

Implications from COGOV for policy-making at multiple levels (EU, national, local)

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Introduction

- Co-creation: means to ends – what ends?
- Co-creation, public service organisations, strategic management, and public policy: establishing the missing links
- Instruments and institutional venues
- Implications for democracy and ways forward

Special thank you to Prof Nicolette van Gestel!

Co-creation is a means to an end: what ends?

Co-creation *may* lead to:

- Generating Public Value (value entails assessing the costs incurred / creating value 'on the cheap': so also bringing public costs down has a bearing here)
- Enhancing quality of life / promoting the European way of life
- Consolidating legitimacy of public governance / enhancing trust (legitimation processes)
- Strengthening participatory democracy (and how about representative democracy?)

These may all become policy objectives → co-creation as policy tool

What are measures of success of co-creation?

- Attaining one or more of the above ends is a sign of 'success': but how to gauge it?
- Useful to distinguish success 'writ large' and success of specific initiatives of co-creation
 - Writ large: European and National policies 'enabling' large scale co-creation and (tentatively, in aggregated fashion) measuring attainment of those ends
 - Specific: policy evaluation is needed (more amenable to application at local level)

What is the role of public organisations in co-creation?

- In co-creation emphasis is often on citizens/users – but also public service organisations matter
- Strategic management of public service organisations may perform a unifying function (see e.g. London Borough of Culture case)
- The scholarly fields of (i) strategic management of public service organisations and (ii) collaborative governance (notably co-creation) have grown significantly, yet mostly apart over the past decade
- Strategic management can be theoretical source to integrate research in co-creation, and collaborative governance more widely, by providing insights into how public organisations make decisions

Bridging strategic management and co-creation

- Connecting the two fields may enhance our understanding of both, and notably of how co-creation occurs, how it may create public value, as well as how to leverage strategically forms of co-creation
- Connecting the two fields is a contribution of the COGOV project
 - Special Issue in *Policy and Politics*: Factors enabling co-creation include adoption of strategic approach by public service organisations
 - The COGOV-initiated joint special issue with COVAL and TROPICO in *Public Policy and Administration* “Strategizing and collaborating in the digital transformation of public administration”

Policy-making and strategic management: complementary and mutually reinforcing

- Getting beyond the simplistic view ‘elected officials-governments make public policies – tenured officials-public agencies implement them (also by managing strategically)’ ...
- ... the ‘public policy – strategic management’ nexus may rather be seen as a continuum: while ‘at the extremes’ policy and strategy may be seen as separate, mostly they intertwine and interconnect closely
- At local level they are nearly always interconnected
- At national and European level the two moments (‘policy’ and ‘management’) may come to be somewhat fictionally separated, but they would benefit from being seen as closely interconnected

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CONCEPTS, SCHOOLS AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES



Venues for interconnection of policy- and strategy-making for co-creation?

- European Commission DG Reform – Group on Experts on Public Administration and Governance [European and national level]
- Public Administration Departments [national level]
- Agencies and semi-autonomous public organisations and policy networks [interconnecting European – national – local levels]
- Local governance systems – most experiences of strategic management and co-creation detected at this level

Instruments for interconnection of policy- and strategy-making for co-creation?

- Knowledge comes in many forms:
 - ‘Enlightening knowledge’: social-scientific/theoretical knowledge (*‘Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas’*, Virgil, verse 490 of Book 2 of the Georgics)
 - ‘Problem-orientated knowledge’: problem-driven, ‘applied’ knowledge
 - ‘Practice-based knowledge’: knowledge embedded into ‘practices that work’ and that requires to be extrapolated for application to a target domain
- ... and COGOV knowledge comes in corresponding forms:
 - COGOV scientific reports/deliverables
 - COGOV problem-orientated (case) studies
 - The Co-creator game
 - The Practices Sourcebook

Participatory democracy... what about (co-creation and) representative democracy?

- Co-creation and knowledge-based policy- and strategy-making may strengthen participatory democracy
- Perhaps more attention should be given to the nexus with (deliberative and) representative democracy
- Thus, a research agenda for the next project: how can co-creation and strategic management enable the strengthening of democracy *tout court* in Europe?



Thanks to everyone who
made COGOV a success!