

Co-production in cities: providing services, empowering communities, changing relationships

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SUMMARY: Co-production in urban areas usually involves the co-delivery of essential municipal services (for instance, water, sanitation and drainage) – to low-income communities, with roles for both government and organized citizens. But it frequently moves beyond this. The delivery of services becomes almost ancillary to changes in relationships between communities and government. In this form co-production contributes to a shift in power and change in relationships and structures that comes with empowerment – and that constitutes real development. Faced with massive public policy failure in municipal service provision and the growing complexity and diversity of needs, might a co-productive approach, going beyond the elites of politics and technocracy, be needed? Could co-production enable community organizations to develop new relationships, enhance existing relationships, and legitimate their own role to a wider set of stakeholders? Or is co-production simply strengthening neoliberalism and making communities take on responsibilities that should be met by the state? Will organized communities challenge inequities and build the required political momentum, or will they buy into solutions that simply meet their own needs without transformative change?

This Brief suggests that low-income urban communities are able to contest power, negotiate and collaborate around their needs. This is aided by solidarity and an associated capacity to organize, and to develop precedents that work better for them than professional designs. These precedents – low-cost plot layouts, houses and toilet designs, and informal settlement mapping – demonstrate to government agencies what is required from them and what it costs. These get local government buy-in, and with this the potential for co-production on a larger scale.

Processes of empowerment and the rebalancing of power are not easily achieved. They require the more powerful members of the relationship to work with the less powerful to agree on the way forward. They need to avoid local elites capturing the benefits. They also need to avoid passing additional responsibilities onto vulnerable groups. While co-production is inclusive for more groups, it is rarely inclusive of all. Issues of discrimination and exclusion remain, with attention being drawn to particularly vulnerable populations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of co-production was first considered in development debates in the mid-1990s but initially, for the most part, it was ignored. From 2004,⁽¹⁾ there has been a renewed interest. This is both in the global North, with debates about community involvement in public service delivery, and in the global South, where the rationale for co-production emerges across the ideological divide on state responsibilities and citizen entitlements.

The empirical evidence that catalysed the first conceptualization of co-production in the 1990s had little focus on development programme design or planned state interventions. Rather, the concept emerged from observations of policing on US streets, and a recognition that security depended on the relations between street-level police officers and local residents.⁽²⁾ Unless local residents shared a broadly similar vision of public order, the job of the police was not possible. Security is not delivered by the police – rather it is the product of relationships, negotiation and collaboration. This research highlighted the limits of bureaucracy, state control and an authoritarian dictate. From this work developed the understanding that health and prison services were also more effective when they grew out of collaboration.⁽³⁾

The application of these ideas to development in the global South gained traction with a

1. Joshi, A and M Moore (2004), "Institutionalised co-production: unorthodox public service delivery in challenging environments", *Journal of Development Studies* Vol 40, No 4, pages 31–49.

2. Brudney, J L and R E England (1983), "Towards a definition of the co-production concept", *Public Administration Review* Vol 43, No 1, pages 59–65; also Parks, R B, P C Baker, L Kiser, R Oakerson, E Ostrom, V Ostrom, S L Percy, M B Vandivot, G Whitaker and R Wilson (1981), "Consumers as co-producers of public services: some economic and institutional considerations", *Policy Studies Journal* Vol 9, No 7, pages 1001–1011; and Whitaker, G P (1980), "Coproduction: citizen participation in service delivery", *Public Administration Review* Vol 40, No 3, pages 240–246.

3. See reference 2, Brudney and England (1983); Parks et al. (1981); and Whitaker (1980).

4. *World Development* (1996), Vol 24, No 6.

5. Ostrom, E (1996), "Crossing the great divide: coproduction, synergy and development", *World Development* Vol 24, No 6, pages 1073–1087.

6. Evans, P (1996), "Government action, social capital and development: reviewing the action on synergy", *World Development* Vol 24, No 6, pages 1119–1132.

7. Mitlin, D (2008), "With and beyond the state: coproduction as a route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 20, No 2, pages 339–360; also Watson, V (2014), "Co-production and collaboration in planning – The difference", *Planning Theory and Practice* Vol 15, No 1, pages 62–76.

8. Bell, D M and K Pahl (2018), "Co-production: towards a utopian approach", *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* Vol 21, No 1, pages 105–117.

9. Durose, C and L Richardson (2016), *Designing Public Policy for Co-Production: Theory, Practice and Change*, Policy Press, Bristol.

10. See the paper by Luisa Moretto, Giuseppe Faldi, Marco Ranzato, Federica Natalia Rosati, Jean-Pierre Iltto Boozii and Jacques Teller listed on the back page.

11. See the paper by Ellis Adjei Adams and Godfred O Boateng listed on the back page.

12. See the paper by Wayne Shand listed on the back page.

13. See reference 10, page 439.

14. See the papers by Ellis Adjei Adams and Godfred O Boateng; Wayne Shand; David Simon, Henrietta Palmer, Jan Riise, Warren Smit and Sandra Valencia; Luisa Moretto, Giuseppe Faldi, Marco Ranzato, Federica Natalia Rosati, Jean-Pierre Iltto Boozii and Jacques Teller; and Vanesa Castán Broto and Susana Neves Alves listed on the back page.

15. See the paper by Vanesa Castán Broto and Susana Neves Alves listed on the back page, page 368.

16. See the paper by Kate Lines and Jack Makau listed on the back page, page 420.

17. See the paper by Somsook Boonyabancha, with Thomas Kerr, listed on the back page.

special issue of *World Development* in 1996.⁽⁴⁾ From the perspectives of both economics⁽⁵⁾ and political science,⁽⁶⁾ co-production was recognized to offer more efficient delivery of services (with labour contributions from local residents replacing unavailable state resources) and more effective state plans (through synergistic planning between organized communities and the state).

In regard to the global South, the concept of co-production has been supported by those concerned with public service provision in the context of a weak state with limited delivery capacity. Here, well-designed co-production processes can strengthen community capacities, enabling community members to build collective processes along with an understanding of effective design capacity. Other observers focus on the breadth of the gap between those who design and deliver services within bureaucratic public management systems and the disadvantaged low-income citizens who are too frequently excluded from provision. In both the global North and the global South, co-production is viewed by many with suspicion, as it is seen as strengthening neoliberalism and passing on responsibilities that should be taken up by the state.

But there is the evidence of co-production working – aided by solidarity among low-income groups and an associated capacity to organize. From this comes a capacity to act to develop precedents that demonstrate to government agencies what is required to provide services and what it costs. Low-income urban communities are able to contest power, negotiate and collaborate around their needs. In the process, they can secure enhanced citizenship.⁽⁷⁾

There are diverse trajectories, both for co-productive action and for understandings of the concept. Co-producing knowledge may be understood as a utopian research method, challenging the existing distribution of power and opening up possibilities for the reform of processes that generate ideas and associated knowledge.⁽⁸⁾ Faced with the scale of public policy failure in the growing complexity and diversity of needs, might a co-productive approach, going beyond the elites of politics and technocracy, be needed to address this?⁽⁹⁾ But co-production may include processes that exclude as well as those that empower.⁽¹⁰⁾ Such discussions reflect the increasingly widespread use of co-production both as a label and as a practice.

II. UNDERSTANDING CO-PRODUCTION

Co-production in urban areas usually involves the co-delivery of basic municipal services, with roles for both government and organized citizens. However, there is the potential to move on from this aspect to a more substantive social purpose. The actual delivery of services can be almost ancillary to the relationship implications of the co-production process. They move from considering co-production as a means to meet essential ends to co-production as a means of altering essential relationships and ongoing practices.

A study in Lilongwe (Malawi)⁽¹¹⁾ focused on the co-production of water services through a partnership between the public utility and water user associations in informal settlements. Here, co-production was compensating for the lack of state capacity around services; the model encourages synergies between communities and service providers and the building of community social capital.

Co-production in Harare (Zimbabwe)⁽¹²⁾ is associated with service improvements (in tenure, housing and services). But more fundamentally it is about municipal officials changing their relationships with low-income communities – and the potential inherent in this change. Many cases of co-production in water and sanitation show a discussion of a "*renewed vision of citizenship, based on residents' voice, participation, and control in the decision-making process*".⁽¹³⁾

Co-production can be seen as an array of strategies to access public services initiated by community-based organizations, often presented as a practical strategy to deliver services in what they refer to as unorthodox contexts. But co-production can also be seen as a tool to advance social justice and to challenge the structures that reproduce inequalities.⁽¹⁴⁾ Even this broader definition can be just a starting point as questions of intersectionality "*increasingly permeate...debates about the co-production of urban services*".⁽¹⁵⁾

Action on the ground can produce new insights for those engaged in theory. Drawing on 20 years of engagement, the Kenyan grassroots federation, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, defines co-production as "*a situation in which the state and citizens come together to find a solution to a challenge, with both parties going beyond their normal processes and building an altogether new solution based on their synergy*".⁽¹⁶⁾ Muungano recognizes that it is not always necessary for the state and its citizens to work under one organizational framework. But changes in relationships are at the core of what it does, so it primarily emphasizes relationships and processes, although specific interventions are also important.

For some, the simple existence of the collaborative relationship is the defining characteristic here. For others, co-production necessarily implies a shift in the usual power relations and the ceding of greater control to disempowered communities. This is fundamental to the support provided to organized communities by the national government agency, the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) in Thailand.⁽¹⁷⁾ For CODI, co-production is "*a process that opens space for poor communities to work with their local governments and other public and private stakeholders to deliver various devel-*

18. See reference 17, page 444.

19. See reference 10.

20. The paper by Lautaro Ojeda, Gonzalo Bacigalupe and Andrea Pino listed on the back page describes a co-production process that many would hesitate to categorize as such. It involved the construction of replacement housing in the aftermath of a devastating forest fire in Valparaíso, Chile.

21. Li, Bingqin, Bo Hu, Tao Liu and Lijie Fang (2019, forthcoming), "Can co-production be state-led? Policy pilots in four Chinese cities", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 31, No 1. This is available online now.

22. French, Matthew, Abdul Popal, Habib Rahimi, Srinivasa Popuri and Jan Turkstra (2019, forthcoming), "Institutionalizing participatory slum upgrading: a case study of urban co-production from Afghanistan, 2002–2016", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 31, No 1. This is available online now.

23. See the paper by Lautaro Ojeda, Gonzalo Bacigalupe and Andrea Pino listed on the back page.

24. See reference 10.

25. See reference 10.

26. See the paper by Diana Mitlin listed on the back page.

27. See the paper by Wayne Shand listed on the back page.

28. See the paper by Beth Chitekwe-Biti listed on the back page.

29. See reference 16.

30. See reference 21.

31. <http://www.sdi.net.org>.

opment goods".⁽¹⁸⁾ This process needs to be demand-driven – catalysed by community objectives and effort. Co-production is viable only if communities "determine what they need, lead the development process, and set the direction and nature of CODI's support" (page 445). The state moves from being a provider to a facilitator, albeit one that engages alongside organized communities to find effective alternatives to evictions and support settlement upgrading.

This is not simply an issue of who controls the process, but also of the stage(s) in the process – for instance when co-production of services has to become co-management.⁽¹⁹⁾ Involvement at the planning stages is quite different from involvement in the management of a service already planned prior to resident involvement. This raises the issue of whether co-production should refer only to those processes that give citizens some control and ownership over the direction that is taken in *all* components, including design, planning, management, implementation, finance and learning. But this would miss important examples where progress was made towards co-production.⁽²⁰⁾

For instance, in China, in 2010, a widespread co-production effort was initiated, geared towards "more responsive service provision, infrastructure improvement, and community building through state-enabled decision-making, self-organization and self-service delivery on the part of communities". Research in four cities found that although local officials have limited enthusiasm and community members may be hesitant about their contributions, service provision has become more participatory than it used to be, and this may "inspire and ignite" more genuine co-production.⁽²¹⁾ To give another example, participatory upgrading in informal settlements in post-conflict urban Afghanistan drew residents in to partner with national and local governments, but faced weak and poorly funded local governments.⁽²²⁾

Beyond the issue of what is being co-produced, and who drives the process, there is the issue of who benefits. Is it co-production when it intensifies inequities for some? For instance, after the fires in Valparaíso (Chile), co-production supported land owners to rebuild, but tenants and those without a land claim were required to relocate.⁽²³⁾ In Kinshasa's co-produced water and sanitation solutions, only plot owners are represented, while tenants and sub-tenants have no role in decision-making.⁽²⁴⁾

Elements of co-production may be evident in projects that only serve high-income groups. They may also be complex to define in contexts where more fundamental changes are underway in the alignment of state, market and citizen roles.⁽²⁵⁾

Urban social movements see co-production or collaboration with the state as just one among many possible strategies.⁽²⁶⁾ Movements advance when they strategically deploy one or more of three approaches: engagement, contention and subversion. Engagement is more typically associated with co-production, but contention and subversion, often used in tandem with engagement, can also create space for action.

III. THE MATERIAL, SPATIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF CO-PRODUCTION

Material solutions often contribute to changing practices and relationships that are constructed *through* and *within* the material projects of co-production.⁽²⁷⁾ The work of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) highlights the significance of *what* is co-produced and the relationships that emerge. The City of Windhoek faced serious deficits in housing and service provision that needed to be addressed, but with full cost recovery. The emerging self-help shelter solutions of Federation members helped push the City towards "a more permissive paradigm", but also demonstrated to the authorities the capacity of organized residents.⁽²⁸⁾ In Nairobi, co-production emerged from efforts to protect informal settlements from eviction and the realization by the authorities that alternatives to eviction could be found and developed.⁽²⁹⁾ In a study of four Chinese cities, this took another route; when migrants to urban neighbourhoods who were marginalized and disengaged received the services and amenities they needed, it encouraged them to feel more like citizens, to establish relationships with others within their neighbourhoods, and even to contribute more willingly to efforts to improve the lives of others.⁽³⁰⁾

Unserved communities may draw on more affordable and local technologies to demonstrate the potential of co-production to provide alternatives to established systems and norms, whether physical, social or institutional. Here, the use of precedents has importance. The slum/shack dweller federations that are affiliates of SDI (formerly Slum/Shack Dwellers International⁽³¹⁾) implement innovative solutions to material problems that may contravene bureaucratic norms. But when demonstrated to the authorities for their practical value, they become a constructive focus for negotiation and engagement.

The material solutions emerging from co-production become a way to challenge existing norms and negotiate for better interventions. But in Windhoek, although the City's policy framework became more progressive and permissive as a result of the Federation's efforts, and while the housing options open to low-income households improved, the locations where families could settle were predetermined by the City's pre-existing zoning preferences as specified within the spatial plan. Only settlements to the northwest of the very overcrowded black township of Katatura were eligible for upgrading. Although there were practical reasons for expanding the city along this transport corridor,

the net effect was that spatial divisions established during the apartheid era remained substantially intact, and the city remained racially and economically divided.

But the co-productive process can have “*an element of spatial reconnection, mostly operated directly by people with the different water redistribution and buying/selling practices instead of through purely physical networks*”.⁽³²⁾ This can be seen in water and sanitation co-production of networked and non-networked solutions, including an “archipelago” of self-sufficient, local, alternative technologies through which citizens fill gaps in the official networked solutions. These are not just alternative options – they may become integrated into the larger network and are as much a stage in the evolution of networked solutions as an alternative to them.⁽³³⁾

32. See reference 10, page 440.

33. See reference 10.

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCALE

Relatively little attention is being given to co-production across the city. “Scale” in this context relates not only to the difference between one water kiosk and a water provision system that reaches everyone with piped supplies, but also to the complexity of the arrangements that underpin the capacity to reach everyone within the city. Moving towards universal access at the lowest level (the water kiosks) appears to be helped by co-productive approaches.

But community provision for services (including co-production) is often limited by larger issues over which communities have little control – for instance from irregular and poor-quality provision in the pipes, and where community engagement has no power to resolve these system-wide issues.⁽³⁴⁾

34. See reference 11.

Communities involved in specific local projects also need to be included in the planning of the city or in citywide service delivery. As the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) began to undertake larger-scale mapping of informal settlements, this tension became more evident. While the government was co-producing housing with the communities, supported by central government funds, the strategic plan for Windhoek was neither co-produced nor pro-poor, so it is hard to see how an equitable city can be secured.⁽³⁵⁾

35. See reference 28.

In Kenya, by contrast, Muungano wa Wanavijiji has been able to grow significantly in scale. It has shifted from individual interventions to working with Nairobi County government on upgrading in Mukuru with over 100,000 households, and with a recognition of the need to integrate the informal settlement into the city. But the Federation members recognize “*that no upgrading model or plan, just by existing, will change the urban landscape*” (page 421). Rather than co-producing models designed for scaling up through state replication, **they recognize that their process co-produces the relationships that enable the grassroots organization to be central to upgrading.** A critical component is the fact that community groups are networked, and hence able to function as co-production partners at the scale of the city. Demonstrated success has led to a deepening of the partnership with Nairobi County.⁽³⁶⁾

36. See reference 16.

Scale issues are also evident in the engagement of the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation with the City of Harare.⁽³⁷⁾ For the City, the primary focus has been on the Dzivaresekwa Extension settlement, where informal residents are supported to upgrade their neighbourhood first with wells, eco-sanitation and shacks, and then over time, using funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with piped water, waterborne sanitation and brick homes. However, for the Federation, this is not just about creating an exemplar neighbourhood – the objective is to go to city scale. So alongside their neighbourhood activities, Federation members established a city fund, catalysed by their own savings contributions and funds from SDI (the transnational network to which the Zimbabwean Federation and its support NGO Dialogue on Shelter belong), and enhanced by a City contribution. Also important have been activities to reform regulations and reach out to vulnerable communities across the City. The Federation and Dialogue on Shelter had completed a city mapping, profiling more than 85 per cent of informal settlements, some years previously.⁽³⁸⁾

37. See reference 27.

Aiming to go from individual interventions to the citywide scale, or larger, forces a recognition that, however innovative and effective community groups may be, they need that deep engagement with the state to achieve more far-reaching change. CODI’s support for communities included “*connecting all the good progress and scattered projects on the ground into something greater than the sum of its parts: a more comprehensive and more structural change*”.⁽³⁹⁾ This is not just a matter of connecting scattered projects. Rather there is the recognition that, while community networks can function at a considerable scale, supporting each other and connecting their efforts, there are limits to what they can achieve if they do not actively collaborate with city governments to plan and implement improvements.

38. Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe Trust (2014), *Harare Slum Profiles Report*, Edition 2, Compiled by Dialogue on Shelter and the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation with the City of Harare, available at <http://pubs.iied.org/G03861/?k=zimbabwe&p=2>.

39. See reference 17, page 449.

A deepening of the level at which co-production takes place appears a necessary condition to achieving scale that can address the range of citizen needs. The deepening also appears to be critical to the empowerment of disempowered populations, enabling them to be engaged with substantive governance choices and not relegated to simply a role in service delivery. However, co-production at this local scale takes place in a constrained context where broader issues of redistribution and regulatory reform are excluded by design. Achieving the empowerment necessary to go to the next level may require a further dimension: there is an emerging recognition of the importance of ideas and knowledge.

V. CO-PRODUCING IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE

Discussions of co-production usually focus on the co-production of material interventions, whether through design, planning, management, implementation, financing, or monitoring and evaluation.⁽⁴⁰⁾ But there is also the co-production of knowledge as part of the more general process of co-production. Of interest too is the flip side of the co-production of knowledge – the way knowledge (and the capacity that accompanies it) contributes to the development of co-production.

Co-production of knowledge challenges the idea of research *on* disadvantaged and marginalized groups, instead demanding the recognition of research processes *with* organized citizens. Such processes also open the potential of radical change. Social movement leaders and other activists blend knowledge creation with social action because of their political engagement. In terms of interventions, social movements argue that there should be “nothing for us without us”. In terms of knowledge related to social inclusion, poverty reduction and marginalization, activists might argue for “nothing about us without us”.

There are many examples of co-production of knowledge between organized communities and local government through the mapping and profiling of informal settlements.⁽⁴¹⁾ Community groups organized by the Philippine Homeless People’s Federation, in Muntinlupa City, undertook the mapping of their informal settlements so they could “*use the information generated to negotiate with the government and other stakeholders*”.⁽⁴²⁾ For these groups, mapping became a participatory process of increasing significance, as they secured the commitment of both the barangay (ward-level) and city governments. They also used this information to work out their own solutions to the problems they face. The challenge for the Federation is to resist letting professionals and students lead the process.

Possession of this kind of information can be critical to full and meaningful citizenship. Our understanding of co-production has expanded to include co-production processes as “*alternative ways of knowing the city*”, with “*the participation of citizens at the intersection between knowledge production and policy formulation*”.⁽⁴³⁾ Power differentials are anchored in knowledge and information. The way authorities share – or fail to share – information also affects the quality of relationships and the level of control that can be experienced by community members. “*With information comes power, and without information the options of the poor are limited and their strategies are shaped by what they know.*”⁽⁴⁴⁾

VI. CO-PRODUCTION AND POWER

There is broad agreement that the purpose of co-production is to address power differentials and to create the space for the marginalized, impoverished and excluded to take their seats at the table. This cannot be done by fiat. “*The shift in power and the change in relationships and structures that comes with empowerment – and which constitutes real development – is something that can only be done by people themselves.*”⁽⁴⁵⁾ People are the infrastructure and the change process that underpin a shift to more equitable development.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The potential offered by co-production lies in having both enhanced relationships and the capability to manage and deepen these relationships. Seeing poverty as caused by adverse relationships that emerge from political and economic structures⁽⁴⁷⁾ is helpful here. Co-production enables community organizations to develop new relationships, enhance existing relationships, and legitimate their own role to a wider set of stakeholders. It is understood as both a process of material improvement and a process within which knowledge, capacity and relationships are built. It is also very much a process through which the agendas of social movements are advanced – and sometimes the means through which these social movements take shape and are constituted.

Underlying the recognition of the efficacy of co-production is an acknowledgement that state and non-state actors depend on each other. If the idea of co-production emerged from observed practices, then it has spread because it has been recognized as effective in delivering both goods and services and desired relational change. After acknowledging the interdependency, the next step requires the more powerful members of the relationship to negotiate with the less powerful to agree on the way forward.

Efficacy and interdependency are central to co-production. So too is the enhanced public legitimacy that organized communities and other civil society actors derive from their demonstrated involvement.

Co-production also builds their confidence and strengthens positive social identities. Positive engagement, arising from co-production, also provides opportunities to challenge the demonization of low-income residents of informal settlements and those who work informally.

Processes of empowerment and the rebalancing of power are not easy. For instance, in Harare, state-led development and a highly professionalized understanding of urban development have left little room for grassroots initiatives, specifically for incremental (and more affordable) upgrading processes. But the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation has successfully engaged local government

40. Brandsen, T and V Pestoff (2006), “Co-production, the third sector and the delivery of public services”, *Public Management Review* Vol 8, No 4, pages 493–501.

41. For many papers on this, see *Environment and Urbanization* (2012), “Mapping, enumerating and surveying informal settlements and cities”, Vol 24, No 1, available at <http://journals.sagepub.com/toc/eaui/24/1>.

42. See the paper by Deanna Ayson listed on the back page, page 512.

43. See reference 15, page 370.

44. See reference 28, page 405.

45. See reference 17, page 460.

46. Simone, A M (2004), “People as infrastructure: intersecting fragments in Johannesburg”, *Public Culture* Vol 16, No 3, pages 407–429.

47. Mosse, D (2010), “A relational approach to durable poverty, inequality and power”, *The Journal of Development Studies* Vol 46, No 7, pages 1156–1178.

48. See reference 12.

49. See reference 15.

50. See reference 15, page 374.

and formalized this in a memorandum of understanding. This is powerful not simply because it provides a formal reference point to support the cause of low-income households and their organizations, but also because it gives legitimacy to the movement. This enables the movement to build relations with other parts of the City of Harare, finding new openings through which it can advance needs and interests.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Service provision through co-production needs to be flexible if it is to cater for the diversity of needs.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Attention to intersectionality can highlight how co-production can be disempowering. There are multiple risks, but two are particularly acute. First, a local elite may capture the benefits. Second, additional responsibilities may be passed to groups that are already vulnerable because their needs are not “*normalized within existing processes of urban management*”.⁽⁵⁰⁾ However, citizen engagement in co-production may itself open the possibility for multiple identities.

In summary, co-production includes a diverse set of interventions. Some aim to provide public services more efficiently, drawing on the capabilities of local communities. Others have emerged from organized social movements determined to advance their interests. There is a broad spectrum from state-initiated to community-initiated co-production. While co-production is inclusive for more groups of citizens, it is rarely inclusive of all. Questions of discrimination and exclusion remain, with attention being drawn to particularly vulnerable populations.

But does co-production have the potential to secure the radical changes needed for transformation? Can co-production catalyse equitable, inclusive urban development? It appears to be essential to social transformation, a necessary even if not a sufficient condition. Will organized communities challenge inequities and build the required political momentum, or will they buy into solutions that simply meet their needs and improve their own social mobility without transformative change?

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