

Unit 6: Co-Creation, Co-Production, and Community-Driven Neighbourhood Development

Introduction

- » 'City makers' or 'urban pioneers' often take on former public responsibilities and contribute to the transformation of urban spaces and structures
- » Through co-design and co-production, they actively shape their environment, promote the common good, and strengthen social cohesion
- » "As co-producers of the city, they can significantly expand the often limited scope of municipal action: with local and professional expertise, voluntary and civic engagement, sometimes with their own resources, with conceptual ideas for local projects [...]. This also works in reverse: cooperative collaboration with the municipality provides these actors with additional opportunities for action. However, in both cases, it is important that such collaborations establish rules to create win-win situations and avoid blocking situations..." (Beck/Schnur 2016, 90)



Introduction

- » Nevertheless, it is often **unclear how cooperation, civic engagement, tactical urbanism, co-production, and co-creation differ from one another**, as well as what advantages and disadvantages are associated with each approach
- » The primary aim of this unit is **thus to foster the understanding of various forms of involvement, cooperation, and co-production** within the context of neighbourhood development
 - to analyse various models of participation that enable community members to influence decision-making processes.
 - to distinguish between different concepts such as information, participation, and cooperation, but also between co-production and tactical urbanism
 - to identify mechanisms for collaboration between public agencies and citizen initiatives that promote resilient neighbourhoods

Structure of Today's Class

1. Introduction
2. Student Presentations on Selected Case Studies
3. Input: Different concepts and mechanisms related to participation, cooperation, co-production and co-creation
4. Interactive discussion on distinctions among the various concepts
5. Wrap-Up

Student Presentations on Selected Case Studies

Student Presentations of Case Studies

- » Who are the key stakeholders involved in the case study? What goals or interests does each stakeholder pursue?
- » How would you describe the level of interaction among the stakeholders? In what ways is collaboration organized among them, and who is responsible for which tasks?
- » What challenges did the stakeholders face during the implementation of the project? How were these challenges addressed, and what lessons can be learned from them?



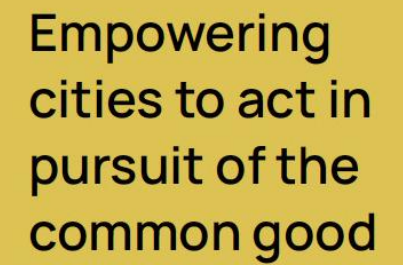
Different concepts and mechanisms related to participation, cooperation, co-production and co-creation

Co-Production

- » Initial approaches to co-production: Co-production as a principle within public administration is based on the observation that citizens can design and often improve public goods and services by providing unique information and resources (Rosen & Painter 2019).
- » In these initial approaches, co-production refers to 'the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not 'in' the same organization' (Ostrom 1996, 1073). This emphasizes the **collaborative action of public and civic actors**, positioning **co-production as a partnership** in the realization of public offerings (Abt 2023; Parks et al. 1981)
- » “this early coproduction approach values citizen engagement in decision making to alter traditional decision-making control mechanisms but without reshaping the broader context within which decision-making processes exist and outcomes are produced” (Rosen & Painter 2019)

Co-Production

- » “co-production engages stakeholders in all elements of the social change process, from determining the problems to address to identifying and delivering solutions, often through piloted interventions. Further, co-production attempts to share and engage economic and political power at each stage by facilitating sustained community participation and sharing resources, power, and decision-making authority—over every dimension of the process from understanding need to creating interventions—toward community ownership. This model supports responsiveness and learning, to offer opportunities to adjust, reassess, and continually progress, even if a strategy falls short of its objective” (Rosen & Painter 2019, 338)



Co-Production

- » The cooperative collaboration of the diverse actors involved in urban development has long been considered good practice in many places
- » When urban development is cooperative, it initially means that **different stakeholders are undertaking something together**
- » This involves a **shared substantive concern** and **partnership-based collaboration on equal footing**
- » In light of the various levels of participation, as illustrated by Sherry Arnstein (1969) with her 'Ladder of Participation,' this 'co' represents the **strongest form of self-organization**, which Arnstein refers to as 'Partnership'
- » Civil society actors and networks are explicitly identified as key participants in co-production processes within urban and regional development in the **New Leipzig Charter**

Co-Creation and Co-Production in the Ladder of Participation

- » A **broad spectrum of approaches to public participation** exists, differing in terms of the degree of involvement and decision-making authority within the planning and design process (Ellery & Ellery 2019, 238)
- » **Information, consultation, and engagement** are characterized by methods such as surveys, public votes, or participation in (urban development) processes initiated by politics and administration
- » These forms represent **more passive types of participation**, where citizens can influence project outcomes; however, the planning and decision-making process remains primarily in the hands of public actors

Co-Creation and Co-Production in the Ladder of Participation

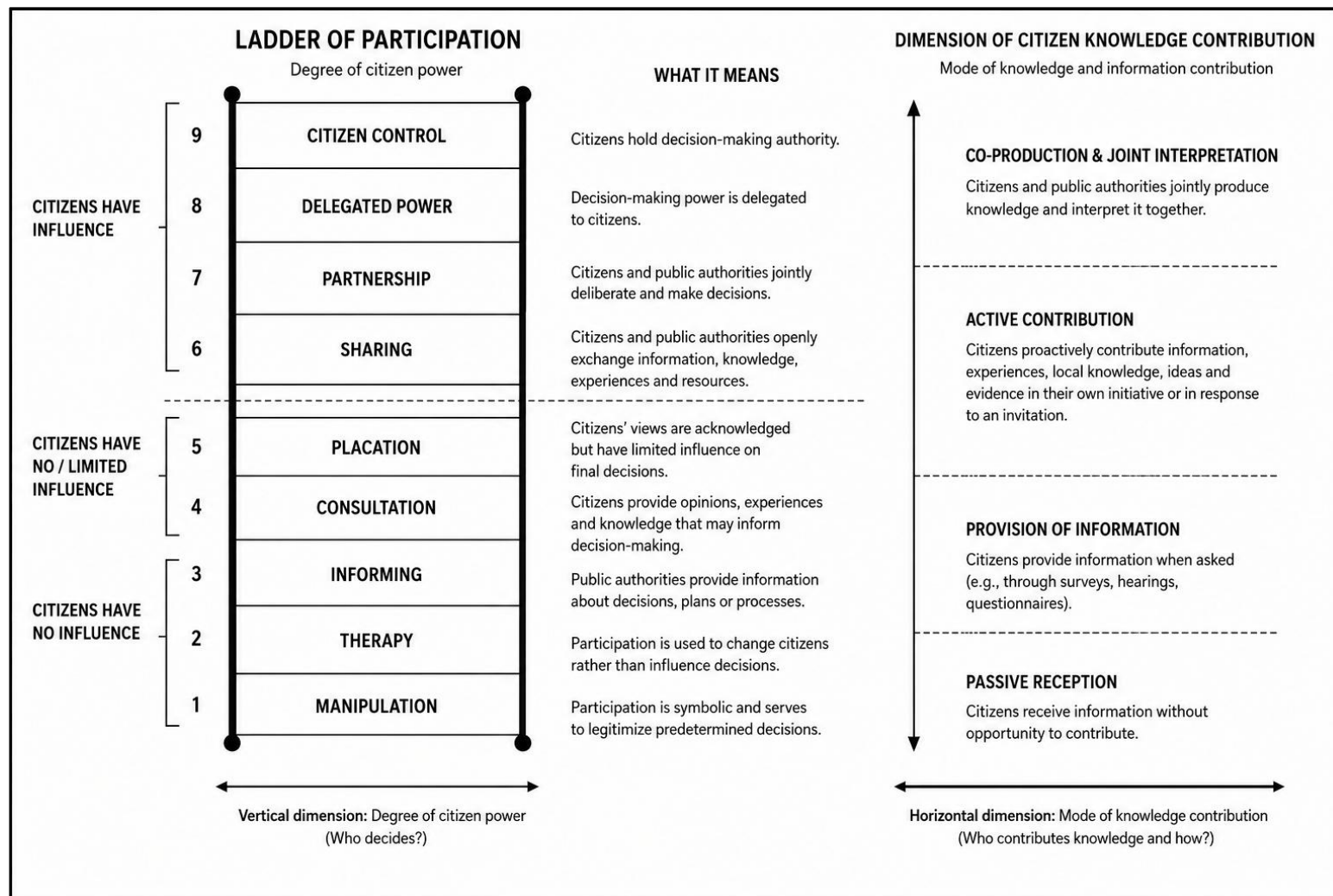


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Co-Creation and Co-Production in the Ladder of Participation

- » Collaboration and empowerment significantly increase the opportunity for community members **to influence decisions**
- » **Co-creation and empowerment** mean that participants or residents lead a project, are fully responsible for political and administrative aspects, and can practically implement their decisions (Arnstein 1969, 223; Ellery & Ellery 2019, 238)
- » Co-creation or empowerment can be seen as efforts **to strengthen participation as a strategic element**
- » **Citizen initiatives represent a particular form of public participation** that aims to independently and responsibly achieve goals and resources for the community or neighborhood (Othengrafen et al. 2024)

Co-Creation and Co-Production in the Ladder of Participation

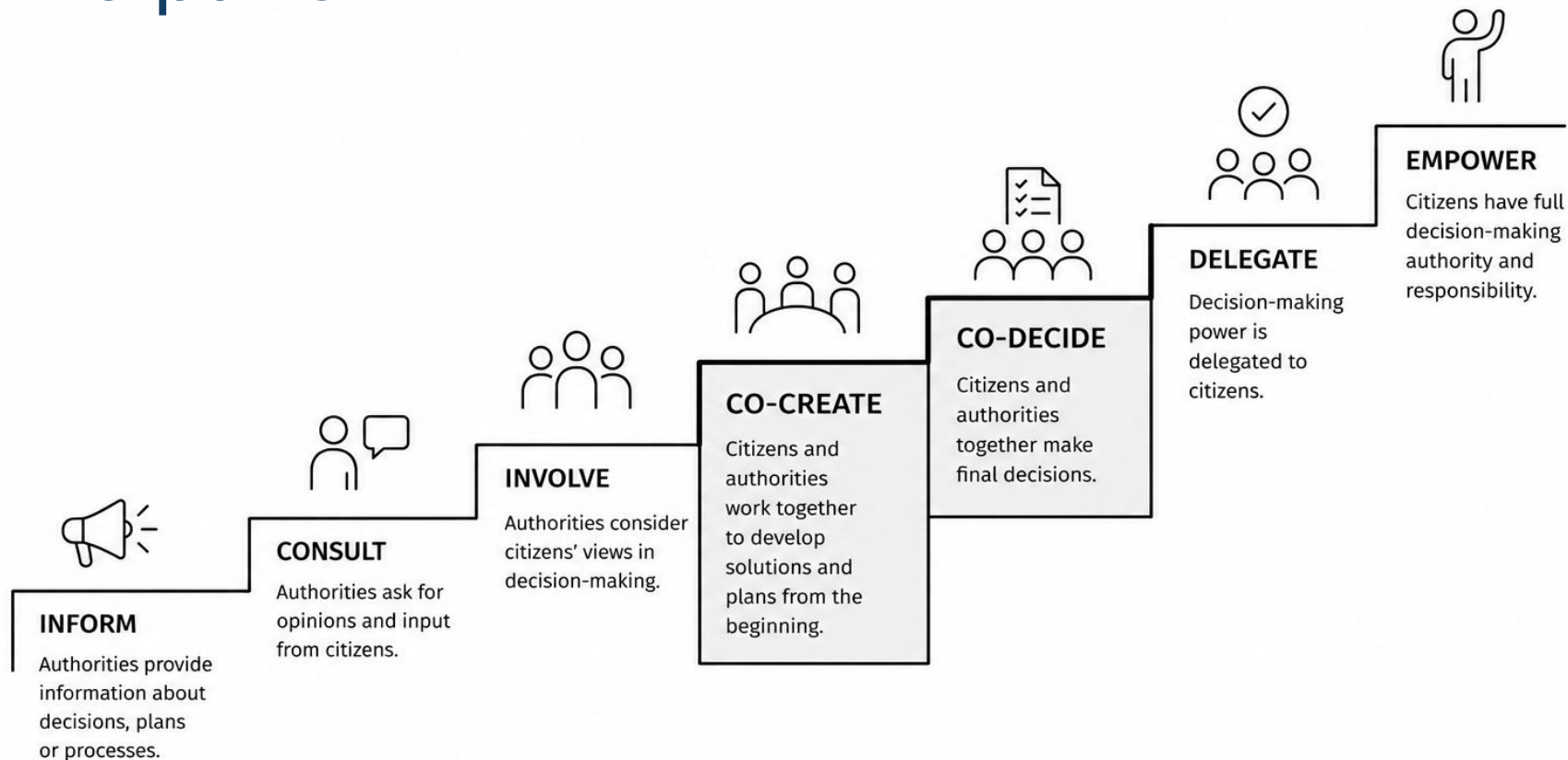


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Co-Production

- » The existing, rather asymmetrical relationships between politics and administration on one side and civil society actors on the other must be replaced by new, **more equitable relationships** in which volunteers are recognized and valued as partners on equal footing and 'experts of everyday life,' contributing their skills and knowledge while being included in strategic decision-making processes (Nadler 2017, 507)
- » Co-production is directly linked to **changed responsibility structures**, where actors from various sectors – politics, administration, business, and civil society – reorganize themselves to solve local problems (Abt 2022)
- » "**Equal footing**" signifies equality between partners and a significant reduction in the use of power resources with an awareness of a common goal. The **role of citizens as equal co-producers of social services notably alters their position** – not only for themselves but also for all those who have traditionally been the sole providers and producers of public services
- » This shift highlights the role of citizens and new initiatives in collaboration with **established civil society organizations**. The intersection between citizenship and municipal administration reveals **a new division of responsibilities that challenges the traditional roles and self-understanding of municipal actors** (Abt 2022)

Co-Production: Involved Actors

Table 2. Coding Result on 'Actor'.

Subcode	Example	N	%
Individual citizens	"citizens" (e.g., Albrechts 2013); "residents" (e.g., Cheng et al. 2022)	57	45
Public sector	"government" (e.g., Bragaglia 2021); "state" (e.g., Refstie and Millstein 2019)	39	30
Civil society	"communities" (e.g., Refstie and Millstein 2019); "a group of people" (Czischke 2018)	31	24
Professionals	"practitioners and researchers" (Polk 2015)	27	21
Users/consumers/ clients	"service users" (e.g., Kelly and Lloyd-Williams 2013); "consumers" (e.g., Potluka and Medeiros 2021)	18	14
Service providers	"producers" (Kelly and Lloyd-Williams 2013); "established providers" (Czischke 2018)	16	13
Private sector	"developers with sufficient financial resources" (Bwalya and Seethal 2013); "market" (e.g., Refstie and Millstein 2019)	15	12
Unspecified	"different actors" (Parker, Lynn and Wargent 2017); "two or more stakeholders" (Blackman, Nakanishi and Benson 2017)	40	31
Others	"nature" (Mellegard and Boonstra 2020)	1	1

Note: Full sample = 244 codings in 128 definitions; % = in relation to the number of definitions with code 'actor'.

(Lee et al 2023, 232)

Co-Production: What is co-produced?

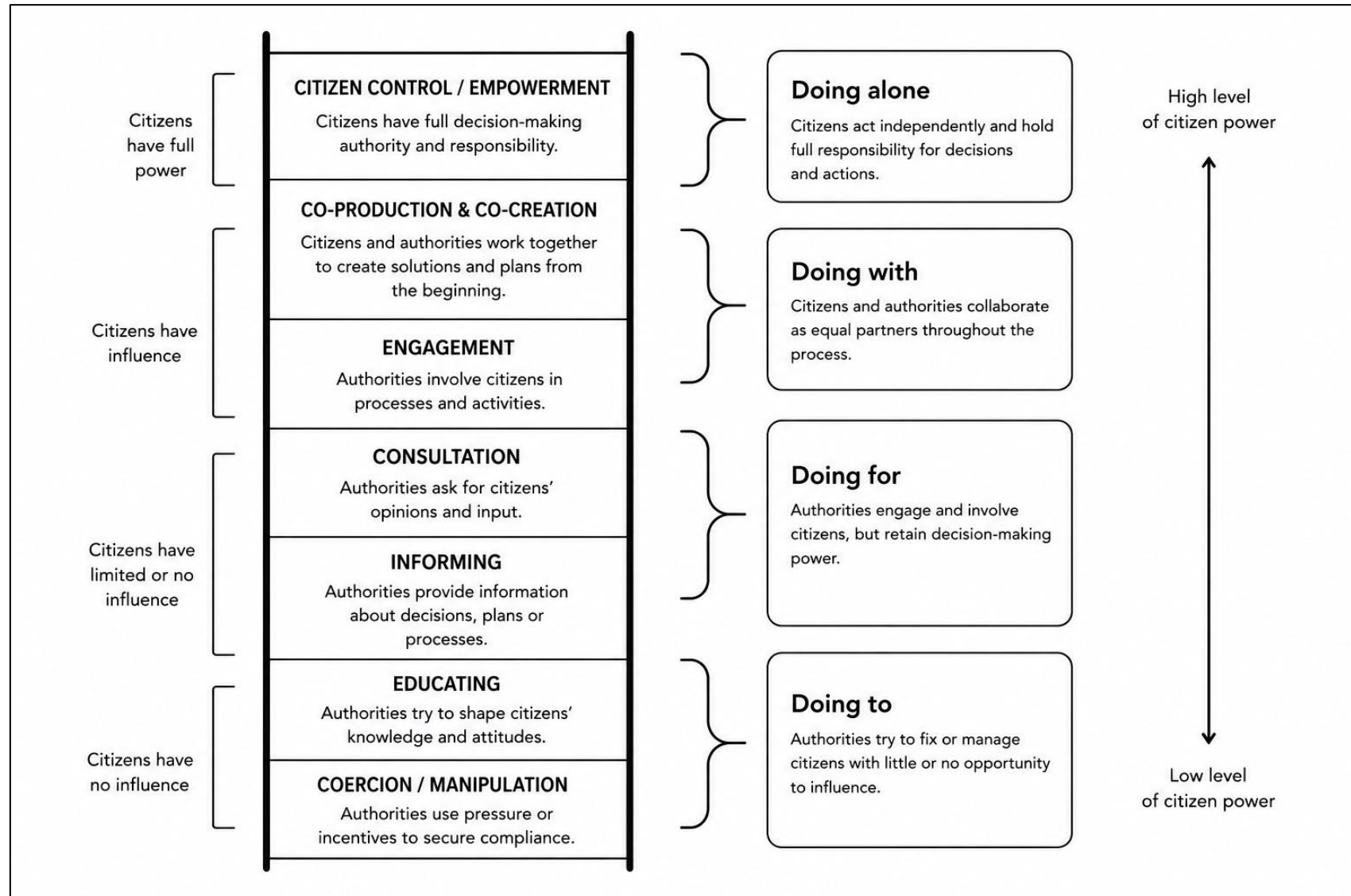
Table 4. Coding Result on 'Input' and 'Output'.

Subcode	Example	N	%
Input			
Knowledge/expertise	"knowledge" (e.g., Krueger 2015); "different forms of expertise" (Durose and Richardson 2016)	24	50
Experience from different practices	"experience from real world practice" (Polk 2015)	9	19
Perspective	"other types of relevant perspectives" (Polk 2015)	3	6
Unspecified	"resources" (Blume 2016); "assets" (Lindsay et al. 2021)	14	29
Others	"needs" (Reimann et al. 2021); "natural, human, financial and manufactured capital" (Raymond, Giusti and Barthel 2018)	6	13
Output			
Public service	"public services" (e.g., Kelly and Lloyd-Williams 2013); "urban services" (Bwalya and Seethal 2013)	48	52
Knowledge	"knowledge" (e.g., Polk 2015); "new knowledge" (Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2022)	27	29
Public good	"public goods" (e.g., Cheng et al. 2022); "more than one commodity" (Lakshmanan and Okumara 1995); "improvement in urban environments" (Canelas and Baptista 2021)	14	15
Social order	"social order" (e.g., Krueger 2015)	6	6
Policy	"new joint policies" (Heeres, Tillema and Arts 2016)	5	5
Value	"value" (Blackman, Nakanishi and Benson 2017)	4	4
Unspecified	"outcomes" (Blume 2016); "a mutually desired output" (Parker, Lynn and Wargent 2017)	7	8
Others	"health interventions" (Wardani et al. 2022)	7	8

Note: For 'input' full sample = 56 codings in 48 definitions; % = in relation to the number of definitions with code 'input'; for 'output' full sample = 118 codings in 93 definitions; % = in relation to the number of definitions with code 'output'.

Co-Production

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Summary:

Co-Production ≠ Participation

- » **Cooperation** = collaboration, but not joint design; **co-production** = both partners are equally and inseparably involved in the creation of a common good (Abt 2023, 253)
- » Co-production embodies both a **procedural-democratic** and a **content-transformative impact** direction oriented towards the common good and a 'fairer' urban and regional development in cooperative urban developments (Beck 2024)

Table 1

Community engagement models.			
	Communicative planning	Citizen control	Co-production
Goals	To reach a mutually agreed-upon, mutually beneficial decision and outcome	"Participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which 'outsiders' may change them" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 223)	Long-term engagement model that progresses toward transformative community participation, where residents become equal partners in the wide-ranging visioning and production of their communities
Means to achieve goal	Participants collaborate, share information and resources, and are mutually interdependent so that they are motivated to achieve a mutually beneficial and agreed-upon outcome	Participants or residents are given decision-making and governance authority	Community participation with resourced capacity-building, power-sharing, and iterative processes where economic and political power differences are identified and undermined
Decision-making control	Participants reach decisions together through consensus-building processes	Citizens have disproportionate control over local decision making	Context and process dependent
Power during deliberation	Power is shared among participants, who are mutually dependent and therefore need each other to achieve their interests to achieve consensus	Citizens are specifically afforded control during decision making	The goal is shared power, but power is recognized to be unequal and therefore must constantly be built for community participants
Control over implementation	Implementation specifics are determined during the consensus-building deliberation	Citizens are largely given control over implementation	Iterative
Resource distributions during implementation	Not necessarily specified	Not necessarily specified	Community engagement must be resourced

Sources: Arnstein, 1969; Booher and Innes, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2010; Margerum, 2002.

Summary: Co-production as co-governing, co-developing, co-implementing, and co-evaluating

- » **Co-governing** encompasses the role of citizens as planners who jointly decide on fundamental goals and the general allocation of resources
- » In contrast, **co-developing** focuses on concrete solutions that arise from a collaborative working process between citizens and administration
- » **Co-implementing** refers to the joint provision of social services, where both public and civic resources and skills are utilized to improve local quality of life
- » Finally, **co-evaluating** involves the shared evaluation of offerings (Abt 2022)

Table 6. Coding Result on 'Means'.

Subcode	Example	N	%
Participation	"(...) to involve multiple participants" (Korhonen-Kurki et al. 2022)	61	47
Collaboration	"(...) joint action of fragmented actors that goes further than 'the mere piecing together of' sectoral perspectives" (Heeres, Tillema and Arts 2016)	39	30
Combination	"(...) through the combination of scientific perspectives with other types of relevant perspectives and experience from real world practice" (Polk 2015)	23	18
Interaction	"(...) by flows and exchanges of knowledge" (Lakshmanan and Okumara 1995)	17	13
Equal relationship	"(...) empowered to contribute their assets to, and act as equal partners" (Lindsay et al. 2021)	17	13
Change in role	"(...) citizens are not passive recipients of public services but active participants" (Zhang and Hartley 2022)	16	12
Innovative practice	"(...) through new forms of governance and management" (Pill and Bailey 2012)	6	5
Others	"(...) deciding" (Blume 2016)	10	8

Note: Full sample = 189 codings in 129 definitions; % = in relation to the number of definitions with code 'means'.

Summary: Co-production as co-governing, co-developing, co-implementing, and co-evaluating

- » Opportunities for co-production should be considered for the further development of municipal services, addressing the challenges faced by cities and communities. It is important to **focus on those forms of co-production that aim more at social rather than individual benefits** (Abt 2022, 256)
- » In this context, **citizens** and their engagement are seen as 'no longer just a nice, additional complement to the core service, but **as co-producers** who play an essential role in maintaining critical functions. Where-as previously the focus was on professional core services that could be supplemented and enriched by competent volunteers, the perspective has now shifted' (Abt 2022, 256)

Table 5. Coding Result on 'Phase'.

Subcode	Example	N	%
Planning	"decision-making" (e.g., Amanatidou, Gritzas and Kavoulakos 2015); "design" (e.g., Kelly and Lloyd-Williams 2013)	26	39
Delivery	"production" (Lakshmanan and Okumara 1995); "provision" (e.g., Bwalya and Seethal 2013)	56	84
Management	"review" (Blume 2016); "control" (Potluka and Medeiros 2021)	6	9
Unspecified	"entire process" (Reimann et al. 2021)	5	7

Note: Full sample = 93 codings in 67 definitions; % = in relation to the number of definitions with code 'phase'.

(Lee et al 2023, 235)

Interactive discussion on distinctions among the various concepts

Discussion

» **Hypothesis 1**

Co-production can lead to innovative solutions for urban challenges. By harnessing the collective knowledge and creativity of diverse stakeholders, co-produced projects often result in novel approaches that address complex urban issues more effectively than traditional top-down methods.

» **Hypothesis 2**

Co-production enhances inclusion and diversity in urban planning. By involving various stakeholders – including citizens, NGOs, and local communities—co-production creates a space for diverse perspectives and needs. This leads to more equitable planning processes as different voices are heard. Strengthening under-represented groups can help reduce social inequalities and promote more inclusive urban development.

» **Hypothesis 3**

Co-production can challenge existing power dynamics but carries the risk of tokenism. While co-production theoretically strengthens democratic processes by actively involving citizens in decision-making, there is a danger that this participation remains merely symbolic (tokenism). If citizens are consulted but their opinions do not genuinely influence the planning process, or if only certain groups have access, it may lead to frustration and undermine trust in democratic processes.

Discussion

» **Hypothesis 4**

Tactical urbanism can serve as an initial step to mobilize civic engagement and spark interest in urban issues. Through temporary projects, citizens can make their ideas and needs visible, leading to a stronger demand for formal co-production processes. These initiatives create a foundation for long-term collaboration between citizens and municipal authorities.

» **Hypothesis 5**

While tactical urbanism is often informal and unbureaucratic, co-production typically requires more complex procedures and formal structures. This can create tension: while tactical urbanism aims for broader participation, formalized co-production may exclude or overwhelm certain groups, thereby reinforcing existing inequalities.

» **Hypothesis 6**

Although tactical urbanism provides space for creative civic engagement, it also carries the risk of ignoring deeper structural issues in urban development. When citizens focus on short-term solutions, they may exert less pressure on institutions to bring about sustainable changes through co-production. In this sense, temporary measures could undermine the necessity for serious co-productive approaches.

Conclusion / Wrap-Up

Urban Planning for Social Resilience in Urban Neighborhoods. Transformative Change through Civic Engagement

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