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Abstract

This article sets out to establish what we mean by the recent buzzword ‘co-creation’ and what practical application this concept entails for democracy in urban governance, both in theory and practice. The rise of the concept points to a shift in how public participation is understood. Whereas from the 1970s onwards the discussions surrounding participation centred on rights and power, following Sherry Arnstein, participation conceptualised as co-creation instead focuses on including diverse forms of knowledge in urban processes in order to create innovative solutions to complex problems. Consequently, democratic legitimacy now relies to a much greater extent on output, rather than input legitimacy. Rather than provision of inclusive spaces for democratic debate and empowerment of the deprived, which have been the goals of numerous urban participatory efforts in the past, it is the ability to solve complex problems that has become the main criterion for the evaluation of co-creation. Furthermore, conceptualising participation as co-creation has consequences for the roles available to both citizens and public administrators in urban processes, which has implications for urban governance. An explicit debate, both in academia and in practice, about the normative content and implications of conceptualising participation as co-creation is therefore salient and necessary.

Introduction: From participation to co-creation

Keywords:
Co-creation
Participation
Democracy

There has been a significant recent development in the concept of participation in urban governance: from the early postmodernist ideals of countering expert dominance to today’s focus on learning and social innovation, in which participation is conceptualised as co-creation and co-production. But what are the consequences of this development in theory and practice? Does it make a difference that public authorities are pursuing co-creation rather than participation? This paper argues that it does, at least with respect to the focus of governance processes, citizen roles, and legitimacy in decision making.

I will start with a short introduction to the history of participation. In 1963 Strauss (cf. Fagence 1977) argued that participation was a means to reduce inequalities of power in society. Arnstein’s (1969) famous ‘ladder of participation’ described the power relations at work in planning and showed how ordinary, and in particular deprived, citizens are disempowered through tokenistic participation processes. These texts were published against the backdrop of the rise of the protest movement against the Vietnam War in the United States, student demonstrations in France (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Floridia, 2017), and sanitation policies resulting in urban demolitions in Denmark. Up to and during the 1990s, participation in urban governance was much debated and formalised in international policy documents, such as Agenda 21 (UNEP, 1992) and the Aarhus Con-

vention (UNECE, 1998), which stipulated the *rights* of citizens to have an influence on and participate in the development of their local environments. In urban governance a socially oriented strand emerged, including a number of area-based initiatives aiming to engage and empower local citizens (Andersen & Pløger, 2007; Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Area-based initiatives in Europe have so far mainly focused on participation as a means of empowerment in order to support inclusiveness and participatory and deliberative democracy, and research has addressed the extent to which these aims have been achieved. For instance, researchers have examined processes of exclusion, including the structural exclusion of certain groups of actors and the discursive exclusion of issues, for example, that professional views and knowledge are favoured over local inputs (Agger and Larsen 2009; Goodlad, Burton, and Croft 2005). The criteria for judging participatory processes have been shaped by the norms of strong, deliberative (Dryzek, 2000; Floridia, 2017; Fung, 2003) or radical democracy (Mouffe, 2000): to what extent did the process include and empower all societal groups and voices and arrive at decisions based on deliberation? To some extent, the processes were seen as ends in themselves due to their promise of empowerment.

In addition to this, a more neoliberal strand of urban governance has influenced the practice and conceptualisation of participation. Throughout the 1990s and beyond, new forms of public-private partnerships and networks have been promoted in order to (among other things) tackle social exclusion. It was argued that partnerships and networks were more inclusive than purely public initiatives because they created new spaces for participation. While such arrangements have the potential to foster increased inclusion and empowerment, studies have shown that they may also foster elitist, neo-corporatist principles and marginalise more radically egalitarian principles of collaboration (Cornwall, 2004; Geddes, 2000; Milbourne, 2009), leading to distrust and disenchantment among actors in civil society (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). However, these new forms of participation are not only judged on their inclusivity, but also on their innovativeness and ability to deliver social services; i.e., new criteria for evaluation have been added when judging participatory initiatives. Under the banner of ‘smart cities’, new opportunities for digital involvement and co-creation are also being pursued (Baccarne, Mechant, Schuurma, De Marez, & Colpaert, 2014).

Social innovation has become a major new agenda in urban governance to deal with persistent problems of social exclusion and segregation in cities (Moulaert et al. 2013). In social innovation theory, social exclusion can be counteracted through bottom-up processes in which counter-hegemonic resistance forms a sort of social movement, acting in opposition to neoliberal discourses and practices (Moulaert et al. 2007). This is also conceptualised as ‘self-organisation’: civic-initiated action to influence the urban environment (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Horelli, Saad-Sulonen, Wallin, & Botero, 2015). Hence, ‘real’ participation becomes self-organising civic engagement. This trend is being appropriated by established institutions fostering policy frameworks of the ‘enabling’ or ‘activating’ state, whose social policies are to rely on ‘promot-

ing an infrastructure of civic engagement for citizens to take matters increasingly into their own hands' (Gerometta, Häussermann, & Longo, 2005, p. 2013). In this framing of social innovation, participation becomes co-creation, whereby public institutions enable citizens to actively engage themselves in social policy-making and service provision, and it becomes as much about harnessing resources as about empowering the deprived. We are thus witnessing a significant shift in the criteria for evaluation and the focus of participation. It is important to note that these conceptualisations do not exclude each other and can and do exist as 'archaeological layers', with different emphases depending on the institutional set-up and culture (Poulsen, 2009). In the following, I will unpack the concept of co-creation.

Co-creation in theory and practice

The concept of co-creation in urban development is by no means clear and well defined. It has multiple roots: partly in the social innovation literature mentioned above; partly in the private sector innovation literature; and partly in the 'communicative turn' in planning theory.

In private sector innovation, the notion of co-creation draws on methods to involve users in the development of goods and services and the creation of value (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Voorberg et al. 2014). In public settings, co-creation is seen as a strategy for addressing complex societal problems in the context of strained public budgets, i.e. as a means to solve prevailing problems in new and more effective ways by harnessing the resources of civil society (Voorberg et al. 2014; Osborne & Strokosch 2013; Bason 2010). This means that the focus is on resources and the ability to solve problems rather than on inclusiveness, representation and empowerment. Voorberg et al. (2014) show from a literature review of 122 studies that effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery are the most frequent objectives of co-creation processes, whereas increasing citizen participation as a goal in itself is much less frequent – albeit still an issue.

Co-creation in urban development therefore partly builds on knowledge and experience from processes of innovation in the private sector, which are applied to public service delivery (Bason, 2010; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). This literature provides examples from health services and e-governance in particular, such as 'patient journeys' to improve the patient's experience of health services (Richardson, Casey, & Hider, 2007), as well as co-created designs for libraries (Costantino et al., 2014) or tax services (Langgaard & Carstensen, 2014). These studies of co-creation in a public sector context tend to be concerned with generating *knowledge about* citizens and their experiences with public services to provide a better 'problem identification' for professionals to act on, rather than creating processes through which *citizens themselves* invent or articulate new services or products of public value and new ideas about which institutional structures may support such activities. Furthermore, citizens tend to participate as individuals and not as representatives of groups or communities, and it is their unique interaction experiences with a specific public service, for example a pa-

tient's interaction with a doctor in which they jointly develop a treatment (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), that constitute the knowledge used by public administrators to improve services. In the public service literature, the concept of co-creation is used interchangeably with the concept of co-production. However, the latter is seen as more service- and product-oriented as well as more concerned with cost reduction than value creation (Voorberg, Bekkers, and Tummers 2014).

The literature on participatory design is one of the strands of urban development literature, building at least partly on private sector innovation paradigms. Design processes and small-scale experimentation are used to test ideas and for 'failing fast' and learning through the development of 'proto-types' (Monguet et al. 2011). Citizens contribute actively through their knowledge and ideas to test the viability of the prototyped services or collaborations. However, some participatory design studies focus explicitly on the empowerment of the socially deprived and the provision of agonistic spaces rather than on innovation (Hilgren et al. 2011, Björgvinsson et al. 2012), combining innovation with norms from deliberative democracy.

Another and popular new form of civic engagement potentially enabling citizen-centred co-creation is the so-called 'living labs', which are seen as able to include more spontaneous and experimental activities. Living labs are understood as both a method and an arena for innovation in which multiple actors collaborate to innovate on services and the creation of public value (Leminen, Westerlund, & Nyström, 2012; Mulder, 2012). While the concept of living labs is not clearly defined, there is a consensus that citizen and user involvement is central and that innovation takes place as a result of bringing together complementary knowledge, skills and resources in real-life experimentation (Edwards-Schachter, Matti, & Alcántara, 2012; Leminen, Nyström, & Westerlund, 2015). Living labs are also gaining popularity under the heading of 'smart cities' (Baccarne et al., 2014) and in relation to sustainable development (Voytenko, McCormick, Evans, & Schliwa, 2016).

An example of a living lab approach to urban development is Suurpelto in Finland, a new urban area located in the city of Espoo and designed to provide housing for 15,000 inhabitants as well as thousands of workplaces. The city of Espoo has created a living lab in collaboration with a university and a vocational college: a collaboration network and a project to promote co-creation and experimentation with services and products in order to cater for the area's urban needs in all 'life situations' (Juujärvi & Pesso, 2013, p. 24). There was therefore a strong focus on analysing the needs of residents and stakeholders through surveys, events and service experiments carried out by students, who followed up by trying to find business partners to develop services and service concepts. While actual investments were sparse, stakeholders agreed that the small-scale experiments were an effective means to foster innovation. Citizens are mainly seen in this context as users of services and products who can provide place-based user experience, test services, and give feedback (Juujärvi & Pesso, 2013).

Another example is an urban living lab in Ghent, initiated and governed by the city council. It takes the form of a collaborative network established between the research community, businesses, the public sector, citizens and the wider community. The focus is on developing Ghent as a smart city and hence on internet-based service provision, stimulating professionals and citizens to use open governmental datasets. A yearly event is the ‘Apps for Ghent Hackathon’, for which the city council issues a challenge related to app development. Teams may participate and have a chance to win a prize. The activity clearly only activates a very specific IT-capable participant group, mainly IT students and professionals, and certainly not the ‘ordinary’ citizen (Baccarne et al., 2014). The living lab also facilitates other projects related to specific problems: mobility, climate neutrality, housing, and health (Stad Gent, n.d.).

Furthermore, co-creation in urban development partly builds on the development following the ‘communicative turn’ in planning theory, in which scholars such as Healey (2007; 1997), Forester (1999) and Innes and Booher (2010) argued for more genuine and inclusive public participation, building on Habermasian norms of communicative action (Habermas, 1981). However, the ways in which these collaborative ideas have been put into practice in urban planning have been criticised for being ‘public support machines’ (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011, p. 104) that also exclude marginalised citizens, and it has been argued that other forms and other conceptualisations of participation are needed. Boonstra and Boelens argue that the main problem with participation as it has been practised since the communicative turn is that participation processes have been initiated and controlled by public authorities, causing them to be time-consuming, subordinated to political systems working through a decision hierarchy and formalised structures of influence, and affected by an insufficient distribution of authority and responsibility. The end result is that these processes only enable ‘professional citizens’ (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011, p. 106) or expert citizens (Agger 2012), that is, citizens with the knowledge and resources to act effectively within this specific framework. Hence, more spontaneous citizen initiatives and informal solutions to problems are excluded unless other forms of civic engagement can be enabled and included in planning processes (Boonstra and Boelens 2011; Agger 2012).

In a related study, Horelli et al. (2015) show how self-organising citizen initiatives, ranging from spontaneous events to long-term neighbourhood development aided by ICT, can link to formal planning institutions under the heading of expanded urban planning. They show that self-organisation can have significant and innovative impacts in urban life that activate new citizen types in urban development. However, they also show that frail links to formal decision-makers are a challenge for ‘participation as self-organisation’ (Horelli et al., 2015).

It is worth noting here that the critique of how participation has been put into practice in urban planning is also an expression of a theoretical tension between participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. Participatory democracy emerged in the context of struggles for civil rights, youth uprisings, protests and so on, and was explicitly opposed to existing institutional practices.

Participatory democracy in the 1960s entailed an opposition to representation, which was seen as mere delegation leading to civic apathy. Active citizenship was a primary virtue, which was to be nourished through empowerment: giving actual decision-making power to citizens. The political momentum for this approach to participatory democracy weakened in the late 1970s and the following decades, but was revived in the early 2000s with a focus on participation as a tool for citizens to gain control over the decisions affecting their lives as well as critical awareness of their conditions (Floridia, 2017).

Deliberative democracy took shape in the early 1990s, with the contributions of Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls providing the theoretical foundation. In deliberative democracy it is not direct decision-making power which is the central feature, but deliberation: the weighing of pros and cons through the exchange of ideas and arguments. In order for deliberation to be democratic it needs to be inclusive, and citizens need to be free and equal. This does not exclude or oppose representation. Nor does it necessarily require that citizens have direct decision-making power, but rather that they are discursively present in the deliberations prior to decision making and that their views and arguments are taken into account (Floridia, 2017).

Co-creation has grown out of both perspectives and consequently has inherent tensions. The social innovation literature has strong associations with participatory democracy through its firm focus on social movements, civic action and counter-hegemonic resistance, giving direct power to citizens (Moulaert et al. 2007). When public institutions attempt to colonise and harness these trends (Gerometta et al., 2005), a power struggle breaks out between neoliberal and participatory ideals seen from a participatory democracy perspective, while from a deliberative democracy perspective this may be seen as a means to enable deliberation. This is of course a highly normative judgment.

It is clear from the above that the concept of co-creation is a bricolage of ideas and norms coming from very varied research traditions and practices, including marketing, public service management, urban planning, and design and innovation. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the concept does not have one clear definition. What can be deduced is that co-creation refers mainly to *innovation and value creation* taking place as a *collaborative process involving different types of actors*. Citizens are seen as valuable contributors to this process but their precise role is unclear: are they self-organising initiators of new initiatives? Or are they merely users of services whose experiences are important to understand? And what is the role of public authorities in co-creation? Are they process facilitators and enablers of private initiatives, or collectors and interpreters of user experiences that can be transformed into input in professional practices?

Roles in co-creation

When participation is conceptualised as co-creation in urban planning processes, this does entail a different role allocation for planners, public authorities and citizens than in more traditional (modernistic) planning processes. First and

foremost, citizens are clearly granted a much more active role, either through self-organised activism linking to existing institutions, or through public initiatives such as living labs (Agger and Lund 2017). The public innovation literature argues that a broad set of citizens should be enabled as co-creators (the term co-innovator is also used). Both Voorberg et al. (2014) and Torfing et al. (2014) subdivide this role into three dimensions, namely *co-implementers*, *co-designers* and *co-initiators*, to distinguish between the very different approaches to citizen involvement in various case studies. These dimensions refer to *when* in a process citizens are active and also to *how active* they are.

The *co-implementer* dimension refers to activities in which citizens are important in making a service work but do not have a role in the initiation or design of a service or activity: this draws on the above-mentioned service management literature and private sector innovation literature. An example could be citizens using a text message service to the police to report suspicious activities (Larsen, 2015). This does not impose too great a demand on either citizens or public authorities, and therefore makes it possible for a wide array of citizens to participate besides expert activists. It is, however, hard to imagine how enabling citizens merely as co-implementers can aid in solving complex problems such as social inclusion and segregation in cities, or how this approach can come up with radically new approaches to urban development (Agger and Lund 2017).

The *co-designer* dimension refers to processes initiated by public actors but in which it is citizens who develop a service or a place. An example could be the design and management of outdoor recreation facilities (Wipf, Ohl, & Groeneveld, 2009). It is clear that this dimension draws on the participatory design literature (eg. Monguet et al. 2011; Björgvinsson et al. 2012) and can be enabled through, for example, living labs, which can facilitate collaborative processes drawing also on the extensive experience of collaborative urban planning (eg. Innes & Booher 2010), but with an added focus on innovation. Here the demands made of citizens are greater in terms of time consumption, competencies and collaborative capabilities. Because the processes are initiated by public authorities, they may suffer from the problems described by Boonstra and Bolens (2011) of time consumption, subordination to political systems and insufficient distribution of responsibility and authority. Furthermore, in the living lab examples above, citizens are reduced to users of services (Baccarne et al., 2014; Juujärvi & Pesso, 2013) – a rather narrow understanding of citizenship that does not necessarily grant a very active role to citizens.

The *co-initiator* dimension describes the most active and resource-demanding citizen role, and an example could be citizens restoring historical monuments in Naples city centre (Rossi, 2004). The dimension draws on social innovation literature and social entrepreneurship. The literature on social entrepreneurship highlights the drivers and motivations of the social entrepreneurs who innovate and drive processes of change to the benefit of groups that are marginalised in one way or another (Mort et al. 2003; Peredo & McLean 2006). In these contexts, citizens are self-organising and take the initiative to address a perceived problem, after which they collaborate with public authorities to do so

(see also Horelli et al. 2015). However, there are no guarantees that these initiatives will in any way be inclusive or empower marginalised citizens in the city. So, while all dimensions may have their merits, they also have pitfalls to be further addressed.

For both the co-designer and co-initiator dimensions, the role of planners shifts from being the experts making the plans and drawing up strategies for an area to becoming facilitators of processes that link existing networks of resourceful urban actors and create new emergent networks. These networks can address collectively identified problems and challenges and guide development in a desired direction (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011). Processes of co-creation require the right leadership to be successful: a leadership that can navigate in conditions of shared power and voluntary engagement, where participants cannot be ordered to collaborate but must be convinced of the merits of collaboration. Ansell and Gash (2012) highlight three leadership roles that are important to facilitate collaboration: that of the steward, the mediator, and the catalyst. The steward is particularly important in the initial phases of a collaborative process, as the role that establishes and maintains the integrity of the process itself. The steward is perceived as neutral, ensures inclusivity and transparency, and moves the process forward. The mediator acts as a conflict manager and arbitrator, who nurtures relations and builds trust among the participants. The catalyst seeks out and communicates opportunities for value creation and mobilises participants to pursue these opportunities (Ansell & Gash, 2012). For planners in charge of participatory processes, these roles may be new territory and require a very different set of skills from what has traditionally been called for in planning. They may also require a change of mindset and professional culture, which may be quite challenging.

The role of public authorities more broadly becomes that of the enabling state (rather than the regulating state), providing the opportunities, arenas, and power for civic networks to form and act. Juujärvi and Pesso (2013) also consider the public sector as an enabler in urban development and in and for urban living labs. The ability of the public sector to enable civic action is particularly important because civic membership of associations, political parties, and activist groups has steadily declined over the past decades. This has led to an erosion of what Sirianni (2009) calls the ‘civic infrastructure’ for collective action. Sirianni presents eight principles for policy design that can foster an enabling state, six of which are focused on the mobilisation of resources and assets, cross-sectoral collaboration, knowledge sharing and learning. Only two are related to democratic norms of deliberation, legitimacy and accountability (Sirianni, 2009, p. 42), showing that a public sector enabling participation is at least as concerned with harnessing private sector resources to solve complex societal problems as it is with pursuing democratic norms.

Co-creation and democratic legitimacy

While co-creation has elements of deliberative democracy in its rationale, there is also a considerable focus on output and the effectiveness and efficiency of problem solving through innovation. This raises the issue of legitimacy. While input legitimacy is most important in more traditional participation efforts in area-based initiatives, this may be different for processes of co-creation, which may be less concerned with including all voices and more with harnessing the right resources to come up with solutions to problems.

Scharpf (1997) has argued that the legitimacy of political decision making is derived from both the input and the output side. Input legitimacy refers to the ability to base decisions on the authentic preferences of the affected citizens. Output legitimacy relies on the ability to solve identified problems. In his words: ‘Democracy would be an empty ritual if the political choices of governments were not able to achieve a high degree of effectiveness in achieving the goals, and avoiding the dangers, that citizens collectively care about’ (Scharpf, 1997, p. 19).

While input and output legitimacy are interrelated, participation in urban planning processes has traditionally been focused on increasing the input legitimacy of decision making and understanding the preferences of the affected citizens in an area through deliberative processes. As mentioned above, this has to a large degree rested on Habermasian ideals of communicative action (Habermas, 1981), in which rational deliberation is the most important mechanism for clarifying citizens’ preferences, strengthening the ability of those involved to act as democratic citizens, and achieving reflective understanding between subjects through the power of the better argument (Fishkin & Laslett, 2003). To be legitimate, processes and influence should be fair, which means that rational deliberation should include all affected stakeholders equally and give all involved an equal opportunity to be heard (Dryzek, 2000). This is where the difficulty lies. The ideal of equal opportunities for all affected cannot be achieved, only approached. We are not equally able to make ourselves heard; we are not equally competent; and we are not equally resourceful (Dahl, 2006). Studies of area-based processes also show that different processes of exclusion are at work (Agger and Larsen 2009). In order to achieve this form of input legitimacy it is thus very important to make an effort to include marginalised citizens by using methods tailor-made for the groups in question (Agger 2012), as well as facilitating processes to minimise the importance of power differences and support rational argumentation rather than interest-based advocacy (Innes & Booher, 2010). These issues are, however, downplayed when the focus is on innovation and co-creation.

Boedeltje and Cornips (2004) argue that fair deliberative decision making is a utopian ideal, and that citizens are willing to trade off fair processes for effective problem solving and output legitimacy. If this is the case, it is more important to include the people with the resources and competences to solve the problems in decision making and not everyone who is affected. For complex issues, including everyone affected tends to create too large a group for effective

deliberation and decision making (Boedeltje & Cornips, 2004). While it is not entirely clear-cut that co-creation processes for urban development are only concerned with output legitimacy, there is a clear tendency in that direction, based on the strong focus on innovation and problem solving.

Boedeltje and Cornips (2004) do have a point with respect to the utopian ideal: numerous studies have shown that ensuring inclusion of less resourceful citizens in particular in urban renewal processes is challenging as the most marginalised are often excluded (e.g. Agger and Larsen 2009; Geddes 2000; Boonstra and Boelens 2011; Ferilli, Sacco, and Blessi 2016). In practice, traditional participatory processes may not be able to boast of more input legitimacy than new co-creation processes. But at least democratic inclusion is an issue when initiating participatory processes. Furthermore, from a deliberative democracy perspective, it is not necessary that everyone is included in person, as long as they are included in the deliberations and their interests form part of a mediation process (Floridia, 2017). This may be the case even if only a selected few citizens are involved in concrete problem solving through co-creation. Nonetheless, at least theoretically, framing participation as co-creation has a profound effect on actor roles and democratic focus.

Discussion and conclusion: Implications for urban governance

What, then, are the implications of wanting citizens to co-create rather than participate? If citizens are included in innovation processes based on their knowledge, resources, assets and competences rather than as representatives of certain societal groups who are entitled to influence the development of their city or neighbourhood, there is a risk of urban development becoming de-politicised. De-politicisation may be a result of shifting the focus of participatory processes and mobilisation strategies from power distribution to competencies; a result of moving the focus away from the right to influence towards the ability to identify and solve urban problems. Whether this is a problem or not of course depends on the capacity of co-creation processes to deliver concrete results. If perceived problems are being solved, and Boedeltje and Cornips (2004) are right that citizens are willing to trade off inclusive procedures for problem solving, then perhaps it does not matter that that de-politicisation takes place. There may however still be a political issue with regard to whose problems are being solved. Will it be the problems of the most marginalised citizens, or the problems defined by the powerful? In other words, it is important not to forget issues of power and inclusion in co-creation processes, particularly as they relate to the identification and prioritisation of problems, after which, when coming up with solutions to these collectively identified problems, such issues may recede in importance.

The social innovation literature (Boonstra and Boelens 2011; Mounlaert et al. 2007) argues that urban development can counter social problems as well as including a broader range of participants than exclusively ‘expert’ citizens through the dynamic formations of counter-hegemonic social movements, forming from below as a reaction to existing neoliberal developments. Citizens will

self-organise to solve social problems in urban areas and co-create solutions in their interaction with (or struggle against) public institutions and semi-public networks of powerful urban actors. Yet they do not explain how these self-organising citizens' movements are more inclusive than publicly initiated processes. It may be that they merely activate other types of expert citizens than in publicly initiated processes. There is also a risk of social movements becoming co-opted by existing hegemonies (Mouffe, 2000). In other words, do we not still need a 'Leviathan' (Hobbes, 1651) to protect the powerless from the powerful? And is that not still an important purpose of public administrations and planners in urban development? It is here that ideas of the enabling state, as well as the principles that should guide its development, become relevant. One of Sirianni's (2009) two democratically oriented principles addresses the issue of mutual accountability and the need for inclusive and transparent procedures, which ensure that decision makers can be held accountable by affected citizens. While Sirianni (2009) presents a number of examples of enabling public administrations, he also warns of the need for a cultural change in many public organisations before the principles of an enabling state can become mainstream practice. Civic initiatives, successful experiments in living labs, and social movements may be able to push for such a change, as Horelli (2015) also argues.

Enabling citizens as co-creators makes available new roles for citizens in urban development and value creation that can potentially engage a much broader set of citizens. This is because the citizen as co-creator can be seen as a scalar concept, constituted by the three dimensions of co-implementation, co-design and co-initiation, each demanding very different resources of citizens. However, these new roles can only be exploited for public value creation if planners and other public administrators manage to embrace their roles as facilitators of collaborative processes, acting as stewards, mediators and catalysts (Ansell & Gash, 2012) rather than merely experts and professionals, despite the loss of control this entails.

In sum, there is both potential and danger in substituting co-creation for participation in urban development. The potential relates to problem-solving ability and more opportunities for other types of citizen than expert activists (Agger 2012) to be genuinely engaged in urban development and problem solving. The danger relates to the diminished focus on input legitimacy and power inequalities. Whereas participation following Arnstein in the 1970s and onwards centred on rights and power, participation conceptualised as co-creation instead focuses on including relevant and sufficiently diverse knowledge in urban processes to create innovative solutions to complex problems. Consequently, democratic legitimacy in this process relies to a much larger extent on output rather than input legitimacy. To avoid the dangers and harness the potential, an explicit debate is needed, both in academia and practice, about the normative content and implications of conceptualising participation as co-creation.

There is furthermore a pertinent need to further investigate, both in theory and practice, what sort of institutionalisation co-creation requires in order to incorporate issues of power, democratic legitimacy, and inclusive deliberation in

the debate. This relates in particular to the role of the public sector as an enabler of co-creation. Sirianni's 2009 book and his core principles have made an excellent contribution to this discussion, but there is still work to be done in critically debating and prioritising these principles based on empirical studies. This also relates to self-organising civic activities and how they link to other stakeholders in the places where they operate.

Moreover, in existing studies of urban living labs as a method for co-creation, issues of democratic norms and power inequalities are rarely raised. As living labs flourish across Europe, there should be ample opportunities to empirically study their democratic potential and experiment with these aspects as well.

Finally, further research is required to refine the conceptualisation of co-creation, co-production, and other forms of participatory practices, and the rapidly developing toolbox of methods that accompany them.

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