerable and are less inclined to take risk in trusting. Individuals who think their own actions have an effect on their daily lives will feel less risk in trusting others because they feel they are less dependent on the conduct of others. Empirical research supports that low self-efficacy leads to a lower propensity to trust (Mishra, 1996; Whitener et al., 1998).

According to Pestoff (2009), service users have indeed become alienated from daily life politics. Conventional forms of participation leave many people cynical about their ability to change or control policies and services (1984: 479). Co-production would help 'to fulfil classic democratic functions of inducing responsibility on the part of public officials, communicating citizen preferences to government, educating the citizenry, and maintaining the political system' (Brudney, 1984: 479). The process of co-production 'would promote greater face-to-face interaction between the staff and consumers of major welfare services. This would also allow for greater citizen influence over their own life-politics, as well as over the welfare services that are most important to them and thereby could contribute to creating trust and social capital' (Pestoff, 2009: 115). Hence, it is the high level of interaction which increases users' feeling of efficacy. The mechanism here is that experience and outcomes are 'negotiated' between the client and the deliverer instead of being dominated by the regular provider alone. Therefore, the client becomes a 'key arbiter of service quality and performance' (Osborne and Strokosch, 2013: S38). This will increase the provider's responsiveness and the client's sense of control, and reduce the client's feeling of risk.

Particularly in business studies, the relationship between involvement, sense of control, and trust has been studied. Rajah *et al.* (2008) find that co-production increases the buyer-seller relationship through frequent interactions and higher levels of customization and personalization. Teichert and Rost (2003) maintain that customers reduce the experience of risk through high involvement, which has a positive effect on their trust. In health care, it appears that encouraging patient involvement indeed increases patients' sense of control over their illness condition, builds effective relationships with physicians, and improves the perception of patients of professional support, which all positively affects trust in the physician (MacStravic, 2000; Ouschan et al., 2006; Pontes and Pontes, 1997).

Alford (2009a) argues that the need to feel competent and self-determining (i.e. intrinsic motivations) indeed motivates people to co-produce. Political research shows, however, that people with low levels of political efficacy, are less likely to vote (Pattie and Johnston, 1998; Powell, 1986), while studies on job search behaviour relate lack of efficacy to less intense job seeking (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). This could imply that precisely the group of users who benefit from co-production (by gaining more control and more trust) may be difficult to reach. However, the urge for personal control is not the only reason why clients co-produce. Alford (2009a) distinguishes three other motivations to co-produce: material self-interest

(tangible benefits), sociality (an individual's desire for a sense of belonging), and expressive values (norms and values). Moreover, co-production can be elicited by providers through motivators, such as sanctions, material rewards, and non-material rewards. The effect of these motivators depends on the orientation of clients beforehand. For example, sanctions are often used to compel less-willing beneficiaries to participate in reemployment programmes (which also tends to cause their role to change from being a beneficiary to an obligatee). Yet, intrinsically motivated clients, who want to do everything to get out of their precarious situation, do not need to be forced into those activities (but voluntarily comply with the programmes provided). It could be that, for those clients, the threat of sanctions will reduce their trust in the service provider and eventually their sense of control. This phenomenon is known as the crowding-out effect (Frey and Jegen, 2001).

Related to the problem of motivation is that in the case of co-production, risk is actually shifted towards the user. He/she becomes partly accountable for outcomes (Vancoppenolle and Verschuere, 2012). Not everyone may want to bear the burdens of responsibility (Bandura, 2001: 13). This may particularly affect trust when outcomes are not satisfactory. Because the co-producer himself or herself is part of the process, he/she cannot solely blame the public servant (Vamstad, 2012). Hirschman (1982: 43) notes this too, pointing at the case of psychotherapy, where the patient must complement the psychotherapist's services with some input of his or her own. If the symptoms do not disappear, it could well be attributed to the inadequacy of his or her own contributions. In this case, Hirschman argues that 'the disappointment the purchaser feels could well be turned against himself'. Studies in the field of marketing however, suggest that co-producing clients rather blame the service provider for disappointing outcomes, while in the case of better-than-expected outcomes, clients give more credits for themselves. This is known as the *self-serving bias* (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003). Hence, the role of motivations and accountability is important in building trust through co-production.

Building trust networks

Networks could be seen as a form of governance which mainly takes place when multiple actors are mutually dependent (Kickert et al., 1997). Again, just as with the first mechanism, intensive levels of interaction within a network are believed to foster trust (Klijn, 2010). In networks, cooperation is crucial, and so there is the need to build trust (Considine and Lewis, 2003; Klijn, 2010). The fact that co-production entails that actors are reliant on each other to achieve outcomes they cannot reach alone, makes it very similar to the concept of networks. According to Tilly (2005b), trust can be best understood within networks. A trust network arises when there is a relationship between at least three actors and

- a. this relationship is named and known to all participants;
- b. participation in the relationship provides actors with some degree of shared rights and obligations;

- c. there are means to be able to communicate and represent their shared connection;
- d. there are boundaries which are developed and preserved by participants and separate outsiders from the relationship.

The characteristics of a trust network indeed apply to several analysed cases of co-production where groups of users come together. Cooperative initiatives are the most illustrative examples. Research demonstrates that parental cooperatives in Swedish child care achieve high levels of parental involvement. These centres show dense networks which include rights and obligations for engaged parents (Vamstad, 2007, 2012). Although there are no visible boundaries in terms of rules of participation, parents in these cooperatives are generally higher educated, have better salaries, and are more often living in two-parent families. In Germany, housing cooperatives exist, which are able to actively engage their residents in and around their near living environment (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012). They could be described as integrated communities where, particularly in the older cooperatives, social bonds and family ties still play a role. Successful cooperatives clearly control their boundaries by maintaining a closed membership. But also outside cooperatives, trust networks arise in the context of co-production. In the United States, young felons could do community work within the concept of time banking. Time banking means the creation of a social network in which members exchange services, both receiving and providing them (Cahn, 2000; Marks, 2009, 2012). While these young offenders often were obliged to participate in the programme, time banking was able to form intimate social groups, consisting of family members, staff, and people from the community. As a consequence, a sense of safety and trust was established (Marks, 2009).

The main problem with the mechanism of creating trust through networks is to explain how trust could expand beyond the level of the network. It may only lead to ‘bonding’ instead of ‘bridging’ trust (Putnam et al., 1994; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Tilly (2005b: 37) argues that the higher the stakes and the more intimacy, the higher the level of trust involved. Yet, through sharpening boundaries with other communities, trust in others may even decline (Marschall and Stolle, 2004). A good example is the study of Bekkers and Meijer (2010; see also Meijer, 2012) of a Dutch policy called ‘Citizens Net’ (*Burgernet*). Citizens Net is a network of citizens who signed up by providing information about their telephone number and address. When a crime occurs, the police can contact citizens immediately to ask for information. According to the location of the offence, the nearest participants are called for information. It appeared that people trusted the police as well as the municipality more after they participated in Citizens Net. A majority of the participants felt they were more in control over their safety than before. Nevertheless, Bekkers and Meijers (2010: 139) also paraphrase a politician who said in a reaction to the pilot that ‘[Citizens Net] stimulates greater social control between citizens and, in turn, stimulates distrust among them and decreases social cohesion’. The project leader of Citizens Net indeed acknowledged that ‘the police too are aware of the risk that citizens spy on other residents and an unwanted form

of social control develops'. The potential to strengthen insider-outsider dynamics could be a 'dark side' of co-production.

Another particular problem of the creation of trust networks is the risk of free-riding. Often, within networks, participation is motivated by the access to a common-pool resource, such as affordable housing or high quality child care (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012). A risk exists that some members would like to benefit from this access without putting any effort in. This could have a detrimental effect on the trust of other users (Frey and Jegen, 2001). As Percy (1984) acknowledges, there is a direct relationship between resources committed and benefits received. When benefits are received by the co-producer individually, involvement in co-production is more likely. Therefore, it can be difficult to develop a trust network in the context of co-production.

Discussion: the agenda for empirical research

Theoretically, as we have shown, it is possible to identify specific types of trust that are fostered through co-production, through specific mechanisms, which operate under specific conditions. There are also conditions which may hinder rather than encourage these mechanisms. Identifying and testing such contingencies constitutes the next important step in the debate on co-production, following a phase in which concepts were first identified and refined (Verschuere et al., 2012). We will here briefly describe the requirements that such research should meet.

Empirical research on the relation between co-production and trust can be described in terms of three consecutive phases. These are illustrated in figure 1. Following our definition of co-production, this model is based on the processes at the individual level. Furthermore, since the creation of identification-based trust almost certainly takes time (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996), the model should be read as a longitudinal design.

Figure 1. A three-phase model of co-production of service delivery and trust

In the *ex ante* situation, the following question should be answered: what are the characteristics of co-producers? As noted earlier, levels of trust and efficacy may affect the particular motivations of users to co-produce. This is in line with earlier work on the dynamics of collaboration that has identified trust as one of the key conditions for collective action (Ostrom, 1998; Yamagishi and Cook, 1993). A selection of relatively high trusters may be the result. Therefore, the backgrounds of users would have to be mapped in a first phase. At this stage, organizations could manipulate the motivations of clients through the use of certain motivators, such as incentives or sanctions. Left out of the model are other factors that may refer to capabilities of clients to co-produce, such as education, employment, health, or social contacts. These elements could very well have an influence on feelings of efficacy and trust too. This brings up the question whether it is required to facilitate or *empower* people to hand them the means to co-produce.

The *ex durante* phase is the process of co-production. The main question at this point is: what kind of trust-building mechanisms can we observe? In this phase, it should be assessed whether indeed efficacy is experienced and/or trust networks are built through the experience of co-production.

Finally, the *ex post* stage can be depicted as the outcome of the process. The question addressed here is whether initial trust levels have changed as a consequence of co-production. Does the process of co-production affect trust in service delivery, trust in government, and/or generalized trust?

Obviously, the model is not complete. More causal relationships could potentially be identified, for example to point out the relationships between different levels of trust, and more concepts could be added, for example organizational characteristics such as duration of service use (i.e. short term vs. long term). Nevertheless, the model illustrates the main hypotheses formulated in this chapter and it could be used as a starting point for empirical research. It also shows the need for a sophisticated methodology. On the one hand, to understand the effects of co-production, collecting data in a large N setting is necessary (Verschuere et al., 2012); on the other hand, since these hypotheses have not been tested systematically before, only qualitative data could make clear whether there are other unobserved, influencing factors which are not included in the model. Finally, the causal relationship between the performance of public service delivery and trust is very difficult to assess (Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003). Therefore, it is crucial to have a longitudinal methodology to deal for a large part with this problem (cf. Allison, 1994).

Conclusion

This study has examined the theoretical relationship between the concepts of co-production and trust, thus addressing a repeatedly noted gap in the literature (Barker, 2010; Löffler,

2009). One of the steps has been to identify more precisely what type of trust is being discussed. Theoretically, co-production relates to identification-based trust, rather than the calculus- and knowledge-based trust which was so predominant in NPM. A second step has been to identify the most important theoretical mechanisms that link the two concepts. Increasing self-efficacy and the creation networks both potentially contribute to this type of trust, in different ways. A third step has been to move away from the absolute statement that more co-production leads to more trust towards a more contingent perspective, in which certain conditions must be present for the mechanisms to come into play. This includes not only favourable conditions, but also obstructions to trust-building, such as crowding-out motivations, accountability problems, free-riding, and reinforcing insider-outsider boundaries. There is absolutely no reason to take for granted that the co-production of service delivery automatically leads to more trust among clients. Nevertheless, expectations are high, in academia as well as in practice, especially as co-production is increasingly presented as a direction for the reform of public services and for the restoration of trusted government. This is why it is important to examine the empirical relationship between co-production and trust more systematically. This chapter has given a suggestion how such empirical research could be designed.

3 |

User co-production of public service delivery: an uncertainty approach

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Abstract

Engaging public service users as co-producers is expected to lead to more efficient services and better outcomes. What has been missing so far, however, is a solid theoretical basis for explaining what compels actors to pursue co-production, or not, and what strategies they adopt in this pursuit. Building on established theories, it is argued that whereas co-production of public service delivery decreases uncertainty for users, it seems to increase uncertainty for organizations. The main conclusion is that the need of organizations to reduce this uncertainty might diminish the possibilities for users to co-produce. The consequences of this conclusion for future research are discussed in this chapter.

Introduction

Users of public services can take on different roles. They can be regarded as consumers, which became a popular view in the 1980s (Vidler and Clarke, 2005), but nowadays the perspective of service users as *co-producers* of public service delivery has gained attention (Brandsen et al., 2012). The contribution of users to the delivery of public services, such as parent participation in child care (Vamstad, 2012), citizen co-production of safety (Meijer, 2012), or patient involvement in health care (Newman and Vidler, 2006), is believed to improve the efficiency and outcomes of those services.

Current research focuses for a large part on the motivations and characteristics of co-producing users (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming; Parrado et al., 2013; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014), and on specific, often successful cases (Bovaird and Löffler, 2012; Cepiku and Giordano, 2013). What has been missing so far, however, is a solid theoretical basis for explaining what compels actors to pursue co-production, or not, and what strategies they adopt in this pursuit. In particular, the role of organizations remains relatively understudied in the current literature. In this chapter, we will define such a theoretical basis, building on established theories. A central hypothesis that emerges from the theoretical analysis is that whereas co-production of public service delivery decreases uncertainty for users, it seems to increase uncertainty for organizations. Therefore, it might not be so easy to realize co-production as it is sometimes assumed.

This raises the question how organizations deal with these uncertainties and importantly, whether they are eager to allow users to co-produce or not. We argue that organizations may employ ‘closed’ or ‘open systems’ approaches to uncertainty, but that the choice for one or the other depends on the institutional context. In the final section of this chapter we will discuss the implications of our theoretical analysis for future research on co-production.

Uncertainty for service users and organizations

Users of public services and the organizations providing those services would not have to deal with uncertainty when they would be able to see and know everything. In reality, both parties have incomplete information about possible solutions and their ultimate consequences. For instance, when a patient is in need of treatment, both the patient and the doctor will be confronted with some uncertainty about the effectiveness of the proposed treatment – the patient because s/he does not possess the required professional knowledge; the doctor because s/he has limited knowledge of the patient’s body and mind. Both service users and public service organizations (PSOs) have to bear with ‘cognitive costs’ of decision-making because of their incapacity to retain, process and collect all relevant information (Ingram and Clay, 2000: 528).

These cognitive costs are substantially higher for providing and receiving services than for producing and purchasing goods. This is because (1) the quality of services is less easily assessed because of their intangibility; (2) services cannot be produced in standard, homogeneous ways as products can; (3) and because with services, production and consumption cannot be separated, but this occurs during the interaction between the user and service staff (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Because of these features, the delivery of services is characterized by *interdependence* between the user and the service provider. An effective service depends on synergy between the actions of the user as well as those of the provider (Ostrom, 1996). This interdependence constitutes the main source of uncertainty for both parties.

Both individuals and organizations are likely to benefit from reducing uncertainty. Uncertainty at the individual level has been related to all sorts of aversive outcomes (e.g. Sorrentino and Roney, 1986) as it leads to a sense of *reduced control* over one's life (Hogg, 2000). Personal control, on the other hand, has been associated with, *inter alia*, stress reduction, sense of ownership and responsibility (Deci et al., 1999; Mills and Krantz, 1979). For organizations, lack of control and uncertainty may lead to less satisfied employees (Greenberger et al., 1989), but also to sub-optimal decision-making (Simon, 1979).

Uncertainty can be reduced by increasing the predictability of behaviour, for instance, by simplifying processes through established routines, rules, and habits. When services are relatively simple and require little personal interaction, simplification can be a useful strategy. Renewing a passport can be done easily because clear procedures and rules can prescribe the expected behaviour of both the citizen and the municipal worker. However, when the environment becomes more complex and less predictable, more active strategies may be needed to reduce uncertainty (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Such complexity is inherent to enduring social services, such as education, health care, and social housing. Here, the problems and their solutions are often defined less clearly, the preferences of users are more diverse, and the range of potential service providers and/or particular services is more varied. A health issue is obviously more complex than renewing a passport; residential care is more intricate than putting your garbage at the curb side.

The types of uncertainties that come along with this interdependence and complexity differ between users on the one hand and PSOs on the other hand. The specific strategies that might be used to cope with these uncertainties might also differ therefore.

For users, uncertainty predominantly relates to service outcomes. Gaining more influence over the way the outcome is reached can reduce feelings of uncertainty. Hirschman (1970) distinguished two mechanisms to influence service delivery: through the use of *voice* and *exit*. Co-production can be added to this model as an alternative way to perceive some kind of control over the service outcome.

With regards to organizations, there are two ways of looking at uncertainty, one based on a *contingency theory*, and the other on *institutional theory*. In the first view, uncertainty is a technical problem, which hinders the production of outputs. Uncertainty is then the

‘critical contingency’ with which organizations have to deal with in order to be effective (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Thompson, 1967). Lack of information about technology and uncertainty about financial support are typical forms of organizational uncertainty (Argote, 1982; Hasenfeld, 1983). Important is the notion that when users become co-producers of services, they become also a source of uncertainty. Within contingency theory, this is known as *input uncertainty* (Larsson and Bowen, 1989). Using this concept, we are able to discuss organizational strategies that deal with such input uncertainty.

What we will argue, is that the choice for these specific strategies to cope with uncertainty depends on the institutional context. Institutional theory gives important input to this statement. Institutional theory also takes coping with uncertainty as a starting point, although here, it entails uncertainty about the legitimacy of organizations (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Yet, before addressing the organizational and institutional context, the strategies to reduce uncertainty for individual users are described first.

Uncertainty reduction by users: beyond exit and voice

The importance of uncertainty reduction for users

There are different strategies for users to influence the way public services are provided. At a fundamental level, being *knowledgeable* about several aspects of services may reduce uncertainty (Averill, 1973). Being well informed helps to understand service characteristics and procedures and contributes to a sense of control. However, available information may not always be complete, or inadequate. Some users are more capable of understanding complex information about possible choices, or are better in finding the channels to express their concerns, than others. This tends to be socially stratified, where the lower class is worse-off (Taylor-Gooby, 1999). Information is thus insufficient to decrease uncertainty. Hirschman’s (1970) well-known mechanisms of *exit* and *voice* might provide some alternatives then. Exit, however, will not always reduce uncertainty, as it is not given that the desired outcome will be reached with another provider. Also, alternatives are not always present, or high transaction costs are involved. Voice only reduces uncertainty when the organization is able to modify its current service provision, and often, this will take time (Hirschman, 1970: 33). In general, it seems to be very hard for users to notice the effectivity of being consulted, involved or engaged (Simmons et al., 2012).

Important is the notion that exit, choice, voice and knowledge only provide *indirect* influence over the service outcome. Within each strategy, the user is, theoretically, placed outside the service provision; in other words, there is a clear demarcation between consumption of the service and production of the service. Within the service dominant approach however, this logic is strongly contested (e.g. Osborne et al., 2013). We now turn towards this approach, which leads to co-production as an alternative way of reducing outcome uncertainty.

Co-production: an alternative logic

Osborne et al. (2013) states that consumers are too often conceived as passive users during the production processes. This is a fundamental problem as the logic of producing and consuming differs. In other words, if the production and consuming phase cannot be regarded as separate, consumers need to be able to say something or be informed about the production and the consumption. Otherwise they will only gain partial control over the service outcome. Getting control over the consumption of services implies that clients are able to shape the service directly through their actions during the interaction with service professionals, which is in fact co-production. Such behavioural control *directly* influences or modify the characteristics of the service (Averill, 1973: 287), and might even be able to prevent organizations from delivering poor quality.

Co-production is not a steady state, but rather a continuum (Osborne and Strokosch, 2013). At a basic level, co-production is inherent to the logic of service provision (Osborne and Strokosch, 2013). Every service experience is shaped and defined by the behaviour and perceptions of users. Service organizations can only 'promise' a certain process or experience – the actual service delivery is a result of the collision between users' expectations and their experience. Yet, some services require more intense levels of co-production, and others less. Organizations may also be able to provide room for more or less client participation. Thus, co-production can be understood as *an arrangement to which both clients and PSOs actively contribute a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services* (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). Please note that this narrow definition excludes forms of collaboration between, for instance, non-profit organizations and government, and it also leaves out forms of user involvement in other stages of service delivery, such as design or prioritization (Bovaird, 2007).

Important to stress is that co-production goes 'beyond' traditional forms of voice (Dunston et al., 2009). Traditionally, 'giving users a say' in enduring social services means the constitution of a representative body, where a small sample of users communicates complaints and/or suggestions within formal arrangements. Here, users do not bear any responsibility in the actual service delivery. During co-production, users become (sometimes literally) 'partial' employees (Kelley et al., 1990). They do not only supply ideas to the service creation, but also behaviour, time, and other resources, taking over a portion of the service delivery functions (Hsieh et al., 2004). Thus, co-production might be described as the most direct way of influencing public services and their outcomes.

However, there are also barriers for undertaking co-production. The more demanding the act of co-production, the more resources of the user are required, in terms of time, physical work or money (Jakobsen, 2013). Users would not only have to be able to contribute these resources, they also have to be motivated to do so (Alford, 2009a). Moreover, recent research has shown that self-efficacy, i.e. the belief citizens can make a difference, is an important determinant of co-productive efforts, especially of collective co-production (Bovaird et al.,

2015; Parrado et al., 2013). As ability, willingness and self-efficacy might be lacking amongst the most vulnerable group of users, co-production could lead to marginalization (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming). Importantly, when users are required to co-produce, but they are unable or unwilling, this will unlikely lead to the expected perception of influence that is supposed to decrease feelings of uncertainty.

Another barrier arises when co-production represents a collective act. Here, groups of users participate and cooperate in the delivery of public services. Because cooperation is the precondition for successful collective co-production, trust within the group becomes an important factor (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming). There are several possibilities for this trust to arise. When users are known to each other, the building of trust is easier than when they are relative strangers. Residents who unite and co-produce neighbourhood safety within community policing are likely to know each other, or have some sense of common interest as they live in the same area. However, when such linkages do not exist, there should be other factors than group identification that facilitate trust. Strangers are less likely to trust each other because they have no information about each other's intentions. When there are doubts whether other users are motivated to co-produce, and when there is indeed a chance that people deflect from their duty to provide efforts in the service delivery, the collective co-production process is negatively affected (Pestoff, 2014). The perception that others might contribute fewer efforts in the co-production than you are contributing increases feelings of outcome uncertainty. Hence, features that assure that free-riding is impossible, costly, or strongly discouraged, will decrease uncertainty about the behaviour of others, and therefore uncertainty about the expected outcome.

Table 1 shows the different strategies that users could use to cope with outcome uncertainty. We have argued that co-production differs from other uncertainty reducing mechanisms because it provides the possibility for users to directly influence service outcomes. Nevertheless, as co-production by definition involves at least two parties, it remains impossible for users to gain complete control over the service outcome by acting as a co-producer. PSOs remain to play an important role in the service delivery process. An important question is then: what is the impact of co-production for organizational uncertainty?

It could be argued that when users become integrated into the service process, service staff becomes more familiar with the preferences, attitudes, and behaviour of their clients. This increases the predictability of the actions of users, which would decrease uncertainty. However, such integration will not take place from one moment to another. This will require an enduring relationship between user and service provider, effective communication, and mutual understanding (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). Before such a relationship is built, it remains unknown for PSO how users will behave when they are involved as co-producers. Hence, users may benefit from co-production by reducing some uncertainty over the service outcome, but it remains the question whether organizations are eager to include users in service delivery.

Table 1. Different strategies of users to cope with uncertainty

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Intended effect</i>	<i>Barriers for users</i>
Knowledge	Gaining knowledge about service process and outcomes	User is better prepared for service process and potential outcomes	User is dependent on information given by PSO; processing complex information might be difficult
Exit/choice	Leaving the PSO for another / choosing a PSO, a service within a PSO or directions within a service	PSO that suffers from exit will try to improve, alternative may lead to successful service; user is able to choose the service that fits his/her preferences best	Uncertainty about alternative options; exit might be costly or no choice is available; information that is needed to make a good choice is often lacking
Voice	Communicating preferences or dissatisfaction through formal or informal channels	PSO alters the service according to user's wishes	Requires communicative skills; organization needs to be responsive
Co-production	Participation in the service delivery process	Direct influence of users' behaviour on service outcome	Requires the ability and motivation of users to co-produce; collective co-production requires cooperation among users

To better understand the implication of engaging users as co-producers in service delivery for PSOs, we need a theory that describes how organizations respond to external influences. A logical starting-point is contingency theory, which primarily deals with external factors ('contingencies') that moderate the effect of specific organizational characteristics on organizational effectiveness (Donaldson, 2001). Uncertainty is regarded as one of the most important contingencies organizations are faced with. Therefore the theory is eminently suitable for the analysis of how organizations respond to the uncertainties inherent to co-production. In the next section, we will give a brief introduction to contingency theory and on that basis identify specific strategies that organizations employ to reduce uncertainties.

Contingency theory, uncertainty and co-production

Contingency theory was formulated in the 1960s and extended years after (Argote, 1982; Thompson, 1967). The core element of contingency theory is *instrumental rationality* (while

recognizing the limits of this rationality) and follows a *logic of consequences*: it assumes that ‘organizations analyse their technical environment and plan appropriate strategies in anticipation of beneficial consequences’ (Entwistle, 2011: 661). When organizations take their specific context into consideration, which includes internal and external contingencies (such as task uncertainty and size), they will be able to adapt their coordination by designing specific standards and procedures. Contingency theory attempts to answer the question: which type of practice works best in a particular situation (Gupta et al., 1994)? So, for instance, within an environment of high task uncertainty (referring to the variability and difficulty of work methods) organic structures (flexibility, joint responsibilities, employee discretion) are believed to perform best, whereas mechanistic structures (hierarchical, centralized decision-making, little discretion) are thought to fit low task uncertainty environments better (Donaldson, 2001: 121).

Thompson (1967) tries to bridge the conflict between the ‘closed systems’ and ‘open systems’ approaches to organizations. Closed systems models do not account for external influences, whereas open systems models neglect the more controllable factors. Thompson tries to integrate the two views, perceiving complex organizations ‘as open systems, hence indeterminate and faced with uncertainty, but at the same time subject to criteria of rationality, and hence needing determinateness and certainty’ (Thompson, 1967: 10). He further notes that a closed systems approach may well be applied to technical functions of the organization, whereas an open systems approach suits the broader institutional environment. To be able to retain the ‘technical core’ as a closed system as much as possible, organizations would try to ‘seal off’ the technical core from environmental influences (Thompson, 1967: 19). These influences create uncertainties, which may hinder the ‘technical rationality’, i.e. the achievement of desired outcomes against a minimum of costs.

Chase and Tansik (1983) argue that the involvement of users in the service process are a source of uncertainty for organizations. Thus, following Thompson, they argue that the less contact users have with the service provision, the higher the efficiency of that service will be. This would mean that, in general, involving users as co-producers is unattractive for organizations, and should be discouraged in favour of efficiency. Rather, client behaviour should be as little variable as possible – the less autonomous clients can act, the more predictable their behaviour will be (Blau and Scott, 1962).

Thompson (1967) argues that the overall ‘organizational rationality’ is not restricted to its technological rationality. Organizational rationality also involves the input and the output activities surrounding the core technological activities. Because input, output, and technology are interdependent, it becomes impossible to completely ‘seal off’ the technological core. Argote (1982) therefore regards service users as the inevitable, but main source of uncertainty for organizations. Within PSOs, this *input uncertainty* already starts at informing the professional (e.g. a welfare worker) about his/her problems, needs and capacities (Llewellyn

and Saunders, 1998). In other words, by minimizing the co-productive efforts of users, PSOs may actually decrease the quality of their services.

This leads to the conclusion that the attitude of PSOs towards co-production may be ambiguous: on the one hand, it increases uncertainty, on the other hand, PSOs are to a large extent unable to exclude users from their technical core (Thompson, 1967), and moreover, their involvement might be necessary for the quality and effectiveness of the service (Mills et al., 1983). Thus, the challenge for organizations becomes then how to manage user input and the uncertainty that is inevitably attached to it. In order to distinguish different responses of organizations to uncertainty, we will draw on the framework proposed by Brown and Osborne (2012). They argue that organizations can adopt either more closed or more open systems approaches. In the next section, we will elaborate on these two ways of responding to uncertainty.

Organizational responses to input uncertainty

Organizational responses to uncertainty with respect to co-production can be based on a variety of more closed or more open systems models. A closed systems approach tries to minimize risk and uncertainty – which are interpreted as negative conditions – as much as possible. Uncertainty is regarded as an internal problem that can be managed by changing processes within the organization (Brown and Osborne, 2012). Brown and Osborne (2012: 196) argue, however, that more complex service arrangements require ‘an open systems approach that acknowledges the fragmentation of both the knowledge base and the task, as well as the need for iterative interaction across a range of partners for successful implementation’. Such an approach focuses on the involvement of the most important stakeholders of a service. This will be explained in more detail after a description of more closed systems approaches, which include *selection of users*, the use of *motivators*, and *professionalization*.

Closed systems approaches to input uncertainty

Input uncertainty depends on two factors: the *diversity of user demand* and the *tendency of users to participate* in the performance of the service (Larsson and Bowen, 1989). On the one hand, organizations face uncertainty about the exact problems and the diversity of those problems as perceived by users. On the other hand, uncertainty exists because it is unknown whether or why the user wants to be involved in the service process. For instance, they could be willing because they are intrinsically motivated to co-produce, i.e. they enjoy their personal involvement. Alternatively, they could feel their active involvement is necessary to guarantee quality. Not knowing the actual motivations of users could have detrimental consequences. A teacher could assume that students recognize that they should participate actively in class and that they enjoy their engagement in discussions. When, however, the

students are passive and uninterested, the quality of the class will probably be low (Porter, 2012). A co-produced neighbourhood safety project in a Dutch municipality failed partially because some of the volunteers that were supposed to keep watch in the area were more busy with acting as a police officer than with giving residents a safe feeling (Fledderus, Broersma, et al., 2014). The motivations of the participants were not adequately understood.

Following Larsson and Bowen (1989), organizations could focus on altering the diversity of user demand on the one hand, and on changing the tendency of users to co-produce on the other hand. What does this mean practically?

Organizations could employ a *selection* procedure for the clients who they serve, controlling the variability of user demand (Katz and Kahn, 1978: 130). Selection could take place through eligibility criteria (selecting only those with particular capacities), or by providing information selectively (for instance, by inviting particular users to participate). The risk from selection is that only the clients that are the easiest to serve are involved – a practice that has been called ‘creaming’ or market segmentation (Fountain, 2001). As a consequence, this could result in a selection of advantaged clients, and marginalizing those who are actually alienated from public institutions (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming).

In order to influence the tendency of users to co-produce, so-called *motivators* could be used: incentives for users to engage in service production (Alford, 2009a). These could take shape in the form of financial rewards, punishment in the case of deterrence, but also in the form of non-material rewards, such as social recognition or group identity. The effectiveness of these motivators then depends on the characteristics of the users and the type of co-produced activity. For instance, time-consuming and complex activities are less likely to be encouraged through monetary rewards than easy, ad-hoc actions (Alford, 2009a).

In this reading, selection and motivators are used to curb high levels of user involvement. Although these mechanisms might result in excluding less-advantaged users (who would benefit the most from higher quality services), they could have positive effects at the wider system level. For instance, there could be clear reasons to involve a particular group of residents in a neighbourhood watch programme. As volunteers might be exposed to confrontations with suspects, selection on certain criteria might be necessary. It is likely and understandable that those who are responsible for selecting participants (e.g. police officers, public officials) will pick out willing, intrinsically motivated and cooperative citizens to join the neighbourhood watch (considering they might be confronted with violence). Likewise, in the case of health care, it is not unlikely that a doctor will refrain from giving a patient the room to get involved in the treatment, if he or she thinks this patient lacks particular skills (e.g. because of mental disabilities). In these cases, selection might actually improve the outcome (safety, health) for disadvantaged individuals too. Furthermore, selection might be crucial for collective forms of co-production. As mentioned, the success of collective co-production is dependent on the willingness of users to cooperate. In order to increase the likeliness of this cooperation to happen, organizations could use ‘recruitment and selection

processes designed to bring into the system individuals whose values are congruent with those of current organizational members' (Robertson and Tang, 1995: 71). Yet, this may lead to a biased composition of users. For instance, parental cooperatives in Sweden attract mainly highly educated parents with a concern about the quality of child care (Vamstad, 2012). Although such a selection might have positive outcomes for the people involved in co-production, it could also lead to rather closed communities and the exclusion of other citizens (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012).

Finally, *professionalism* within public service delivery can serve as a way of decreasing uncertainty that comes along with co-production. Through specific, expert knowledge professionals are more easily able to recognize the problems and needs of users. The role of service users is to then to trust the advice of experts, to accept hierarchy, and to comply with the directions given by the professionals (Ewert and Evers, 2014). Indeed, Vamstad (2012: 1177) argues that as a consequence of the professionalization of the Swedish public sector, less room was left for volunteering amateurs, because the 'superior knowledge' of professionals would provide the highest service quality. In Dutch school boards the number of parent board members decreased over the last couple of years due to policy initiatives to professionalize boards (Honingh and Hooge, 2012). Hence, within a closed systems approach the knowledge of professionals can be classified as 'mystical', limiting the access of users to public services (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013). Involving users would only be risky, as they are uneducated and unskilled to take part in the delivery process (Vamstad, 2012; Whitaker, 1980). Only when they feel that users are capable enough, professionals may decide to allow them to take over some tasks. Professionals are then responsible for 'matching' the capabilities of users to the many intermediate levels and types of contributions by users that are possible. For instance, some jobseekers may be left free in starting up their own social enterprise, whereas for others following a job application course might be already a huge contribution.

However, professionals may take upon a different role when a different approach is followed. In an open systems approach, it is understood that the knowledge of professionals is not mystical, but that it is more dispersed. Thus, in order to upkeep legitimacy, they need to engage users more actively in the provided service (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013). This may demand a more open systems approach to uncertainty. What this exactly entails will be described in the next section.

Open systems approaches to uncertainty

As mentioned above, closed systems approaches to uncertainty seek to decrease uncertainty and risks as much as possible. Morgan (2000: 17) mentions that such traditional responses to risk and uncertainty, which are negative and restrictive, 'only serve to confirm users' suspicions, and increase their distance from professionals and thus the chance of risks occurring.' They put too much emphasis on the negative side of risks (while certain organizational

risks could be beneficial for users) and on professional knowledge about risks (as users can interpret these risks completely differently) (Brown and Osborne, 2012). Therefore, 'positive' risk-taking must be preferred, which refers to involving 'collaborative working, based on the establishment of trusting working relationships, whereby service users can learn from their mistakes based on taking chances, just like anyone else' (Morgan, 2000: 17).

Such an open systems approach has eye for the potential benefits of risk-taking, and focuses on the involvement of important stakeholders of the service. With respect to co-production, users can be regarded to be the most important stakeholders. An open systems approach entails then that users should be involved in a dialogue about how they perceive risks they take when co-producing; what level of risk the PSO as well as the users are prepared to take; and for what price (costs versus benefits) they are willing to take risks (Brown and Osborne, 2012). This means transparent and inclusive management of uncertainty, allowing a plurality of voices to discuss and negotiate which and how risks are to be taken.

In particular, such a transparent, negotiated style of uncertainty management may be preferred when new needs are addressed, or when there are contested views about needs and risks. In the Netherlands, for example, there are a few parental child care cooperatives. However, national regulations restrict such co-produced child care initiatives: they cannot fulfil the 'three face criteria', which states that children are not allowed to see more than three caretakers at the facility. Here, parents and government disagree about the need for and the risk involved with co-production. Brown and Osborne (2012) argue that in such a case, two important stages need to be followed. First, it requires the establishment of 'a collaborative process that can enable negotiation to take place with the broad range of stakeholders, to reach a shared understanding of acceptable levels of risk, including acknowledging and attempting to resolve contested views' (Brown and Osborne, 2012: 202). This implies that co-production should not be restricted to the delivery phase, but also to prior phases, such as consultation and decision-making (Bovaird, 2007). After this stage, accountability needs to be build into the process. Who is responsible for which risks? Some aspects are in control of the PSO. As said, users often remain dependent on the skills or resources of the PSO. Without adequate support and facilitation, leaving too many tasks to users will foster alienation from the public service. Users might then feel exploited and left alone by the PSO, which may result in lack of control and uncertainty. When the PSO is clear in what the PSO does to make co-production happen, users might also be more prepared to take responsibility for eventual risks.

To summarize, organizations are faced with uncertainty when users co-produce, and there are different approaches to manage this uncertainty (see Table 2). Closed systems approaches focus on internal organizational processes, such as selection mechanisms and incentive structures. Open systems approaches involve users in discussing risks and responsibilities that are related to co-production. The question that remains is when organizations opt for closed approaches to uncertainty, and when for open approaches. In the final part of the chapter, it is argued that this depends for a large part on the institutional environment.

Table 2. Organizational responses to uncertainty and co-production

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
Closed systems	Emphasis on minimizing uncertainty PSO staff determines levels and types of user contributions	Selection procedures Use of motivators Professionalism
Open systems	Emphasis on the benefits of uncertainty PSO staff and users negotiate levels and types of user contributions	Negotiation about risks between PSO staff and users Discussing accountability with PSO staff and users

Institutional theory and uncertainty

As mentioned, uncertainty plays a central role in institutional theory too, albeit in a different form. Here, the argument is that uncertainty about stakeholder support leads organizations to respond to ‘overarching social forces such as norms, standards and expectations held by relevant stakeholders and common to all inhabitants of the organization field’ (Kraatz and Zajac, 1996: 821). This idea was supported by the finding that organizations within a particular field tend to become rather similar with regards to structure, goals and practices (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Institutional theory explains that organizations that are dependent upon the government have the disposition to adopt a bureaucratic form of control, because this is the prescript within government: bureaucracy is the ‘taken-for-granted’ form of organization (Gupta et al., 1994). Hasenfeld and Powell (2004) show that English non-profit organizations, being involved in the delivery of reemployment services, adopted their original practices to the dominant institutional norms, rules and cognitive schema of the policy that was designed by government. They conclude that this downplayed the unique character of these non-profit organizations (such as providing individual-tailored services and innovation): for instance, they started using coercive (rather than participatory) instruments, and focused on performance targets, rather than more broad goals such as empowerment. This turn from the original social purpose to an economic one is known as the problem of ‘mission drift’ (Rees, 2014).

In the same vein as social forces may frustrate the work modes of non-profit organizations, institutional pressures could lead to less involvement of users as co-producers. The hierarchical mode of governance that results from these pressures tends to focus on accountability through the measurement of *outputs*. This may distract organizations from values that may be important but difficult to measure, in particular those activities that are potentially delivered through user co-production at the input or throughput stage of the service delivery. Even though the critique on performance standards in terms of outputs is known, the practice is persistent (Aiken and Bode, 2009; Lodge and Gill, 2011). In the UK,

there have been attempts to move to outcome evaluation, in particular in the case of micro-commissioning. However, in a review, Williams et al. (2012: 84) note that commissioning is often still assessed in terms of activities and outputs, and it remains ‘unclear how outcomes are being incorporated into the procurement processes subsequent to commissioning decisions’. Moreover, the focus on targets often decreases the *discretion* for both service professionals and users to act. For professionals, it leaves less room to give attention to specific personal problems, or to invest in personal relations with users (Bonvin, 2008). It therefore also decreases the possibility to negotiate and discuss about uncertainties of co-production, increasing the chance that closed systems approaches will be adopted.

For users, aspects of bureaucratic control such as standardization hinder the input of additional activities, which may be needed to improve the service, or which may even be intrinsically desired by users (Bettencourt, 1997; Larsson and Bowen, 1989). Moreover, fixed-term funding on the basis of over-specified contracts tends to undermine the long-term trust between professional organizations and communities, disrupting the motivation and engagement of the latter to provide input in the service (Milbourne and Cushman, 2013). Thus, as a result of institutional pressures, there may be less space, time, and resources for users to fulfil their co-producer role. When service organizations indeed are guided and controlled by norms, rules and ideas from their main stakeholder – (local or national) government – it could thus be expected that co-productive efforts are minimized.

This view assumes that government is the main stakeholder from which organizations gain their legitimacy. An alternative view is that users also express particular expectations and needs, which could, when not met by service organizations, reduce the legitimacy of those organizations severely. In fact, this is the argument when scholars refer to a ‘crisis of trust’ (Vigoda-Gadot and Mizrahi, 2014: 2) between citizens and government. In order to ‘restore’ the assumed decrease of public trust, governments should focus on the governance, management and organization of their public services (Rothstein and Stolle, 2008; Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003). For instance, the market-type reforms at the end of last millennium (with the focus on ‘empowering’ instruments such as exit and choice) have been, according to some, proven to be insufficient to gain the support of citizens (see Van de Walle, 2010). It is argued that these reforms have paid too less attention to the co-productive role of citizens (Osborne et al., 2013), and thus new modes of service delivery should focus on the involvement of users in the service process, possibly resulting in improved legitimacy of democratic governance (Pestoff, 2009). Hence, when citizens are perceived as the most important stakeholders, and their involvement is important for the legitimacy of service organizations, it could be expected that organizations will indeed provide structures for co-production and more open systems approaches of uncertainty management.

Yet, this co-production could remain symbolic, rather than a true cooperation between users and professionals to improve the quality of the service. Royo et al. (2011) use institutional theory to explain the need for governments to adopt citizen participation initiatives.

They would adopt them ‘as a symbol of responsiveness and good management, expecting them to be interpreted by citizens as improvements in transparency and accountability, but without necessarily incorporating citizens’ opinions in decision-making processes’ (Royo et al., 2011: 141–142). Such behaviour is known as ‘decoupling’, a separation between formal structure and actual activities (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The empirical analysis of Royo et al. (2011) also shows that citizen participation initiatives are encouraged by (German and Spanish) local governments predominantly because of coercive forces, and not because they are eager to actually use the views of citizens in their decision making. Legislative pressures appear to be stronger determinants of policy implementation than the perceptions of users.

Another way of organizations to symbolically embrace co-production is to use it in order to shift their own responsibility for reaching outputs or outcomes towards individual users or collectives. This is the main critique on programmes such as the Big Society in the UK, or the ‘participation society’ in the Netherlands: the emphasis on citizen participation and self-reliance is believed to be synonym for cutbacks, and not for any genuine change in policies. Viewed in this way, responsibilities are not negotiated according to an open systems approach, but rather imposed on citizens. Nevertheless, normative forces could sometimes lead to actual change in user behaviour. For instance, there has been a major shift in the field of social security, where a focus on rights and duties has been replaced with a notion of citizens as active and responsible human agents (Borghi and Van Berkel, 2007). The increase in active labour market policies, engaging citizens in their own reemployment, shows that normative changes could be combined with actual changes in policy, and in fact could foster co-production.

To summarize, institutional theory predicts that PSOs tend to adapt to governmental pressures, resulting in bureaucratic and output oriented practices. This leads to more closed systems approaches to dealing with uncertainty and co-production. High levels of co-production and the additional benefits of co-production too, could therefore be thwarted. An alternative prediction is that organizations adapt to the desires of users, who want to become involved, although this might be symbolic, instead of real change of internal organization.

Conclusion

Our theoretical analysis shows that PSOs might be less compelled to pursue co-production than commonly thought. The involvement of users as co-producers implies an increase in uncertainty for PSOs. Whether co-production will be realized in the first place depends on the way PSOs react on the challenges that come with this uncertainty. The strategies employed by PSOs to cope with uncertainty, in turn, seem to be dependent on the institutional environment of PSOs. Strategies that are designed to minimize uncertainty as much as possible may lead to the exclusion of particular groups of users. They can also frustrate

the possibility of users to have an influence in the service outcome. Ultimately, this lack of inclusion and influence perceived by users could lead to a decrease of trust in public service delivery and government (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). Thus, in order to organize co-production in a way where both users and PSOs benefit, PSOs will have to accept certain uncertainties that come along with co-production.

This analysis has several implications for future research on co-production of public services. We will provide three suggestions, related to the initial stage, the process stage, and the outcome stage of service delivery (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). With regards to the initial phase of service delivery, our analysis shows that the behaviour of organizations influences the extent to which citizens will be engaged in co-production. Therefore, research needs to take into account which and why users are *not* involved in co-production. The cause of exclusion may be found in organizational strategies to cope with co-production, but it may also be the result of a lack of self-efficacy or trust at the individual level.

At the process stage of service delivery, future co-production research should focus on the interaction between the motives and behaviour both at the user and the organizational side. Are users indeed able to influence the service process or does their participation remain 'symbolic'? Are professionals given the space to go discuss and negotiate the role of users in the service delivery? These questions automatically require an analysis of the institutional environment, including the pressures of important stakeholders, which might limit the ability of PSOs to deal with uncertainty.

Finally, at the outcome stage of service delivery, it would be interesting to investigate how users respond to disappointing outcomes. If users feel that any risk related to co-production is a responsibility of the PSO, disappointing outcomes will likely result in low levels of satisfaction (Fledderus, 2015a). However, when there are clear agreements on accountability issues (e.g. in an open systems approach), one would expect that co-producing users may also be prepared to take some responsibility for negative outcomes. As a result, users might be less pessimistic in their evaluation of the service.

Verschuere et al. (2012: 1096–1097) have argued that 'for systematic advancement, it will be necessary to link the study of co-production more explicitly to general theories widely accepted in the social sciences'. By the use of well-established theories, our analysis has contributed to the improvement of our knowledge on co-production of public service delivery. Most importantly, we have shown that the realization of co-production may encounter serious organizational and institutional resistance.

4 |

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

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Abstract

Activation services that aim at reemployment of jobseekers often suffer from ‘creaming’, i.e. selecting those who have the best qualifications to re-enter the labour market. New ways of delivery, such as co-production, are supposed to be less subject to selection mechanisms. To analyse whether co-produced activation programmes suffer from selection biases, participants of a local innovative activation programme (n=60) were compared to non-participants (n=18). Participants are more motivated in general and showed higher levels of generalized, municipal and interpersonal trust. Moreover, high general motivation relates to high levels of trust and perceived control. This indicates there is indeed a selection bias within co-produced activation programmes. Therefore, it remains uncertain whether co-production is more successful in dealing with creaming than common types of service delivery.

Introduction

These days, users of public services are invited to get actively involved in the delivery of public services. This notion of co-production emphasizes partnership and collaboration and is considered to be a promising concept in providing services of better quality and in increasing service satisfaction and public trust (Verschuere et al., 2012). It is often regarded as a solution to at least some of the problems related to ‘traditional’ Public Administration, where clients are passive and loyal to the service provider, and to New Public Management (NPM), where clients are a consumer within a marketized arena, ideally having the ability to choose between providers, but where they are not actively involved in the service delivery (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014; Torfing and Triantafyllou, 2013).

Also within the provision of activation policies, which aim to get welfare recipients back into the labour market, there is an emergent ‘New Public Governance’ (NPG) framework, ‘characterized by a broader range of delivery actors, diverse processes of service delivery, and a greater emphasis on co-producing services in collaboration with end users’ (Lindsay et al., 2014: 4). Over the past decades, however, the delivery of activation services in many European countries has been inspired by NPM. One of the problems of competition between private providers of such services was ‘creaming’, i.e. selecting those who have already good qualifications in order to retain high success rates (Bruttel, 2005: 401–402). The question is: does the problem of selection disappear when activation services are based on co-production?

Two types of selection might occur. Creaming is a form of organizational selection, which might be stimulated not only by competition, but also by performance management. The second type of selection relates to the role of the jobseeker. Some welfare recipients do not want or are not able to enter activation programmes for different reasons and will therefore try to avoid getting involved. For instance, low trust in public institutions, low self-esteem, disappointing previous experiences with services or poor (mental) health might hold people back from participating.

Activation programmes provide an interesting case of co-production since they often entail a mandatory element, whereas normally, co-production is considered to be a voluntary act (Brudney and England, 1983). By the use of (the threat of) sanctions clients are compelled to collaborate and take up particular activities. Those who are unmotivated and have low self-esteem and low levels of trust might actually be reached when sanctions are used. This leads to a supplementary question: does the use of compulsion have an effect on the (possible) selection biases within activation programmes?

A recently introduced activation policy in the municipality of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, will be used as a case. This policy allows organizations, so-called ‘work corporations’ (*werkcorporaties*), to offer work-learning programmes to social assistance recipients. They could be understood as a specific type of ‘Work Integration Social Enterprises’ (WISEs) (Davister et al., 2004). In the next section, we will first briefly introduce activation services

and co-production. Moving on from there, self-selection and organizational selection will be explained. Then, the case, methods and sample are described. The results of a comparative survey study are presented in turn, and the paper concludes with the implications of the findings.

Policy background

Activation services are expected to promote ‘the (more or less obligatory) participation of people dependent on unemployment benefits or social assistance in work’ (Van Berkel and Borghi, 2008: 332). Activation programmes could help to minimize the marginalizing effects of unemployment – such as a decline in social contacts, well-being, agency, perceived control and trust (Andersen, 2008; Fryer, 1997; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). In the field of activation policies, there is increasingly room for interagency cooperation, the involvement of third sectors and social innovation (Van Berkel and De Graaf, 2011). Municipalities more often cooperate with non-profit and/or voluntary organizations, a trend that can be witnessed in other countries too, such as the UK (Lindsay et al., 2008) and Denmark (Lindsay and McQuaid, 2009). These collaborative partnerships are believed to be less focused on competition, and are supposed to emphasize the role of users as co-producer.

Let us clarify what we mean by co-production of activation services. There are at least two interpretations of co-production (Porter, 2012). The first is that there are services which cannot be effectively produced without some involvement of the user. Education and activation services are examples of such inherent, inescapable co-production (Alford, 2009a). In the second usage, user input is added to enhance qualities and quantities of a public service. In this paper, we acknowledge the first interpretation of the concept of co-production, but we will use the second as our definition: although activation will never work without some involvement from users, there are different ways to deliver such services. According to our view, there is co-production when users are *actively* engaged in the delivery of the activation service. In WISEs, such active participation is required because users need to cover the expenses for their own reemployment through productive activities. Through these activities, they generate income, which is used to deliver the activation service. In this sense, users become co-producers of their own service.

The involvement of non-profit organizations on the one hand and engaging users as co-producers in the delivery of activation services on the other hand have both been related to democratization and inclusion, often by contrasting them with market solutions (Pestoff, 2009). The question is, however, whether activation programmes in which users co-produce are indeed better able to reach social inclusion. Two selection mechanisms might still be in place: self-selection and organizational selection. In the following section, the concepts needed to understand these mechanisms are introduced.

Theoretical background

Self-selection

Not everybody is eager to join activation programmes – especially when they entail much effort and devotion, as might be the case when users are considered as co-producers. There could be clear circumstances which restrict a person's participation, for instance when someone's health is poor or when a sick child needs to be taken care of. Such factors relate to people's *capabilities and resources*. However, there are also other factors which could determine participation, such as motivation, trust and perceived control (consisting of self-esteem, self-efficacy and internal control), which will be described below.

Motivations

Motivation to co-produce can be *extrinsic* or *intrinsic*. If motivations are based on the expectation of material rewards or punishments from an external party (such as cutting one's benefit), one needs to speak of extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the idea that somebody participates in certain activities because he or she finds the activities themselves interesting, worthwhile and enjoyable (Deci, 1972).

Next to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, *sociality* might also be a motivation to get involved. This refers to the pleasure of associating with others: 'people may contribute even if it disadvantages them financially, because they enjoy the company, fellowship and esteem of others' (Alford, 2009a: 27). Especially for people without a job, gaining social contacts could be an important driver. Finally, people may participate out of *normative* considerations, which may also conflict with material self-interest. Alford (2009a) gives the example of a rich person supporting progressive taxation out of a sense of fairness. Similarly, when people receive welfare benefits, they might find it appropriate to do something in return for this allowance.

Whereas extrinsic motivations are often found in simpler, transactional services, more complex or relational services require in addition intrinsic motivation. Since co-produced activation programmes consist of enduring and demanding activities, it is likely that a selection occurs on the part of the welfare recipients. Those who are only motivated by rewards (or sanctions), and not by their urge for a new job, will not enter these programmes as readily as those who are eager to become employable.

Trust and perceived control

Trust is recognized as one of the key conditions for collaboration (Yamagishi and Cook, 1993). People with low levels of trust in (local) government and/or the service provider, will probably be less convinced by the benefits of the programme than individuals who have high levels of trust. This relates to the perception of external efficacy: 'is the service able to help me?' (Calzada and Pino, 2008). Moreover, when the programme involves working together

with a group of participants, having trust in fellow citizens (generalized trust) may also be an important precondition.

Furthermore, perceiving control over one's life will increase the chance of participation. Being happy about yourself (self-esteem), thinking that your actions (like joining an activation programme) have positive consequences (self-efficacy) and thinking that reemployment is the result of hard work rather than luck (internal control) all contribute to this feeling of perceived control (Skinner, 1995). The expectation of success greatly determines the likelihood of conducting particular behaviour (Feather, 1992). Therefore, people who feel incapable of changing their situation will be less inclined to search for a job, and therefore will show little job-searching behaviour (Taris, 2002). Or, to put it another way: because people with a high sense of control tend to select challenging tasks (Bandura, 1989), they are more likely to get involved in activation programmes.

Hence, activation programmes are likely to suffer from self-selection. However, it is conceivable that organizational selection plays a role too.

Organizational selection

Creaming refers to the practice of selecting the most qualified candidates for participation in order to increase programme success (Van Berkel, 2010: 30). This includes selecting on so-called 'hard' characteristics, such as educational background, language proficiency and work experience, but it could also involve 'soft' characteristics, such as social skills, appearance and motivation. It is thought that creaming is especially a risk when contracting out services to private companies (Van Berkel and Van der Aa, 2005). The process underlying this phenomenon could be described as market segmentation. Firms identify what the main demographic and psychographic characteristics of potential clients are and differentiate according to customer segments (Fountain, 2001: 13). Creaming is believed to be stimulated when fierce accountability measures are in place. The effective spending of resources on activation services is increasingly managed by the use of performance targets (Van Berkel, 2010). Thus, activation services are often evaluated on the basis of their capacity to increase labour market participation. A lack of effectiveness will result in a weak position in tendering. Hence, to reduce this uncertainty, organizations could try to influence the composition of their clientele. Market segmentation and a focus on output lead to a propensity to help the clients easiest to serve, which could bring about a selection of individuals with not only greater capabilities and resources, but also 'soft' characteristics such as motivation, trust and perceived control.

Scholars suggest that network governance will make creaming less of an issue (Van Berkel, 2010: 30). This assumption seems to relate to the inclusion of non-profit organizations in the delivery of activation services. These organizations are expected to be less occupied with individualistic behaviour, competition and outputs, and more with human development and holistic approaches to social integration (Lindsay et al., 2014). What is neglected, however, is that network governance often demands more from service users. The more

organizations depend on the efforts of their clients – which are difficult to control – the more motivation becomes important. Moreover, in practice, performance indicators and targets are nowadays widely used for monitoring the output of local service providers – not only within marketized arenas (Van Berkel, 2010). Consequently, within network governance too, selection could occur.

Coercive measures, however, seems to counteract creaming. Activation programmes often include mandatory elements (Dingeldey, 2007). Using coercion implies that everybody should do their best to become job-ready, and there are few (or no) excuses. People who do not participate in work-first programmes or work-learn activities are considered ‘unwilling’, and should therefore have no right on privileges such as benefits. There are several reasons to make use of (the threat of) sanctioning. It can be used as a gate-keeping function when workload is high (Lipsky, 1980). Sanctions can also be employed to make clients comply with the rules and to collaborate, and to ‘control’ the motivation of clients (Thorén, 2005). In this latter way, the use of force and obligation might actually help to reach those people who have little motivation, low trust and low perceived control. Hence, there could be a link between being motivated because of the threat of sanctions and/or because somebody told you to do so, and general motivation, trust and perceived control.

To summarize, self-selection and organizational selection potentially play a role within co-production. As a consequence, the participants of activation programmes could be those citizens who have sufficient capabilities and resources, who are already highly motivated, and who have high levels of trust and perceived control. Using force might involve those who are not motivated and have both low levels of trust and little perceived control.

Figure 1 illustrates four possible variables which could be related to organizational and self-selection. In order to investigate the model, a particular activation programme in a Dutch municipality is used as a case study, which suits an analysis of selection biases in the four concepts, but also illustrates the relation between extrinsic motivation, general motivation, trust and perceived control.

Figure 1. Selection mechanisms

Case: work corporations

In the summer of 2011, several work corporations started operating in the municipality of Nijmegen, a middle-sized city in the Netherlands (see Fledderus, Broersma, et al., 2014). These work corporations aim at reemploying social assistance recipients at a considerable distance from the labour market by offering work, guidance and education. They can be best understood as a specific type of WISEs (Davister et al., 2004). Davister et al. (2004: 3) define WISEs as ‘autonomous economic entities whose main objective is the professional integration – within the WISE itself or in mainstream enterprises – of people experiencing serious difficulties in the labour market. This integration is achieved through productive activity and tailored follow-up, or through training to qualify the workers.’ Across Europe, more than 50 types of WISE have been identified (Nyssens, 2014). They differ in the way their participants are integrated, but also in financial structure, resources and objectives. What are the assets of work corporations?

Work corporations are entirely run by the beneficiaries under supervision, often with the support of professionals. The revenue earned by the participants is directly invested in the organizational costs of the work corporation. Thus, we can speak of a co-produced activation programme: without the efforts of the participants, the work corporation would not exist.

Work corporations have clear objectives: they should aim at personal development; the service or product delivered should have societal relevance (which may be interpreted broadly); and a work corporation should be able to be self-sufficient in the long term. The main goal of the programme is to get into a paid job within two years at the most.

The municipality takes care of recruiting participants, i.e. determining who is eligible to join. It also provides required facilities for the reemployment programme and monitors the output target (in terms of outflow of clients). The work corporation’s functions include: having the final responsibility for the selection of participants (they may reject participants for any reason); creating a personal reemployment programme / development plan for the participant; guiding the participant during the development process; and providing education/training.

Beneficiaries can enter a work corporation in several ways. They can apply voluntarily through applying for vacancies, with or without the help of their job coach. The majority, however, have been summoned to join a so-called job market, where they visit stands of different work corporations, and afterwards have to fill in a form to request an interview with one of them. Welfare recipients are threatened with sanctions when they do not show up at the job market. Whether these sanctions are actually applied is at the discretion of the client’s job coaches. Indeed, clients have been punished for not participating in the job market. Nevertheless, when beneficiaries do show up and apply, they have the right to decline the job at the work corporation without being sanctioned. However, this is not something that

is stressed by the municipality and indeed, it turns out that there are quite a number of participants who believe they must participate in order to maintain the right to benefits.

When participants start working, they have to sign a contract where their rights and obligations are formulated; this also includes the fact that they could be sanctioned. Hence, participants could be extrinsically motivated by the threat of sanctions or by the persuasion of their job coach; but they could also be motivated by the content of the programme, by the social feature of the service or because they feel morally obliged.

To date (March 2013), 45 work corporations have emerged, of which 13 have more than five participants. Most of the investigated work corporations have their origins in delivering publicly funded non-profit services. For example, in one work corporation participants cook and serve food in a restaurant in combination with lower secondary vocational education; another guides participants who do maintenance in neighbourhoods; and a third work corporation is a furniture and decoration shop where people learn to work as a vendor.

Method and data

Data

The present study draws upon survey data retrieved from participants in seven of the 13 larger work corporations in the municipality of Nijmegen. The questionnaire was developed specifically for this study using existing items about *motivations* (Alford, 2009a), *trust* (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2008), *perceived control* (Scholz et al., 2002) and *capabilities and resources*. To determine how we could adapt some of the items to suit the purpose of our study we interviewed the policy advisor of the municipality, the project leaders of the work corporations. Cognitive interviewing was applied, including thinking aloud and retrospective probing (Willis, 2005), to five participants with different (ethnic) backgrounds to test whether they could understand the questionnaire. The final version was approved by all work corporation managers.

Measures

Motivations

To account for the variety of motivations and potential combination of motivational factors to participate in an activation programme, items regarding general and specific motivations in the questionnaire were included. One question addressed the participant's general motivation to participate in the programme on a scale from 1 to 4 ('did not like to participate (at all)' to '(very) much like to participate'). Based on Alford's (2009a) distinction of motivations, context-specific statements were developed with which respondents could disagree

(completely) (1,2), neither agree or disagree (3) or agree (completely) (4,5). This included intrinsic motivations ('the work I have to do is interesting'), outcome-related benefits (getting a job or education), sociality ('I want to have more contact with others'), normative motivations ('people with a benefit have to do something'), and extrinsic motivations based on compulsion ('somebody told me I had to participate'; 'I was afraid my benefit would be stopped').

Trust

Two broad types of trust are distinguished: *particularized* trust, which is aimed at a particular person, organization or institution, such as neighbours, (local) government or the service provider; and *generalized* trust, i.e. trust in people in general, or strangers. Respondents were asked to rate these forms of trust giving a number ranging from 0 to 10. Principal component analysis shows a clear distinction between those persons close to the respondent (neighbours, people in the neighbourhood and other participants) and organizations at a distance (government and the political system). Trust in managers of the work corporation and the municipality of Nijmegen double-loaded on these two dimensions, indicating that these neither fit the personal nor the abstract category. Therefore, these were kept as manifest variables. The mean for the 'interpersonal' factor was calculated (neighbours, people in the neighbourhood and other participants), which reported an alpha of .82. The same was done for trust in the political system and government (Pearson's r 0.88).

For the measurement of generalized trust, a three-item scale was used (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2008). Again, the items were simplified to comply with the language proficiency of the population. The questions were phrased in the following way: 'Are most people to be trusted or do you think most people are not to be trusted?', 'Do you think most people are honest or are most people dishonest?', 'Do you think people help each other often or do you think people only think about themselves?'. Respondents could choose a 10 for thinking people are completely to be trusted, honest and helpful and a 0 for the opposite. The scale's alpha was .84 and the mean was determined.

Perceived control

Three constructs measured perceived control: self-efficacy, self-esteem and locus of control. These three are considered to be core self-evaluations and actually part of a broad personality trait (Judge et al., 2002). Self-efficacy refers to the belief in the effectiveness of one's actions. Self-esteem entails the overall value one places on oneself as a person. Locus of control can be divided into internal and external control. 'Internals' believe they can influence many things that happen to them, whereas 'externals' feel events occur as a result of fate or luck.

Self-efficacy Three items from the validated GSE scale (Scholz et al., 2002) were slightly adapted to increase the comprehensiveness. Respondents had to say whether they '(not at all) agree' (1,2) or '(completely) agree' (3,4) to propositions such as 'I have a solution for most

problems when I try'. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was .65 and a mean was computed to construct the latent variable.

Self-esteem The measurement of self esteem is based on the validated Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Franck et al., 2008). From the original ten items, three items were selected and adapted slightly, involving questions such as 'I feel satisfied with myself'. Response options again ranged from 1 'not at all agreed' to 4 '(completely) agreed'. Alpha of the scale was .64 and again means were calculated.

Locus of control Spector's (1988) Work Locus of Control Scale was used as model for a context-specific measurement of locus of control. Two items dealt with the extent to which people feel their job search is affected by their own actions: 'If I work hard (at the work corporation), I will find a job later on' and 'If I make enough efforts (at the work corporation), I am likely to find a job later on'. The variable 'internal locus of control' consists of the mean of these two items (4-point scale).

Capabilities and resources

To measure capabilities and resources, perceived health (1 very bad to 5 very good), number of social contacts ('how many people do you have contact with outside the work corporation on a regular base', 0-3, 4-9 or 10 or more persons), duration of unemployment (in years), and country of birth (the Netherlands, outside the Netherlands) were measured.

Sample

Seven work corporations were selected for the sample. The selection criteria were: a minimum size of five participants; comparability in terms of internal organization (for instance, participants should have been working at the organization for at least one year). Furthermore, only those who had just started (for no more than four weeks) working in the period from September 2012 to January 2013 were invited to complete the survey. All of them (n=60) completed and returned the questionnaire.

A control group was set up to compare the results of the participants with non-participants. This group consists of participants who did apply for a work corporation, but did not start working there. This assured the same population (in terms of eligibility) was addressed. A €10 voucher was promised for taking the time to fill in the survey. Of the 100 surveys that were sent to members of the control group, 20 were returned, of which two could not be used because one did work at a work corporation and the other had a job already. The low response rate might be due to a lack of interest in the survey topic (what is in it for me?) and distrust in the intentions of the survey (although it was anonymous). This would imply that the control group consists of a selective group of non-participants, with higher levels of trust than the actual population.

This is supported by the reasons given by the respondents for their non-participation. It appears that most of them actually did like the work at the work corporation. This seems to point at organizational selection. Indeed, the majority (11 of 18) note that either there was no vacancy at this moment ($n=7$); they were told that they did not suit the profile ($n=2$); or that they have not been called back by the work corporation ($n=2$). The other responses could be linked to self-selection (7 of 18). For instance, three mentioned that they would not get a paid job anyway, and another wrote that he thought work corporations are ‘a form of exploitation’. Two mention that they cannot combine it with the care for their children, and another two say that the work was physically too demanding.

It should be noted that this control group does not involve those who chose not to attend the job market or those who did not apply at all, even though they were familiar with the programme. The size of the first group is known. 56% (233) of the 413 social assistance recipients that were invited to the job market did not turn up. A proportion of this group might have good reasons why they could not attend: 35% (82) had let the municipality known that they were unable to come – this might be due to health or having to take care for others. The remainder, however, had not – and this might be due to a lack of motivation. Thus, a fairly large self-selection has already taken place before jobseekers apply to the work corporation. This means that we do not have a complete view on the self-selection mechanism.

Results

Descriptive analysis

Table 1 shows the background characteristics of the participants and the control group. Compared to all social assistance receivers in Nijmegen (in 2011), there is a slight overrepresentation of men (55% compared to 48%). 53% were born in another country which does not differ much from the average in the population. The participants generally state that they are in good health (average 3.77). There is an overrepresentation of women in the control group, although the composition does not differ significantly from the participants’ group. The average age of the control group is slightly higher than the participants (45 versus 41). Most statistics which measure capabilities and resources (born in another country, social contacts, perceived health and duration of unemployment) also hold more or less the same values between the groups. Hence, non-participation cannot be explained by factors that relate to capabilities or resources of clients.

Table 2 presents the motivations of the participants and control group. The original 5-item scale has been dichotomized for presentation, where low stands for the lowest three categories (1, 2, 3) and high for the two highest (4, 5). It seems that the general motivation of participants is very high. 92% state they (very) much liked to enter the work corporation.

Table 1. Background characteristics

	participants (n=60)	control group (n=18)
Women (%)	45	67
Men (%)	55	33
Age (average in years)	41	45
Country of birth: Netherlands (%)	47	65
Country of birth: foreign (%)	53	35
Duration of unemployment: two years or less (%)	48	39
Duration of unemployment: more than two years (%)	52	61
Perceived health: (very) good (%)	62	59
Perceived health: (very) bad, not good / not bad (%)	38	41
Social contacts: 0-3 (%)	33	50
Social contacts: 4-9 (%)	37	33
Social contacts: 10 or more (%)	30	17

Only five of the 60 respondents said they were not eager to participate. Not surprisingly, almost all participants applied because they would like to get a job after the project (82%). Obtaining a diploma is also a main motivation for the majority (72%). Another reason mentioned often was getting in contact with others (78%). Hence, sociality is very important for most participants. This also suggests that many participants felt socially excluded as a result of being unemployed. Fewer respondents mentioned that the content of the work itself was an important motivator (73%). More or less the same amount agreed that their participation had to do with normative reasons: people on benefits have to do something (72%).

Table 2. Motivations of participants and control group

<i>Motivations</i>	participants (n=60)		control group (n=18)	
	low (%)	high (%)	low (%)	high (%)
General motivation	8	92	22	78
Getting a job	18	82	13	88
Work is interesting	27	73	40	60
Getting a diploma	28	72	53	47
More contact with others	22	78	40	60
People on benefits have to do something	28	72	33	67
Afraid of ending benefits	60	40	71	29
Somebody told me to	79	21	79	21

Only 40% said they were afraid of cutbacks on their benefits. 21% indicated they joined because someone said they had to. Hence, only a minority participates because of external pressure. Interestingly, participants are motivated by different factors simultaneously. Even most of the respondents who indicated there was external pressure nevertheless found the work interesting (65.2% of people working because of fears of ending benefits; 71.4% of people participating because somebody told them to). Still, participants indicating there are no external motivations more often stated they joined because they thought the job was interesting (respectively 78.6% and 77.4%). This supports the crowding-out hypothesis, although the differences are not marked. In general, participants are highly intrinsically motivated.

Strikingly, perceived control is high among participants (Table 3). On a four-point scale, the mean of self-efficacy is 3.31, that of self-esteem 3.47 and that of internal locus of control 3.30. This suggests a typical group of users have indeed entered work corporations. The means of generalized trust and interpersonal trust are 6.60 and 6.56. These figures are relatively high: in the European Social Survey (ESS), the average generalized trust of Dutch unemployed individuals looking for a job is 5.4⁴. Trust in government and politics is more similar to the average found in the ESS (4.25 compared to 4.50)⁵. Trust in the work corporation is very high (7.98), whereas trust in the municipality is somewhat lower (6.73).

Table 3. Trust and perceived control; means of participants and control group

	participants (n=60)	control group (n=18)
<i>Trust</i>		
Generalized trust	6,60 (1,97)	5,26 (2,39)*
Interpersonal trust	6,56 (1,92)	4,22 (2,53)*
Trust in work corporation	7,98 (2,10)	.
Trust in municipality	6,73 (2,52)	5,56 (2,55)†
Trust in government and politics	4,25 (2,93)	3,97 (2,83)
<i>Perceived control</i>		
Self-efficacy	3,31 (0,57)	3,13 (0,43)
Self-esteem	3,47 (0,48)	3,37 (0,53)
Internal locus of control	3,30 (0,58)	2,97 (0,76)†

*<.05, † p<.10; Standard deviation within parentheses

4. Own calculations; the same three-item construct was used to measure generalized trust.

5. Own calculations; mean of 'trust in parliament' and 'trust in politicians'.

Comparison with control group

It appears that the non-participants are less motivated in general than the participants, when comparing the original 5-point scales (Mann-Whitney U 376.5, $p < .05$)⁶. This supports the expectation that intrinsic motivation is required to participate in co-production. Participants also seem to be more motivated by the prospect of getting a diploma (Mann-Whitney U 303.5, $p < .05$), but there are no differences regarding the other reasons to join the programme. This could mean that non-participants are not looking for a long-term investment, but for quick solutions to their precarious situation.

Differences are also found in the levels of interpersonal trust (Mann-Whitney U 247.5, $p < .05$), municipal trust (Mann-Whitney U 392.5, $p < .10$) and generalized trust (Mann-Whitney U 336.0, $p < .05$), which are all higher for participants than non-participants (Table 3). The level of trust in government and politics was the same for both groups. The internal locus of control is somewhat higher for participants than for non-participants (Mann-Whitney U 372.0, $p < .10$). Yet, there are no significant differences between the two groups in relation to self-efficacy and self-esteem, whereas it was expected that this would be lower among the control group.

As said, because the group of non-participants is small and the non-response rate fairly high, there might be another selection effect (i.e. a particular group of non-participants completed the survey). Nevertheless, one would expect that, in particular, people with low levels of trust and perceived control would not respond to the survey. In fact, this would suggest that levels of trust and perceived control might even be lower among non-participants than found here.

Apparently, there is a selection bias concerning trust and motivation. Does this mean that selection on motivation also leads to a selection on trust? And does the use of extrinsic motivators help to involve those who have low levels of trust? To compare levels of trust among poorly and highly motivated individuals, the variable general motivation is this time dichotomized between highly motivated ('very much like to participate') and the other three levels ('did not like to participate (at all)' and 'much like to participate'), to create comparable groups. This time, the data of the participants and non-participants are combined, as we are now interested in the statistical relations between the variables, rather than the differences between the two groups.

Relation between motivations, trust and perceived control

Clearly, those who are highly motivated have higher levels of trust than less motivated participants, except for generalized trust (Mann-Whitney U tests, see Table 4). Thus, if organizations only pick out highly motivated persons, they will also select high trusters.

6. Mann-Whitney U was used because of non-normal distribution of variables in the control group.

Table 4. Trust, perceived control and motivations (n=78)

	<i>General motivation</i>		<i>Afraid of ending benefits</i>		<i>Somebody told me to</i>	
	low	high	low	high	low	high
<i>Trust</i>						
Generalized trust	6,18 (2,22)	6,57 (1,93)	6,47 (2,12)	6,28 (1,91)	6,65 (2,07)	6,67 (2,07)
Interpersonal trust	5,68 (2,27)	6,83 (2,15)*	6,16 (2,23)	5,85 (1,85)	6,22 (2,15)	6,17 (2,04)
Trust in work corporation	7,48 (2,28)	8,95 (1,28)*	7,97 (2,05)	7,68 (2,25)	7,98 (1,98)	8,25 (2,22)
Trust in municipality	5,98 (2,44)	7,63 (2,52)*	6,44 (2,24)	6,31 (2,65)	6,52 (2,34)	6,80 (2,93)
Trust in government and political system	3,81 (2,80)	5,13 (2,96)†	3,88 (2,47)	4,02 (3,20)	4,19 (2,69)	4,17 (3,60)
<i>Perceived control</i>						
Self-efficacy	3,20 (0,54)	3,44 (0,54)	3,29 (0,53)	3,16 (0,57)	3,31 (0,53)	3,13 (0,65)
Self-esteem	3,38 (0,50)	3,62 (0,44)*	3,47 (0,51)	3,35 (0,48)	3,46 (0,48)	3,38 (0,57)
Internal locus of control	3,11 (0,60)	3,50 (0,62)*	3,22 (0,69)	3,23 (0,53)	3,21 (0,65)	3,27 (0,56)

* $<.05$, † $p<.10$; Standard deviation within parentheses; n=60 for trust in work corporation

Individuals that are (highly) motivated by being afraid of having their benefits stopped are compared to those who did not state this was an important reason to join. Regardless of the type of trust, there are no differences between the two groups. Likewise, individuals who say they joined because somebody told them to do so do not have lower levels of trust than those who did not. Hence, using extrinsic motivators does not seem to attract participants with lower trust.

Regarding differences in perceived control regarding motivations, high general motivation appears to be related to high perceived control (Mann-Whitney U tests, see Table 4). Levels of self-esteem and internal locus of control are higher for individuals who are highly generally motivated compared to less motivated beneficiaries. Again, extrinsic motivations do not relate to perceived control, and do not counteract the selection bias under scrutiny.

Conclusion and discussion

In this paper we have investigated whether there is a selection bias within co-produced activation programmes. Background characteristics relating to the resources and capabilities of people, such as health, social contacts and ethnicity do not seem to determine whether people co-produce within work corporations or not. However, participants of work corporations have much more trust in their fellow citizens (in the neighbourhood), more trust in the municipality, more trust in people in general, and are intrinsically motivated to a higher extent than those who do not participate. This result, which resembles findings in the field of civic participation, is important since activation policies, and co-production in general, are expected to be beneficial in combating marginalization and fostering social cohesion (Anderson, 2009; Breidahl and Clement, 2010). If levels of trust are already high, this proposition would not be impossible, but difficult to become a reality.

The result that municipal trust is an important precondition for participation in the programme, implies that public officials (in the Netherlands the so-called 'client manager') benefit from gaining trust from clients if they would like them to become engaged in activation programmes. This is underlined by the finding that (municipal) trust relates to general motivation to join work corporations.

We also found that extrinsic motivations such as being afraid of cutbacks on one's benefits and being told to participate are not negatively related to trust and perceived control. Users who have been forced by the municipality to apply for a work corporation nevertheless seem to be enthusiastic about the work corporation programme. People might need some persuasion to be convinced of participation. For some, the pressure from the municipality to apply for a work corporation can be harmonized with their own norms that one has to do something in return for benefits, or with the wish to find a job. Others might perceive initiatives such as work corporations as good opportunities for increasing their chance of securing a regular job, even though they are mandatory.

Although it might be regarded as positive that extrinsic motivators do not necessarily affect the relation between the user and the municipality and work corporation in terms of trust, we can also conclude that they are unable to counter the selection biases that occur within co-produced activation services. Thus, it remains the question whether co-production is an effective strategy to engage vulnerable citizens.

Biased participation within co-production may be a problem for activation services, but this does not necessarily have to be the case for other public sectors. Take, for example, participants of a neighbourhood watch programme, who are actively involved in combating crime. As volunteers might be exposed to confrontations with suspects, selection on certain criteria might be necessary. It is likely and understandable that those who are responsible for selecting participants (e.g. police officers, public officials) will pick out willing, intrinsically motivated and cooperative citizens to join the neighbourhood watch. Likewise, in the case of

health care, it is not unlikely that a doctor will refrain from giving a patient the room to get involved in the treatment, if he or she thinks this patient lacks particular skills (e.g. because of mental disabilities). In these cases, selection might actually improve the outcome (safety, health) for disadvantaged individuals too.

But if we desire an inclusive approach and try to reach those groups who are at a distance from public services and government, we also need to know how to mobilize the less willing. This study has shown that participants of activation programmes are often motivated by several reasons simultaneously. Therefore, it will be difficult to determine which instruments could be used to overcome the selection bias. To complicate matters even further, it is probable that users within different sectors might have other motivations than participants of co-produced activation programmes. Within activation programmes, the outcome is mainly private value, whereas in other cases, the outcome could also be group or public value (Alford, 2014). Parents who participate in child care also produce value (high quality child care) for other parents. Residents who join a neighbourhood watch also produce value (neighbourhood safety) for other residents. Citizens can be motivated by individual and collective benefits simultaneously too. For example, tenants of social housing cooperatives co-produce because they enjoy the social contacts, but also because they are able to rent at advantageous prices (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012). Comparative research across different sectors is needed to gain more insight into the process of motivating people to co-produce.

In the end, the key actors who are able to motivate users to co-produce are the front-line professionals. They are able to influence how clients perceive the service offered, and therefore their willingness to participate (Alford, 2009a). The various reasons why users co-produce, shown by this study, illustrate how difficult it is to design accessible and successful co-produced services.

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User co-production of public service delivery: exploring mechanisms and conditions for building trust

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Abstract

User co-production of public service delivery is expected to increase citizen's trust in services, local government and society in general. This assumption is tested in a longitudinal mixed methods study, following participants of a co-produced activation programme for long term unemployed over time. The quantitative results show that trust in local government did not increase, whereas trust in the service and generalized trust both decreased. Unexpectedly, the programme was unable to increase perceptions of personal control and trust among participants. Qualitative interviews with managers and participants offer possible explanations for this result, such as selection effects; the incapacity to foster users' commitment to the organization; lack of organizational support; and unclear expectations about the responsibilities of the service provider and municipality.

Introduction

The ‘New Public Governance’ (NPG) seems to be at the heart of recent reforms of active labour market policies across Europe (Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009; Lindsay, Osborne, & Bond, 2014). Recognizing that the state is no longer able to address complex social problems alone, the NPG emphasizes network-based approaches to promote the participation of people dependent on unemployment benefits or social assistance in work. Key characteristics of NPG-type arrangements are therefore inter-agency cooperation, partnerships with non-governmental agencies, decentralization, and a role for users as *co-producers* in the delivery of activation services (Lindsay et al., 2014). Whereas most empirical work focuses on the former aspects, such as interorganizational relations or professionals (Aiken and Bode, 2009; Lindsay et al., 2014; Van Berkel, 2014), little empirical work is devoted to effects of user co-production within activation services. This chapter attempts to bridge this gap. Specifically, it delves into the assumption that public trust is fostered when users are involved as co-producers of service delivery.

NPG-based reforms are believed to be a mean to ‘restore’ public trust by emphasizing the importance of the process of service delivery and incorporating the affective and value-based side of trust (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014; Taylor-Gooby, 2008). In contrast, reforms building on the principles of the New Public Management (NPM), have focused excessively on rational foundations of trust, by promoting consumerism, the use of performance targets, and competition. Although case study research in other sectors has indeed given some support for the potential of co-production to build trust (Bovaird and Löffler, 2012; Ostrom, 1996), such studies are unfortunately unable to systematically answer the question whether co-production leads to trust in service delivery, (local) government and society. To answer this question and to study the effects of co-production longitudinal research design is needed.

However, longitudinal designs are far from unproblematic, especially due to the chance on dropouts. Also, the limited scale of co-production initiatives and the vulnerability of users restrict the possibilities for statistical analysis and increase the chance of panel mortality. Despite these difficulties, the urge to fill the research gap regarding the relation between co-production and trust led to the design of a longitudinal mixed methods research project on the effects of a co-produced programme for unemployed social welfare recipients. This research led to unexpected results. Before analysing and discussing these findings, the theoretical and methodological backgrounds are described.

Trust and co-production of activation

Trust can be defined as ‘the belief that others, through their action or inaction, will contribute to my/our well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon me/us’ (Offe, 1999: 47). This chapter focuses specifically on trust in local government and public service organizations (PSOs), since it is in this context ‘where misplaced trust will damage the citizens’ interests and where the citizen as service-user faces uncertainty’ (Taylor-Gooby, 2008: 289). Additionally, users’ trust in other citizens – generalized trust – is considered in this study too, as it is an important indicator for social cohesion (Putnam et al., 1994).

Taylor-Gooby (2008) argues that NPM-induced reforms have focused too much on the cognitive dimension of trust, emphasizing service outcomes and objective standards. Such an approach ignores the affective dimension of trust, which is rather elicited through the interaction between service staff and users. As this interaction is central to co-production, it can be expected that NPG-type arrangements are beneficial for the building of trust (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). Co-production would ideally lead both users and professional staff to identify with each other’s goals and effectively understand and value the other’s interests, with affective trust as result (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014; Lewicki et al., 2006). Additionally, an important feature of the NPG is the involvement of third sector organizations (TSOs), which are believed to foster voice and co-production. This is because they entail social goals, and emphasize ‘trust between producers and consumers by minimizing or eliminating opportunistic behavior’ (Pestoff, 2009: 136). Indeed, research shows evidence that TSOs providing activation services can have positive effects on social outcomes such as self-efficacy and social capital through high levels of user participation (Hazenberg et al., 2014; Ho and Chan, 2010).

Needham (2008: 223) also concludes that co-production ‘can be a therapeutic tool (building trust and communication between participants, allowing bureaucrats and citizens to explain their perspective and listen to others)’. This leads to the basic premises of this study: *user participation in a co-produced activation programme will lead to an increase in users’ trust in the service provider (H1), an increase in users’ trust in local government (H2), and an increase in users’ generalized trust (H3)*. However, to identify specific mechanisms that explain how co-production could increase these three types of trust, it is useful to define co-production and to separate *individual* and *collective* forms of co-production.

Co-production is defined here as *an arrangement where both clients and ‘regular’ producers contribute a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services* (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014; Ostrom, 1996). Co-production is viewed as *a deliberate action of the service provider to increase users’ activities that are aimed at specific outcomes*. The focus is on participation at the delivery phase. This means that it differs from participation in formulating and designing policies and/or services (cf. Bovaird, 2007), although these forms of participation may occur simultaneously.

Co-production could take place both at the individual and the collective level (Bovaird, 2007). Individual co-production is primarily focused at gaining private value and described the relation between a single user and a service provider (e.g. the PSO as a whole, or a single professional). Collective co-production takes place when a group of users participate in the delivery of a service. It adds complexity with regards to attaining outcomes, as users become dependent on the efforts of fellow users. For example, free-riding behaviour might be a source of frustration for other users (Ostrom, 2000).

Individual co-production might build trust because users increase their *perceptions of control*, as they are able to influence the service process through their involvement. An important element of perceived control is the feeling of self-efficacy, which refers to the experience of competence. During co-production, people learn particular skills and techniques and are able to apply these qualities. Such enactive mastery is the strongest way to perceive competence (Bandura, 2001). Repeated experiences lead a person to discover his/her level of performance capability, whereas repeated success in performing a task increases the perception of one's ability to perform that task. Furthermore, experiencing having influence over the outcome of a service will decrease feelings that outcomes depend on external factors, such as luck, fate, or religion. This refers to one's locus of control: internal versus external (Rotter, 1966). For example, a user who is actively involved in his/her activation, will be more likely to experience competence and internal control over his/her chances on the labour market. When the user develops a strong belief there may be a solution for his/her unemployment, the relation with the service provider is also likely to improve (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). Other research has also shown that people are more likely to trust their managers in organizational contexts that promote perceived control (Deci et al., 1989). Hence, it is hypothesized that *an increase of users' level of perceived control leads to an increase of users' trust in the service provider* (H4a). Also, people with high levels of perceived control will feel less vulnerable in daily life and therefore feel less risk in trusting others (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). This leads to the expectation: *an increase of users' level of perceived control leads to an increase of users' generalized trust* (H4b).

Collective co-production often takes place within small, cohesive groups, in which it is relatively easy to build trust relationships (Ostrom, 2000; Pestoff, 2009). According to Ho and Chan (2010: 42), TSOs and social enterprises in particular 'could contribute to the building of social capital by providing an opportunity for disadvantaged and marginalized groups to expand their social networks and develop social trust, which facilitates cooperation for mutual benefit'. Joint interests and common backgrounds (e.g. the same neighbourhood, disease, or social-economic status) among the service users may give rise to social recognition and trust (Aiken and Bode, 2009). Ostrom (1996: 1082) also showed that co-production can generate 'social capital in the form of urban residents learning how to work with each other and with public agencies'. She argued that 'the experience of co-production also encourages citizens to develop other horizontal relationships and social capital' (Ostrom,

1996: 1083). Ultimately, these factors may lead to the creation of *trust networks*, which are characterized by their shared identity and closed nature (Tilly, 2005a). A strong trust network is recognized by high levels of trust of participants in fellow participants. It can be expected that *when a trust network to which a user belongs becomes stronger, trust of that user in the service provider increases* (H5a). Furthermore, it could be that positive experiences with other, unfamiliar citizens spill over to citizens in general. In other words, it is hypothesized that *when a trust network to which a user belongs becomes stronger, generalized trust of that user increases* (H5b). However, it must be noted that the closed character of trust networks could also make it less easy for trust to go beyond the ‘in-group’ (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012).

The final hypothesis is about an expected ‘spill-over’ effect of trust in the service provider to trust in the (local) government: *an increase in user trust in the service provider leads to an increase in user trust in (local) government* (H6). Increasingly, activation services are delivered by organizations that are at arms’ length of (local) government, such as agencies, private companies or TSOs (Van Berkel, 2010). Here, we assume that users of public services also perceive the government to be responsible for the service, although this does not necessarily have to be the case (cf. Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003). To summarize, co-production might lead to an increase in perceived control and trust in fellow users, which possibly results in trust in the service provider, local governments and generalized trust. Additionally, the literature on co-production mentions a number of conditional factors that seem to be important for a positive experience of co-production. Again, these factors relate to the individual and the collective level.

Conditions for achieving outcomes through co-production

At least two conditions for the success of co-production have been discussed in the literature. The first refers to the individual level: motivation. The second refers to the organizational level: organizational support.

Individuals might have very different reasons to co-produce (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014). Many scholars argue that co-production should be a voluntary act in order to have positive outcomes (Bovaird, 2007; Brudney and England, 1983): it should not be imposed from above, but it should come from citizen’s own initiative. Alford (2009b) discerns different voluntary motivations that users could have for co-production. When people believe they will enjoy the act of co-production, they are *intrinsically* motivated. Such motivation is likely to lead to active involvement, which is crucial for effective collective action (Robertson and Tang, 1995). But users could also want to co-produce out of a desire for a sense of belonging (*sociality*), or out of *normative* reasons (i.e. I have to do something in return for my benefit). When co-production is the result of

extrinsic motivations, such as material rewards or the fear for sanctions, it will less likely lead to outcomes such as self-efficacy or trust.

Secondly, co-production is more likely to be to create trust when users are sufficiently facilitated and supported by the service provider and government (Hazenbergh et al., 2014). Ostrom (1996: 1078) argues that successful co-production will be thwarted when responsibilities between citizens, public agencies and governments are not clearly defined; and by ‘top-down administrative command as the style for decision making’. Thus, the activities of service users and service providers should be effectively coordinated on the one hand; and both users and professionals should have a voice in decisions regarding the provided service (Cepiku and Giordano, 2013). Furthermore, co-production requires substantial resources from the service provider. As Bovaird and Löffler (2012: 58) argue, ‘co-production may be “value-for-money” but it usually cannot provide value *without* money’. It remains the question whether organizations are eager to facilitate and support users in co-production efforts, as co-production potentially gives rise to organizational uncertainty (Fledderus et al., 2015).

Figure 1 outlines the theoretical model of this study, including the potential social outcomes of co-production and conditional factors for success.

Figure 1. The relation between co-production and trust

The case of work corporations in the Netherlands provides an excellent opportunity to explore the relation between co-production and trust. It presents a clear break with past local traditions, moving towards a policy based on NPG characteristics (for a detailed analysis of the emergence and organization of work corporations, see Fledderus, Broersma, et al., 2014). It entails the involvement of TSOs in the delivery of activation services and importantly, it demands high levels of co-production.

Case description

Work corporations are examples of a local, innovative activation policy where beneficiaries are given an active role, partly running the organization, with the ultimate goal of returning to the regular labour market. Work corporations started running in Dutch municipality (Nijmegen) in 2011.

Work corporations are non-profit organizations offering learn-work trajectories of one or two years to social assistance recipients. They are supposed to become self-sufficient. In order to generate income, they heavily rely on the efforts of the participants. A work corporation can therefore be seen as a form of collective co-production between participants and its staff. To give an example: there is a work corporation where participants learn how to work in a restaurant and how to serve customers, while at the same time they earn money by actually running the restaurant. In September 2012, a total of 45 work corporations were operating in the city, serving almost 200 beneficiaries. Because there are some differences in management and organization between the work corporations, the influence of organizational support can be assessed.

Participants can apply voluntarily (through applying on vacancies), but they can also be coerced by the municipality to apply. The role of motivation as possible conditional factor can therefore also be analysed. Some have been summoned to join a so-called job market, where they visit stands of different work corporations, and afterwards have to fill in a form to request an interview with one of them. In case they do not show up at the job market or apply for a work corporation, they could face repercussions, such as temporary cuts on their benefits. When they start working, they conclude a contract where their rights and obligations are formulated; this also includes that they could be sanctioned, e.g. when they frequently do not show up for work. It also involves the right on a bonus (i.e. a financial incentive), of 100 Euros per month, to be paid after six months of work, on top of their benefit.

Methods and data

Methods

This study employs a mixed method design, combining a longitudinal survey design and in-depth qualitative interviews. Participants of a specific sample of work corporations were asked to fill out a standardized questionnaire (paper and pencil). Additionally, semi-structured interviews with managers, policy makers and participants were carried out.

The sample

Seven work corporations were selected for the sample (see table 1). The selection criteria were: a minimum size of five participants (to be able to include collective aspects); comparability in terms of internal organization (for instance, the organization should be running for at least one year, in order to rule out start-up problems); and comparability with respect to the duration of the programme (at least one year, in order to measure long-term effects). In total, 109 participants worked at these seven work corporations (September 2012). Those who had just started (for no more than four weeks) working in the period from September 2012 to January 2013 were invited to complete the survey (paper and pencil). All of those who were invited completed the questionnaire ($n=60$ at t_0). After a half year, the respondents were asked to repeat the survey (t_1). At this point, one third of the sample (20) dropped out of the service because of various reasons (sickness, lack of motivation, family problems). After one year, only a small percentage (20%) still worked at the work corporation (t_2). The other respondents either dropped out, or found a job or other activities to pursue. The characteristics of the dropouts provide already valuable information about the effects of the programme. This will be outlined in the results section.

Table 1. Overview of the quantitative and qualitative data

Organization	Survey respondents (<i>n</i>)			Interviews		
	<i>T0</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	Participants	Project leaders	Policy makers
Local government						3
WoCo1	5	2	.	5	2	
WoCo2	9	5	.	5	2	
WoCo3	13	8	2	5	1	
WoCo4	6	3	.	4	2	
WoCo5	3	3	.	3	1	
WoCo6	16	13	9	5	2	
WoCo7	8	6	1	5	1	
Total	60	40	12	32	12	3

Operationalization of quantitative measures

The items in the survey intended to measure concepts such as motivation, perceived control and trust. The survey was tested by the use of cognitive interviewing, including thinking aloud and retrospective probing, to five participants with different (ethnic) backgrounds to test whether they could understand the questionnaire.

General motivation was measured by the question: ‘how much do you like to work at this work corporation’ with a scale from 1 (‘do not like at all’) to 4 (‘very much like to’).

Perceived control was measured by two interrelated concepts: *general self-efficacy* (GSE) and *internal locus of control* (ILC) (Judge et al., 2002). GSE was measured by the mean of five items, based on the validated general scale of self-efficacy (Scholz et al., 2002). Respondents had to say they ‘not (at all) agreed’ (1,2) or ‘(completely) agreed’ (3,4) to propositions such as ‘I have a solution for most problems when I try’. The Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was average, reaching .69 (t0) and .62 (t1).⁷ ILC consisted of the mean of two questions addressing whether getting a job depends on the participants own hard work or not (4-point scale), based on the validated Work Locus of Control Scale (Spector, 1988).

Respondents were asked to rate different forms of *trust* giving a number on a Likert-scale ranging from 0 (low trust) to 10 (high trust). Principal component analysis shows a clear distinction between those persons close to the respondent (such as fellow participants) and institutions at a distance (government and the political system). *Trust in the service provider* (i.e. managers of the work corporation) and *trust in local government* (i.e. municipality of Nijmegen) double-loaded on these two dimensions, indicating that these neither fit the personal nor the institutional category. Therefore, these were kept as manifest variables. The presence of a trust network is measured by *trust in fellow participants* of work corporations (single item). For the measurement of *generalized trust*, a validated three-item scale was used (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2008). Scale’s alpha was good, reaching .75 (t0) and .76 (t1).

The differences between t0 and t1 are analysed using the Wilcoxon Signed-ranked test, eliminating the possibility that a small number of extreme differences will distort the results. To examine the mechanisms of perceived control and trust networks, Pearson correlations were calculated on the proportional difference scores of the relevant variables. The differences between t1 and t2 are excluded, as too little respondents were left over, possibly resulting in a selection effect.

Qualitative study

The conditions that affect the relation between co-production and trust can be found on both the organizational and the individual level. Therefore, interviews were conducted with managers of the work corporations and policy makers, and with participants of work corporations (Table 1).⁸ They were semi-structured around factors defined in the theoretical model, but left enough space for conditions that were not theoretically defined. To be able to inductively develop new theoretical ideas, the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) (Boeije, 2002) is useful. CCM starts with open coding within a single interview, where quotes are labelled and frequently compared with other quotes, looking for similarities and

7. The relatively low Cronbach’s alpha is probably due to the textual adaptations of the scale that had to be made in order to improve the comprehensibility of the questions, in particular for non-native respondents.

8. 10 of the 32 interviewed participants were also included in the survey. The other 20 interviews were conducted after analysing the first results of the survey and the initial interviews.

differences. Then, interviews are compared in-between and coding and categorization is adapted to the result of this comparison. The final categorizations are analysed in order to find underlying themes or typologies.

Results

Quantitative results

Table 2 shows the differences in social outcomes between t0 and t1, as well as the differences between participants who continued the programme and those who dropped out within six months. Interesting to see is that almost all means have decreased, whereas an increase was expected. Significant negative changes are found for trust in the work corporation and generalized trust. This means that hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 are disconfirmed. Looking at perceived control (GSE and ILC) and trust in fellow participants, the same trend can be witnessed. Trust in fellow participants also significantly dropped.

Table 2. Wilcoxon signed-ranked tests for T0 to T1 changes and differences between participants (n=40) and dropouts (n=20)

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Intervention phase</i>				<i>Mean dropout</i>	
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>± (%)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD</i>	
General motivation	Time 0	3,45	-2,03%	,64	2,75*	,46
	Time 1	3,38		,63	.	.
GSE	Time 0	3,38	-0,01%	,46	3,40	,45
	Time 1	3,35		,41	.	.
ILC	Time 0	3,34	-8,99%*	,62	3,23	,47
	Time 1	3,04		,67	.	.
Trust in fellow participants	Time 0	7,77	-6,69%†	1,94	6,90	2,04
	Time 1	7,25		1,98	.	.
Trust in service provider	Time 0	8,67	-6,80%†	1,51	6,65*	2,48
	Time 1	8,08		1,92	.	.
Trust in local government	Time 0	7,44	-5,52%	2,26	5,35*	2,50
	Time 1	7,03		2,65	.	.
Generalized trust	Time 0	6,82	-5,01%†	1,68	6,18	2,43
	Time 1	6,48		1,47	.	.

* p<.05, † p<.10; GSE=General Self-Efficacy, ILC=Internal Locus of Control

The bivariate analysis (Pearson correlations, table 3) shows that an increase in ILC or GSE does not relate to an increase in trust in work corporations.⁹ Hypothesis H4a is therefore rejected. Hypothesis H4b is also disconfirmed: change in perceived control does not correlate with positive change in generalized trust. The positive correlation between change in trust in participants and change in trust in work corporations conforms to hypothesis H5a: when the trust network of users becomes stronger, trust in the service provider increases.¹⁰ Hypothesis H5b is also confirmed: the higher the trust in participants, the higher the generalized trust. It seems to be that the collective mechanism of co-production explains differences in trust better than the mechanism of perceived control.

Table 3. Pearson correlations for changes in trust and perceived control (n=40)

	<i>ΔTrust in work corporations</i>	<i>ΔTrust in local government</i>	<i>Δ Generalized trust</i>
Δ ILC	ns.	,361*	ns.
Δ GSE	ns.	ns.	ns.
Δ Trust in participants	,644*	ns.	,701*
Δ Trust in work corporations		,530*	,479*

* p<.05, ns=not significant; GSE=General Self-Efficacy; ILC=Internal Locus of Control

The spill-over effect from trust in the service provider (H6) indeed seems to exist: when trust in the work corporation increases, trust in local government also increases significantly. This suggests that the effect of a change in trust in participants will indirectly affect trust in local government through trust in work corporations.

Even though there are no positive differences at the aggregate level, the patterns are different at the user level: even though most of the participants show negative changes in trust attitudes, some participants show positive changes. This concurs with Breidahl and Clement's (2010) research, which found that for some people, activation services are positively related with an increase in factors such as self-esteem, but for others they are negative. Hence, we need in-depth information about the experiences of participants to understand how the programme really affects them.

Also, when we look at the means in absolute terms, it is not that big of a surprise that there has not been an increase for the respective variables. The means of the measured indicators at the beginning of the project are relatively high. This has been described and analysed

9. Proportional changes in perceived control and different types of trust could not be explained by background characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity (Pearson correlation, $p>.10$).

10. It must be noted that this can also point at a reverse effect: the more people trust the staff of the work corporation, the more likely a context is created where users trust each other.

in an earlier article (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming). In this article, it was shown that the participants of work corporations have significant higher levels of trust and motivation than individuals who were invited to join, but (were) refused. This selection effect is exacerbated because the levels of trust and motivation are also lower for the dropouts of the programme, leaving the work corporations with participants with the highest levels of trust and motivation (Table 2).

What conditions might explain why the programme does not reach the expected outcomes? The analysis of the qualitative data may provide answers. Several themes were distilled from the interviews with participants and organizational actors. Quantitative evidence is added to the qualitative reporting whenever relevant.

Qualitative results

Theme A – Motivation

Supporting the theoretical model, an important theme that arose from the interviews is the motivation of participants to enter the work corporation. Even though many respondents were obliged to apply for a work corporation, most of them stated that they liked the work they had to do and regarded it as an opportunity to do something about their unemployed status. However, some participants felt they did not have a choice and perceived the work corporation as a ‘punishment’ (Participant20_WoCo1). The managers of the work corporations often mentioned that intrinsic motivation was a criterion for participation for two reasons: motivation as a condition for a ‘successful’ programme, and motivation to work hard in order to generate income for the organization.

The survey results show that a decrease in general motivation is related to a decrease in trust in fellow participants and in the work corporation (Pearson correlation, $p < .05$). Furthermore, there is less often a decrease in ILC, trust in the work corporation and local government among participants who still liked the work they did at t1 (t-test, $p < .05$).

Applying for the work corporation felt like a burdensome duty, but [the work corporation] appeared to be something really good for me. (Participant36_WoCo4)

You are juggling with two balls: on the one hand, you want to invest in the development of participants, on the other hand you have paying customers. (Manager15_WoCo1)

Theme B – Support

The analysis showed the importance of participant’s perceptions of ‘support’ from the environment during their programme, in line with the theoretical model. This support can take on different forms: showing your interest in participants as a manager of municipal worker;

provision of an official educational programme; adaptation of work hours for personal circumstances; or simply giving support to daily work activities by providing work clothing or tools. Interesting to note is that the financial bonus of 100 Euros per month was rarely mentioned as a supportive element.

Lack of support leads to the feeling of being 'left to their fate' (Participant26, 31, 32), and suspicion towards the purpose of the programme. 10 of the 32 interviewed participants stated they believe that the work corporation primarily exists for the sake of the (owners/ employees of the) work corporation or municipality, and/or said they are being used as cheap employees. The survey analysis shows the negative effect of lack of support. Participants who are dissatisfied with the efforts of their supervisors (at t1) show more often a decrease in their levels of ILC, trust in fellow participants, and trust in the work corporation (t-test, $p < .05$). Also, dissatisfaction with the work hours is related to a decrease in trust in the work corporation and municipality (t-test, $p < .05$).

If I was not able to get a diploma, I would have said right in their faces: you take advantage of the people. Because they just let you work here without pay, they make big money on you, that's the truth, and then you do not even get a job. Yes then you take advantage of people. But now, I don't experience that, because you get something in return. (Participant25_WoCo7)

Theme C – Commitment

One of the themes that emerged from the data was 'commitment'. This refers to (the lack of) a sense of identification and involvement with the work corporation and other participants (cf. Barnes, 1999; Robertson and Tang, 1995). Participants with high commitment cared about their tasks and the quality of their work and were prepared to take on more responsibilities. Furthermore, these participants are sensible for the lack of commitment of other group members. Such free-riding is strongly disapproved.

Commitment is especially strong when participants can relate to other group members, and is encouraged when management is perceived as horizontal. Perceptions of equality and equal treatment foster a sense of 'we are all in the same boat' (Participant1_WoCo3). Contrarily, when a distance between the manager(s) and the participants is experienced, commitment will be less strong.

That commitment is important for a positive experience of co-production is underlined by the survey results, which show that those who feel that the work they do is important are less likely to drop in levels of ILC (t-test, $p < .05$), although there are no effects on trust.

I feel that everybody has their piece of responsibility. After all, we do it all together. [...] Look, I find it very disturbing when [another participant] is texting in the shop. I don't think that's right. And then I will report that [to the manager], but I find that very annoying. (Participant27_WoCo5)

Theme D – Role of work corporation and municipality

Managers expressed their concerns about the chances of reemployment. Barriers to reemployment included the vulnerable background of the participants, but also the lack of vacancies in the particular labour market sector and the economic situation in general. This concern was also present among participants. They said that it would be hard – in spite of the programme – to get a regular job because of the economic crisis, their employment history, educational level, or age. Although a few recognized that it is also not easy for the institutions to find suitable jobs, and that it remains their individual responsibility, other respondents expected more efforts from the municipality and the work corporation to help them becoming employed. Actually, some participants felt that because they put so much time and energy in cooperating with the programme, they should be rewarded for this. This view was strengthened when they were promised by the managers that they would do their utmost to find a job for the participants. The disappointment at the end of the programme could be a barrier for reaching positive outcomes.

You commit yourself for 100 percent, even if it's sometimes difficult, and then you are being sent from pillar to post. You don't get anything in return, only misery is what you get.
(Participant15_WoCo2)

Discussion

A reason for the incapacity of work corporations to increase perceived control and trust could be that the levels of the indicators were already relatively high (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming). It also appeared that the dropouts at t1 have lower levels of trust – in local government, the service provider, and government – than those who stayed in the programme. These findings seem to contradict other research: Hazenberg et al. (2014) actually find that organizations comparable to work corporations are better able to include 'socially excluded' individuals than for-profit organizations. However, research on co-production does point at the problem of 'self-selection', arguing that disadvantaged citizens may be held back by lack of knowledge and other resources to participate in service delivery (Clark et al., 2013, on safety; Jakobsen and Andersen, 2013, on education). Yet, there is less attention in co-production literature to the fact that organizational selection may play a role too, leaving risk selection as a typical characteristics of quasi-market arrangements (cf. Van Berkel, 2014). This research indeed suggests that the focus on outputs and self-sufficiency resulted in selecting highly motivated and more skilled individuals.

The bivariate analysis shows that especially the collective mechanism of trust networks has a relation with trust at different levels. Although correlations are unable to reveal more complex relations between variables (e.g. mediation and interaction) the interviews revealed

that the interaction with other users is important for individual experiences. For instance, the presence of less motivated users could affect the attitudes of motivated users when the management style focuses on the former group. One participant said: *'They [the managers] did not have trust in me. They continuously keep an eye on you, and yeah, it is like, I don't want to call it a prison camp, but the fact that you are unemployed is your fault and here you are punished.'* (Participant14_WoCo1).

Also, the work corporations might have been unable to build strong trust networks because the structure did not foster a sense of commitment. Service users are willing to put effort into the organization when they know their efforts are being 'rewarded'. This requires credible leadership: managers should convince co-producers that the goals set are realistic, that participants are rewarded as promised, and that this will bring them benefits (Robertson and Tang, 1995: 72). There may be a relation between commitment and managerial support: managers who are personally involved with users' activities, who are being helpful, and whose leadership style is less hierarchical, are more likely able to create a feeling of reciprocity among the group of participants. This is in line with Wilson (1994), stating that co-production is incompatible with a great power distance between users and professional staff.

In order to build commitment, organizations could use 'recruitment and selection processes designed to bring into the system individuals whose values are congruent with those of current organizational members' (Robertson and Tang, 1995: 71). Participants who felt that their fellow participants came from similar backgrounds were indeed more committed to the organization – it fosters a sense of 'shared identity' (Barnes, 1999). This, however, brings again a tension between constituting a homogenous and closed community and excluding particular citizens from co-production (Brandsen and Helderma, 2012). Commitment may further be promoted by a long-term cooperation between individuals, allowing norms to be built and recognized (Robertson and Tang, 1995: 72–73). When this leads to a motivation to collectively sanction those who do not conform to these norms, it will increase commitment to the group. Indeed, the work corporations where the composition of the group was less frequently altered showed higher levels of commitment than work corporations with less stable groups.

Other research on collective co-produced services shows that commitment is particularly high when users are given a voice in the design and delivery of services (Brandsen and Helderma, 2012, on housing cooperatives in Germany; Pestoff, 2009, on parental childcare in Sweden). According to Pestoff (2009), a main advantage of co-production is the possibility of users to communicate with the 'regular' providers about their preferences. The interviews revealed that there was little space to co-produce beyond a 'basic' level – i.e. carrying out your tasks, providing services or making products in order to generate income. Participants were hardly given a voice in shaping their personal programme or in the work content.

Hence, the ‘voice option’ was underdeveloped, possibly thwarting the chance to develop feelings of personal control (Simmons, 2011) and affective relations (Taylor-Gooby, 2008).

The absence of a more participatory structure might be a result of the managerial focus on outputs and self-sufficiency. This could have led to a shift from the work corporations’ original integrative orientation towards generating income and getting people back to work as soon as possible (Aiken and Bode, 2009). Work corporations were unable to resist the top-down demand to emphasize re-employment and measurable targets. Aiken and Bode (2009) find similar results in Germany and the UK, and have called this process ‘killing the golden goose’. To illustrate this, one participant told that he was refused to engage in an educational programme (which would be beneficial for his job chances), and stated that the reason for this was that the management needed him on the work floor, being more experienced than other participants (Participant18_WoCo1). When co-producing users experience little attention for their personal progress, feelings of exploitation could grow. Such feelings do not foster a belief that others will contribute to your wellbeing – as trust was defined in this study.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that co-production of public service delivery does not necessarily lead to the expected increase in trust in service delivery, trust in (local) government and in generalized trust. The fact that similar studies actually point at positive outcomes of high user participation (Hazenbergh et al., 2014) leads to the logical yet compelling conclusion that it is not co-production as such, but the way co-production is organized and managed that determines its ultimate outcomes. Particularly, attention must be paid to the interaction with other users, which seems to be crucial for the building of public trust. Yet the external validity of an in-depth, but small-scale study may be limited. Additional research is ultimately needed to find out whether these conditions are also important for different sectors and services. The results presented in present study may assist to construct a sophisticated theoretical model to test their generalizability.

Such a model should take a multilevel approach, including the interaction between the individual, the organizational, and the institutional level (Fledderus et al., 2015). At the individual level, motivations to co-produce play a key role, which are affected by self- and organizational selection. Particularly interesting is the fact that users of (activation) services are often confronted with multiple role expectations; sometimes they are regarded as partners, then as a consumers, but they still face coercive strategies (Newman, 2007: 371).

Processes at the organizational level play an important role in determining the motivation of users. PSOs – and in particular the street-level staff – often have the possibility to employ particular selection procedures, determining which individuals are allowed to co-produce

and which not (Fledderus and Honingh, forthcoming; Van Berkel, 2014). There is a tension between balancing the group composition (to foster commitment) and exclusion of others, which in turn may lead to distrust.

Furthermore, organizations differ in their willingness and capacity to provide support to citizens who co-produce (Ostrom, 1996). The impact of (lack of) support might depend on the expectations users have about the role of the service provider – a condition that emerged from the analysis. When users feel that the service provider is highly responsible for the outcome/outputs of the service, lack of support will probably have a more negative impact on trust than when users feel that they themselves are largely responsible (Fledderus, 2015a).

The institutional level, finally, also plays a crucial role in understanding the effects of co-production (Fledderus et al., 2015). Institutional pressures may not only determine the organizational goals, but also the internal structure of organizations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This, in turn, influences the extent to which users can actually exert influence over the service, rather than just participate.

In order to test this model, future research may want to focus on comparative research – between sectors, countries and/or organizations. Finally, in spite of its challenges, large-N research is necessary to find out which factors provide the best explanations for the relation between co-production and trust.

6 |

Does user co-production of public service delivery increase satisfaction and trust? Evidence from a vignette experiment

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Abstract

Whereas it is assumed that involving users in the delivery of public services yields more positive evaluations of those services, this study shows that levels of satisfaction and trust are not necessarily positively affected by such user co-production. An experimental vignette design among students ($n=174$) is used to analyse the differences concerning trust in and satisfaction with service providers between co-produced and non co-produced public services. In some cases, the results suggest, co-production actually leads to less satisfaction and trust. This might be explained by the self-serving bias, which states that co-producers take credit for success but blame service providers for failure.

Introduction

Citizens are increasingly becoming co-producers of public service delivery. Patients engage in making decisions about their preferred lifestyles and medical treatment (Baggott, 2005; Fotaki, 2011) and welfare recipients become job-ready by actively participating in reemployment programs (Alford, 2009a). Also at a collective level, users co-produce services. Tenants plan and manage social housing through housing cooperatives (Brandsen and Helderma, 2012); to combat crime and to fight antisocial manners residents cooperate with the police in neighbourhood watch schemes (Fleming, 2005); and volunteers in care services supplement the resources of professional staff, such as parents in child care (Pestoff, 2006). Co-production is supposed to increase satisfaction with and trust in public services and government, because it gives users more control over the services they use (Bovaird, 2007; Levine, 1984; Pestoff, 2009).

However, in their widely cited article, Bendapudi and Leone (2003) specify this claim by suggesting that co-producing clients tend to blame the service provider for poor outcomes, while in the case of better than expected outcomes, clients give more credit to themselves. This is known as the *self-serving bias*, which refers to ‘a person’s tendency to claim more responsibility than a partner for success and less responsibility for failure in a situation in which an outcome is produced jointly’ (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003: 15). Hence, when co-production leads to outcomes worse than expected, the service provider is blamed rather than the client him- or herself. Yet, when the outcome of co-production is successful, users might attribute this success partly to themselves, *resulting in less satisfaction with the service provider compared to a situation without co-production*. This leads to the counterintuitive expectation that whatever the outcome may be, co-production would at best reach the same and at worst poorer satisfaction levels as compared to ‘regular’ service delivery.

Bendapudi and Leone (2003) investigated customer co-production of goods and private services and provided evidence for the self-serving bias. Surprisingly, studies about the prevalence of this psychological effect regarding the co-production of *public* services seem to be lacking. There are at least two reasons why such a study would be relevant. First, an important difference between private and public services is that in case of the latter, clients can also be involved *collectively* instead of individually – such as in the case of a neighbourhood watch. This complicates the problem of self-serving, because success cannot only be attributed to one resident alone, but also to fellow neighbours. Second, current research on co-production of public service delivery often highlights successful cases (e.g. Ackerman, 2004; Bovaird and Löffler, 2012; Fung, 2006). Therefore, comparisons between the evaluation of clients between co-produced services and ‘traditionally’ produced services, and comparisons between different outcomes (positive vs. negative) remain absent in current literature.

By adding trust as a dependent variable, this study makes a third contribution to the existing literature. Trust is regarded as an important outcome of public policies and services. It is seen as crucial for legitimacy of policy and democracy as a whole (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003; Putnam et al., 1994; Thomas, 1998). Importantly, different factors seem to play a role in constituting trust than those that constitute satisfaction. Several authors argue that satisfaction relates mainly to the evaluation of outcomes, whereas trust mainly relates to the evaluation of the service delivery process (Herian et al., 2012; Rothstein and Stolle, 2008; Van Ryzin, 2011). In short, the argument is that when the process is perceived as inclusive, participatory and impartial, trust will be fostered. Co-production is believed to elicit such values. Thus, higher levels of trust are expected when people co-produce.

This research explores the relationship between co-production of public service delivery and user trust and satisfaction, and it is among the first to address the potential self-serving bias in this context. Two questions are addressed:

- (1) To what extent does co-production of public service delivery increase satisfaction with and trust in service providers?
- (2) To what extent does the evaluation of public service delivery differ between individual and collective co-producers?

The study follows the design of Bendapudi and Leone's (2003) research, namely a vignette survey. The vignettes they used to analyse the self-serving bias are adapted by replacing goods and private services with examples of public services. The study is structured as follows. First, the concept of individual and collective co-production is introduced. Subsequently, this concept is linked to the self-serving bias, and expectations are derived from theory. In the next section, the methodology is explained, followed by the results. The chapter ends with a discussion of these results and a conclusion.

Theoretical background

Defining co-production

The concept of co-production originated from research on urban service conducted by Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues in the 1970s. Among their main conclusions was the notion that many public services are not delivered by one public organization, but instead rely on several public *and* private actors. Importantly, they found that for successful public services, the contribution of time and effort by the users of these services is of vital importance. They developed the term co-production to describe the possible relationship that exists between the 'regular' producer (such as street-level police officers, schoolteachers, or health workers) and 'clients who want to be transformed by the service into safer, better educated or healthier persons' (Ostrom, 1996: 1079; see also Parks et al., 1981, for an overview). Spurred by this research, co-production was seen by scholars as an alternative to 'traditional' service delivery,

where regular producers allocate goods and services while employing 'standard operating procedures', and where the role of service is restricted to providing feedback (Brudney and England, 1983). Co-production regards service users as active participants in the delivery process.

During the 1980s and 1990s however, the alternative of market provision was preferred. This included managerialism, privatizing services and contracting out (Hood, 1991). By adopting the private sector logic of producing *goods*, marketization preserved the boundary between the client as customer receiving the service and the regular producer providing the service. Emphasis was put on *exit*: by giving customers more options to choose between providers, service quality and user satisfaction was supposed to be enhanced. Recently, however, the goods-logic of marketization has been criticized for, *inter alia*, not addressing the role of users in the service delivery process (Osborne et al., 2013). The past few years, co-production has again been recognized as a promising (or even inevitable) strategy to improve service delivery, in academia as well as in public policy (Brandsen and Pestoff, 2006; Pestoff et al., 2012). Most important in respect to this study, is the belief that co-production increases satisfaction with and trust in public service delivery (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014).

Co-production is defined here as *an arrangement where both clients and 'regular' producers contribute a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services*. In a way, every service can be regarded as co-production: there is no teaching without listening to the teacher, and there is no medical service without adhering to doctor's prescription. However, in this paper, we view co-production as *a deliberate action of the service provider to increase users' activities that are aimed at specific outcomes*. Thus, services could have different levels of user involvement. To specify what we understand by co-production, we follow the definition of co-production by Brudney and England (1983). First, co-production is only considered within the stage of service delivery, which is also depicted as *co-delivery* (Bovaird, 2007). This excludes co-production of the process of formulating and designing policies and/or services. According to Boyle and Harris (2009: 17), this limitation actually denotes the real nature of co-production: it 'is the antidote to the idea that we endlessly need to ask people's opinion, before handing the service back to the professionals to deliver, since people will be involved in delivery as well'. To others, co-delivery should complement other stages of participation or vice-versa (Percy, 1984; Pestoff, 2009). However, especially when users are involved in co-delivery, a self-serving effect could be expected. When co-production is restricted to decision-making or consultation, it will be relatively easy for users to blame service failure (i.e. not reaching the expected outcome) on the service provider, as they are still responsible for delivery. Likewise, in such a situation it will be relatively difficult to take credit for success. Also, trust could be expected to be higher when users are involved in the delivery of services, compared to a situation where users are engaged in co-decision making, but are neglected in the actual implementation phase.

A second specification of the definition of co-production refers to the inclusion of only 'positive' and 'active' co-production: user activities that are consciously aimed at improving the (outcome of) service (Brudney and England, 1983). On the contrary, 'negative' co-production entails 'citizen activities that have a detrimental impact on community conditions, such as vandalism, littering, youth gangs, and the like' (Brudney and England, 1983: 62). 'Passive' co-production refers to not undertaking certain actions, for instance refraining from littering or not helping the police with solving crimes (Brudney and England, 1983: 62). These forms of co-production are outside the scope of our definition.

A third specification relates to the distinction between compliance and voluntary cooperation. Service users might co-produce because they fear sanctions when they refuse to do so. For example, within activation services, job-seekers are often required to perform certain activities, such as job application courses. Although mandatory co-production could sometimes be a strategy to include vulnerable service users (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014), in this study co-production is restricted to voluntary cooperation. It can be expected that in the case of obligatory behaviour, success will be less easily assigned to the regular producer. This will decrease the chance of the presence of a self-serving bias and thus provide a stricter test.

The last specification or rather an extension of the concept separates individual and collective (or community) co-production (Bovaird, 2007; Brudney and England, 1983). Individual co-production entails single user participation, which is primarily focused at gaining private value. However, co-production frequently includes an (organized) group of users. When residents form a neighbourhood watch to assist the police, they co-produce collectively. The value created in such a situation is not only private, but it produces safety for a larger group (Alford, 2014). When group or public value is created through co-production, the impact of the efforts of a single user is much less straightforward compared to individual co-production. This might have an influence on how users attribute success and failure, and thus on the prevalence of the self-serving bias.

Co-production is argued to yield more positive results than 'passive' delivery of services. Two of these positive effects are considered to be trust and satisfaction, which will be described in the following paragraphs.

The benefits of co-production: trust

Both levels of trust and satisfaction are used to assess the evaluation of services and policies by users. Although they are often statistically correlated, they measure distinct concepts. Trust can be defined as 'the belief that others, through their action or inaction, will contribute to my/our well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon me/us' (Offe, 1999: 47). While satisfaction seems to relate directly to the outcomes of services, trust lies much closer to the evaluation of the process of services (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003; Van Ryzin, 2015). Processes might matter to citizens as much as do outcomes. Processes entail different beneficial aspects such as fairness, respect, and honesty, whereas there may also be negative

aspects, such as red tape. Van Ryzin (2011) argues that such process characteristics have an impact on trust, and they are (presumably) elicited when users becomes part of the delivery process. Participation gives users more information about the process and it provides them with voice, which increases perceptions of inclusiveness, fairness and honesty (Herian et al., 2012). Co-production enhances users' impression that professionals or public officials have respect for their capabilities. Furthermore, users are believed to value control over the services they receive, and they often would like to be more involved (Löffler et al., 2012; Pestoff, 2009).

Specifically, co-production will give people the feeling that their actions actually have an impact: because I join a neighbourhood watch, my neighbourhood is safer. This so-called *self-efficacy* will decrease users' feeling of risk, vulnerability and dependence, which has a positive influence on trust (Fledderus, Brandsen, et al., 2014). The more self-efficacy is increased, the less individuals refer to external causes of events (such as inferior services, or 'the crisis'). Consequently, one can argue that co-production leads to users who feel less alienated from policies and services, because they will feel they can have an influence on their processes and outcomes. In health care, it appears that encouraging patient involvement indeed increases patients' sense of control over their illness condition, builds effective relationships with physicians, and improves the perception of patients of professional support, which all positively affects trust in the physician (MacStravic, 2000; Ouschan et al., 2006; Pontes and Pontes, 1997).

Additionally, collective co-production could foster the creation of trust networks. Networks could be seen as a form of governance which mainly takes place when multiple actors are mutually dependent (Kickert et al., 1997). In networks, cooperation therefore the need to build trust is crucial. Trust is fostered through intensive levels of interaction (Considine and Lewis, 2003). This is especially visible in research on cooperatives. For instance, parental cooperatives in Swedish child care achieve high levels of parental involvement (Vamstad, 2007, 2012). These centres show dense networks which include rights and obligations for engaged parents. Also, housing cooperatives exist, which are able to actively engage their residents in and around their near living environment (Brandsen and Helderman, 2012). They could be described as integrated communities where particularly in the older cooperatives social bonds and family ties still play a role. In both cases, trust among participants is particularly high. Yet, these cooperatives are run by citizens themselves, and there is little involvement of public bodies. It remains a question whether collective forms of co-production also lead to more trust in public service providers. For instance, when a city park is maintained by a group of users, who collaborate with municipal workers, does trust increase in the municipality? When it is assumed that users value the involvement in public services, then this could be expected indeed.

The aforementioned arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

H1: Users have more trust in the public service provider when they co-produce compared to users who do not co-produce, regardless of service outcome.

The benefits of co-production: satisfaction

Increasing the involvement of users in service delivery is expected to have a direct impact on the quality of the service, specifically on the outcome of the service (Bovaird and Downe, 2008). Because users are often more knowledgeable of the content, costs and limitations of local services, the service quality will be enhanced (Brudney and England, 1983: 63). Also, 'by emphasizing user input into the productive process, co-production improves resources efficiency, making front-line providers and their managers more sensitive to user needs and preferences' (Needham, 2008: 223). Especially beneficial for quality are so-called positive sum models, where both citizens and providers collaborate, instead of zero-sum approaches, where citizen contributions replace those of providers (Needham, 2008). Furthermore, the more users act as a collective, the more resources can be put into the delivery process, which enhances service quality. Hence, it is expected that outcomes are better achieved when users co-produce than when users are not involved in the service delivery.

However, it could very well be that in spite of client involvement, the desired outcome is not produced. For example, a patient does his utmost best to comply with the treatment for his illness but does not get any better. In such a case, disappointment about the outcome could be turned against him- or herself (Hirschman, 1982). This especially will occur when people feel that the outcome is not achieved because of their own lack of capabilities (Bandura, 2001). On the other hand, people may be assured of their own capabilities, and feel the service provider (or other contextual variables) is the main cause of the detrimental outcome. When users are hardly involved in the service delivery, the latter perception will always prevail, as the service provider – not considering other contextual factors – is the only factor to blame for the outcome.

When co-production leads to the expected success, satisfaction with the service provider is thus expected to increase – assuming that the absence of co-production leads to unsuccessful outcomes. But there is also the possibility that both options are able to achieve successful outcomes.

Consider two cities, both having troubles with keeping their municipal parks clean. City A chooses to increase their maintenance services, delivered in-house by municipal workers without the involvement of citizens. City B opts for a cooperative solution where residents work together with municipal workers to keep their park clean. Both options have the desired effect: the parks become cleaner. In which city is users' satisfaction in the municipality higher? Proponents of co-production would probably go for City B. However, when the self-serving bias is taken into account, the picture could be very different. This will be addressed in the next section.

Self-serving bias

As mentioned earlier, the self-serving bias refers to ‘a person’s tendency to claim more responsibility than a partner for success and less responsibility for failure in a situation in which an outcome is produced jointly’ (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003: 27). In contrast, when an outcome is produced solely by another party (e.g. a public organization), all the credit or blame for the outcome goes to this party. This means that when success is the outcome, users who co-produce give less credit to the provider for this result and are therefore less satisfied with the regular service provider than their counterparts who do not co-produce.

Several explanations for this effect have been proposed (Bradley, 1978). Motivational models state that people attribute failure to external factors because they like to protect their self-esteem or their public image; and they appoint success to themselves because it boosts their self-esteem or public image. Non-motivational models point at individuals’ expectations. Individuals might expect success more than failure, and people are more likely to ascribe expected outcomes to themselves than unexpected outcomes. Another explanation is that people who experience an increase in success are more likely to perceive a relation between response and outcome than individuals who experience (constant) failure. Most evidence however seems to support the motivational tendency of people to protect or enhance their self-image (rather than their public image) (see Knee and Zuckerman, 1996, for an overview).

The self-serving bias does not always seem to occur. When interpersonal activity consists of a powerful and a powerless actor, the former will be more likely to take blame for lack of success (Zuckerman, 1979). People feel responsible to take care for the weak, similar to a doctor who has the duty to help a patient. Persons with power can also afford to be more generous. Supporting this argument, studies have shown that teachers are less likely to show self-serving attribution, because their self-confidence is not threatened by giving credit to the student for their success or taking blame for their failure (Ross et al., 1974). Users of public services – especially social services – are however, in general, relatively powerless (as opposed to professionals or public officials). Hence, it will be more important for them to increase their self-image than for powerful actors. Therefore, the self-serving bias can indeed be expected when they co-produce.

Thus, when a service leads to successful outcomes – such as better health, safer neighbourhoods or higher quality education – co-producers are expected to be less satisfied with the service provider than service users who do not co-produce. Sometimes, a service might, unexpectedly, lead to even worse outcomes: a treatment of a doctor went wrong, or a re-designed university course has become actually poorer than the previous one. The self-serving bias entails that a user is less likely to take responsibility for the bad outcome, regardless of his or her participation in the process. Thus, for both co-production and ‘traditional’ service delivery, satisfaction will be the same (i.e. low) when failure is the outcome.

In some circumstances, a public service is delivered, but the situation has not been improved, nor has it been deteriorated. Since users expect an enhancement of the particular problem the service was provided for, this still will be perceived as failure. When there are high expectations for success, bad outcomes will be attributed to external factors (Harvey et al., 1974). Consequently, maintaining the status quo (the problem still exists, but did not become worse) is expected to lead to the same evaluation of the service, regardless of co-production.

This leads to the following hypotheses:

H2: When the outcome of a service is success, a user who co-produces is less satisfied with the public service provider than a user who does not co-produce.

H3: When the outcome of a service is deterioration, a user who co-produces is as satisfied with the public service provider as a user who does not co-produce.

H4: When the outcome of a service is maintaining the status quo, a user who co-produces is as satisfied with the public service provider as a user who does not co-produce.

Self-serving bias and collective co-production

Collective co-production complicates the problem of self-serving. In this case, users are not only able to blame (or give credit to) the regular service provider, but also to their fellow co-producers. What does this mean for the influence of the self-serving bias on user satisfaction? A first expectation can be derived from social identification theory, which states that when people are appointed to a group, they will favour and defend that group (Tajfel, 1982). They like to make attributions which boost the reputation of their group, because it is regarded as part of the self (Sherman et al., 2007). Therefore, individuals want to identify themselves with successful groups, not with unsuccessful groups. When groups are perceived negatively, people want to distance themselves from these groups. This again could mean that in case of collective co-production and success, credit is given for the group and not for the provider, resulting in lower satisfaction with the public service provider. Bad outcomes will then not result in differences in satisfaction between collective co-production and non co-production. They are expected to be attributed to the regular service provider (just as is expected in the case of individual co-production), because users would like to protect the positive image of the group, especially when they are highly committed (Ellemers and Barreto, 2003).

Second, self-awareness appears to be a factor which influences the occurrence of the self-serving bias (Zuckerman, 1979). When people are focused on the activities of other persons (i.e. when self-awareness is low), they are more likely to attribute success to these persons, while individuals tend to attribute failure more often to external factors when subjects are focused on themselves (i.e. when self-awareness is high). When users co-produce together with other users, self-awareness can be expected to decrease. This could mean that attribution of success will be shifted from the user himself towards other users. Satisfaction with the public service provider will again be lower than when users do not co-produce. In case

of failure, however, – in contrast to social identification theory – less self-awareness implies that collective co-production leads to higher satisfaction with the service provider compared to non co-production. In other words, because users are more focused on the group of users, failure will be more likely attributed to the group, not to the service organization.

There is considerable evidence for the negative impact of negative evaluation of one's group on one's self esteem (Ellemers and Barreto, 2003). Therefore, we follow social identification theory that users will try to protect the image of their group. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H5: When the outcome of a service is success, users who collectively co-produce are less satisfied with the public service provider than users who do not collectively co-produce.

H6: When the outcome of a service is deterioration, users who collectively co-produce are as satisfied with the public service provider than users who do not collectively co-produce.

H7: When the outcome of a service is maintaining the status quo, users who collectively co-produce are less satisfied with the public service provider than service users who do not collectively co-produce.

Methods

The study follows the design of Bendapudi and Leone's research (2003). Their study was based upon a survey among students with six vignettes of the purchase of goods and private services. Bendapudi and Leone (2003) explain that the use of projective scenarios is common practice in the marketing and psychology literatures. Such vignettes have little influence of social desirability effects and have good external validity. Furthermore, they note that even if subjects put themselves in someone else's shoes, adopting an 'observer' stance rather than a 'actor' stance, it would represent a conservative study of the self-serving bias, because studies have shown that the effect is reduced when events related to another instead of to oneself are described. Moreover, it is known that children and older people tend to show more attributional biases, while adolescents and adults show them less (Mezulis et al., 2004). Therefore, using students as subjects also implies a more conservative test of the potential presence of a self-serving bias.

For this study, six scenarios were developed too, but this time they described experiences with public service delivery. The survey was distributed through e-mail amongst students of Public Administration and Political Science (n=174, 88 men, 86 women, mean age 21.2). Students received an email with a link to the online survey. A small lottery incentive (a 50 Euro voucher) was included.

Designing the vignettes

Each scenario represents one of six possible manipulations: two levels of client participation, non co-production versus co-production, and three outcome levels: an improvement of the situation, status quo of the situation, or a deterioration of the situation. Furthermore, three scenarios of co-production entail collective co-production, whereas the other three consist of individual co-production. All students received six scenarios but the conditions were randomly assigned. The scenarios describe the experiences of different students (with male names for male respondents and female names for female respondents). Students were asked to put themselves in the student's shoes and indicate how they thought the student would respond in each setting. After the outcome was presented, students gave an evaluation of the service provider in terms of satisfaction and trust as if they were the student (e.g., 'how satisfied with the general practitioner do you think Esther is?', 'how much trust does Esther have in the general practitioner according to you?'). Respondents had to rate the public service provider on a 0 ('not satisfied at all', 'does not trust at all') to 10 ('completely satisfied', 'trusts completely') scale.

A few considerations were made before constructing the vignettes. Whether the self-serving bias is elicited depends on salience of the problem. When people do not care about the outcome, it is of little value to attribute success to their ability. If failure is the outcome, people will easily attribute this to their lack of ability, as it is not of any importance to the individual (Zuckerman, 1979). Therefore, each scenario consists of a problem that concerns the student. This also improves the believability of the vignettes, because people are more inclined to co-produce when they are aware of a shortfall in public performance on outcomes (Parrado et al., 2013).

Table 1. Description of the vignettes

I. Situations (common to all subjects)

- A. Bart is suffering from a physical complaint. He meets his general practitioner and he explains what his symptoms are.
 - B. Jeroen is graduated and has been looking for a job quite a while. Because he receives a benefit from the municipality, he has a talk with his client manager at the municipality about finding a job.
 - C. Mark rents a room from the students housing corporation. He is regularly disturbed by the litter at the porch of his building. One day, he meets the caretaker of his building and speaks to him about his complaint.
 - D. Lately there have been quite some burglaries in the neighbourhood where Thomas lives. They also tried to break-in at Thomas' place. The police have organized a meeting to talk about the safety of the neighbourhood. Thomas attends this meeting.
 - E. Tim just followed a course of his educational programme. The students' educational committee, of which Tim is a member, evaluates the course with the lecturer. It appears that the both the lecturer and the students agree that the content of the course is outdated.
 - F. There is a lot of litter in the park that Dennis often visits. He complains about this at the municipality. A municipal worker says they have been informed about the rubbish.
-

Table 1. Description of the vignettes (continued)**II. Manipulation of co-production (between subjects)**

- A1. The general practitioner prescribes a treatment.
- A2. The general practitioner provides information about the complaint and asks Bart what kind of treatment he prefers. Together, they agree to a treatment plan.
- B1. The client manager says that the municipality informs Jeroen about new job possibilities.
- B2. The client manager says that Jeroen is eligible for a learn-work programme. Within this programme of 32 hours per week, Jeroen will receive additional education and job experience. Jeroen decides to take part.
- C1. The caretaker announces to pay more attention to cleaning the porch.
- C2. The caretaker says he has not enough time to clean everything so often, but points to the possibility to receive discount on your service costs if students help for two times per month with cleaning the building. Mark is interested and accepts this offer.
- D1. The district police officer announces that there will be more often patrolled in the neighbourhood.
- D2. The district police officer talks about Citizen Net. If residents sign up to Citizen Net, they will be notified after something has happened, for instance a burglary, and they are able to provide tips to the police. Thomas, together with other residents, signs up for Citizen Net after the meeting.
- E1. The lecturer announces to reform the course next year.
- E2. The lecturer asks a few students, including Tim, to reform the course. The participating students will also take part in lecturing as student-assistants next year. Tim decides to participate together with other students.
- F1. The municipality announces in a letter to residents that live around the park that more garbage bins will be placed and there will be more regular cleaning.
- F2. During a meeting with residents that live near the park the municipality asks visitors to help cleaning the park due to insufficient resources. The municipality takes care of material, such as garbage bags and trash pickers, and will dispose waste. The visitors take care of a cleaning schedule. Dennis, together with other regular visitors, decides to participate.

III. Manipulation of outcomes (between subjects)

- A. Complaint gets worse, remains the same, disappears.
- B. Gets no invitations for job applications, gets a few job applications without success, gets a job.
- C. Litter gets worse, remains the same, is much less.
- D. Burglaries increase, remain the same, decrease.
- E. Course quality gets worse, remains the same, improves.
- F. Litter gets worse, remains the same, is much less.

Furthermore, following Bendapudi and Leone (2003), the scenarios were developed in such a fashion that the actual process of service delivery runs as expected: in each scenario, there was a problem which gets handled as promised (with or without user participation), but only the outcome is different. This design enables to compare evaluations between individual, collective co-production and non co-production scenarios, and also evaluations between levels of outcome. In Table 1, the different vignettes are described. The first three (A, B, C) are examples of individual co-production, with the following problems: health, unemployment and house litter. The last three (D, E, F) are scenarios in which users collectively co-produce to solve problems with burglaries, the quality of a university course and park litter.

Manipulation check

A small focus group of students was constituted to pre-test the probability of the scenarios and the comprehensiveness of the questions. After this, the survey was tested for probability and co-production levels (n=42; this test-survey was completed by students who did not partake in the final survey) to assure that respondents were able to identify with the vignettes' subjects, and to validate the manipulation (co-production versus non co-production). Table 2 shows the results of this testing. Probability was measured by a 1 ('not at all probable') to 7 ('very probable') scale. For all the scenarios where no co-production takes place, probability is good (average 5.55).

Probability is lower when it comes to co-production (average 4.80). This is not surprising: in reality, co-production is also a less developed strategy than service delivery by professionals or public officials alone. Especially in both the litter vignettes, probability is low. The focus group revealed that students think *students* are not easily inclined to clean, although they do think this might happen among older residents in particular neighbourhoods. Co-production, also measured by a 1 ('not at all involved') to 7 ('very much involved') scale, was significantly higher in the co-production scenarios than in the other cases (mean co-production 6.02, mean non co-production 3.22, $p < .01$), which validates the intended manipulation.

Table 2. Involvement and probability of the vignettes

	Probability		Involvement	
	NCP	CP	NCP	CP
A. Health problem	6.65 (.64)	6.00 (.88)	3.87 (1.84)	6.16 (.60)
B. Unemployment	5.25 (1.33)	5.05 (1.29)	3.35 (1.60)	5.73 (.98)
C. House litter	5.46 (1.56)	3.67 (1.53)	2.21 (1.14)	5.72 (1.27)
D. Burglaries	5.25 (1.19)	5.61 (.85)	2.42 (1.34)	5.61 (.61)
E. Course quality	5.58 (1.02)	4.65 (1.47)	4.42 (2.06)	6.65 (.49)
F. Park litter	5.12 (1.07)	3.81 (1.68)	3.04 (1.59)	6.25 (.68)

NCP= no co-production, CP= co-production; averages on seven point scales; standard deviation within parentheses

Results

For each outcome (improvement, status quo, deterioration) satisfaction and trust levels were compared across non-co-produced services and co-produced services. The correlation between trust and satisfaction was generally high, varying between moderate (.68) and extreme (.90) correlations in the different vignettes. This means that in some cases, there

is hardly any empirical difference between measures of trust and satisfaction. Yet, as not all correlations are extreme, and we expected a conceptual difference between trust and satisfaction, we started with multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). This procedure reduces potential type 1 errors that could occur when choosing for multiple ANOVAs for the two dependent variables instead. When the MANOVA tests did not show a significant effect of co-production on the combined variable of trust and satisfaction across different outcome levels ($p < .05$), we did not look at the differences between trust and satisfaction. When a significant effect was found, we continued to analyse the differences between trust and satisfaction by employing ANOVAs.

As already suggested by the high correlation between trust and satisfaction, the ANOVAs did not show many differences in the effect of co-production on the two measures of service evaluation. This can be observed when comparing the satisfaction and trust levels in Table 3, which presents the results of the ANOVAs. Perceived trust seems to follow the same pattern as feelings of satisfaction, with only a few exceptions.

Hypothesis H1 stated that because trust is related to the process of service delivery, and co-production is supposed to be valued by users, trust should be higher in cases of co-production than in cases of traditional service delivery, regardless of the outcome. Actually, in not a single case, trust is higher among co-producers than among non-co-producers. In half of the cases trust is lower in public services when they are co-produced; in the other half trust is as high as when they are not co-produced.

The same result is found for satisfaction levels. When the outcome entails an improvement of the situation, in three of the cases (house litter, burglary and park litter), satisfaction with the service provider is lower when users have co-produced than when no co-production took place. This could mean that in these circumstances, people take credit for success, resulting in lower satisfaction. For the health problem, unemployment and course quality, no differences in satisfaction are found. Here, no self-serving bias can be observed. Hypothesis H2 is thus partially confirmed, partially disconfirmed. While the lower satisfaction levels of one of the three cases of individual co-production could be explained by a self-serving bias, this is true in two of the three cases when it concerns collective co-production. Indeed, partially supporting H5, collective co-production results in a self-serving bias, because success is probably attributed to the group, instead of to the service provider.

H3 predicted that when the outcome is a deterioration of the problem, there will be no differences in satisfaction between co-production and non co-production. This appears to be the case in two cases (health problem and course quality). In four of the six cases, satisfaction with public service delivery is lower when the outcome is bad after co-production compared to non co-production. Hence, most of the evidence refutes H3. Also expectation H6, stating that when deterioration is the result there are no differences in satisfaction between collective co-production and non co-production, is proven false in two of the three cases (burglary and park litter).

Table 3. The impact of co-production and service outcome on trust in service delivery

Co-production	Outcome	improvement			status quo			deterioration		
		NCP	CP		NCP	CP		NCP	CP	
A. Health problem	Trust	8.83 (.83)	8.52 (1.12)		4.59 (2.26)	5.32 (1.42)		3.63 (1.94)	3.84 (1.70)	
	Satisfaction	9.00 (.87)	8.84 (1.04)		3.96 (2.07)	5.50 (1.53)**		3.11 (2.01)	4.03 (2.01)	
B. Unemployed	Trust	n = 30	n = 31		n = 27	n = 28		n = 27	n = 31	
	Satisfaction	8.14 (1.41)	8.22 (1.09)		7.29 (1.53)	5.93 (1.44)**		6.52 (1.48)	4.61 (1.93)**	
C. House litter	Trust	8.31 (1.42)	8.22 (.75)		7.55 (1.26)	7.22 (1.05)		6.81 (1.57)	5.48 (1.75)**	
	Satisfaction	n = 29	n = 27		n = 31	n = 27		n = 27	n = 33	
D. Burglary	Trust	7.66 (.87)	6.31 (1.79)**		5.22 (2.01)	4.64 (2.01)		5.33 (2.59)	3.70 (1.92)*	
	Satisfaction	7.66 (.87)	6.79 (1.24)**		4.96 (1.52)	4.64 (1.52)		5.17 (1.90)	3.40 (1.57)**	
E. Course	Trust	n = 35	n = 29		n = 27	n = 33		n = 30	n = 20	
	Satisfaction	8.04 (.91)	7.30 (1.12)**		5.48 (1.93)	4.43 (1.85)*		4.07 (1.57)	4.45 (1.84)	
F. Park litter	Trust	8.25 (.79)	7.70 (.95)*		6.19 (1.64)	4.79 (1.91)**		5.40 (1.67)	4.39 (1.58)*	
	Satisfaction	n = 25	n = 33		n = 27	n = 28		n = 30	n = 31	
	Trust	7.94 (1.03)	7.97 (1.09)		5.79 (1.44)	5.79 (1.44)		6.14 (1.22)	5.88 (1.86)	
	Satisfaction	7.42 (1.54)	7.46 (1.10)		6.16 (1.34)	5.62 (1.88)		5.92 (1.08)	6.00 (1.38)	
	Trust	n = 31	n = 37		n = 19	n = 26		n = 36	n = 25	
	Satisfaction	8.24 (1.00)	6.21 (2.13)**		6.31 (1.26)	5.20 (1.56)**		6.27 (1.56)	4.60 (1.96)**	
	Trust	8.14 (1.11)	6.06 (2.26)**		6.07 (1.65)	5.23 (1.43)*		6.27 (1.59)	4.63 (1.93)**	
	Satisfaction	n = 21	n = 33		n = 29	n = 30		n = 26	n = 35	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, standard deviation within parentheses, NCP=no co-production, CP=co-production

Propositions H4 and H7 say that there are no differences in satisfaction between individually and collectively co-produced and traditionally provided services when the outcome involves maintaining the status-quo. This is confirmed in the unemployed, house litter and course quality cases. In the burglary and park litter examples however, users are less satisfied with public service delivery when they have co-produced. When users are asked to co-produce with their doctor and the health problem remains the same, people are more satisfied than when they are not asked to co-produce. This is the only case where co-producers are more positive about public service delivery than passive clients.

Analysis

The results showed that co-production did not lead to higher satisfaction and trust rates compared to non co-production. Also, there were no clear patterns in the differences between individual and collective co-production. Thus, whereas Bendapudi and Leone (2003) evidently showed that user involvement leads to less satisfaction with successful services compared to non-involvement, it is less definite in present study. The self-serving bias could only partially explain the results. To gain more insight in these unexpected results, a member check was held with eight students who participated in the survey was convened to discuss possible alternative explanations. Member checks are used to increase the internal validity, usually in quantitative research. During a member check, respondents are asked whether they agree with description, interpretations and conclusions of the researcher(s) (Swanborn, 1996). This possibly leads to new insights, for instance by checking whether other unmeasured variables, besides the manipulation, have had an impact on user evaluations of the service provider. The information gathered from the member checks are integrated in the analysis below.

In three of the six cases, co-producers were less satisfied with the service provider. Two of these cases, the housing and park litter vignettes, were defined as not very probable in the survey testing. In the focus group, students argued that cleaning public space is not the responsibility of citizens. People might take more responsibility for success when they actually feel the service provider is solely responsible for the service and they should not be co-producing. Still, the burglary case was perceived as probable, but did show lower satisfaction. The focus group revealed that in this case, as well as in the litter cases, the presence of the regular service providers is less visible than in the other cases. In the health care vignette, the doctor still carries out his job; in the educational course example, the teacher is still actively involved; and in the unemployment case, the municipality puts effort in organizing a reemployment programme. In the three cases where satisfaction was lower, the local authorities were much less present. This probably gave students the feeling that they were left alone and therefore took credit for success.

Often, poor outcomes as a result of co-production led to low satisfaction with public service delivery, while no differences with traditional delivery were expected. This might be explained by the fact that the study design did not manipulate the process: each time, the service was delivered as promised. Therefore, when people do not co-produce, and the situation worsens, they might not blame the organization (because it did what it promised), but think of external conditions. For example, in the negative outcome of the burglary case, the police did patrol more often, so the police cannot be blamed for not being present more often. On the other hand, in the co-production case, the negative outcome did not mention efforts of the police. Hence, when people co-produce and the service fails, people might feel that the service provider was actually not involved enough, which is reflected in low satisfaction. This explanation is actually in line with the self-awareness hypothesis: the less people are aware of their own efforts, the less they will show a self-serving bias. Consequently, service providers would be able to diminish the self-serving bias by emphasizing the mutual character of co-production: both the ‘regular producer’ and the user provide resources e.g. time, efforts, money) to improve the quality of the service. Service providers should make sure they remain visible in the process of co-production.

Public service providers which make use of co-production might also want to invest in establishing a close relationship with users. As said, research has shown that people are less likely to demonstrate the self-serving bias when the bond with the partner is stronger. When individuals work together with friends rather than strangers, they are more eager to share credit as well as the blame (Campbell et al., 2000).

Discussion

A vignette design was used to investigate differences in satisfaction and trust between co-produced and non co-produced services. Such an experimental setting has clear advantages, but it has also some limitations. In this section, these limitations are discussed and some directions for future research are suggested.

The co-production vignettes described a situation where students were always willing to be involved in the service delivery. In practice, citizens are not likely to co-produce with a service provider without some knowledge about or connection with that service provider. Specifically, co-production probably cannot take place without trust between the professional and the user: for instance, students will not engage in cleaning their flat if the caretaker has never spoken to the tenants before; a teacher will not activate students if he or she never engages in a dialogue with the class. In other words, a certain amount of trust probably must exist before users co-produce. When there is mutual trust, users are probably less inclined to take all credit for success and none for failure. Unfortunately, the design of this study makes

it difficult to imitate a personal relationship with professionals or public officials. Hence, the self-serving bias might be less present in practice than shown in this study.

The study did not incorporate personal characteristics, which might influence the occurrence of the self-serving bias. As already mentioned, (young) adults show less attributional biases than children and the elderly. Although theory suggest that women are more likely to attribute failure internally and success externally than men, meta-analysis only finds this effect during adulthood (i.e. 25-55 years old) (Mezulis et al., 2004). Also in present study, satisfaction and trust levels between women and men were compared, but only few, non-systematic, significant differences were found. Also psychological traits, such as high internal locus of control, high self-esteem and high self-efficacy might lead to a higher self-serving bias (Silver et al., 1995; Tennen and Herzberger, 1987; Zuckerman, 1979). As it is likely that healthy academic students boast more positive self-evaluations than average clients of welfare services, this would imply that in reality, self-serving bias would actually be less pronounced.

The salience of particular issues may also be different for students than for other publics. For instance, highly educated citizens may desire less support from the government when they are unemployed and job seeking than lowly educated citizens. The salience of a certain issue thus likely determines the propensity to co-produce in the first place. In the vignettes, it was tried to clearly state the salience of the problem for the student, but it was not measured whether the respondents indeed perceived this salience. Furthermore, as mentioned, when users do co-produce, but the salience is low, they are less concerned with attributing success to themselves (Zuckerman, 1979). Future research should incorporate perceived salience and draw upon a broader public than students, to analyse differences in the propensity to co-produce (within different sectors) between students and the general population.

Furthermore, the presence of a self-serving bias within co-production of public service delivery might differ between countries. Heine and Lehman (1997) argue that in collectivist cultures, the bias is less likely to occur compared to individualistic cultures. In countries such as Japan, Korea and Thailand people are less prone to overemphasize the uniqueness of one's own success. In individualistic cultures, a meaningful cultural entity relies on the identification and confirmation of the self, while in collectivist cultures self-enhancement relies much more on shared expectations and norms. Furthermore, there could be country differences when it comes to expectations of public service delivery. In highly developed welfare states, citizens might expect much more of governments in terms of quantity and quality of services than citizens in less developed countries. When expectations are low, people are less inclined to make self-serving attributions (Zuckerman, 1979).

Surprisingly, the process of co-production does not lead to more trust. Apparently, being involved in the delivery of services is not valued by users. The theory that participation in public services gives users feelings of fairness, respect and inclusiveness is not supported. In this study, the service user was not presented with a choice; the user just decided to co-produce. It might be that giving users an explicit choice between 'traditional' delivery

and co-production, increases perceptions of fair procedure, honest and respectful service providers. Choice may also mitigate the self-serving bias (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003). Additionally, choice increases the role for motivations. When people choose for co-production, they are likely to be motivated to be involved in service delivery and they will not only value the process (in terms of trust), but will also be less inclined to take credit for success and will more easily take some blame for failure (Arkin et al., 1976).

Finally, this research uses relatively simple measurements of satisfaction and trust. Future research might use multiple item scales to improve the reliability of these measures. This could also improve the empirical distinction between the two concepts, in order to reveal differences in the effect of co-production. Furthermore, in reality, people evaluate public services on a whole array of characteristics (e.g. the length of a queue, politeness of civil servants, or general attitude towards the public sector). To gain more insight in conditions of satisfaction and trust-building through co-production, qualitative studies among specific cases (e.g. particular group of users, different sectors, and various intensities of activity) could be very useful.

Conclusion

This research explored the relationship between individual and collective co-production of public service delivery and user trust and satisfaction, and addressed the potential self-serving bias in this context. This study has shown that even when the process runs smoothly, co-production does not necessarily lead to higher satisfaction or trust. Service users do not seem to value participation in service delivery, as proponents of co-production, who regard it as a possibility to renew democracy, assume (Pestoff, 2009). Claims that collective co-production is a better strategy to build trust than individual co-production (e.g. Needham, 2008) are also not supported.

Yet, the idea that co-production is an alternative strategy which should be preferred above traditional (or market-type) delivery increasingly finds its way into the literature (Pestoff et al., 2012) as well as into policy formulation, especially in the UK (Boyle and Harris, 2009; Löffler et al., 2012). For instance, the idea of the Big Society leans on the idea that ‘we need to draw on the skills and expertise of people across the country as we respond to the social, political and economic challenges Britain faces’ (Cabinet Office, 2010). In the Netherlands, the idea of a ‘participation society’ was coined in the King’s speech of 2013, denoting that ‘everybody who can, is asked to take responsibility for his or her own life and environment’ (King’s speech, the Netherlands, 2013). Thus, in times of austerity, governments seek possibilities to increase the input of citizens in order to preserve the quantity and quality of public services. The question is: can the search for efficiency be combined with higher satisfaction with and trust in public service providers – or government as a whole? This study suggests

that there might be a trade-off between these two outcomes: when people co-produce they might still expect the presence and involvement of the service provider.

In particular this study has shown that further research is needed to investigate how the division in responsibility between the 'regular producer' and service users affects their satisfaction and trust. This study implies that poor outcomes will be blamed on government because co-producers might feel left alone by government when the service fails. How much can government leave to users and how strong must their supportive role be in order to gain positive evaluations? The missing link, we suggest, is knowledge about the conditions which affect people's appreciation of the process of co-production. Without understanding these conditions, regarding co-production as the best alternative for public service delivery could be inappropriate. Comparative qualitative as well as quantitative research should focus in particular on the motivations of citizens to co-produce, of their expectations about the role of the service provider, and their expectations of the co-production process as a whole.

7 |

Conclusion and discussion

Introduction

The goal of this study has been to critically assess the expectation that co-production of public service delivery is able to foster trust in service delivery, trust in (local) government and generalized trust. This has been one of the arguments that governments and service providers have used to increase the involvement of users in service delivery. Now that co-production is increasingly embraced as a key driver for public service reforms, it is necessary to enhance our knowledge about this topic. Therefore, this study attempted to answer the following research question: *to what extent does co-production of public service delivery by users lead to trust in service delivery, trust in (local) government and generalized trust; and by which mechanisms and conditions can this relationship be explained?*

In the following section, the research question will be answered by systematically answering the formulated sub questions. After this, the theoretical and methodological innovations of the study are discussed. Then, the theoretical and methodological gaps that still remain are described. This chapter ends with the practical implications of the study.

Answers to the research questions

Whereas the relation between co-production and trust has been mentioned frequently, no efforts have been made to explicate why this relation would exist. Chapter 2 takes on this challenge by answering the question: *What are mechanisms described in the literature that can explain the relation between co-production and trust?* Two explanations were identified, one at the individual level and another at the collective level. The mechanism at the individual level states that co-production may lead to *self-efficacy*. When users co-produce, the expectation is that they will develop a sense of control – not only over the service, but over their own actions in general. This is particularly fostered through face-to-face interaction with professional staff, which allows users to negotiate experience and outcomes with personnel, gaining influence the service delivery in turn. Hence, an increase in perceived control relates to a perception of professional support and responsiveness, which is believed to be beneficial for trust in the service provider. Also, people with high levels of perceived control will feel less risk in trusting other citizens.

The second mechanism, at the collective level, holds that co-production may lead to the creation of *trust networks*. Collective co-production stands for co-production where multiple users co-produce simultaneously for a shared cause. Collective co-production may enhance intensive levels of interaction within a small and cohesive network of users. It requires cooperation between users, who often pursue the same goals. For instance, housing cooperatives try to uphold high quality of the buildings and living environment by high levels of

co-production (Brandsen and Helderma, 2012). The same background of users and the familiarity among users is expected to increase trust among users.

The theoretical elaboration in chapter 2 also points at possible barriers for these mechanisms to take place. For instance, the creation of trust networks among users may be beneficial for generalized trust, but it could also be that trust does not expand beyond the level of the network – closed communities may increase ‘bonding’ trust rather than ‘bridging’ trust. The problem of motivation is also mentioned: why would users co-produce in the first place? Could it be that some people are more eager to co-produce than others?

Furthermore, an important conclusion of the theoretical elaboration in chapter 2 is that in order to study the effect of co-production on trust, a multi-stage model needs to be adopted. It is not sufficient to only assess the evaluation phase, it is also necessary to gain insights in the initial and process phase.

Chapter 3 expands this approach by also taking into account the different levels of actors involved in co-production. This means not only focusing on the user side, but also by taking into account the position of public service organizations (PSOs): *what compels actors to pursue co-production?* Commonly, it is taken for granted that organizations profit from involving users as co-producers: it could reduce costs and increase responsiveness, for instance. This chapter contributes to the discussion by showing that this might not be the case. An uncertainty approach was adopted, which started from the assumption that users as well as organizations desire and benefit from reducing uncertainty. It was argued that co-production might indeed lead to a reduction of uncertainty for users. For PSOs, however, co-production might well mean an increase in uncertainty. This could be an obstruction for public service organizations to allow users to act as a genuine partner in service delivery. When the options to co-produce are limited, restricted or only symbolical, this may have a negative effect on the building of trust in general. PSOs might respond differently to this uncertainty, depending on the institutional context. Specifically, strategies to deal with uncertainty may differ according to the level of discretion that staff of PSOs is allotted or the level of bureaucratic control. Thus, this chapter points at the importance of the organizational practice and the institutional context in order to understand the effects of co-production.

One of the possibilities to reduce uncertainty is to make use of selection procedures in order to attract those users which are more likely to conform to the organizational goals. However, this might lead to a selection effect: the inclusion of a particular group of users – those with high levels of motivation, often well-educated, native and healthy – whereas less-equipped citizens are excluded from co-produced service delivery. In the literature, however, co-production is praised for its possibility to ‘empower’ vulnerable citizens (Needham, 2009; Wilson, 1994). This leads to the first empirical, descriptive sub question *what are the characteristics of users involved in co-production?* Chapter 4 discusses and investigates this issue. Next to organizational selection, this chapter points at the possibility of self-selection: those who are more motivated and trusting will also be more likely to initiate or compelled

to co-production. By comparing participants of a co-production activation programme (work corporations) with citizens who did not participate, it is indeed shown that high levels of motivation and trust predict the willingness to co-produce. Other characteristics, such as health and ethnicity did not matter. This is a very important result, as it affects the possibility for co-production to build trust: when it is already high, it becomes more difficult to increase. This could also mean that the causal relation between co-production and trust is reversed: trust is required for users to co-produce, and is not necessarily the result of co-production.

Furthermore, it may lead to the exclusion of those citizens who would actually profit the most from successfully co-produced services. This could have negative consequences for either the users who abstain from co-production or the users who do co-produce. First, those who are excluded could suffer from inequality in quality of services (when co-produced services reach better outcomes); or from the possibility that PSOs are mostly responsive towards the needs of the users who co-produce, as they have the most direct contact with PSO staff. Second, those who are co-producing may feel that while they are concentrating their efforts on the delivery of the service, others profit from these efforts (i.e. free-riding). Thus indeed, before addressing the process and effects of co-production, it is necessary to study the initial phase to understand who are involved in co-production.

Chapter 5 continues the empirical research initiated in chapter 4, addressing the explanatory question: *what are mechanisms and conditions that explain the relation between co-production and trust?* Is co-production, regardless of possible selection effects, still able to foster trust? To answer this question, it takes into account the insights from chapter 2 and 3. This involves testing whether the mechanisms of self-efficacy and trust networks can be found in practice, and scrutinizing conditional factors that determine whether co-production takes place and has effect. The conditional factors included factors at the individual level (e.g. motivation), the organizational level (e.g. organizational support), and the institutional level (e.g. goal pressures). By following participants of work corporations over time, it was shown that self-efficacy did not increase and that trust networks were not fostered. Importantly, trust at different levels decreased significantly instead of the expected increase. This result alone is already important, as it raises awareness that co-production will not always produce the expected outcomes.

Furthermore, it appeared that changes in trust in other users were stronger (positively) related to changes in trust in the service provider and generalized trust than changes in self-efficacy. This indicates the importance of studying the interactions between users in cases of collective co-production, rather than focusing on individuals solely. The study also revealed important conditional factors that might determine whether co-production leads to trust or not, such as motivation, organizational support, commitment and space for higher levels of user participation. When motivation to co-produce diminishes, trust will less easily be improved. The same counts if support for co-productive efforts is lacking, or if commit-

ment to the co-production is low. In case of the work corporations, organizational support was often not optimal, commitment to the service was relatively low, and there were little possibilities for users to become involved in service design (i.e. ‘voice’), possibly explaining why trust generally did not increase.

Another suggested explanation for the decrease in trust among participants of work corporations was the disappointment that arose among the participants when they got closer to the end of the programme. It then became clear that it is extremely difficult for them to return to the labour market, even though they had put many efforts into the programme during quite some time. An important question is then: *to what extent does the evaluation of co-produced services depend on the result of the service?* Chapter 6 delves into this issue. Previous studies in the field of service management (Bendapudi and Leone, 2003) suggested that co-producing individuals might blame the organization for negative outcomes, whereas positive outcomes are attributed to themselves. This *self-serving bias* predicts that, assuming the outcome of the service is successful, satisfaction with and trust in the service provider will be lower in the case of co-production compared to services that are delivered by an organization solely. This is because in the latter case, users cannot but attribute the success to the organization, whereas in the former, users also take some credit for themselves. In a vignette experiment, the presence of this psychological effect was indeed shown for co-production of safety and litter removal, but not for co-production of health, education, and reemployment services. Still, in none of the cases, trust and satisfaction in the service provider was higher for co-production than no co-production.

A focus group in which the experiment results were discussed provided explanations for the finding that the self-serving bias was stronger in some of the cases. The most plausible explanation seemed to point at the experienced support of the PSO. When the visibility and involvement of the PSO was believed to be low, they were stronger blamed for negative outcomes and less rewarded for positive outcomes. This is in line with what was found in chapter 5.

An answer to the general research question can now be formulated. Three parts can be distinguished in the research question. First, *to what extent* does co-production lead to trust in public service delivery, (local) government, and generalized trust? This study found that the experience of co-production may actually lead to a *decrease* in trust in public service delivery, in trust in (local) government, and in generalized trust. Second, *which mechanisms* can explain this relationship? Theoretically, co-production could enhance feelings of self-efficacy on the one hand, and it could create trust networks among users on the other hand. Empirical research shows that the collective mechanism of trust networks seems to relate more strongly to changes in trust in service delivery and generalized trust than the individual mechanism of self-efficacy. Third, *under which conditions* does co-production lead to trust in service delivery? The study found that a positive relation between co-production and trust is highly dependent upon the motivations and commitment of users, the organizational

practice (including giving support to users and providing users with options for voice) and the institutional context (including the institutional pressure on PSOs to deliver outcomes that are difficult to unite with co-production). The fact that current research often focuses on appealing and successful case studies might have led to an incomplete view on the possible pitfalls of co-production. Both theoretically and empirically, the picture seems to be more complex than often assumed.

Theoretical, methodological and practical contributions

In this section, the contributions of this study to the research field of co-production are discussed, in terms of theory, methods, and practice. Specifically, it deals with the questions: what were the knowledge gaps at the beginning of this study? What did this study contribute to these knowledge gaps? And what does this mean for future research?

Theory

Current research on co-production often focuses on a single stage of the service delivery chain. Particularly, there seems to be much attention for the initial phase, in terms of questions on motivation (Bovaird et al., 2015; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014) and distributional biases (Clark et al., 2013; Jakobsen and Andersen, 2013; John, 2009). Other research has focused on the process of co-production (Bovaird and Löffler, 2012; Cepiku and Giordano, 2013; Isett and Miranda, 2015; Meijer, 2011). Finally, only little research revolves around the outcomes and outputs of co-production (Marks, 2009; Vamstad, 2012). Importantly, the interplay between the three stages (initial, process, and evaluation) is often neglected.

Also, most research on co-production fails to integrate the coexisting processes that take place at the different levels (the individual, the organizational, and institutional). For example, research on the initial phase mostly focuses at the individual level (the motivations of users, the distribution bias of users), but only exceptions mention the role that PSOs have at this point (Alford, 2009a). Scholars working on the process stage of co-production either put emphasis on the individual experiences (Pestoff, 2006), on how it affects professional staff in their interaction with users (Cepiku and Giordano, 2013), and in rare cases on the influence of the institutional environment on co-production (Joshi and Moore, 2004; Tuurnas et al., 2014). Sparse research on the evaluation stage of co-production does combine effects at the individual and organizational level (Marks, 2009; Vamstad, 2012), but devotes little attention to the institutional context. This is a serious flaw, since this study showed that all levels may have a large impact on the design and practice of co-production, and therefore on the effects on co-production.

A first insight of adopting a multistage/multilevel approach was that studying the effects of co-productions fares well by having a multidisciplinary framework. For instance, some

disciplines are clearly better for explaining phenomena at the individual level, whereas other are more suited for phenomena at the organizational level. Thus, social cognitive theory has been used for explaining individual level and group processes; organizational theories for the behaviour of organizations that are confronted with user involvement; and institutional theory for the influence of the institutional environment on the behaviour of organizations and users. Such a multidisciplinary theory was pursued to understand all the processes that take place at different stages and levels of the service delivery chain. For instance, the psychological attribution theory on the self-serving bias was necessary to understand the evaluation of co-produced service delivery by citizens. Yet, to grasp the reaction of PSOs to institutional pressures, institutional theory was needed, whereas psychological theories are less useful here.

Second, the multistage approach has indeed provided a better view on the relation between co-production and trust. The incorporation of the *initial* stage showed that high levels of motivation and trust are already important for the initiation of co-production. This also means that there is a relatively high risk that these levels drop when expectations are not met. Taking the *process* stage into account led to insights in the interaction between users and between users and professional staff. This study showed the importance of the supportive role of professional staff and the ability of staff to create a sense of community. Assessing the *evaluation* stage, finally, provided important information about attribution mechanisms. The latter research on the evaluation stage, in particular the self-serving bias, showed that even if co-production leads to desired results, it does not automatically mean that the relation between citizens and service providers – and ultimately government – improves. It seemed to be that especially in the cases where the service provider was less present, the self-serving bias was stronger. This finding supports the assumption in this study that it is vital to incorporate the process stage of co-production: in the end, users' evaluation of their co-production experience depends for a large part on who is involved and what happened in the process, not so much on the actual result.

Third, this study showed the complexity of the involvement of three levels (user, PSO and institutional context) in co-production. In particular, the uncertainty approach (chapter 3) has proven to be very helpful as a diagnostic tool for possible dilemmas in the implementation of co-production. Uncertainty about the characteristics of participants, combined with an institutional pressure to perform, could explain the work corporations' selection of motivated and trusting participants. It could also explain why work corporations hardly gave participants the possibility to have a say about the internal organization and programme. This, in turn, negatively affects citizens' possibility to actually gain some control over the service delivery.

One could wonder whether there is some kind of optimum of redistribution of control between users and public service providers. Joshi and Moore (2004: 40) seem to indicate that this is a zero-sum game: 'where co-production occurs, power, authority and control of

resources are likely to be divided (not necessarily equally), between the state and groups of citizens in an interdependent and ambiguous fashion'. This could mean that PSOs might desire to frustrate or limit co-production even though there might be benefits for users, because it might be beneficial for the organization. This was evidently shown in the case of a work corporation participant, who said that he was prohibited from taking courses because this would improve his job chances. Because of his skills, he was needed on the work floor (see chapter 5).

The insights provided by the multistage/multilevel approach of this study also lead to new questions. For instance, whereas this study focused on the role of organizations in a rather generic way, future research can benefit from paying more attention to the specific role of the *professional* in co-production. Because of the direct interaction they have with co-producing users, they can have the most impact on building a close relation with the user (Needham, 2008). Although this study shows professional staff can also frustrate the co-production process, more research is required to understand under which conditions professionals genuinely engage users in service delivery (Brandsen and Honingh, forthcoming). This can build on literature on the discretion service deliverers have and how they cope with this freedom (Lipsky, 1980). Specifically, literature on professionalism shows that professionals in the context of public services function differently depending on the institutional context (Brandsen and Honingh, 2013; Noordegraaf, 2007).

Furthermore, the finding that building commitment among users to the public service is important will benefit from more theoretical embedding. Organizational commitment is a concept that has been researched often, although not so much in the public sector context (Steijn and Leisink, 2006). Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory may be useful here (Perry and Wise, 1990). Attempts have already been made to apply PSM (an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions) to the study of co-production (Van Eijk and Steen, forthcoming). It is argued that people with high levels of PSM also show 'citizenship behaviour' outside the workplace (Houston, 2006). Van Eijk and Steen (forthcoming) thus state that citizens with high levels of PSM will more likely engage in co-production of public service delivery. This premise could be extrapolated to the process stage – users with high levels of PSM might also be more likely to show high levels of commitment. This is worthwhile to investigate, as it will provide more information on how commitment to the service is fostered during co-production.

Methods

In the period this study was conducted, the methodological variety in studies on co-production has been vastly improved, including natural experiments (Jakobsen, 2013), Q-methodology (Van Eijk and Steen, 2014), and large-N surveys (Parrado et al., 2013). However, at the beginning of this study, most research on co-production represented rather static case studies, and still, most studies remain cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. Also, most research

focuses on those who are already involved in co-production, whereas little is known about those who do not co-produce. Furthermore, most studies on co-production focus on data collection at one level of analysis (user or organization) and rarely combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Finally, still too often successful, innovative examples of co-production are studied, which makes it impossible to compare co-production with non co-production, or successful co-production with less successful co-production.

This study dealt with some of these shortcomings. First, it used a longitudinal design, which is necessary if it is acknowledged that all stages are important for understanding the effects of co-production. One has to follow co-producers over time to explain how co-production affects their experiences and evaluations in the end (see above). Furthermore, in order to know who is involved in co-production, it does not suffice to ask about people's motivations to co-produce. It is also necessary to know which citizens are not involved. This group exists of two types of users: those who are excluded but are eligible to co-produce; and those users who prematurely decide to stop with co-production. An analysis of both these group – those who never started and the dropouts – provides a lot of information about the factors that make co-production a positive experience for users. Motivation and trust appear not only to be predictors for engaging in co-production, but also for the sustainability of co-production. People with lower levels of motivation and trust are more likely to discontinue co-production. This points at the issue of causality: can trust be an outcome of co-production, or is it more viable to regard it as an independent variable?

Second, the study used a combination of qualitative data and quantitative data, assembled at different levels, which is crucial against the background of a multilevel approach. For instance, the interviews with the organizational level exposed dilemmas of the managers, which were often not recognized by the participants. The other way around, the managers were generally more positive about their support and about the effects of work corporations than the participants. The surveys and interviews with participants helped to shape a complete picture of the relation between co-production and trust. Furthermore, the quantitative data clearly showed that most trust levels decreased, whereas this would have been difficult to assess in qualitative interviews. In contrast, the interviews revealed important information about the experience of users, which would have been difficult, if not impossible to reveal with the help of a questionnaire.

Third, for a good understanding of the evaluation stage, it was necessary to compare co-produced services with non co-produced services, and services with good and bad outcomes. Probably due to the difficulty to design this in practice, such research has – to the author's knowledge – not been done before. Therefore, an experimental method was used. Definitely, such a method has its drawbacks, but it proved to be extremely helpful for exploring effects of co-production, which otherwise could not be studied.

The methodology used in the study also exposed some difficulties in researching co-production. A first problem concerns the accessibility of respondents. The background of

the users of work corporations, which often involved precarious histories, posed a threat for the accessibility for the researcher. The willingness of the managers to cooperate was very helpful in this respect. They could motivate the users to fill in the survey and participate in an interview. Admittedly, some participants only took part in the research because they were told to do so. This may have an impact on their answers, but more importantly, this increased the importance for the researcher to clearly communicate his independence of the organization and municipality. By stressing this frequently and by conducting the interviews at an appropriate location (e.g. a separate room), participants seemed to feel comfortable and speak out freely. In other service sectors, however, the accessibility of users may be less difficult. For instance, one can easily compare parents who co-produce in child care and parents who do not (Vamstad, 2007); or compare elderly who assist in their own care with elderly who do not (Wilson, 1994). Also, the organizational staff in these sectors usually has less power than in the case of activation services.

Another challenge is to deal with dropouts – users who prematurely decide to stop with co-production. Dropout rates are likely to be high for social services, again because of the vulnerable background of service users. A substantive size of respondents is thus needed if comparisons between continuous co-producers and dropouts are to be made. Also, one needs to pay attention to keeping track of those who stop co-producing. This proved to be difficult in the case of work corporations (no contact details, difficult personal circumstances). When done properly, it will provide interesting knowledge about the conditions for sustainable co-production. The reasons for dropout may differ per sector. In health and social care, co-production may stop as a result of deteriorated health; in education co-production may end when time is lacking; in safety, people may co-produce less when the effect remains unclear.

However, in order to design valuable comparisons between sectors, research on co-production must focus on a good measurement of co-production. In the study on work corporations, co-production was more or less considered as an inherent characteristic of the programme. In the vignette study, levels of co-production were manipulated, which was checked by the question ‘how much is ... involved in solving the problem?’ Although this question suited the design of this study, in other cases, a more objective measure might be necessary. Also, a measure of co-production could help to distinguish the level of co-production in different stages of service delivery (e.g. involvement in design, implementation, delivery or evaluation).

In the same vein, future research could pay attention to the development of valid measures of satisfaction and trust. The survey for participants of work corporations primarily used single-items of trust. With single-items, internal consistency reliability cannot be tested. However, taking into account the target group, the questions had to be rather simple. Selnes (1998) also argues that trust can be understood as a unidimensional construct that is directly accessible to the respondent. In contrast, multidimensional measures of trust often use sources of trust as measures (cf. Grimmeliikhuijsen, 2009). The vignette study however

showed that simple measurements of these concepts display too much similarity. It would be good to develop multiple items to obtain discernable measures of satisfaction and trust. Also, even if trust is regarded as a unidimensional construct, it would be interesting to see whether there are differences in the way co-production affects different sources. Following the theory in this study, co-production would particularly have an impact on the affective dimension of trust, and not so much on the cognitive dimension of trust.

Although the vignette study was not able to discriminate between satisfaction and trust, it did prove to be a fruitful tool to compare more and less successful cases of co-production. In practice, this would be almost impossible to design. Experimental studies are inexpensive and perfectly suited to test particular mechanisms. The next step is to see whether the results can also be found in practice. Natural experiments could be very useful here. Indeed, there have been attempts to set these up (Jakobsen, 2013). Such studies are incredibly valuable for understanding the effects of co-production for citizens.

Finally, as mentioned above, the relationship between co-production and trust is not one-directional. The methods in this study were insufficient to fully tackle this issue of causality. Does co-production lead to trust or is trust a condition for co-production? Or could there be a vicious circle: high trust leads to co-production, which leads to even higher trust? The same accounts for the mechanisms of perceived control and trust networks. For instance, according to other studies, self-efficacy is a predictor for the willingness to co-produce, rather than a result of co-production (Bovaird et al., 2015; Parrado et al., 2013; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014). Experiments or more advanced longitudinal designs could help to deal with the problem of causality.

Practical implications

High hopes are placed upon co-production by governments across the globe. For instance, the OECD stated that co-production could lead to more satisfaction and possible cost reduction (OECD, 2011). A report from the British Trade Union Congress notes that co-production could foster

... greater ability to get to the root of issues and develop tailored solutions; increased innovation and efficiency of services when they are built around the users' needs; greater user satisfaction; creation of more cohesive communities with greater sense of local ownership; building confidence and capacity of individuals and communities; better use of public resources (Trade Union Congress, 2013: 7).

Although there is public debate about the desirability and the actual implementation of co-production, in general, governments seem to be taking a very positive stance towards co-production.

Importantly, there seem to be a few policy assumptions about co-production (see Chapter 1), which this study can now challenge on solid theoretical and empirical grounds. Table 1 can be regarded as a tool for practitioners to explicitly and critically address these policy assumptions. It consists of several questions that can be posed during the design and implementation of co-production, highlighting potential barriers for successful co-production. They are systematically ordered along the three phases of service delivery (initial, process, and evaluation) and the three levels of actors (users, PSOs, and institutions).

One of the assumptions identified in Chapter 1, and related to the initial phase, was that citizens are intrinsically motivated to co-produce. This research, in line with other recent work (Bovaird et al., 2015; Van Eijk and Steen, 2014), shows that users can have very

Table 1. Questions for practitioners dealing with co-production

	User	PSO	Institutional
Initial phase	What is the background of potential co-producers? What could be the motivations of users to co-produce? Could there be risks for users to co-produce, e.g. health or financial risks?	Are there specific users that the PSO want to target for co-production? Is it necessary to motivate users to co-produce? Is cooperation between users important and what does this mean for the composition of users? How does co-production affect the internal organization?	What kinds of instruments are available to use to elicit co-production? Is there support for co-production from stakeholders?
Process phase	What kinds of contributions will users be able to give? What are their skills and resources? How much influence do users have over the design and implementation of the service?	How are users supported in their co-productive efforts? How can their sense of commitment be elicited?	How much discretion is there available for users and professional staff to deviate from standard procedures?
Evaluation phase	To what extent can users be held responsible for outcomes/outputs?	To what extent can the PSO be held responsible for outcomes/outputs? How will be dealt with disappointed users after negative outcomes/outputs?	Which outcomes/outputs do stakeholders desire? Are these congruent with what users and PSO desire?

PSO=Public Service Organization

different reasons to participate in co-production. For PSOs involved with co-production, it can be quite important to understand the variety of motivations.

First, it could be desirable for PSOs to prevent that users with particular motivations will co-produce. It was advantageous for the work corporations that users showed some motivation to do the daily tasks and willingness to find a job. Also in other sectors, it could be positive for the service to withhold particular users. For example, when residents co-produce neighbourhood safety with the police, it could be dangerous when participants have other motives than to serve the community (e.g. racism, personal conflicts with other residents) (Fledderus, Broersma, et al., 2014). This insight is important, as it is often assumed that organizations always desire users to co-produce.

Second, a good view on the motivations of users can help to make more effectively use of policy instruments to elicit co-production. When it appears that most users are motivated by individual, instrumental reasons, it makes sense to attract users by material incentives. However, when it is important that users are intrinsically motivated, or that cooperation between users is at stake, such instruments might not have the intended effects. Indeed, whereas intrinsic motivation and trust were important for sustainable participation in work corporations, the policy instruments used to elicit participation aimed at very different motivations. Thus, the financial bonus was rarely regarded as important, and the contract (which can actually be regarded as a display of distrust) was perceived as trivial at best and led to fierce resistance at worst.

Obviously, the intentional use of instruments to determine who is and who is not involved in co-production leads to a selective group of users. This could also be the result of self-selection, as explained in chapter 4: those who have more resources, who are more motivated and more trusting will be more eager to co-produce. Although there seems to be an assumption that everybody is involved in co-production equally, it is thus more likely that most forms of co-production are characterized by distributional biases. The lack of representation does not necessarily have to be a problem. More similarities between users will, for example, be beneficial for the commitment in the following process phase. It can actually be a strategy for PSOs to 'match' potential users to an existing group of users. Yet, it could mean that disadvantaged citizens are less likely to co-produce, leaving them with fewer possibilities to have an influence on the delivery of public services.

An assumption related to the process phase is the premise that co-production automatically leads to users having an influence on the design and implementation of the service. In practice, co-production could mean high levels of participation during service delivery, but little control over other aspects of the service. This is what happened at the work corporations. Providing users the possibility to be involved in decisions about the way co-production is given shape could lead to high levels of personal control and strengthens trust between user and provider. However, PSOs should then also analyse what kind of contributions users are able to give, what their skills and resources are, and how these inputs can be supported by the

organization. Also, it should be clear for PSOs how much space there is for their professional staff to deviate from standard procedures, as they must be able to do so when users provide suggestions that do not fit the regular process.

Finally, in the evaluation phase, a common policy assumption is that in the case of equal outcomes, co-produced services will lead to better evaluations by citizens than non co-produced services. This study has indicated, however, that this depends on the ideas that citizens hold about the division of responsibilities between user and service provider. When the service leads to successful outcomes, users may well attribute this success to themselves. They could actually blame the service provider for all the efforts they had to put in themselves. Of course, this will depend for a large part on the process phase and the question of support and commitment. And what happens when the service does not lead to the expected outcomes? An important question for PSOs in this respect is to which extent the users, and to which extent the PSO can be held responsible. In practice, it will often be difficult for governmental agencies to blame citizens for failing services.

Interestingly, in the case of work corporations, it were the (characteristics of) users who finally were believed to be responsible for disappointing results (in terms of regular employment). Specifically, in an evaluation report of the municipality (published after the research period), it was stated that the low amount of 'success' was partially due to the participants' distance to the labour market and personal problems, such as debts, child care and housing (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Very little attention was paid to the way the organizations managed the co-production of users or to the supportive role that the municipality could have played (for instance on the issues of debts and child care). Several participants of work corporations having clear organizational problems were quite astonished to hear these results (personal communication). For them, it felt that the fact that they are still unemployed was completely their fault, leading to feelings of disappointment and distrust in the municipality.

At the institutional level, problems in the evaluation phase can arise when stakeholders, PSOs, and users have different ideas about the definition of successful outcomes. In the case of the work corporations, many of the users were happy just because they participated, the work corporations focused both on reemployment and personal development, whereas the municipality mostly focused on reemployment (or putting people off benefits). Each actor will then also evaluate other outcomes; or the same outcomes differently. In order to prevent conflicts that arise as a result of this, it would be good for PSOs to explicitly address the desired outcomes with both users and stakeholders.

By addressing the questions in Table 1, practitioners will be able to overcome some of the potential barriers that co-production of public service delivery entails. Without doubt, co-production could have very positive effects for the relation between citizens, service delivery and government. However, when co-production is not carefully designed and implemented, it might just as easily damage rather than build trust.

Summary

Involving citizens in the delivery of public services – known as co-production – is regarded as a way to improve service quality and trust of citizens in service delivery, government and generalized trust. Although governments increasingly implement policies stimulating co-production, empirical research to support the relationship between co-production and trust is scarce. Therefore, it seems fair to say that in its present form this remains ideological assumption. In order to critically assess this expected relationship, the main research question of this study is: *to what extent and under which conditions does co-production of public service delivery by users lead to trust in service delivery, (local) government and generalized trust; and by which mechanisms can this relationship be explained?*

Chapter 2 aims to identify mechanisms described in literature that can explain the relation between co-production and trust. Co-production is defined here as *an arrangement where both clients and 'regular' producers contribute a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services*. Trust is defined as *the belief that one will contribute to your well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon you*. It is argued that co-production might be able to address the identification-based form of trust that was neglected in previous modes of governance. Instead of maintaining trust by authority or contracts and exit, trust is maintained by direct participation in service delivery and close interactions between citizens and service providers. Specifically, this direct participation would provide users with a sense of control over the service, leading to a sense of self-efficacy – the perception that you are capable of solving your own problems. People who perceive more control over their life are also expected to feel less risk in trusting others, because they feel they are less dependent on the conduct of others. Also, co-production would potentially lead to the building of so-called trust networks. When users co-produce together with other users (known as collective co-production), integrated communities could develop, characterized by clear boundaries and shared connections among participants (i.e. users and professional staff). The close cooperation within such networks would foster trust among the participants. Potentially, this spills over to citizens outside the network – generalized trust –, but boundaries may be so strong that this creates distrust towards outsiders of the community. In order to investigate whether the mechanisms of perceived control and trust networks could explain the relation between co-production and trust, a longitudinal design is proposed that includes all the three stages of service delivery (the initial, the process, and the evaluation phase).

Chapter 3 provides a theoretical examination of the impact of co-production for users and organizations by posing the question: what compels organizations and users to pursue co-production? An uncertainty approach was adopted to argue that whereas co-production might lead to a reduction of uncertainty, for organizations, co-production might well mean an increase in uncertainty. This could be an obstruction for public service organizations to allow users to act as a genuine partner in service delivery. When the options to co-produce

are limited, restricted or only symbolical, this may have a negative effect on the building of trust in general. Public service organizations might respond differently to this uncertainty, depending on the institutional context. This is because the institutional context determines for a large part the level of discretion that is allotted to the staff of PSOs and the level of bureaucratic control. When there is more discretion and less bureaucratic control, PSOs may be more likely to accept uncertainties that come along with co-production. In this institutional context, there is space for a dialogue between users and professional staff, where the uncertainties and possible risks can be discussed and negotiated. When there is little discretion and more bureaucratic control, there will be less room for a dialogue. The PSO would rather attempt to decrease uncertainties as much as possible. One of the strategies to do so is to deliberately select on the characteristics of co-producers.

Chapter 4 discusses and investigates this issue of selection: the inclusion of a particular group of users – often well-educated, native and healthy – whereas less-equipped citizens are excluded from co-produced service delivery. Next to organizational selection, this chapter also points at the possibility of self-selection: those who are more motivated and trusting will be more likely to initiate or compelled to co-production. By comparing participants of a co-production activation programme (work corporations) with citizens who did not participate, it is indeed shown that motivation and trust play an important role in the willingness to co-produce. Other characteristics, such as health and ethnicity did not matter. This might affect the possibility for co-production to build trust: when it is already high, it becomes more difficult to increase. Also, it may lead to the exclusion of those citizens who would actually profit the most from successfully co-produced services.

Chapter 5 continues the empirical research initiated in chapter 4, addressing the explanatory question: *what are mechanisms and conditions that explain the relation between co-production and trust?* Is co-production, regardless of possible selection effects, still able to foster trust? To answer this question, it takes into account the insights from chapter 2 and 3. This involves testing whether the two mechanisms can be found in practice, and scrutinizing conditional factors – at the individual, organizational, and institutional level – that determine whether co-production takes place and has effect. By following participants of work corporations over time, it was shown that perceived control did not increase and that trust networks, in terms of trust in other participants, were not fostered. Importantly, trust at different levels decreased rather than increased. This result alone is already important, as it raises awareness that co-production will not always produce the expected outcomes. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the collective mechanism of trust networks seems to relate more strongly to changes in trust in service delivery and generalized trust than the individual mechanism of self-efficacy.

The study also revealed important conditional factors that might determine whether co-production leads to trust or not, such as motivation, support and commitment. When motivation to co-produce diminishes, trust will less easily be improved. The same counts if

organizational support – ranging from emotional to material support – for co-productive efforts is lacking, support that can range from material to emotional. Commitment is important too – if users feel responsible for the co-produced service, it has a positive influence on their trust in service delivery.

One of the suggested explanations for the decrease in trust among participants of work corporations was the disappointment that arose among the participants when they got closer to the end of the programme. It then became clear that it is extremely difficult for them to return to the labour market, even though they had put many efforts into the programme during quite some time. An important question is then: *to what extent does the evaluation of co-produced services depend on the result of the service?* Chapter 6 delves into this issue. By looking at previous studies in the field of service management, it became clear that co-producing individuals might blame the organization for negative outcomes, whereas positive outcomes are attributed to themselves. Because of this self-serving bias, satisfaction with and trust in the service provider will be lower when users successfully co-produce compared to successful services that are delivered by an organization solely. In the latter case, users cannot but attribute the success to the organization, whereas in the former, users also take some credit for themselves. In a vignette experiment, the presence of this psychological effect was indeed shown for co-production of safety and little removal, but not for co-production of health, education, and reemployment services. Nevertheless, in none of the cases, trust and satisfaction in the service provider was higher for co-production than no co-production. It seemed to be that especially in the cases where the service provider was less present the self-serving bias was stronger. Again, this result can be interpreted as a warning for implementers of co-production. Even if co-production leads to desired results, it does not automatically mean that the relation between citizens and service providers – and ultimately government – improves.

The main conclusion of this study is that a positive relation between co-production and trust in service delivery, (local) government and society is highly dependent upon the motivations of users, the organizational practice and the institutional context. The fact that current research often focuses on appealing and successful case studies might have led to an incomplete view on the possible pitfalls of co-production. Both theoretically and empirically, the picture seems to be more complex than often assumed.

Samenvatting

Het betrekken van burgers bij publieke dienstverlening – bekend als coproductie – wordt gezien als een manier om de kwaliteit van diensten en het vertrouwen van burgers in dienstverlening, overheid en samenleving als geheel te verhogen. Hoewel overheden steeds vaker beleid implementeren waarin coproductie gestimuleerd wordt, is er maar weinig empirisch onderzoek naar de relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen. Het lijkt er daarom op dat deze verwachting eerder een ideologische aanname dan de realiteit is. Om de verwachte relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen kritisch te onderzoeken, is de hoofdvraag van deze studie: *in hoeverre en onder welke condities leidt coproductie van publieke dienstverlening door gebruikers tot vertrouwen in dienstverlening, (lokale) overheid en algemeen vertrouwen en hoe kan deze relatie verklaard worden?*

Hoofdstuk 2 heeft als doel om mechanismen te onderscheiden die in de literatuur beschreven worden als mogelijke verklaring voor de relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen. Coproductie wordt hier gedefinieerd als *een arrangement waar zowel gebruikers als ‘gewone’ dienstverleners een mix van activiteiten bijdragen op het moment van dienstverlening*. Vertrouwen wordt gedefinieerd als *het geloof dat iemand bijdraagt aan je welzijn en zich ervan weerhoudt jou schade toe te brengen*. Coproductie heeft de potentie om zogenoemde ‘identification-based’ trust te beïnvloeden, een vorm van vertrouwen die in eerdere bestuursarrangementen is genegeerd. Voorheen werd vertrouwen behouden met behulp van instrumenten zoals de autoriteit van de professional, het werken met contracten en keuzevrijheid voor burgers. Met coproductie wordt vertrouwen echter eerder gevormd door directe participatie in dienstverlening en nauwe interacties tussen burgers en dienstverleners. Deze directe participatie zou mogelijk de gebruikers van diensten een gevoel van controle over de dienst geven, wat leidt tot een gevoel van *self-efficacy* – de perceptie dat je in staat bent om zelf problemen op te lossen. Dit leidt tot het eerste mechanisme. Als individuen meer controle over hun leven ervaren, dan wordt verwacht dat ze ook minder risico ervaren om anderen te vertrouwen, omdat ze het idee hebben minder afhankelijk te zijn van het gedrag van anderen. Naast dit mechanisme op individueel niveau, is er ook een mechanisme op collectief niveau te onderscheiden. Als gebruikers met andere gebruikers coproduceren (collectieve coproductie), dan kunnen er hechte gemeenschappen ontstaan, die zich karakteriseren door een hechte scheiding tussen de groep en buitenstaanders en gedeelde banden tussen de deelnemers van de gemeenschap (bestaande uit de gebruikers en de professionele staf). De nauwe samenwerking tussen gebruikers onderling en gebruikers en dienstverleners leidt mogelijk tot vertrouwen van gebruikers in medegebruikers en dienstverleners. Ook kan dit vertrouwen overgaan in vertrouwen in mensen in het algemeen, al kan het ook zijn dat in het geval van een zeer hechte gemeenschap, er wantrouwen ontstaat ten opzichte van buitenstaanders. Om te kunnen onderzoeken of deze twee mechanismen een verklaring bieden voor de relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen, wordt in dit hoofdstuk een longitudinaal model voorgesteld

waarin drie fases van dienstverlening worden onderscheiden: de initiële fase, de procesfase en de evaluatiefase).

Hoofdstuk 3 biedt een theoretische verklaring voor de impact van coproductie voor gebruikers en organisaties aan de hand van de vraag: wat zorgt ervoor dat organisaties en gebruikers willen coproduceren? Vanuit een aanpak gebaseerd op onzekerheid wordt beargumenteerd dat coproductie voor gebruikers kan leiden tot minder onzekerheid, maar dat het voor organisaties juist kan leiden tot meer onzekerheid. Dit kan organisaties ervan weerhouden om gebruikers als een echte partner toe te laten tot de dienstverlening. Wanneer de opties voor gebruikers om te coproduceren beperkt zijn, worden tegengehouden of slechts symbolisch zijn, dan kan dit een negatieve invloed hebben voor vertrouwen. Organisaties reageren echter verschillend op de onzekerheid die met coproductie samengaat. Dit is waarschijnlijk voor deel afhankelijk van de institutionele omgeving. De institutionele omgeving bepaalt namelijk gedeeltelijk de discretie voor professionele dienstverleners en de mate van bureaucratische controle. Meer discretie en minder bureaucratische controle zorgen er waarschijnlijk voor dat de onzekerheden rond coproductie min of meer geaccepteerd worden. In deze institutionele context kan een dialoog ontstaan tussen gebruikers en dienstverleners over deze onzekerheden en tot welke risico's dit kan leiden voor beide partijen. Als er sprake is van minder discretie en meer bureaucratische controle, dan is er minder ruimte voor een dergelijke dialoog. De dienstverlenende organisatie zal eerder geneigd zijn om de onzekerheden zoveel mogelijk in de kiem te smoren. Eén van de strategieën om dit te doen, is door het bewust selecteren op kenmerken van de coproducerende gebruikers.

Hoofdstuk 4 gaat in op deze strategie van selectie. Het kan zijn dat een specifieke groep burgers coproduceert, bijvoorbeeld hoogopgeleide, autochtone en gezonde individuen, terwijl burgers met een kwetsbaardere achtergrond minder vaak de mogelijkheid krijgt van organisaties om te coproduceren. Het is ook mogelijk dat er een zelfselectie ontstaat: personen die meer gemotiveerd zijn en al meer vertrouwen hebben in de overheid of dienstverlenende organisaties zijn misschien ook eerder geneigd te coproduceren. Om dit te onderzoeken, zijn deelnemers van een gecoproduceerde reïntegratiedienst (werkcorporaties) vergeleken met individuen die wel gesolliciteerd hebben voor deelname, maar niet hebben deelgenomen. Hieruit bleek dat motivatie en vertrouwen inderdaad een grote rol spelen in de bereidheid om te coproduceren, terwijl achtergrondkenmerken zoals etniciteit en gezondheid er niet toe deden. Dit heeft een invloed op de mogelijkheid van coproductie om vertrouwen te creëren: als het al hoog is, wordt het lastiger te verhogen. Het kan ook leiden tot uitsluiting van burgers die juist het meeste kunnen profiteren van succesvol gecoproduceerde diensten.

Hoofdstuk 5 sluit aan op het empirische onderzoek in hoofdstuk 4. In dit hoofdstuk wordt de vraag gesteld: *wat zijn mechanismen en condities die de relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen kunnen verklaren?* Kan coproductie, ondanks de bevinding dat er een selectie-effect optreedt, alsnog vertrouwen verhogen? Om hier een antwoord op te kunnen geven, wordt gebruik gemaakt van de inzichten van hoofdstuk 2 en 3. Dat betekent ten eerste dat

de twee mechanismen (ervaren controle en vertrouwensnetwerken) zullen worden getest en ten tweede dat conditionele factoren – op het individuele, organisatorische en institutionele niveau – die bepalen of coproductie van de grond komt dan wel effect heeft, worden onderzocht. Een groep deelnemers (n=60) van een zevental werkcorporaties zijn gevolgd over de periode van een jaar met behulp van vragenlijsten en semigestructureerde interviews. Ook zijn de managers van de werkcorporaties en beleidsmakers ondervraagd. Uit dit onderzoek is gebleken dat ervaren controle niet is gestegen en dat vertrouwensnetwerken ook niet zijn ontstaan. De belangrijkste bevinding is dat het gemiddelde niveau van vertrouwen – in de gemeente, de werkcorporatie en in het algemeen – eerder afnam dan dat het toenam. Dit resultaat is al interessant op zich, omdat het aangeeft dat coproductie niet altijd tot de gewenste uitkomsten leidt.

Uit dit onderzoek kwamen ook belangrijke conditionele factoren naar voren die mogelijk verklaren waarom coproductie leidt tot vertrouwen of niet: motivatie, ondersteuning en betrokkenheid. Het blijkt dat als motivatie om te coproduceren minder wordt, vertrouwen ook eerder afneemt. Hetzelfde geldt als de dienstverlener onvoldoende de coproductie ondersteunt (bijvoorbeeld materieel of emotioneel). Betrokkenheid is ook erg belangrijk: als gebruikers zich verantwoordelijk voelen voor de gecoproduceerde dienst, dan is dit positief voor hun vertrouwen in de dienst.

De teleurstelling van deelnemers van de werkcorporaties over de lage kans op uitstroom naar een betaalde baan was ook een mogelijke verklaring voor de afname in vertrouwen. Omdat verwacht werd dat het resultaat van coproductie minder belangrijk voor vertrouwen is dan het proces, roept dit de volgende vraag op: *in hoeverre is de evaluatie van gecoproduceerde diensten afhankelijk van het resultaat van de dienst?* Deze vraag wordt in hoofdstuk 6 beantwoord. Eerdere studies op het gebied van *service management* en sociale psychologie geven aan dat bij coproductie sprake kan zijn van een *self-serving bias*. Dit houdt in dat coproducerende individuen de dienstverlener verantwoordelijk houden voor slechte resultaten, terwijl ze positieve uitkomsten aan henzelf toewijzen. Door dit effect is het mogelijk dat bij een positieve uitkomst, tevredenheid en vertrouwen in de dienstverlener lager is wanneer er gecoproduceerd wordt in vergelijking met een dienst die alleen door een organisatie wordt verleend. In het laatste geval, is het vrijwel onmogelijk voor gebruikers om het succes niet aan de dienstverlener toe te wijzen, terwijl in het eerste geval zullen gebruikers ook een deel van het succes aan zichzelf bedelen. Een vignette-experiment liet zien dat de *self-serving bias* inderdaad optreedt bij coproductie op het gebied van veiligheid en het opruimen van vuil, maar niet bij coproductie van gezondheid, educatie en reïntegratiediensten. Een opmerkelijke uitkomst van deze studie is dat in geen van de gevallen het vertrouwen en de tevredenheid hoger was voor gecoproduceerde diensten dan voor niet-gecoproduceerde diensten. Dit laat zien dat zelfs wanneer coproductie leidt tot het gewenste resultaat, dit niet altijd leidt tot een betere relatie tussen burgers en dienstverleners – en uiteindelijk de overheid.

De conclusie van deze dissertatie is dat een positieve relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen in dienstverlening, (lokale) overheid en samenleving voor een groot deel afhankelijk is van de motivatie van burgers, de organisatorische praktijk en de institutionele context. Het feit dat huidig onderzoek zich vaak focust op aantrekkelijke en succesvolle cases heeft mogelijk geleid tot een incompleet beeld van de mogelijke valkuilen van coproductie. Zowel theoretisch als empirisch lijkt de relatie tussen coproductie en vertrouwen complexer dan dikwijls wordt aangenomen.

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Joost Fledderus was born in Bathmen on May 18th, 1987. He holds a Bachelor and Master Sociology from the Radboud University Nijmegen. In addition, he obtained a Master Public Administration at the Free University Amsterdam. In 2011, he started as a PhD-candidate at the Public Administration department of the Radboud University Nijmegen. Simultaneously, he was involved in the FP7 research project Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in favor of Cohesion (WILCO). Currently, he is working as a researcher/advisor at Necker van Naem.