Co-creation in social innovation: comparative case-study on the influential factors and outcomes of co-creation

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1 Introduction

Due to the economic and fiscal crisis, and the decline of legitimacy of public institutions, governments are seeking to find new ways to provide public value. In this, a shift becomes visible from a market and customer orientation, derived from New Public Management, to an understanding in which users of the services are considered to bring in specific expertise and assets in the production process (Needham, 2008). As a result, policy making and service delivery cannot be considered as a one-way process anymore (Bovaird, 2007). Public organizations increasingly rely on the efforts and capacities of citizens. As such the government is no longer to be considered as the (only) provider of public services and public value. Citizens are increasingly invited to play an active role in the delivery of services and add value during the production process of public services. Where earlier innovative attempts were aimed at inviting citizens to 'play along', more contemporary policies aim to enhance social innovation in which citizens are invited to 'design along' and/or take the initiative for public service delivery. We label this kind of social innovation as *co-creation during social innovation*. We understand with social innovation as the creation of long-lasting outcomes that aim to address societal needs by fundamentally changing the relationships, positions and rules between the involved stakeholders, through an open process of participation, exchange and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including end-users, thereby crossing organizational boundaries and jurisdictions (Hartley, 2005; Bason, 2010; Osborne & Brown, 2011; Sörensen & Torfing, 2011; Chesbrough, 2006). This description shows that social innovation always takes place within an environment and in a network of multiple stakeholders. In these processes of co-creation, citizens can have different roles (Voorberg et al forthcoming): 1) *citizens as co-implementer*, 2*) citizens as co-designer* and 3) *citizens as initiator*. Research to co-creation in which citizens operate as initiator or designer is relatively scare (ibid). Furthermore, so far, studies regarding public co-creation are focused at the identification of drivers and barriers of the co-creation process (Gillard et al. 2012; Parrado et al. 2013; Vamstad, 2012) or are aimed at the identification of different types of co-creation (Carr, 2012; Pestoff, 2012; Ryan, 2012). As a result, our empirical understanding about the outcomes of co-creation processes is still limited (Voorberg et al, forthcoming). The goals of this research paper are then to describe and analyze the outcomes of the co-creation processes with citizens and to explain how these outcomes occurred with respect to influential factors and the context of the co-creation.

Hence our research questions:

1. *How can the co-creation initiative be described, referring to the involved actors, type of co-creation and objectives?*

2. *Which factors influence the development and process of co-creation?*

3. *What are the <u>outcomes</u> of co-creation and how can the outcomes be explained?*

The presentation of these three research question also structures the outline of this paper. In section two we present the theoretical framework. In section three we describe the used research methods. Subsequently we present our results and we draw some conclusions.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 An ecological perspective

To our consideration, social innovation takes place in a specific, local and thus contingent context, in which all kinds of different developments merge (Bekkers, V. Edelenbos, J. Steijn, B., 2011). These developments take place in different environments that mutually influence each other and come together around specific societal, very often 'wicked' problems, like for instance ageing. Relevant environments are for instance political-administrative, the socio-cultural, the economic and technological environment. The merger of these developments around specific societal problems create an important trigger for the actors in these environment to embark on the social innovation journey. The relationships between these actors can be understood in terms of an innovation network. The main challenge in this network is how to organize the collaboration between these actors, - with different interests, views and wishes and different (inter) dependencies – in order to share ideas, information, and knowledge as well as other relevant resources (Osborne & Brown, 2013; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). The open innovation literature emphasizes the importance of a flee flow of ideas, information, knowledge, capital and people across boundaries and jurisdictions (Chesbrough, 2006; Von Hippel, 1976). At the same time the importance to exchange and share resources is not given. It is often limited by all kind of grown practices that create all kinds of path dependencies. Hence, it is important to look at how this innovation context or innovation network is institutionalized and what factors contribute to this process of institutionalization, which also influence the trust that these stakeholders have in each other (Ostrom, 1996). Hence, in order to understand the active involvement of citizens as one of the collaborating stakeholders, a first step is to understand the local context of network in which they co-create.

2.2 Objectives and reasons for co-creation

So far in the academic literature it is not being specified why co-creation can be considered as an answer to contemporary challenges. This partly related to the fact that in most cases no specific objectives are being mentioned what co-creation efforts needs to achieve (e.g. Pestoff, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2009). In this it seems that co-creation can be considered as an objective in itself.

Others relate co-create to the increase of general values, without a specification to a certain case or context (e.g Corburn, 2007; Maiello et al. 2013). Reasons for co-creation seems to lie not per se in the achievement of a certain objective, but might relate to a certain 'whim of fashion' (Hood, 1991) or window of opportunity (Kingdon & Thurber, 1984) as the result of a number of trends or maybe it might have a concrete starting point, as a consequence of a certain event or occurrence (Cobb & Elder, 1972).

2.3 Influential factors on the organizational side

In the literature, a number of influential factors are mentioned. In the first place, there is the impact of a *risk-averse administrative culture* to public co-creation. The administrative culture appears not always to be inviting the incorporation of citizens. Authors have stressed that because of legalistic and bureaucratic culture (Damanpur, 1991; Kelman, 2008), the culture of public organizations has become risk-averse and conservative (Baars, 2011; Talsma & Molenbroek, 2012). This might negatively influence the process of co-creation (Hyde & Davies, 2004; Weaver, 2011). As a consequence of this risk-averse administrative culture, *the attitude of public officials and politicians* is often not really inviting to co-creation efforts. Public professionals and politicians may feel threaten in their expertise (Fuglsang, 2008) or may consider citizens as being incompetent to deliver public services properly (Gebauer, Johnson, & Enquist, 2010; Kingfisher, 1998). This negative attitude is expected to have a hampering effect on the co-creation process. The literature suggest that the presence of *clear incentives and objectives* to why the co-creation effort will be beneficial may influence this attitude (Abers, 1998; Evans, Hills, & Orme, 2012). The formulation of these specific incentives might be challenging since in the public sector these are formulated in intrinsic factors, rather than in concrete gains (Wise, Paton, & Gegenhuber, 2012). Last, if these incentives are present and the public organization is inviting and open for co-creation this should result in *compatible public organizations to co-creation.* This involves the adaption of structures and procedures within public organizations to co-creation, such as training facilities, communication structures and supporting organizational processes (Andrews & Brewer, 2013; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012a).

2.4 Influential factors on the citizen side

A first important influential factor appears to be the *willingness of citizens.* According to Alford this willingness of citizens to co-create is determined to what extent citizens are intrinsically motivated. Alford described this as 'the client's sense of self-determination and competence' (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009). In addition Wise et al. (2012) showed that intrinsic values, such as loyalty, civic duty, and the wish to improve the government positively, influence the willingness of citizens to participate. Also personal traits like education and family composition play a role**,** which Sundeen (1988) demonstrated. People which had received more education than high school were more aware of

community needs and were more able to articulate their own needs.

In addition, citizens needs to have the ability to co-create. In the literature this is formulated as *awareness to actually influence and a feeling of ownership* (Pestoff, 2012). This importance of awareness is also mentioned by Gebauer et al. (2010). They concluded that once customers of the Swiss railway-services had the feeling that they could actually participate and increase the quality of the services, this did not only resulted in a 'snow-balling' effect, but people also got a feeling that to some extent they are responsible for the quality of the railway services. We call this 'a feeling of ownership'.

A last important influential factor appears to be *social capital*. Social capital refers to 'features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam, 1995; p. 2). Social capital involves the number of alliances between individuals in a specific city or neighborhood, but also to a shared understanding of (public) interest and trust in the capabilities of other actors. Social capital may be considered a conditional breeding ground for co-creation see also (Andrews & Brewer, 2013; Uitermark, 2014; Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008). As such it can be assumed that the presence of social capital is required in order to create the awareness and willingness of citizens to co-create (Schafft & Brown, 2000).

The above mentioned factors may support or hamper the process of co-creation. To what extent these processes create beneficial *outcomes* is depending on the context in which these factors interplay. Therefore it is important to explore how these outcomes can determined. We come back to this in our next section.
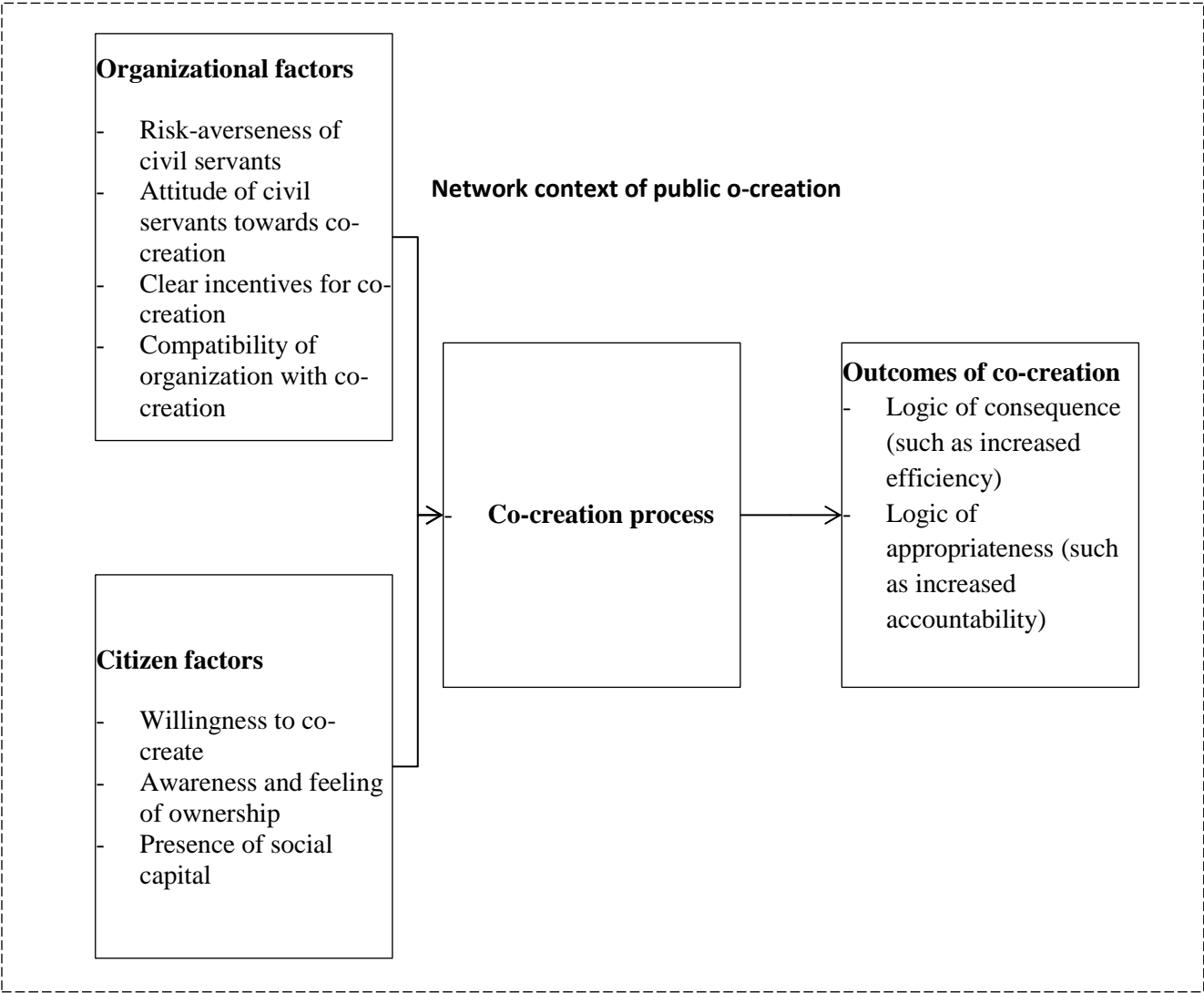
2.5   Outcomes of co-creation processes

In order to assess and evaluate the outcomes of co-creation process we can use the distinction made by March & Olsen (1989) between the logic of consequence and logic of appropriateness. The reason for this is that in the co-creation literature outcomes are often discussed in terms of what is the added value of co-creation (Alford, 2009; Stoker, 2006). If we would try to conceptualize this notion in a public sector context, the distinction between both logics could help us. The logic of consequence refers to the extent in which benefits are being realized refers to rational calculation and consideration of different options. As such beneficial extent is determined in concrete, tangible gains with a before mentioned concrete objective. The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, refers to the extent in which co-creation efforts fit within a specific context. Beneficial extent follows then from "identity-driven conceptions of appropriateness, more than conscious calculations of costs and benefits" (March & Olsen, 1989; p. 692-693). The latter also relates to the idea that innovation in the public sector can be seen as 'conspicious production' (Feller, Finnegan, & Nilsson, 2011), which

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implies that social innovation and co-creation have a meaning in itself; that the process itself instead of the outcomes is considered as being valuable for the legitimacy of the public sector.

Several authors have defined important values specific for both logics: To start with the logic of consequence, values related to this logic refer to the level of rational accomplishments of a specific intervention. Examples are the quantity of outputs, quality of outputs, effectiveness, efficiency and consumer satisfaction (Andrews, Boyne, & Walker, 2006; Boyne & Dahya, 2002; O'Flynn, 2007; Stoker, 2006). When it comes to the judgment whether public value creation is appropriate in a given context a number of authors refer to the value of accountability (Boyne & Walker, 2004; Moon, 2001; Smith, 2004; Van der Wal, De Graaf & Lasthuizen, 2008). In this accountability can be considered a clear assignment of responsibility (Hood, 1991). Furthermore, specific administrative values seems to be equity, which involves a more equal and fair position for involved stakeholders i.e. more fair distribution of public goods and servcies (Moon, 2001; O'Flynn, 2007) and responsiveness, involving the ability of public organizations to respond to societal demands (Boyne & Walker, 2004). In our research we examine to what extent the above mentioned values are being evaluated per involved stakeholder (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

Organizational factors

- Risk-averseness of civil servants
- Attitude of civil servants towards co-creation
- Clear incentives for co-creation
- Compatibility of organization with co-creation

Network context of public o-creation

Co-creation process

Outcomes of co-creation
- Logic of consequence (such as increased efficiency)
- Logic of appropriateness (such as increased accountability)

Citizen factors

- Willingness to co-create
- Awareness and feeling of ownership
- Presence of social capital

3   Research Methods

We conducted a comparative (qualitative) case-study. Two policy domains (social welfare and urban regeneration) have been selected for two reasons. First, in the welfare sector, because of a 'withdrawing' government, citizens are 'urged' to take initiatives and find alternatives for traditional public service delivery. Second, civil involvement within the urban regeneration sector is characterized by citizens who want to increase the livability within the neighborhood or city by infrastructural initiatives (e.g. playgrounds, parks and shared gardens). In doing so they need to collaborate with many different stakeholders with different interests and numerous administrative procedures. As such there seems to be a difference between these two sectors why people tend to co-create. Therefore, comparing these two policy domains may generate valuable insights about the influence of a policy domain on the co-creation process and the outcomes of the process. We expect that such a most dissimilar case-study design may teach us important lessons about the influence of social and policy context to co-creation processes.

In each domain an exemplary case for public co-creation is selected that is based on two criteria. First, in both cases it involves co-creation in which citizens are (at least) involved as either co-initiator and/or co-designer. Second, both initiatives are running for at least a year, so at least some outcomes are already produced. Our case-selection is more detailed described in Annex I (Van Hulst & S. van Zuydam, 2013).

Next, in order to refine our research results and strengthen our validity we consulted five experts in the field of social innovation and (public) co-creation (table 1).

There are a number of reasons why we opt for a qualitative case-study approach. In the first place we aim to understand the practice of co-creation within a specific policy and social context (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As such we aim to understand the *mechanism* of co-creation. With a qualitative case-study we are able to in-dept. both explore and analyze the different aspects of this mechanism (Yin, 2003). We assume that in order to understand why specific outcomes has occurred we must place them within a context of multiple actors and specific forms of co-creation. A comparative case-study gives us the possibility to extensively ask respondents to this context, how it influenced the process of co-creation and compare it to each other. As such our research aims to provide 'analytical generalizations' instead of 'statistical generalizations'. Based on an in-depth analysis of the involved stakeholders, their considerations about influential factors and how they experience the outcomes of public co-creation we can look for striking resemblances and differences. This may help us to draw

some plausible conclusions with regards to the mechanisms of co-creation and how these mechanisms influence possible outcomes (Yin, 2003).

Case introduction

In both domains an exemplary case of co-creation needs to be identified. Therefore within the welfare domain we selected *Starters4Communities* (S4C) in Amsterdam; a civil initiative originated in January 2013 by one social entrepreneur in the Eastern part of Amsterdam. In December 2013 the pilot phase was finalized. The essence of the idea is that (well-educated) starters offer support to civil initiatives which run into (administrative) trouble. These initiatives are aimed at enhancing community building (within and between different cultural groups), increase livability or social support. In S4C a large variety of civil initiatives are involved, for instance a cultural café (a place where visitors can get acquainted with cultural differences within the neighborhood), a chess-school for children from deprived neighborhoods and a furniture factory for juveniles without any start qualifications. These initiatives are all characterized by being initiated by inhabitants and being uplifted by the involvement of the well-educated starters.

Our second case is *Stadslab Leiden*; an initiative of two (social) entrepreneurs. As concerned inhabitants of the city of Leiden, they were frustrated with the image of Leiden as a dull and boring city. Therefore they initiated Stadslab (2008). Stadslab now functions as a 'broker' between citizens with innovative ideas, the city (council) of Leiden and a number of citizens who indicated that they want to contribute to the city. A large number of projects are being initiated by Stadslab. The most remarkable are the reconstruction of the Singelpark (a large park in Leiden where citizens, with the municipality, decide on the design and maintaining of the park), the 'Breestraat 2022' (a famous street in Leiden, which now serves conflicting purposes, such as being an important thoroughfare, containing a large number of shops, residency and having a number of monumental buildings) and a large number of smaller initiatives. These initiatives are all characterized by being initiated by citizens and are aimed at updating the city of Leiden.

In order to analyze our cases we conducted semi-closed interviews (8 for S4C and 7 for Stadslab) with involved stakeholders in both cases. We interviewed involved citizens (initiators and/or designers), involved public officials and involved professionals.

We conduct our case-studies along the topics described in section three and four. We present these topics schematically in table 1.

Category	Factor
Co-creation background	
The co-creation network	• The network of actors in which the co-creation initiative is being implemented (actors, resources and dependencies)
Reasons for co-creation	• Specific event(s) that triggered co-creation • Specific problems or challenges which needs to be solved by the co-creation process • Type of problems which needs to be opposed by the co-creation process (e.g. political/social/infrastructural)
Objectives to be achieved	• The goals the co-creation initiative should achieve
Influential factors to the co-creation process	
Influential factors on governmental/institutional side	• Administrative culture (tradition of civil involvement, convictions in relation to role in public service delivery) • Attitude of public officials (inviting to citizen participation) • Clear incentives for co-creation (the extent in which public officials are familiar why co-creation is important/what kind of beneficial effects co-creation might have) • Compatibility of public organizations (required ICT-structures, routines, training facilities) • Other factors, also related to non-public actors
Influential factors on citizen side	• Willingness of citizens (reasons why citizens consider co-creation as important e.g. salience, easy access, normative convictions) • Awareness of influence and ownership (to what extent citizens feel responsible for the public service) • Social capital (to what extent contribute the relationships with other citizens to the decision to co-create)
Outcomes of co-creation process	
Outcomes: Logic of consequence:	Logic of consequence: • Quantity of outputs → deliverance of concrete products • Quality of outputs → enhance of better service delivery than before the co-creation initiative • Formal effectiveness → are customer needs better addressed? • Efficiency → is public service delivery become cheaper? • Citizen satisfaction → are customers more satisfied with the new kind of service delivery?
Outcomes: Logic of appropriateness	• Accountability → has been clarified who is accountable for what part of the service? Is there a accountability protocol? • Equity → the extent in which co-creation has caused a more equal distribution of public services • Responsiveness → the extent in which the public service has become more adaptable and flexible to specific citizen needs • Fairness → the extent in which the co-creation has led to a more fair

	public service delivery
	• Trust → the extent in which trust in public services and public organization has increased (or decreased)
	Public participation → the extent in which the co-creation has led to more participation of citizens in the public service

Table 1: Analytical framework

4   Results

In this section we present the results of our case-studies. We start with a short introduction of both cases. After that we describe for both of them subsequently the context, influential factors and outcomes and we compare both cases per factor.

4.1   Co-creation background

The co-creation network

In both cases the network formed the core of the co-creation initiative. The S4C case uses the connections within the neighborhood on the one hand, in order to find proper initiatives which require some uplifting. On the other the required training and support is given by professionals who are also part of the network of the initiator of S4C. Depending on the initiative, professional (care) organizations are involved in order to make sure that safety conditions are being maintained and to bring in a professional standard. The municipality is in the S4C mainly involved as subsidizing party. Next to that a so-called 'participation broker' is being appointed in order to show initiatives the bureaucratic way to apply for subsidies. Furthermore, the broker connects initiatives to each other and/or to a policy objective. Also in the Stadslab case, the initiatives rely heavily on the social relations within the city of Leiden. The network of Stadslab is large and diverse, but it mostly involves citizens who act on their own expertise. Most of them are freelancers, who partly have paid assignments and partly contribute to Stadslab activities. Therefore in the Stadslab case a sharp distinction between inhabitants and professionals (who are sometimes partly paid by funding from Stadslab) is not possible, since they go hand in hand. Relations with the municipality of Leiden are also diverse. On the one hand Stadslab functions as a lobby organization aimed at influencing the political climate in Leiden. Therefore they speak directly to aldermen. On the other hand, in order to design and implement their activities they collaborate with a large number of public officials. These officials sometimes act as controller or 'gatekeeper' (when it comes to subsidies) and on the other hand as designing partner (usually to make sure that initiatives live up to standards such as safety and common good).

Presence or absence of specific events

In both cases, no specific event is presented which can be identified as the cause of the co-creation. Our respondents pointed out a number of challenges which might be opposed by the co-creation process. We come back to this later on. As such our cases do not reflect a triggering event as a condition for the occurrence of co-creation (Cobb & Elder, 1972), but rather the collision of a number of trends, resulting in a window of opportunity (Kingdon, 2003; Kingdon & Thurber, 1984).

Specific problems or challenges to be opposed by the co-creation process

Our respondents indicate from both cases that the initiative must confront a number of general challenges. For the S4C case this involves the cutting down of social funds, the economic crisis and the increased challenges for juveniles to find a job. As such the S4C initiative is aimed at opposing these trends. In the Stadslab case, respondents indicated that participation has become a magical term. Something you can't be against right now. Furthermore, specifically in Leiden there was a lot of creative and intellectual potential which is now unused. "*Leiden has become one of the most well-educated and prosperous cities of the Netherlands",* as one of the Stadslab members argued. As such Stadslab is aimed at making Leiden more 'fun' and 'less boring' and in the meanwhile, turning the feeling of 'defeatism' which characterized the citizens of Leiden.

Objectives to be achieved

When we look to the objectives to be achieved, in line with the literature we can see that S4C aims to achieve a number of goals which involves both more effectiveness and efficiency (Jakobsen, 2013; Molinas, 1998): First, they aim to improve the labor opportunities for (almost) graduated students, by building up valuable resume experience in civil initiatives. Second, to increase the (financial) sustainability of civil initiatives, by adding knowledge from the starters. Last, to gain much attention for the initiative that it can be implemented in other parts of the Netherlands. Next to these goals, the participation broker saw in S4C a possibility to increase the livability in one of the neighborhoods of Amsterdam. In the Stadslab case, however, the aims were to boost, canalize and generate a platform for civil initiative. As such, the purpose of Stadslab is to enhance citizen involvement (Anderson & Clary, 1987; Bifulco & Ladd, 2006).

4.2 Influential factors on the organizational side

In this section we present how and to what extent the earlier identified influential factors came across in our case study.

Risk-averse administrative culture

Our case-studies do not indicate that a *risk-averse* culture was influential to the co-creation process. Our respondents do not reflect about whether involved municipalities dared to co-create. But, they do reflect about the *administrative* culture. They described it as aimed at wielding al administrative and legal frameworks, effusively bureaucratic and fragmented. However, the influence of this administrative culture is plural. In the S4C case the administrative culture hampered sometimes the process, since it highly determined how and if subsidies were granted (we come back to this later on with the description of compatibility). In the Stadslab case it was explained that in a number of situations Stadslab acted as 'booster' or broker to push the political agenda, just because they were opposed to this bureaucratic culture. As such the administrative culture created on the one hand an opportunity for Stadslab to be engaged and on the other hand a reason for citizens to connect to each other. Sometimes against the administration.

Attitude of public officials

Our case-studies show that the attitude of public officials towards co-creation differs from person to person. One civil servants explained: "*there is a large part of more conservative public officials, who find it quite hard to collaborate with citizens. Next to that, civil servants do not always trust the competences of citizens".* So for a number of civil servants it is quite hard to accept the fact that their professionalism is partly taken over by citizens, as is shown by earlier research (Fuglsang, 2008; Gebauer et al., 2010). On the other hand, the initiator of S4C mentioned that the participation broker is very actively trying to connect networks to each other. However, it is questionable to what extent these attitude of public officials are also influential to the co-creation processes. As one of the members of Stadslab indicated: *"The state doesn't bother us that much, cause most of the things we do without them."* Our case-studies show that in line with the literature, attitudes of public officials are not always that inviting towards co-creation. However, whether they are also affect the progression of the co-creation process is highly depending on the type of initiative (e.g. in infrastructural projects more than in the organization of cultural activities) and the dependency relation between public organization and the initiative (e.g. a subsidy relation creates a stronger dependency relation between the citizens and the involved municipality).

Compatibility of public organizations

Our case analysis show that internal organizational procedures and facilities are not really adapted yet to co-creation. This is predominantly reflected in the procedures of granting subsidies. In the S4c case, the participation broker explained: "*Here in Amsterdam the bureaucracy has become useless. For instance we have a rule that it at least takes four weeks before the request is granted. The people from this target group very often don't have the financial capacity to advance this kind of money."* As

a consequence not only may this result in the hampering of civil initiatives, but also in feelings of jealousy and cheek phrases. Therefore it might also hamper collaboration between initiatives within the neighborhood. Furthermore, because of a highly fragmented organization, citizens get lost when they search for the administrative responsible in their initiative. "*There are so many departments, all responsible for something. You have department 'Green' which is responsible for the trees and plants. And you have department 'Grey' which is responsible for the buildings and stuff. If Grey does something that Green doesn't want, that means that Green will not do any favors for them. As a result you have absolutely no idea who you need to have for what.*" Again, we note that the influence of a lack of compatibility is primarily felt when there is a subsidy relation between the public organization and the civil initiative.

Presence of clear incentives and objectives for co-creation

The importance of having clear incentives has come across in two in our case-studies. First, in the Stadslab case, the municipality considers having clear incentives of the highest importance to participate. The municipality joins *projects* of Stadslab, rather than Stadslab as platform. Projects have concrete objectives which the municipality can underline or not. Second, in the S4C case the participation broker showed that he asked S4C whether they could contribute in a number of specific issues within specific neighborhoods: *"We have one of the biggest squares of the city in our neighborhood, but it is badly used as public space, I asked if S4C could do something for this square".* This shows that, although all interviewed civil servants welcome the enthusiasm of citizens, for them concrete incentives are very important to consider co-creation (Joshi & Moore, 2004; Van Dijck & Nieborg, 2009).

In our cases a number of influential factors came across, which were not mentioned in the literature on public co-creation.

Scale of the co-creation initiative

Co-creation initiatives rely on strong relations between people. However our case-studies show that these relations are often informal and based on the personal networks of involved stakeholders, rather than based on formal contracts. Therefore the scale of co-creation needs to be limited. In the Stadslab case, one of the members said: "*We are large enough to contain everything you need, but also small enough to know everyone*" and: "*Leiden is that small, that you easily have access to the responsible alderman.* This is also shown in the S4C case.

The presence of a physical locus to co-create

This relates to the preceding factor. People need to know each or have a physical locus where they are able to meet each other. This is already acknowledged in the literature on self-organization (Comfort, 1994). In the S4C case, community center the Meevaart (a community center in Amsterdam) facilitated such a physical locus and in the Stadslab case such a meeting point is being created, since the involved stakeholders increasingly recognize the importance of such a central meeting point.

The co-creation 'chain'

Our case-study confirms that in co-creation processes different stakeholders bring in their own specific expertise (Needham, 2008). However, rather than citizens who take over responsibilities of other (institutional) stakeholders, their activities take place *next* to the activities of professional organizations and governmental organizations. In the Stadslab case it has been stated that this collaboration, in which Stadslab act as 'booster' and the municipality with professional organization as implementer can have a strong stimulating effect on the co-creation process. In the S4C case this also came across. Citizens acted as designer and initiator, but professionals remained responsible for safety standards.

4.3   Influential factors on the citizen side

Willingness of citizens

The willingness of citizens determines to a large extent whether co-creation initiatives are successful. As suggested in the literature, also in our case-study this willingness is influenced by personal characteristics (Sundeen, 1988). In our case-study these characteristics involved primarily, level of income, level of education and often (creative) entrepreneurs. However, according to one of the professionals, when it comes to co-creation within the welfare domain, this willingness does not come from a normative motive to contribute (Wise et al., 2012), but because of the fact that a large group of people is increasingly forced to do volunteer work, since they are unemployed. As a result it is predominantly the lower class which is asked to participate and it is very questionable to what extent these people are capable to bare this responsibility. Our case-study show that citizens are willing to co-create, however the reasons why and which kind of citizens are willing to contribute seems to be different than suggested in the literature.

Awareness and feeling of ownership

When it comes to awareness of citizens to have actual influence, our examples of co-creation are two specific ways to increase this awareness. Especially in the Stadslab case, our respondents indicate

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that Stadslab functions as a platform to increase this awareness. Stadslab has gained a reputation of actually influencing the political agenda. Therefore, Stadslab increased the awareness of citizens that they can actually have influence on the public domain. In this, the co-creation initiative formed a platform to citizens with a feeling of ownership. However, we must note that this feeling of ownership is largely formed by a form of personal interest. As the participation broker explained: *"If it is property of the municipality then it doesn't belong to anyone. Then it is fun to demolish it. However, when it belongs to your mother or sister, then you keep it intact."* Furthermore, this feeling of ownership can have a geographical orientation (city or neighborhood), but stronger is a feeling of ownership about a certain expertise: *"It is not the borough or street what determines the feeling of ownership, but someone's specialism. That is also on what we approach our participants",* as a Stadslab member illustrated. We must note though, that this feeling of ownership can hamper the co-creation process as well. Both members of Stadslab and civil servants mentioned the occurrence of a battle about who is the owner of the Singelpark project (one of the major projects of Stadslab). From the perspective of the members, the municipality tries to take the idea away from Stadslab. So awareness of citizens to participate appears to be very important, but our cases show that it wasn't so much that this awareness influenced the establishment *of* these co-creation initiatives, but rather is being stimulated *by* the co-creation initiative. Ownership appears to be an important driver to participate, but it might occur as both a stimulating as hampering factor.

Social capital

Our cases confirm the importance of social capital as precondition for co-creation efforts. The initiator of S4C stresses that this is the fundament on which these 'bottom-up' initiatives are build on: *"You don't have to convince people for the need for an initiative, because this need is already there. It is because of social capital that these people can be approached."* In both cases the initiatives rely on the strength within local networks in the city or neighborhood. However, our case studies show that social capital very often is present within groups of comparable people, rather than between groups of people. As a civil servant explained: *"In Leiden it is very often the upper class for the upper class".* Attempts to bridge these different groups appears to be not always that successful. So social capital indeed functions as the fundament, for co-creation efforts (Andrews & Brewer, 2013; Putnam, 1995), but the image that occurs is that if it's there it can be used, but it is hard to manufacture.

Also on the citizen side a number of factors can be detected which were not mentioned in the literature on public co-creation

Reputation (brand) and compatibility of citizen organization

Our respondents indicate that both Stadslab and S4C has gained a lot of notoriety. This good reputation made that professional and governmental actors tended to pay more attention to them. *"Stadslab has become a phenomenon which stands for creative, thorough and constructive ideas"* as one of the civil servants stated. As a result, one of the members explained that, the aldermen and council members now wants to be associated with Stadslab, rather than that you have to fight for the attention of the municipality. In our S4C case something comparable can be said about the Meevaart (a community center which accommodates most activities of S4C), which also embodies a good reputation of initiating useful initiatives. Next to that, peculiar was that also the compatibility of the organization on the *citizen* side is mentioned as being highly influential. For instance, Stadslab has a database of 1000 people who indicated that they would like to contribute to the wellbeing of the city. Having this database (and the included profiles) makes it possible to easily connect people to ideas and to fight a proper match. Furthermore, civil servants indicate that if such a compatible organization is not being established it hampers the collaboration.

Informal status of co-creation initiative

The fact that civil initiatives are not constrained by regulations and administrative procedures (yet) makes that they can act rather independent. Neither does it have to cope with a number of conflicting interests. *"Stadslab is a loose entity……what they can do and we can't is repeatedly drop by every council member as some sort of a Jehovah witness, we can't do that".* Especially taken the 'booster' activities of Stadslab into consideration, this independent position acts as an important driver.

In this research we aimed to classify the outcomes of the co-creation processes in terms of values related to the logics of consequence and the logics of appropriateness. In this section we present the outcomes which can be derived from our case-studies.

Logic of consequence

Our respondents indicate that values attached to the logic of consequence are limitedly increased. In the S4C case both some *efficiency* as *effectiveness* gains are being gained. One professional stated that S4C is creating a multiplier effect. Minimal financial resources are required and it stimulated so many civil initiatives, plus it helps juveniles to get a job afterwards. Furthermore, the starters assume that in the long term it will become more efficient, since a starting fortune is required. In the Stadslab case the members of Stadslab assume that Stadslab is far more cheaper than traditional public services. This has two reasons: First, public organizations spend a lot of effort in creating social cohesion and social support for their initiative. Stadslab will act only if social support is already

present. Second, if an initiative shows to be unsuccessful, Stadslab will just quit it, instead of maintaining as long as possible. However, we must emphasize that the effectiveness of S4C is related (limited) to the kind of objectives that are being achieved. As one of the initiating inhabitants illustrated: *"We had a program from neighbors, for neighbors. We succeeded in the sense that citizens initiated something for other citizens."* In addition, one of the professionals stated that you cannot simply replace professionals by citizens. That would not improve the quality of the service. In the Stadslab case it was being stated that since Stadslab does not have a compatible organization yet, for the municipality effectiveness is being decreased. In addition, the extent in which *concrete products and services* are realized is questionable. Members of Stadslab mention a number of projects and products, but none of these products has replaced an existing public service. The same point was raised in the S4C case.

With regards to increased *satisfaction*, in the S4C case most respondents are unanimous in their evaluation. S4C is a success, in terms of civil initiatives which are taken a step further. This had a positive result both for the initiating inhabitants as for the neighborhood in general. As one of the starters indicated: *"People are happily surprised. At first they are, like, what are you doing here, but then they understand that you come to bring something, to listen to them. That's important."* Also one of the members of Stadslab stated that "*Leiden has become more fun".* One of the professionals mentioned that the feeling of 'defeatism' has turned and instead of complaining people take the initiative themselves.

Logic of appropriateness

When it comes to increased or decreased *accountability,* our respondents of the S4C case indicate that it simply was not much of an issues since most activities contained cultural and/or social activities. These kind of projects did not raise any accountability issues. In the Stadslab case, our respondents state that accountability has decreased in terms of standardized and formalized protocols. This relates to another value: *trust.* Trust as outcome of co-creation has different aspects. Both the professionals and the members of Stadslab explain that the relations are funded on *trust* rather than on formal accountability procedures: *"You work from a positive attitude without a span of control or punitive threat. There is no public scaffold if you screw up".* According to a civil servant this is simply one of the risks you have to take. *"Sometimes that is an issue, but that's simply part of the deal",* as she explained. This shows that in the case of Stadslab trust in civil initiatives is increased, at the cost of (formal accountability). However, trust in the municipality is not being increased. One of the members of Stadslab stressed that the municipality of Leiden is struggling to find a proper way to deal with initiatives like Stadslab. In addition one of the professionals stated that there was a form of collaboration with the municipality, but in retrospective it was more of a

competitive struggle to get the favor of the municipality counsel. In the S4C case our respondents reported quite negative about the municipal organization and how they relates to the S4C initiative. Therefore trust in the public organization is not being increased, by the S4C initiative.

With regards to *equity* and *fairness,* our respondents indicate that co-creation rather decreases than increases these values. The participation broker mentioned that only the people who find access to new rising networks benefit from co-creation. Subsequently, one of the professionals indicated that it creates a new kind of unfairness, since these initiatives lack formal collective labor agreements. As a result some people can only reimburse their travel costs, while others get paid for their activities. In addition one of the initiating inhabitants mentioned: "*What is fairness? Giving money back to neighborhood is fair, but what if only four aged white man receive it, because they know how the administration works? That's not really fair".* Next, in both cases we found empirical evidence that co-creation is restricted to a limited number of people: *The typical Stadslabber is an entrepreneur, outgoing and not much of a planner".* Another civil servant explains that Stadslab represents only a (top) part of the population of Leiden, while a very big part of the population is never reached by it. In the S4C case it is being shown that the initiative is aimed at connecting the higher educated to the initiating inhabitants in Amsterdam. So this involves again higher educated people on the one hand and on the other hand socially involved (and creative) inhabitants. In this we recognize the 'meritocratic effect' described by (Davis & Kenneth Ruddle, 2012; Eick, 2012).

Our cases suggest that with regards to *responsiveness* also multiple aspects can be observed: On the one hand you can say that since Stadslab and S4C both function as a platform for co-creation and civil initiative, responsiveness of *citizens* is being increased. In both cases an opportunity is presented for citizens to actually influence or contribute to a societal cause. On the other hand it questionable whether *public organizations* have become more responsive to societal challenges. Especially in the Stadslab case the need for close collaboration between Stadslab and the involved municipality is emphasized. If this collaboration is organized properly, then also the public organization becomes more responsive to societal challenges. However, our respondents all indicate that especially this collaborative relationship requires some improvements.

We conclude that the outcomes of co-creation in terms of the logic of consequence lie predominantly in the increased satisfaction of citizens. With regards to effectiveness and efficiency, we can see that primarily civil servants are critical in their judgment whether the co-creation has added value. This might be related to the (lack of) concrete products and objectives that are being accomplished. Yes, the co-creation initiatives does deliver a number of concrete products, but these are not necessarily in line with the expectations of public organizations.

With regards to the logic of appropriateness, we can conclude that the co-creation efforts have a decreasing effect on values as equity and fairness. Furthermore, the increase of trust in civil initiatives comes at the cost of decreased formal accountability and also responsiveness of public organizations, since this responsiveness is 'outsourced' to the civil initiatives.

5 Conclusions

We started this paper with posing the research questions:

1. *How can <u>the co-creation initiative</u> be described, referring to the involved actors, type of co-creation and objectives?*

2. *Which <u>factors influence</u> the development and process of co-creation?*

3. *What are the <u>outcomes</u> of co-creation and how can the outcomes be explained?*

In answering these research questions we conducted a comparative case-study to two exemplary examples of public co-creation within the Dutch welfare domain (Starters4Communities) and the urban regeneration domain (Stadslab Leiden).

With regards to our first research question, we can conclude that co-creation projects (by definition) rely on close collaboration between involved stakeholders. These stakeholders all bring in their specific knowledge and expertise. Our case-study show that these stakeholders often operate from different roles. Especially in the Stadslab case, the involved citizens are often professionals and/or freelancers who based on their expertise as professional participated. Also the involved public officials acted as controller and 'gatekeeper' on the one hand, but also had an important role in connecting initiatives act as a designing partner. This shows us that co-creation changes and challenges existing relations between involved stakeholders (Hartley, 2005; Osborne & Brown, 2011). Peculiar is that these co-creation are rather the result of a number of colliding trends, rather than the consequence of a specific event. In our cases objectives are formulated which relates to either enhanced effectiveness (uplifting civil initiatives, supporting juveniles getting a job) efficiency (making civil initiatives more financially sustainable) or to increase citizen involvement (offering a platform for initiatives).

In relation to our second research question, our case-studies indicate that factors on the citizen side were more influential than factors on the organizational side. The observed co-creation initiatives are funded on *existing* social capital within the neighborhood or city. As such a feeling of ownership, ability and willingness of citizens is greatly recognized by our respondents. However we must note that this willingness may not come from a normative conviction to wield your talents for a greater

cause (Wise et al., 2012), but because of necessities created by the current labor market. This emphasize on the citizen side can be explained by the fact that both co-creation initiatives are aimed at *entrepreneurship*. In this model a strong reliance of public organizations is avoided as much as possible. However, the factors on the organizational side do play a role in the co-creation process. This influence was mostly felt when there was a subsidy relation between the initiative and the involved government. But in such a situation, our case-studies indicate that the compatibility of public organizations needs to adapt (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012b; Joshi & Moore, 2004). However whether this will be adapted is very much relying on the attitudes of public officials and politicians.

With regards to our last research question, we can conclude that if we classify the outcomes of these co-creation processes in terms of values related to the logic of consequence and appropriateness, a nuanced perspective occurs. This is remarkable since all our respondents indicated that the co-creation effort can be considered as successful. Our case-studies show two explanations for this general conviction about the success of co-creation on the one hand and this more nuanced perspective on the other hand: In the first place this might be explained by what our different stakeholders consider as 'successful'. Our respondents point out that the success of their co-creation effort lies in the 'process gains', rather than in concrete outcomes. For instance, the members of Stadslab indicated that the success of Stadslab must be understood in terms of how they boosted and canalized the energy in the city. Next to that, both Stadslab and S4C has gained a very good reputation as being an influential and valuable civil initiative. In this we have empirical evidence that co-creation is considered a goal in itself (Voorberg et al. forthcoming) see also: (Anderson & Clary, 1987; Bifulco & Ladd, 2006). In the second place, this could also be related to the fact that civil initiative lack evaluative frameworks with strict indicators and specific objectives to be met. Our cases also show that the co-creation is aimed at enhancing rather general objectives and ambitions rather than achieve concrete objectives. As a result, given the political interest in civil initiatives, the outcomes may be displayed more colorful than they are in reality. In this we recognize that co-creation is a process of sense-making, a symbolic process to create normative integration between the central and dominant values and developments which are important in the environment of the organization and the values that are important in the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Therefore the answer whether co-creation is beneficial cannot be related to such a specific objective.

Our cases indicate that the added value of co-creation lies predominantly in outcomes related to the *process* of co-creation. This explains why earlier research is predominantly dedicated to this process of co-creation rather than whether it meets concrete objectives (Voorberg et al. forthcoming, see also: Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012b; Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012) As such our cases do not suggest to replace existing public services by co-creation efforts, but rather takes place next or

preceding to them, since they serve different purposes and have expertise for very different aspects of public service delivery. Our analysis show that co-creation initiatives can be considered as successful with regards to the canalization, focus and specification of civil initiatives and energy within the society. But in doing so a (direct) answer to challenges such as austerity, ageing or inequality in public service delivery is not presented.

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Appendix I: Line of reasoning from co-creation to Stadslab and Starters4Communities

1. Co-creation
2. Public co-creation
3. Public co-creation between citizens and public sector
4. Public co-creation between citizens and public sector in the West
5. Public co-creation between citizens and public sector in the Netherlands
6. Public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative and the public sector participates
7. The outcomes of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative and the public sector participates
8. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative and the public sector participates
9. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the public welfare domain
10. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the urban/rural domain
11. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the public welfare domain in modern times
12. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the urban/rural domain in modern times
13. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the urban/rural domain in modern times
14. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the welfare domain after 2005
15. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the urban/rural domain after 2005
16. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in the example of S4C after 2005
17. The extent in which outcomes are beneficial of public co-creation where citizens in the Netherlands take the initiative in Stadslab Leiden after 2005