

International Workshop

'To be inclusive, you need more voices'¹

Making sense(s) of “Co-Production”

**Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research –
UFZ Leipzig/ Germany
June 17-19th 2015**

Venue: Alte Schlosserei
Kurt-Eisner-Straße 66, 04275 Leipzig Germany

RELEVANCE

The objective of this workshop is to take stock of the discussions on Co-Production. The idea that knowledge is co-produced, with scientific researchers and stakeholders actively involved, has been adopted now by *Future Earth - Research for Global Sustainability initiative*.² In order to fill the gap between the *supply* of scientific findings and its *demand* at different levels of decision-making, co-production has become a key concept guiding major research initiatives in response to Grand Challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, food and energy supply. At the national level, *sustainable*³ and *transformative* sciences are ‘called to arms’ to provide support for great transitions such as the *Energiewende* (WBGU 2012). Last but not least at the local level, as soon as fracking, carbon storage and other large infrastructure projects have faced public resistance (“Wutbürger”), citizen participation has become the panacea to enhance the public acceptance of these contested risk technologies. What stakeholders and publics think and do has become a central concern of research and policy. As a result, transdisciplinarity and stakeholder participation has advanced to one of the central criteria in national and European funding initiatives such FONA or Horizon 2020 to evaluate research proposals. The ‘participatory’ turn in the domain of environmental and energy science indicates a central aspect of the institutional reconfiguration of the social contract of science.

WORKSHOP ISSUES

This workshop explores the possible academic and practical value of co-production. Novel forms of knowledge production such as co-production or transdisciplinary science are assumed, often unproblematically, to advance the ‘usability’ of expertise, to improve science politics interactions and to democratize politics, yet do they do so? And if they do so, under what conditions, and in what ways? How, if at all, can their transformative promise be secured? Or, do calls for co-production often simply turn out as their opposite: as lip-services; used as social technologies (mis-)used to maintain the acceptance of contested technologies? If taken seriously, what are the challenges, implications and impacts of putting in practice participatory integrated modes of research? Whether and how do they challenge and/ or complement the autonomy of science and process of quality control? What is their relationship to traditional forms of science and politics?

¹ Sheila Jasanoff, see <http://www.futureearth.org/blog/2014-jul-23/be-inclusive-you-need-more-voices-qa-sheila-jasanoff>

² Mauser, W., Klepper, G., Rice, M., Schmalzbauer, B. S., Hackmann, H., Leemans, R., & Moore, H. (2013). Transdisciplinary global change research: the co-creation of knowledge for sustainability. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 5(3), 420-431. <http://www.csap.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/1/fdsaw.pdf> (accessed July 22, 2012)

³http://www.leopoldina.org/uploads/tx_leopublication/2013_Wissenschaftssystem_Diskussionspapier.pdf
<http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/3228-13.pdf>

WHAT IS CO-PRODUCTION?

The term 'co-production' has a range of meanings - under two main, a *practical-organizational* one, for example as adopted by *Future Earth*, and a *social-philosophical* one:

- In the *practical-organizational* sense, co-production refers to tools or processes that are introduced into 'real life' research and assessment processes such as *Future Earth* to bridge boundaries between knowledge producers and potential user groups and to improve science policy interactions.⁴ These approaches have been concerned with the improvement and optimisation of participation through developing, and evaluating the effectiveness of new participatory methods and designs.
- In the *social-philosophical* sense, co-production is developed as a scientific concept to analyse how, to what end and with what effects science and politics are interlinked. This idiom puts our attention to two, intertwined feedback loops: between 'nature' and 'society' and between 'analysis' and 'behaviour.' From this perspective, the way a thing is (*ontology*), is inseparable from normative commitments to what ought to be (*norms*). This co-productionist approach promises to take us further in understanding how the way in which we frame environmental problems is inextricably linked to the ways we choose to solve them, and how these choices affect the ability of strategies to achieve desired goals. In this way, it tries to make us "more reflective about how we intervene, in word or deed, in the changing order of things" (Jasanoff 2010: 249).

The concept has travelled over established boundaries, it has been (widely) diffused through academic and policy making circles, and been re-adapted and (con-)tested in many ways.

WORKSHOP ISSUES:

At the upcoming workshop in June 2015, we aim to collect experiences from co-production processes that participants were involved in or have observed in fields such as biodiversity/ ESS, climate change and energy. We try to bring together different research communities to discuss the relevance of the concept from different perspectives. We will engage with the concept from a conceptual, empirical and political-normative perspective. In doing so it has three main areas of concern and possible contribution:

- What are the promises of different ideas of co-production? What are their epistemic implications and political impacts? Is co-production simply *new wine in old bottles*? What are similarities and differences between different theoretical explanations and political understandings of co-production? Whether or not can they be linked? How? What is the added value of co-production in general – and for looping back between analysis and practice in particular?
- What are lessons to be learned from 'real life' co-production processes? Past experience with participation exercises in different European countries indicate that the crucial question is not how much participation, but what kind of participation, by whom, to which purposes. What are criteria and standards to evaluate of processes and outcomes of co-production? Can *social-philosophical* concepts inform *practical-organizational* exercises of co-production? How? To what end? Can they contribute to render co-production more responsive, reflexive and accountable?
- How to put co-production into practice? How are processes of co-production staged, shaped and set up (*processes*)? Can such as salient, credible and legitimate processes of co-production increase the scientific, deliberative and participatory quality of expertise (*outcomes*)? Can calls for geopolitical representation and public accountability be reconciled with scientific requirements for informal self-organization and scientific integrity? How? With what effects?
- How do different modes of co-production account for cultural diversity, pluralism and nested/poly-centric governance structures? How would relations between science, governance and society need to be reconfigured in order to better account for the inherent uncertainties, diversities, and competing visions of emergent energy publics?

⁴ Lemos, M. C. and B. Morehouse (2005). The Co-Production of Science and Policy in Integrated Climate Assessments. *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 57-68.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

The workshop aims at bringing together discussions between *practitioners* such as scientists participating in transnational assessments, representatives from “user institutions” (UNEP, Future Earth, national governments, stakeholder and civil society organisations) and outstanding *researchers* from different disciplines. We will include representatives of major initiative such as Future Earth, ISSC and FONA to discuss how, why and with what effects they promote co-production as the paradigm for science policy/ new contract of science and society. In so doing the workshop will be highly interactive, with a mix of presentations and discussions. All workshop participants are invited to give diverse inputs.

In order to make the discussion productive and responsive, the following *procedures are applied*:

- We will ask you to provide a short input statement (one page) on a selected issue on the workshop agenda where you can contribute from your particular expertise and experience.
- The number of participants is limited, to ensure an open, fluid, and profound discussion.
- The workshop is conducted “off the record” and designed to allow maximum time for conversation and engagement. All participants speak from their personal experiences and not as a representative of an institution or organised group. Your comments will not be attributed outside the workshop.

OUTCOMES

The workshop will result in a short set of considerations and publications. We plan to publish the input statements and presentation and comments by participants in an edited volume and submit it to an international journal. Suggestions and opportunities for a policy document feeding into ongoing negotiations or addressing a particular event, or for policy comments, are very welcome.

The UFZ 'Science-Policy Expert Group':

- Silke Beck/ Alejandro Esguerra/ Christoph Görg/ Jennifer Hauck
- Katja Heubach/ Carsten Neßhöver
- Josef Settele

About the UFZ:

The Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) is member of the Helmholtz Association of Research Centres whose mission consists in problem oriented research. Its approximately 950 scientists focus on environmental issues such as sustainable use of landscapes, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning under accelerated change, water management, soil contamination.

Background:

This workshop draws on three international workshops previously held in Leipzig.

- In October 2006, the **IMoSeb workshop** has gathered a group of highly experienced scientists and practitioners to open up and deepen the discussion on science policy interfaces: The *Leipzig Recommendations* resulting from this workshop called for a turn away from a monolithic, centralized and hierarchical epistemic community to more pluralistic, decentralized and heterogeneous ways of interaction that they have called *nested networks*. These *recommendations* constitute a major milestone in the consultations setting up a science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- In May 2011, a second international workshop continued the discussion on how to design and visualize nested networks and how to bring these insights into the establishment of the IPBES.⁵
- In May 2013, a third international workshop continued took place focussing on the reflexive turn in governing global expertise.⁶

⁵ Hulme, M., Mahony, M., Beck, S., Görg, C., Hansjürgens, B., Hauck, J., et al. (2011). Science-Policy Interface: Beyond Assessments. *Science* 333(6043), 697-698.

Making a difference with IPBES: Leipzig Consideration derived from an expert workshop on Science-Policy Interfaces and Nested Networks.

⁶ Beck, S., Borie, M., Chilvers, J., Esguerra, A., Heubach, K., Hulme, M., Lidskog, R., Lövbrand, E., Marquard, E., Miller, C., Nadim, T., Neßhöver, C., Settele, J., Turnhout, E., Vasileiadou, E., Görg, C., (2014): Towards a reflexive turn in the [governance](#) of global environmental expertise. The cases of the IPCC and the [IPBES](#). *GAIA* **23** (2), 80 – 87.

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Geden, O. & Beck, S. (2014) Renegotiating the global climate stabilization target. *NATURE CLIMATE CHANGE* | VOL 4 | SEPTEMBER 2014: 747-748.

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