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Co-creation in local public organizations: a duality of public value outcomes

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The positive effects of co-creation on declining public values

Context and
theoretical
background

Public organizations are under pressure:

- Declining public trust (Schmidhuber et al., 2021)
- Voter abstention rates show lack of cohesion and interest in democracy in its current state

→ Fracture of the social contract (Allen, 2022) as these **public values** (Moore, 1995) are diminished

Public values concern, among others, “(1) the rights, benefits and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (2) the obligations of citizens to society, the state and one another; and (3) the principles on which governments and policies should be based” (Bozeman, 2007)

Methodology
and case

Findings

Policy co-creation becomes increasingly popular:

Defined as “a process through which two or more public and private actors attempt to solve a shared problem, challenge, or task through a constructive exchange of different kinds of knowledge, resources, competences, and ideas” (Torfing et al., 2019)

→ Meant to increase and strengthen various public values (Torfing et al., 2019, 2021; Ansell & Torfing, 2021)

Discussion
and
conclusion

... but does co-creation always strengthen public values?

Context and
theoretical
background

Despite the numerous benefits depicted in literature, **co-creation comes with risks** (Bentzen, 2022; Steen et al., 2018)

→ **Public values might be diminished rather than strengthened through co-creation**

Methodology
and case

Co-destruction of value is defined as *“the collaborative destruction, or diminishment, of value by providers and customers that captures the diminishment of value during interactions between actors”* (Echeverri & Skålén, 2021) in the *private* sector

Findings

With a few recent exceptions (Engen et al., 2021; Cui and Osborne, 2022), a lack of literature on the **co-destruction of public value** and how this might result from a co-creation process

→ Calls to explore the potential pitfalls of co-creation (Cui & Osborne, 2022; Hartley et al., 2019)

Discussion
and
conclusion

How does co-creation affect public value outcomes in the eyes of internal and external stakeholders ?

Venelles in Transition: a qualitative single-case study of co-creation effects

Context and
theoretical
background

France: a roadmap to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at national level
→ **Encouraging French municipalities to develop local 2030 Agendas**

The town of **Venelles** as one of a handful of municipalities to do so through co-creation with its inhabitants

Co-creation in 4 stages: mobilization (questionnaire), exploration (brainstorming workshops), co-construction (idea development workshops), finalization and compilation of final 2030 Agenda
Creation of a steering committee to involve all parties over the entire process

Methodology
and case

Findings

Discussion
and
conclusion

18 hours of
(non-) participant
observation

Semi-structured
interviews with
22 respondents

Secondary data
from 8 sources
(media, website)

Development of a conceptual matrix
(Miles & Huberman, 2003) based on
**perceptions, attitudes, and
behaviors of actors** → sub-categories
emerge during coding

Second matrix to **understand and
visualize emerging factors that may
explain** these positive and negative
perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors
for each actor



	Perceptions								Emotions								Behavior						
	positive			negative					positive				negative				positive			negative			
	space to express oneself	willingness to co-create	good organization	political process	hollow process	guided reflection	lack of representativeness	lack of transparency	hopeful	feeling useful	motivated	enthusiastic	suspicious	angry	uninterested	disappointed	frustrated	changing organizational culture	commitment	entrepreneurship	self-censorship	disengagement	disconnection
P-1	4	19	1					8		2	4				2	4	5	4		2			
P-2		7					9	4		3	1				4	6	2	1		6			
P-3		5	2					1				3				3		1		3			
How politicians are perceived	4	5				2	1				6	5			1		1			3		3	
M-1	4	8	7	1			2	5	2	4	6				3	1	7	13					
M-2		9	2	1			1	3	1	1	5	1			2	2	1	9	1	1			
M-3	1	7	1	2			1	1		1		1				1	9	3	7			1	
M-4		5	1	2			3	1			1				1	3	1	1			1		
How managers are perceived	2									4	6				2	1		4					
How agents are perceived										2	1	9		11			2						
CA-1	3	1		1		1	2				1									1			
CA-2	1	6									3												
E-1	3	3	2	1	1		1		1									3					
C-1	1	2	4	3	15	4	1	1				6	7								5		
C-2	6		4		1	1		5	1	1	4		7					5	2				
C-3	4	2	3	1	2	1		1		1	3	2						3			1		
C-4	3	4	8	6	15	7	2	5		1	2	3			3	3		4	7				
How citizens are perceived								2		15	4	13	1	6	3	12		7		1	11	6	
A-1	1	3		1	3		2	4			4	1	1		2	6		1		1		8	
A-2	1			1	11	8		3	1			8				4			8			4	
A-3				1		1	1	3				3				3			2			3	
A-4	2			3	4	1		6	1			5				2			6			3	
A-5		1			1	1		2				1				5					2	8	
A-6	1			1		2																	
How associations are perceived										1		1			1			2	1		11	2	
OP-1	1	1			1						1		1		1	1			1				
OP-2	1				1	2	1	1			1	1	1	1		2				1			
TOTAL	43	88	35	25	55	31	27	26	33	6	40	49	70	11	17	25	59	28	61	36	18	31	38

Venelles in Transition: a duality of co-creation and co-destruction of public values

1) Internal stakeholders

Context and
theoretical
background



Methodology
and case



Findings



Discussion
and
conclusion

ELECTED POLITICIANS

Willingness to co-create and provide citizens with space for deliberation

Strong position of the mayor, wanting to add to Venelles' culture of engagement for the environment

But only vague idea of how to co-create because **no past experience with participation**

Disappointed with low attendance of workshops and response rate to questionnaire

PUBLIC MANAGERS

Enthusiasm for the project and willingness to go beyond the surface – new sense of purpose

Encounter important **resistance and obstacles** within the organization

Disappointed with low attendance and communication problems, but **hopeful** that co-creation will spread



Venelles in Transition: a duality of co-creation and co-destruction of public values

2) External stakeholders

Context and
theoretical
background



Methodology
and case



Findings



Discussion
and
conclusion

CITIZENS

Possibility to participate in itself considered as more important than the topic

Municipality perceived as open during workshops, but citizens are aware of **political nature of the process**

Citizens are **committed** to the process but **very doubtful** regarding the treatment of their contributions

Lack of transparency of the entire project

ASSOCIATIONS

Project is overall **well received** but associations **remain sceptical**

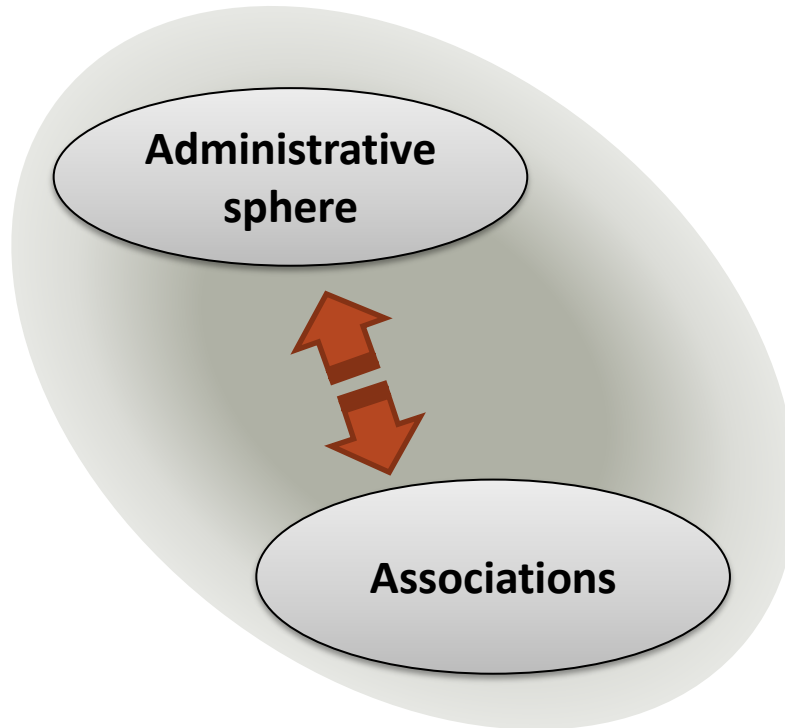
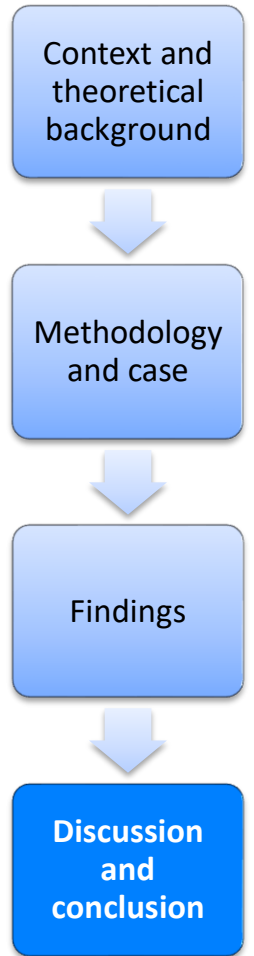
Fear of being used for legitimacy purposes

Hesitant because of lack of information and transparency

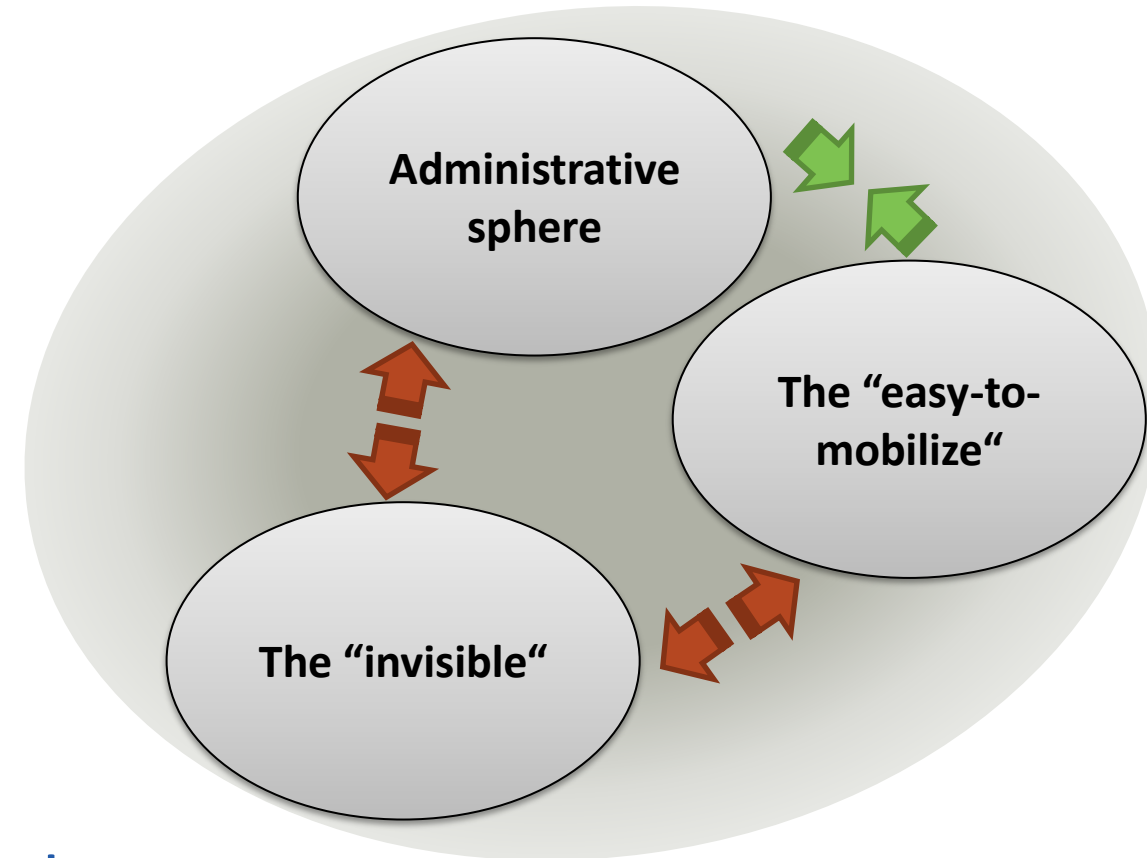
Renewed sense of entrepreneurship because of the project: associations start their own projects – reinforced **disconnection**



The local social contract: dislocation rather than fracture?



Risk of widening the gap between administrative and associative spheres



A duality of public value outcomes:

Risk of exacerbating exclusion of the "invisible", and increasing social inequality

Potential to increase proximity between administrative sphere and mobilized citizens

***Thank you for your attention, questions,
and comments !***

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duality of public value outcomes**

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