



Call for Contributions

Seminar on 'Co-production: the State of the Art'

Budapest, 22-23 November 2012

Background

The concept of co-production has been around for decades, but has in recent years been rediscovered as an important source of social innovation. This is in no small part due to the work of Elinor Ostrom (1933-2012), who passed away earlier this year.

Public management research in a variety of disciplines has paid increasing attention to the role of citizens and the third sector in the provision of public services. The growth of interest in co-production during the past ten years provides important insights into, and at the same time poses important challenges for, public management. Co-production has been defined as '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 & 1999). Others have also argued that co-production can involve collaborative work between government and the third sector (Pestoff & Brandsen 2008).

Exploring co-production has become increasingly topical for a broad range of academics and practitioners working on public services and opportunities for social innovation. These include the issues of the nature of co-production (Alford, 2002, Strokosch & Osborne 2010); how it has developed in recent decades (Pestoff & Brandsen, 2008 & 2009; Pestoff, Brandsen and Verschuere, 2012); the relationship between individual and group participation in the provision of public services (Bovaird & Löffler, 2003); how co-production can contribute to the development of service quality in public services (Bouchard, et al., 2006, Osborne 2010); how it can promote participative democracy (Ostrom, 2000; Fung, 2004); and how ownership and institutional set-ups are related to co-production (Vamstad, 2007; Pestoff, 2009). Although there is of course previous work on this phenomenon, what is new is that it is addressed as a crosscutting phenomenon in the context of public management research.

Now, with an increasing number of publications on the topic, including theme issues in the *Public Management Review* (2006) and *Voluntas* (2012), as well as edited volumes published in Routledges Critical Studies in Public Management series (2008, 2012), the time is right for a discussion on where we stand. What have we found in recent years and what is the research agenda of the future?

Amongst others, the seminar will address the following questions:

- *What are the theoretical approaches, from a range of disciplines, applied in recent public management research and where are the overlaps and gaps?*
- *How can we conceptualise and better understand co-production?*
- *What broad empirical trends are visible and what are the gaps in our knowledge?*
- *What is the range of methodologies applied to the study of co-production and where are the blind spots?*

Sponsors

The seminar will be co-sponsored by:

- The Special Interest Group on the Third Sector of the IRSPM (*International Research Society on Public Management*, www.irspm.net).
- The Study Group on the Public Governance of Societal Sectors of EGPA (*European Group of Public Management*, www.egpa-publicgovernance.eu/).
- The European project 'Welfare Innovations in the Local Context', funded by *The European Commission* (www.wilcoproject.eu).
- The *British Academy of Management* (www.bam.ac.uk/).

It is also made possible by the organisation and support of the following bodies:

- Corvinus University Budapest (Professor Gyorgy Jenei)
- Radboud University Nijmegen (Professor Taco Brandsen)
- The University of Edinburgh (Professor Stephen P. Osborne)

Format

Participants can submit individual papers to the seminar, which will be discussed in one of two ways:

- *Individual presentations* discuss specific conceptual contributions or research projects,
- *Round tables* focus on common threads in a larger number of papers: theoretical approach, methodology and empirical issues.

Attendance will be limited to a maximum of 25-30 participants to maximise interactive discussions and on-going debate. *Submissions are particularly encouraged from doctoral students working on this topic.*

Publication

A selection of the best papers will be eligible for a special issue of *Public Management Review* on co-production, to be published in 2014.

Date and location

The seminar will take place at Corvinus University, Budapest on 22-23 November 2012. The seminar will start on Thursday morning and end on Friday afternoon.

Costs

Participants will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation, but there is no registration fee for the workshop. A Workshop Dinner on the Thursday night will be provided for all participants and refreshments will be made available over the two days of the workshop. All supporting services and rooms will be provided by the Workshop sponsors.

Submissions

Abstracts should be submitted by **7th September 2012**. Participants will be notified of acceptance within two weeks. Please send all submissions and questions to t.brandsen@fm.ru.nl. Please note that abstracts must be a maximum of 300 - 500 words, plus any indicative references (*not* a full reference list).