Following the yellow brick road?
(Dis)enchantment with co-design, co-production and value co-creation in public services

Introduction

In their recent systematic review of co-production and co-creation in this journal, Voorberg and colleagues (2015) called co-creation a 'magic concept', to justify both its extraordinarily intuitive appeal and the ease with which it defies attempts to pin it down, define, describe, or explain it. Indeed, what can be more natural than the idea that services, and perhaps public services *par excellence*, are co-created by people inside the organisations charged with providing them in collaboration with service users (or with their representatives, as proposed very recently in this journal –see Eriksson 2019)? Public health relies not only on doctors giving out correct diagnoses but also on patients' willingness and ability to take the medicines prescribed; equally, public housing relies on tenants working with the housing officers on, for example, home maintenance. The normative assumption behind the magic nature of co-creation is that the outcome of (public) services co-created by users and professionals ought to be 'better services'. But are they, necessarily, or have we been 'enchanted' (Siebert et al. 2017) by their intuitive appeal? In this editorial, we call for constructive disenchantment with the magic that surrounds co-design, co-production and value co-creation in public services. This is appropriate since, as scholars, we attain knowledge through verification and proof, a distinguishing feature of the 'disenchantment of the world' according to Weber (Weber / Kalberg 2005), aiming for:

> '[…] an ever more wide-ranging understanding of the world's occurrences and events by reference to empirical observation, mechanical principles, and physical laws rather than to the magical…'
> (Weber 2017 / Kalberg 2005, p. 316)

Disenchantment relies on reason, rather than faith, in analysing and interpreting the world in which we live (George 2017). Yet the battle between reason and belief is far from being won by the former. Rather, recent history saw rationality being challenged as the status of science came under public scrutiny and re-enchantment became a counterveiling narrative throughout the world (Suddaby et al. 2017). So demystifying aspects of the 'co-' paradigm ought to be the start of a process, not the end of it. We ought to set new premises for (re-)enchantment.

The evidence pointing at the 'co-' paradigm being magical lays in its *broadness*, *normative attractiveness*, the *implication of consensus*, and *global marketability* (Pollitt & Hupe 2011, p. 643). As interest in citizen participation has increased in general, both with academics and practitioners, it should not come as a surprise that also 'co-creation' of public services, as a particular kind of citizen involvement, attracted significant academic interest over the last decade (Brandsen et al.forthcoming). Despite recent advancements in theorizing, empirical scope and methodology, not at least because of an increasingly coherent research community (Brandsen et al. forthcoming), some issues deserve further scholarly attention. A useful point of departure in such an endeavour is revealing the fissures in current normative conceptualisations of the paradigm, for example the potential negative effects of co-creation (e.g. Steen et al 2018), to increase our understanding of how co-creation affects public value. This will hopefully lead to a more nuanced, informed debate about collaborating with service users in the design, delivery and value creation in and through public services.

A first fissure, starting from Pollitt and Hupe's (2011) conditions for enchantment, is that the broadness of the 'co-' paradigm leads to significant conceptual fuzziness: what *is* value co-creation / co-production / co-design and what is it not? Authors' views differ and, in the attempt to get on the enchantment train about all things co-created, they include virtually everything under the 'co-' umbrella (Voorberg et al. 2015). Indeed the 'co-' concept is polysemic – it means different things to different people – yet this is largely unacknowledged, except in very few literature reviews (such as in Voorberg et al. (2015) and Brandsen and Honingh (2016). Secondly, and normatively, it is very appealing to advocate for user involvement in the creation of public services under the assumption that 'co-' necessarily leads to added value, hence it is superior to non 'co-' alternatives. But such general claim would not do justice to the increasing empirical evidence that challenges this assumption (for an

overview, see Steen et al. 2018). Thirdly, presenting co-creation as a consensual and marketable concept is denying that the phenomenon can only be understood correctly when observed in its particular context. In other words, we are prone to falling into the trap of believing in magical concepts, risking conceptual and empirical blindness. This point icomes close to our final one on global marketability which can be as much as a friend as a foe: on the one hand, there is very little empirical data from outside Western public-service contexts (although there are a few exceptions, see Brandsen et al. 2018 for some non-Western case studies of co-creation and co-production), which makes generalisation difficult. On the other hand, given the diversity of political systems (ranging from autocracies to parliamentary democracies and semi-direct democracies), one needs to be suspicious of any expectation of universal applicability of the 'co-' paradigm. Switzerland's referenda tradition may be inspiring for many policymakers but borrowing the tool without consideration to its applicability can lead to policy disasters such as Brexit. Following this macro-level example, attempting to co-opt citizens in the design of public services in countries where the public is not accustomed to genuine co-optation in decision-making in unlikely to produce the positive results modelled after Swiss and Scandinavian models. Equally, co-opting citizens in the design of services where there is little public understanding or interest in the service, or after experience of citizen engagement into a universal service people routinely use and therefore understand (e.g. transport or education).

We contend that co-creation is only as 'magical' as traditional Weberian PA and later New Public Management (NPM) once were: i.e. until scholars started to empirically investigate the phenomena and started to discover deficiencies. Shifts in management paradigms are a large part of the history of public sector reform scholarship. In a sense, the 'co-' paradigm is also considered as part of the remedy to ilnesses that contemporary democracies and public sectors (and their organizations) must deal with: declining trust levels, citizens' concerns about whether public services represent 'value for money', and public sector austerity.

This special issue on co-design, co-production and value co-creation in public services aims to highlight some avenues for 'demystifying' these concepts by highlighting opportunities to advance future research in the field. However, the intention behind this process is not to deplete this area of research of the magic which helped channel the efforts of so many colleagues into advancement of ideas

which can make a real difference to practice (e.g. Bianchi et al. 2017, Bovaird and Loeffler 2014, Bovaird and Loeffler 2017), but to pave avenues for re-enchantment (Suddaby et. al 2017). We start with a short conceptual discussion on the topic of this special issue: co-design, co-production and value co-creation of public services. We then introduce the state of the art in the literature unravelling issues which are still problematic. Against this backdrop, we introduce the papers in the special issue, pointing out their distinct contributions to the extant literature and, from that, teasing out building blocks to a future research agenda and, in effect, co-creating the path to re-enchantment with value co-creation. Finally, we draw this together under two themes: *'locus'* and *'focus'* of future research on co-design, co-production and value co-creation in public services.

Setting the scene: public services in pursuit of value

We argue that public service providers concern themselves not so much with the delivery of public goods (e.g. water, university degrees, medicines) but with the provision of public value. There are two key points in this assertion: first, that services are inherently different from goods in that production and consumption occur simultaneously (e.g. Osborne 2018) but both goods and services are resources which users integrate into their value creation process (Trischler and Charles 2019); secondly, that public value is different from the concept of economic, or private value (Bovaird and Loeffler 2012), more often implied in connection with the concept of 'value'.

Public value (Moore 1995) refers to public managers seeking to find ways of expressing and solving the collective needs and aspirations of citizens (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009). Services delivering public value need to create something valuable, to have legitimacy, be politically sustainable, and to be feasible (therefore not draining public resources) according to Moore. Public value can also include public goods (Alford and O'Flynn, 2009) – if public goods are outputs of products and services produced by public organisations; public value thus encompasses not only outputs but also outcomes.

Public value is often referred to in opposition to its 'private' counterpart. Moore (1995) and, later, O'Flynn (2007) argue that the creation of public value is the central activity of public managers,

just as the creation of private value is at the core of private sector managers' actions. Hefetz and Warner (2004) also note that, unlike their private sector counterparts, public managers must balance technical and political concerns to achieve public value. These are usually more complex than those linked to corporate sector stakeholder management, due to an electorate's inherent diversity of interests. Both public and private sector organisations are vehicles for public value delivery through public services, but sometimes this pursuit is mixed with that for value for the individual consumers. Indeed, different public-private value patterns emerge from the increasingly diverse organisational configurations implicated in the design and delivery of public services: public organizations (e.g. for primary and secondary education in most countries), public sector partnerships (e.g. for child protection services in the UK), hybrid organisations (e.g. for public utilities everywhere), charities (e.g. for welfare services in USA) and private contractors (e.g. sometimes exclusively private provision in services like elderly care and transport, but also alongside public sector providers in universal services like health and education).

One source of conceptual clarity in the mapping of this organisational diversity in public services comes from the field of services marketing. For example, Laing (2003) puts forward a spectrum of public services ranging from those which have more benefits for society than for individual consumers (e.g. taxation and other compulsory services) to those with more benefits for individuals than for society (e.g. public housing and other welfare and means-tested services).

Social Benefits Dominant			**Private Benefits Dominant**	
Criminal Justice	Customs & Revenue	Education/Health Care	Public Transport	Public Housing
Professional Judgement Dominant			**Consumer Judgement Dominant**	

Figure 1: Laing's (2003) service spectrum

Laing's spectrum has been utilised in recent research (Dudau et al. 2018) to highlight that, on the public service blueprint's 'line of visibility' (Radnor et al. 2014), there is one significant type of interaction which ought to be important to the 'co-' paradigm: the interaction between front line public sector employees (often professionals with various levels of professionalism –see for example Gleeson and Knights 2006, Noordegraaf 2015) and service users (referred to as citizens, customers, or service users –McLaughlin 2004). These two key actors pull services in opposite directions: public and private value, respectively, and there may well be a tension between the two. Indeed, professionals have been educated and socialised to contribute to public value through evidence-based practice in relation to the public's best interest even when it may not be in any individual client's (e.g. Saks 1995, Evetts 2006). For example, sentences given through the criminal justice service have traditionally had the interest of the many at heart, more than that of those immediately affected (the victim or the perpetrator). Therefore, the outcome is normally a decision with societal implications more than with immediate consequences to the victim. Sometimes, a 'just' outcome may not 'feel' just to the victim (or the perpetrator for that matter). On the other side of the spectrum, public housing serves individuals more than societies. There are elements of both public and private value being pursued through services like public housing and transport, but the value accrued (or not) at an individual level (e.g. university degrees, reliable trains, late or unreliable bus services; unsafe, overcrowded or unhygienic living conditions in public housing) is often more powerful in constructing the rhetoric around service success or failure. Similar private value narratives are less likely to bring about change in services on the left side of the services, spectrum (e.g. criminal justice or taxation).

However, not everyone subscribes to this, arguably dyadic, perspective of services (e.g. Trischler and Charles 2019). Newer conceptualisations of organisational configurations implicated in the delivery of public services are Trischler's and Charles's (2019) public service ecosystems, following Vargo and Lusch's (2016) service ecosystems, and Hodgkinson's public service network framework (Hodgkinson et al. 2017). Both go beyond service users and service providers as essential co-creators of services and, instead,speak of networks of actors interacting in wider policy ecosystems, in recognition of the dynamic and diverse nature of contemporary public services. From such a systems' perspective, public services are conceptualised less linearly than Laing (2003) - more like partially

overlapping circles of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, service users and front-line service professionals, and interacting dynamically as they integrate resources to gain new resources (e.g. Osborne et al. 2013, Verley et al. 2017). Within this complex configuration of services being co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered, we contend that there are still specific differences between public value dominant services (where professional judgement is paramount) and private value dominant ones (where the knowledge asymmetry between professional judgement and that of other stakeholders is minimal). The 'co-' paradigm is compatible with both the linear and the system perspectives of public services and of public service management, virtue of its broadness as a magic offering.

Value co-creation, co-design and co-production: the magic offering

The three key concepts of the 'co-' paradigm entered our discipline in subsequent waves, partially overlapping, and some more long-lasting than others, but each with key characteristics reflective of prevalent thinking around public services at the time.

TABLE 1: Waves of service-based thinking in public services and what they mean for the 'co-' paradigm

Period	Label	Key characteristics	What it means for the 'co-' paradigm
First Wave	Civic participation (Public services as public goods)	Involving the public in urban renewal etc. Influence of product-dominant logic	Co-production Co-creation of services
Second Wave	Public-service dominant logic (Public services inherently different than goods)	Engagement with public service users – inside the organization to outside Use of tools and techniques (e.g. lean)	Value co-creation (organisations as judges) Co-design (organisation led)
Third Wave	Public service logic (Focus on user and community engagement such as co-design, co-innovation)	Focus on client/user groups' involvement in their own services Outside-in thinking Engagement in co-governance	Value co-creation (individuals as ultimate judges) Co-design (not necessarily organisation led)

Fourth Wave	Public service value eco-system (Focus on stakeholders co-creating value)	Moving beyond co-production as an action and towards co-design, and co-innovation of services	Value co-creation (no one judge)

Co-production

Co-production is the more researched of the three elements of the 'co' paradigm investigated in this special issue. Defining the concept is certainly important, and yet definitive statements on co-production and co-creation (with which co-production is sometimes equated) are relatively sparse. In part, this may be due to the evolving nature of the co-paradigm as well as our evolving understanding of it. Certainly, several attempts to bound co-production as a concept within public services and beyond have been made (see, for example Brandsen & Honingh, 2018; Alford, 2016; Bovaird and Löffler, 2012a, b; Brandsen and Honingh, 2016; Brandsen et al., 2012; Brudney and England, 1983; Laing, 2003; Ostrom, 1996; Parks et al., 1981; Verschuere et al., 2012). It would seem that there are as many definitions as there are articles and books about co-production. We do not seek here to pronounce on these definitions, but what different definitions have in common is that (a) they constitute a part of the production process of services, (b) they refer to collaboration between professional service providers and citizens/users, and that (c) active input by citizens is needed to shape the service (Brandsen & Honingh 2018, p.11). The normative part in some of the definitions is that co-production or co-creation would lead to better value, e.g. in the sense of better quality or larger quantity of public services (Parks et al. 1981).

Despite some recent attempts to bring some coherence in the knowledge about service co-creation and co-production (e.g. Brandsen et al 2018), there is still need for more empirical evidence to show us how and why co-creation works, and the theoretical underpinnings of the co-paradigm are still somewhat underdeveloped. More specifically, we need more systematic research investigating the relationship between service co-creation and (public) value creation. Empirical evidence about the potential positive and negative effects of co-creation, in terms of individual, organizational and societal value, should give us a more nuanced understanding of the co-paradigm and its practical implications for public administration. We contend that this lack of systematic knowledge represents a stage in our

enchantment (Jenkins, 2000; Siebert et al., 2017) with the co-paradigm, and at the same time an impetus for disenchantment (Weber 1917 / 2005).

Co-design

The second concept in the 'co' paradigm magic offering is the 'co-design' notion. This has been identified by Voorberg and colleagues (2014) as the first step towards co-production as well as what makes co-production sometimes be referred to as 'co-creation'. Public service design has always been an integral part of policy making but has not always been truly collaborative in nature. It started by being more top-down, expertise and evidence based, but, increasingly, in some public services, co-design has slowly become the norm. Co-opting the public into the design of public policies and, then, of public services, was seen to be not only democratically sound (Fraser 2005), but also the only way in which service designers can maximise value promise to users in the absence of knowing what value to create and who to create it for (Dorst 2011). The move towards co-design was of course facilitated by a social turn (Chen et al. 2016) towards crowd-sourcing solutions to social problems, as part of a wider decrease of trust in technical and professional expertise, traditionally the source of evidence for policy and service design. Indeed, the rule of 'rationality' in policy making and service design is increasingly replaced, or at best augmented, by the values of empathy and curiosity (Torjman 2012). This is entailed in the newer co-design practices which are essentially about 'crafting new solutions *with* people, not just *for* them' (Carstensen and Bason 2012). To the extent to which we, as a society, value the principles of transparency and inclusion (Relly and Sabharwal 2009), co-opting citizens through public service co-design can only be appealing, albeit at a normative level.

Value co-creation

What seems to bring both the co-production and co-design concepts together is the notion of value co-creation –arguably the aim of any co-design and co-production initiatives. This is the third of our 'co' paradigm notion and it came into public management research packaged within distinct assumptions from the area of services marketing. There are both opportunities and threats emerging from this grafting of marketing concepts into public management. On the one hand, there is the opportunity of

incorporating tried and tested research paradigms (product dominant logic, service dominant logic, service logic, consumer-dominant logic, service ecosystems –see Trischler and Charles 2019, as well as Petrescu's paper in this special issue for a comprehensive overview) which may explain public service management processes better than the modes of governance we have been accustomed to use for theoretical structure. This is because public services are increasingly provided by a plethora of organisations, not all public (in fact very few public, for services on the right side of Laing's (2003) spectrum). The danger, however, comes from leaving public value behind, as none of these paradigms consider the difference between public and private value –unsurprisingly, they focus on the latter whereas the former –still- has a pivotal role in understanding the public sector and the provision, consumption and leadership in public services (Prebble 2016, Crosby and Bryson 2018, Hartley et al. 2019). We contend that, on balance, the value co-creation paradigms are more beneficial than damaging to us at this point in the field's development. But they need to be contextualised to fit public service environments. This is due to the distinctive nature of public services[i]: consumer return is a sign of failure rather than service quality, consumers do not often have an exit option (e.g. change water providers in some countries where the provider is publicly owned and has monopoly over provision of that service), there is such a thing as 'coerced' consumers (e.g. prisons), and finally, service providers are accountable to far more stakeholders than just the service users (Osborne 2018).

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The waves (table 1) suggest a teleological assumption that public service design and delivery follow a service, rather than a goods dominant logic, and that our understanding of public services follows service-based thinking from other disciplines, such as service operations and services marketing. If the first two 'waves' are dominated by operations management contributions aiming to conceptualise what organisations do to deliver excellent services, the latter two follow a marketing approach which places service users at the heart of service design, firmly establishing the 'co-' paradigm in public service thinking.

Therefore it is unsurprising that our thinking around value co-creation in public services followed a similar trajectory as services marketing: marking a shift in understanding services as

fundamentally distinct from products, we went from product-dominant to public service-dominant logic (PSDL –see Osborne et al. 2013) and then to public service logic (SL –see Osborne 2018) in public service management. While public service logic (PSL) was only recently formulated (Osborne 2018), the theory is rooted in the service-logic (SL) perspective developed some decade earlier (Grönroos, 2006). Chronologically, the service logic (SL) extended 'service-dominant logic' (SDL) (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), only to then get incorporated into a more holistic perspective of SDL which is suitable to both actor-to-actor and ecosystem service lenses (Vargo and Lusch 2016, Trischler and Charles 2019), and was further extended by consumer-dominant logic (CDL) (Heinonen *et al.*, 2010), also incorporated into the newer SDL outlook. SDL has its equivalent in the public-service dominant logic (PSDL) in the public sector and no extension of the CDL framework is found in the public sector management literature as yet, but despite the newer SDL perspective of Vargo and Lusch (2016) not seeing a suitable translation into the public service literature, there are signs of progress towards public service value ecosystems (with which Lember and colleagues, as well as Petrescu, engage in this issue). There seems to be a trajectory of thought and inevitability of progress modelled on the development of service-based co-thinking in services marketing (again, Petrescu's paper in this special issue provides more guidance into this field, but also research recerch by Trischler and Charles (2019)) –perhaps another consequence of the 'magic' surrounding the 'co-' paradigm.

Arguably, however, this trajectory of thought in public service management research may make some public management scholars uneasy about the declining role of organisations in the co-creation of value. This is further strengthened by the PSL PSL framework (Osborne 2018) which sets itself apart from PSDL in that, where PSDL concerned itself with value co-production at the level of service provision, hence instigated and controlled by organizations, within PSL, value is seen to be co-created, not co-produced, with individual service consumers. Co-creation implies dynamism and uncertainty about the value consumers derive from the 'service promise' offered by service providers. This is, in essence, a value proposition which never actualises if the consumer does not make use of the service ('value in-use') and if that use does not interact well with societal and individual context ('value in-context) (Osborne 2018). Therefore public services are interpreted and made sense of by individual consumers by a process of interpretation of the consumption experience through the lens of consumers'

context or previous experience (Alford 2016). The common denominator for both perspectives, seems to be that **the unit of analysis is at the interface of service provision and service consumption regardless of who the ultimate judges of value are –organisations, for PSDL followers, service consumers for PSL scholars (e.g. Osborne 2018) or stakeholders (for a post-PSL paradigm as well as for modified SDL perspectives). This is the first important building block for our research agenda**, and one which all the authors in this special issue adopted, more or less explicitly, in their arguments, as the overview in the next section shows.

Papers in this issue

The papers in this issue cover a great variety of public services, of methods and of public service management paradigms. Service cases in this issue range from waste management, public health, environmental education, public safety (Trischler and colleagues) tax administration, public safety, environmental services (Kang and Ryzin, as well as Alonso and colleagues, for environmental services), specialist health services (Hardyman and colleagues), disability services (Best and colleagues), youth services and elderly care (Lember et al.). They are an insightful collection of empirical settings, as the networks of actors involved in each of these services overlap at least partiall, in a manner which reminds of Hodgkinson's public service network framework (Hodgkinson et al. 2017). They also cover both professional judgement dominant / client judgement weak services (e.g. tax administration, public safety) and professional judgement weak / consumer judgement dominant ones (e.g. disability, youth and elderly care). Unsurprisingly, the authors in this issue placed more attention to the latter category – perhaps in recognition of the fact that there more opportunities to co-produce, hence more opportunities for value co-creation (as opposed to 'creation') in services with higher propensity for private value. **The second building block to this special issue's research agenda is that the 'co' paradigm is likely to apply to some services (e.g. private value dominant services) better than to others.**

As far as methodologies go, co-design, co-production and value co-creation research has been predominantly theoretical and qualitative in nature, with a very few number of quantitative and

experimental studies readdressing the balance between inductive and deductive approaches to studying this field in recent years (e.g. Trischler et al. 2018; van Eijk et al. 2017; Jakobsen 2013). This special issue offers slightly more diverse methodological approaches than has characterised our field to date. Theoretical and case study approaches are still present, in Lember's and Petrescu's work (for theoretical) and Trischler's, Best's and Hardyman's teams (for case studies), as the field finds itself in full developmental swing, so those approaches are still highly suitable. But the quantitative approaches taken by Alonso and colleagues, and by Kang and Ryzin, are encouraging signals that we are ready to move the debates forward past conceptual explorations. Experiments like Kang's and Ryzin's, in particular, are useful in putting our assumptions to the test –due to long periods of enchantment with the co-revolution in public services, some of our assumptions about their value (such as that according to which they enhance trust in government by essentially giving the public the chance to play an active role should they wish to) to governments, and to society at large may be untrue. **We therefore call behaviourist scholars to contribute to the disenchantment agenda by revealing causal links of relationships we have come to theorise so much that we have taken for granted. This is our third building block in our research agenda.**

The collection of papers in this issue starts with Trischler and colleagues' (2019) paper on co-design. This is appropriate given that co-design is the first step to value co-creation, preceding co-implementation and co-evaluation of value. In their paper, the authors apply a co-design framework from services marketing to six public service design projects, to shed light onto conditions for successful co-design, particularly in relation to recruiting and sensitising participating service users. This is a very important issue to consider as the extraordinary diversity of public services translates into a diversity of user groups, each with their own needs. Co-design and other co-optation initiatives ought to differentiate between service users in public services and manage their involvement accordingly.

If we follow Voorberg's (Voorberg et al. 2015) lamentation that co-creation is overly-focused on design and that there is a need to draw on the co-production literature to understand the implementation of value co-creation, this is what the following three papers in this special issue (Alonso et al. 2019, Kang and Ryzin 2019 and Lember et al. 2019) do in this special issue. Reporting on quantitative cross-sectional findings, Alonso and colleagues (2019) put forward several co-production

antecedents which could help us gain a nuanced understanding of when co-production is meaningful – in which services, with which clients. This important point contributes directly to our research agenda's second building block, based on the assumption that co-production, co-design and the value co-creation paradigms do not apply to all services indiscriminately.

Then, Kang and Ryzin reflect on coproduction consequences in terms of citizens' trust in government. His paper reports on the results of an experiment which revealed little or no causal effect of coproduction on trust. This is of course surprising given the assumption suggesting precisely the opposite effect: that co-production would enhance trust in government (for an overview on co-production and trust, see Fledderus 2018). Kang and Ryzin provide us with one of the few experimental studies investigating outcomes of co-production whichis invaluable to the process of constructive disenchantment which we call for in this journal issue. We need to understand the aims to which we advocate for co-production and, often, only experimental and longitudinal research designs can offer the clarity we need to distinguish between expectations when embarking onto co-production and actual effects of such initiatives.

Finally, Lember and colleagues reflect on a particular implementation method for coproduction: through technology. The author rightfully points out the dangers of conceptual fuzziness and tech-optimism in the use of technology in public service co-production and value co-creation. On the basis of three cases of technology use to enhance co-production, the authors put forward the proposition that technology can bypass meaningful interaction between service providers and service users. This, too, contributes to gaining a more realistic perspective on co-production –constituting **our fourth and fifth research agenda building blocks, respectively: the need to explore value destruction and co-destruction through public services, and the need to investigate the role of technology and other work-place innovations in public service value co-creation.**

Momentum is rising, indeed, through this special issue's papers thus far, towards addressing the notion of 'value' (see Figure 2). We have come a long way in considering that value is accruing at service level, at the interface between service providers and service users (through the PSDL framework) and, more recently, through the PSL paradigm, accrued entirely at service user level. The last three papers in this special issue help us understand this paradigm in action as well as open the way

to future research pathways towards a post-public service logic paradigm. To start with, Hardyman and colleagues apply SDL to a public service context to explore what value means for users of specialist cancer care services. Antecedents and contingency factors for value creation in this service area are identified, and distinctive variations of the PSDL in healthcare contexts.

Then, Best and colleagues move the discussion from direct users of services to stakeholders, extending the idea that the ultimate judges of 'value' are the users themselves and amplifying the role of the stakeholders –not necessarily individuals but organisations, as well. This resonates well with PSL with its focus on value creation / realisation rather than the delivery of it through co-production.

Finally, Petrescu's theoretical paper (2019) on value co-creation takes us back to where it all started for PSDL and PSL: services marketing. The contribution to the paper to our re-enchantment agenda is that, through cross-fertilisation with the service ecosystems framework in a technology-based context, it paves the way to realistic future developments in public service research: one of consumer-dominant logic of value co-creation through crowd-sourcing (rather than consumption of services delivered by organisations) and one of individuals and organisations forming service ecosystems. This direction merges with those put forward by Hardyman and Best (see Figure 2) and forms **our sixth and final research agenda building block: to investigate the utility and applicability of public service ecosystems to value co-creation theory and practice.**

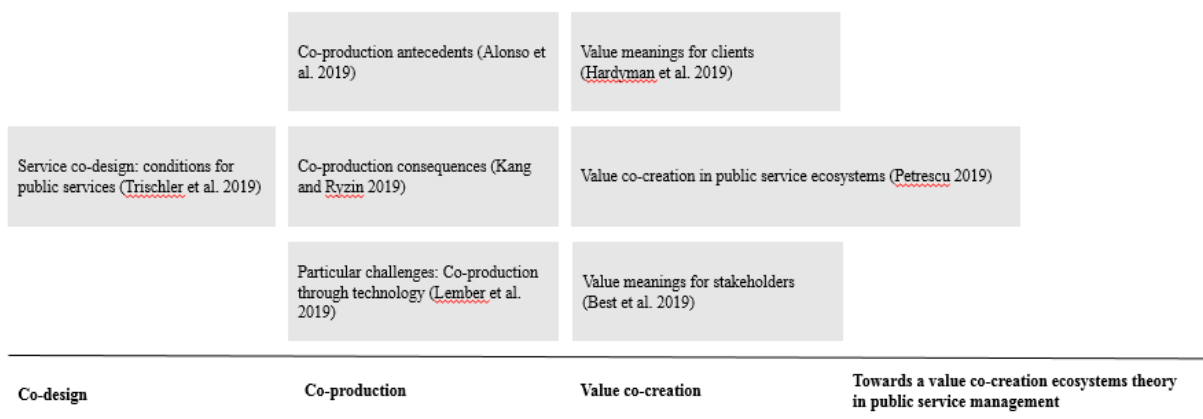| Co-design	Co-production	Value co-creation	Towards a value co-creation ecosystems theory in public service management
	Co-production antecedents (Alonso et al. 2019)	Value meanings for clients (Hardyman et al. 2019)	
Service co-design: conditions for public services (Trischler et al. 2019)	Co-production consequences (Kang and Ryzin 2019)	Value co-creation in public service ecosystems (Petrescu 2019)	
	Particular challenges: Co-production through technology (Lember et al. 2019)	Value meanings for stakeholders (Best et al. 2019)	

Figure 2: The papers in this issue moving knowledge towards a new paradigm in public service management

Petrescu's is a viable direction, as shown by service marketing in private sector settings, but also by very recent public service management research (e.g. Hodgkinson et al. 2017), as well as shown by policy and practice developments, such as the Big Society in the UK. The latter was abandoned due to political pressures (e.g. Mason and Moran 2018) but it is nevertheless suggestive of direction of thought in public service governance modes which went from serendipitous (and often philanthropic) public service provision before the 20th century, through Weberian public administration with central planning and provision of services after WW2, through New Public Management and public and private sector provision of public services, to New Public Governance with its public, private and third sector public service provision (Hodgkinson and Hughes 2014). The 'Big Society' approach came short of a service provision paradigm in the public sector partly due to the difficulty to design for grass-roots initiatives for service provision. But it does not annul its applicability and, as the value creation ecosystem idea develops, it may materialise in a slightly more sophisticated political programme.

While Figure 2 suggests a linear trajectory for this field, one which moves further and further away from co-design, our claim is slightly more nuanced. While we contend that co-design as a stand-alone practice and concept may have lost some ground to both co-production and value co-creation in public service management research, we argue that it can, nevertheless, be an integral part of these processes. In other words, the new paradign of public service management, of value creation ecosystems, is not an entirely new idea developing alongside, or ahead, co-design, co-production and value co-creation, but, rather, pulling them all forward together.

Towards constructive disenchantment: a realistic research agenda

The previous section has described the current state of scholarship on the 'co-' paradigm. This is characterized by a move towards an emphasis on 'co-creation' of value, the latter with its own dynamics: from organisations co-creating service value, to individuals, to not one party but rather ecosystems. This implicitly suggests a conceptual and practical broadening. Whilst we broadly welcome this as a move towards a more distinctive landscape of services theory (co-production was

used simultaneously as a superordinate or umbrella term, as well as a hyponym or a label for a specific mode), a major challenge to our understanding of co-creation is the very conceptual breadth this term now suggests.

This is coupled with two primary schisms in the extant literature: first,the disagreement as to where the *locus* of value can be found: does value accrue solely to the recipient of the service (be they client, user, customer, citizen etc.) or is value more widely dispersed? Secondly, the view that if everything is co-created, then the idea is meaningless versus the view that co-creation is essential to improved services - a matter of the *focus*. We will address these two dividing lines, highlighting research directions as appropriate.

Locus

We argue that one important point of debate when it comes to value creation or co-creation in public services stems from the heterogeneity of the concept of value. It is multi-faceted and arguably accrues at different points: individual value for the co-producer in terms of personal or career development or wellbeing, organizational value for the institution, more diffused value for other beneficiaries beyond the co-producing individual, and society in general. We attempt to synthesise these points in the table 2:

Table 2: Where does value accrue?

Who primarily benefits ➡	Individual	Community	Organization	Society
Who primarily participates ⬇				
Individual	Rational self-interest	Public contribution 'giving back'	Co-production as resource shifting	Highly altruistic volunteering
Community	Volunteering as self-development	'Good Samaritan' behaviours around self-interest	Volunteering as resource provision	Community-based volunteering
Organization	Traditional service delivery, private value (direct value)	Public value	Managerial self-interest	Wider public value 'deep value', 'diffused value'
Society	It is more difficult to conceive of value delivered by a society that is not directly delivered by one of the other three groups. Society, therefore, is a net receiver of value in our conceptualization.			

This classification comes close to Bovaird's and Löffler's claims (2012b) around value added through co-production, which they coin as a shift from public services *for* the public towards public services *by* the public. They put forward several dimensions, ranging from individual user value, over value to wider groups (family, friends etc.), social value (social cohesion), environmental value (sustainability of policies), to political value (support to the democratic processes). Taking these points further, we argue that user value and value to close family and friends come under 'value to individual', social value, under 'value to community', and political and environmental value, under 'value to society'. As public management scholars, however, we ought to include organisations and services in our typology (as the most common units of analysis in our field) if we are to push forward our understanding of value co-creation in the public sector.

Focus

Now that we have defined the locus of future research directions on 'co-' paradigm, we need to agree on its focus. There is little doubt that the 'co' paradigm enchanted us to the point of embracing teleological and normative assumptions about the universal usefulness and applicability of the paradigm to all service contexts, in all countries. One contributing factor is the relatively shallow set of empirical studies. While many of these have made interesting observations and contributions, additional theorizing or generalized conclusions have not been achieved, perhaps owing to the highly contingent nature of public service delivery.

Our building blocks to a re-enchantment research agenda centre around the following research 'focus' for future research on co-design, co-production and value co-creation in public services:

> *Research direction 1:* We need to get back to the basics and investigate what happens at the interface between front line professionals (or employees, or street-level bureaucrats), clients (or citizens, for services with large non-user groups) and key service stakeholders. To what extent the identities of those in interaction shape service co-design, co-production and value co-creation?

> *Research direction 2:* The assumption that the 'co' paradigm is not universally applicable to all public services seems more realistic than that of ubiquity. Therefore, a contingent application of the paradigm (perhaps on public / private value dominance, on professional / client power or knowledge base or even on administrative culture / system) seems appropriate.

Research direction 3: The normative view of the 'co' paradigm, coupled with the dominance of theoretical and case study-based research in the field, led us to take antecedents and consequences of effective co-design, co-production and value co-creation for granted. There is a need for behavioural public administration scholars to unravel significant causal relationships impacting service users' behaviour.

Research direction 4: The normative nature of the 'co-' paradigm will also be challenged by investigations of value co-destruction as well as unsuccessful cases of co-production and co-design need investigating as learning opportunities and real impetuous for knowledge enhancement.

Research direction 5: The paradigm seems well suited to the analysis of technology and other work place innovations in public services. More research should be channelled into the value of technological innovation to service co-design and co-production.

Research direction 6: We need to investigate the utility and applicability of value co-creation theories to public service ecosystems, hence the prospect for a value creation ecosystems theory.

Conclusion: towards a re-enchantment with the co- paradigm

Through the rapid development of the public service management field in the past decade, it has become apparent that the notion of value co-creation (Alford 2009) is key to our understanding of public services. This is negotiated and adjusted through interaction between the multiple identities (e.g. citizen, service user, customer, commissioner – see Alford 2002, Thomas 2012) and relationships invoked in co-design, co-production, co-innovation, and the co-evaluation of public services. This special issue aimed to take forward the emerging research on the relationship between different modalities of co-creation of value in public services.

The special issue came at an interesting time, indeed a forkroad in this field, where stock taking is important if we are to move forward. On the one hand, we have reached an impasse caused, ironically, by the extraordinary intuitive appeal of what we have called the

'co-' paradigm. We captured this idea in our disenchantment thesis: the need to break down the magic into concrete research directions which are less normative and all inclusive as the 'co-' paradigm became over the years. On the other hand, we have reached what appears to be a consensus, or at least significant agreement that the way forward in this are of research, at a macro-level, is that of a systems' view of public services, one where value is co-created between stakeholders and where there is little or no 'objective' measure of value. Thus, marketing (Petrescu, in this issue), public management (Lember et al., in this issue) and operations management (Hodgkinson et al. 2017) scholars independently have started embracing this systems' view of both services and value created through services. Their implicit agreement on this conceptual lenses is very encouraging for the re-enchantment prospects of the 'co-' paradigm. At the same time, however, these theoretical developments pose obvious challenges to scholars of performance and evaluation studies, and undoubtedly, even more challenges to practitioners in charge of planning, measuring and evaluating organisational performance. There is considerable 'translation' ground to be covered converting these ideas into workable practice with which public managers could engage now and in the future.

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[i] While the view that public services are different in nature than services in the private sector is inevitably dominant in public management and public administration research, it is certainly not unanimous. In their recent article, Trischler and Charles (2019) argued precisely the opposite.