Co-production of research: for good or ill?

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Introduction

I will draw on my experience over 35 years or so of researching with disabled people and their families, public service workers and people living lives of poverty and duress, to consider the benefits of the co-production of research with community residents and grass roots projects. I will argue that the benefits of co-production can be important for those involved at individual and organisational levels and co-production of research in its full sense has the capacity to contribute in positive ways to social transformation and to the kinds of research carried out in universities. However, I will also argue that co-production raises a number of dilemmas and challenges in practice and that we need to remain vigilant about the ideological and political dimensions of co-production in research if it is to remain of benefit to those involved and their communities.

Co production research

There lots of contemporary interest in coproduction of research and worthy statements from research councils, (*Punching our Weight*) and others (*Towards co-production in research with communities)*. This follows an interest in co-production of policy and human and public services, and interest that is growing alongside the decimation of public services and huge public spending cuts.

In my mind there is quite a difference between the user involvement, participatory and co-production processes (in both human services and in research) that I, and others, have argued for since the 1980's, and those that are now joyfully promoted by (a right wing) Government. This tension is something to bear in mind, and this dynamic must be kept at the forefront of our thinking about the merits of co-production in research. Furthermore, co-produced service provision is not the same as co-produced knowledge

– always two contradictory tensions – user involvement and control –

Why co-produced research and why now?

Agendas include:
Punching our weight (AHRC and shared views of other research councils):
What this means for policy makers:
- Heighten policy impacts;
- increase policy makers understanding of the research process – help them frame questions that need to be addressed, specify the research required and receive and use results of this.
- Ensure research findings re taken up and exploited (sic)

What this means for academics:

- Academics need to promote what their disciplines have to offer;
- understand the needs of users;
- horizon scanning;
- develop good codes practice;
- develop joint initiatives with policy makers.

Durose et al. (2012) *Towards Co-production with Communities*:
- Fill the 'relevance gap' in research
- Ensure impact - making research better informed by communities' preferences and needs, with communities then contributing to improved outcomes and achievable solutions (care needed, is this an ideological agenda?)
- Put into practice principles of empowerment – working with communities; offering greater control over the research process; provide opportunities to learn and reflect from experience (a different ideological agenda?).

Co-production reflects the ethos and value base of critical community psychology, community development, pedagogy and community practice wherein *reflection* is a key tool for creating transformative practice (Kagan et al., 2011).

In the literature and often in practice, co-production of research is often conflated with participatory research or participatory action research (PAR). These research practices do indeed share a common ethos that Beebeejaun et al (2113) characterise as:

i)   Having social transformation as a goal;
ii) Acknowledge different claims to knowledge
iii) Recognise dynamic interaction between researchers but also the blurring of boundary distinctions. Opportunity for creative coalitions or the clash of civilisations (Orr and Bennett, 2010, p.202)
iv) Following the ethos of research through the knowledge production process – asking questions about at what stage do people get involved – necessarily addressing issues of power

An understanding of co-production in research therefore has the following elements: a more equal partnership with communities and practitioners; working in a dynamic relationship to understand issues, create knowledge and then implement findings for transformational social change. This approach to research is underpinned by respect for different bases for expertise and claims to knowledge, a research production process that allows genuine participation at all stages, and transparency in the values informing the inception of the work. (Beebeejaun et al., 2013 p 5)

The emphasis is on local context and the shared construction of knowledge and understanding (reflecting what Maiter, Simich, Jacobson and Wise (2008) call the ethic of reciprocity).

One of the biggest challenges is to acknowledge and/or work with power asymmetries in any such coalitions or alliances: it is often necessary to spend quite a lot of time developing trust, a common language and sense of purpose and to both expose and agree how to work with these kinds of asymmetries. Nevertheless, co-production, if carried out from a shared value base, brings in different kinds of experiential expertise.

What is it
Co-produced research is more than participatory research although it shares with PR a non-positivist view of research, one that celebrates different perspectives and values the involvement of those affected by the research in the research process. This is particularly important for those who are often kept out – who are situated as objects of research from which information is to be extracted. Participatory research enables people to be included and to have control over the research process; to (sometimes) have status and (sometimes) to be empowered. When participation includes participation in governance of research, then there is also some status attached to it. For academic researchers who are used to defining research areas, topics and control the research process, co-production can be both intimidating an liberating. (It is not only academic researchers who could move to co-produced research: policy research activists, for example, who decide on priorities without involving those most marginalised by the very policies they are advocating might work more effectively if co-production was part of the process. Similarly, researchers in community and voluntary associations often forge ahead without involving those whose interests they serve: co-production could give recipients and participants n their projects a voice and change the direction of the research, to make it more grounded and meaningful.) Participation is at the heart of any co-production process.

Participation can be at one or many stages of the research process. Indeed, we can think of participation in research as a continuum:

1. Voice
2. 1 plus: Partnership in decision making
3. 2 plus Collaboration in the process
4. 3 plus Involvement in analysis
5. 4 plus involvement in decisions and practice of dissemination
6. 5 plus Research directed and controlled (governance)
7. 6 plus Research fully owned with joint processes of reflection

Participation in making sense of information, data or the research process, via joint reflection at different stages of the process, moves participatory research into co-produced research. Key is reflection and sense making. Sense making might include decisions and processes of dissemination or telling other people about the research and its findings.

- Co-produced knowledge
- Co-produced ideas

- Co-produced methods
- Co-produced data collection
- Co-produced data analysis
- Co-produced dissemination

Thinking about co-production research highlights two opposing epistemological positions:

i)   lay people cannot contribute to analytical thinking and operate at the level of scientificity required (A regeneration research officer with a PhD, when we were discussing some co=produced research with residents in her patch, said" What is the point of my having a PhD and all that training in research if you are saying anyone can become a resracher" (which of course, is not what we were say8ing: we were talking about co-production and co-research, with support and training). What is the evidence that participatory approaches work ie contribute to change?

ii)   experts by experience enhance the authenticity of research and lay people's expertise is as valuable and skilled as that of trained researchers.

Essentially this is a positivist vs non-positivist epistemological debate and co-produced research is generally placed on the non-positivist side of research. However, this is not necessarily the case – it may be that some positivist research (attempting to describe the reality of the social world – not necessarily embracing the above evaluation of the role of lay people in the research process) is required for social transformation, lobbying for change, enhancing people's understanding of their own oppression and so on. This may or may not result in co-produced research. Examples might be research into income inequalities in a town; research into patterns of police responses to domestic violence; research into why more disabled people die following hospital admissions than non-disabled people. These research questions might all be important and could be raised and answered as co-produced research – particularly if we were to adopt the position demanded by the disabled people's movement 'Nothing about us without us'.

This raises the issue of whether all research can and should be co-produced research or not. (There are no easy answers to this question – I think it comes down to what role the research is to play in social transformation. The greater the role, the greater the case for co-production.)

Some examples of co-produced research (examples from Kagan, 2012 presented as Participative Action Research – they are also examples of co-produced research[1]):
Here, I give two examples of quite different kinds of co-produced research, involving different groups of stakeholders and addressing different issues. The first is a project

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[1] *The examples are taken from the English translation of Kagan, C. (2012) La ricerca-azione partecipata e la psicologia di comunità Rome (Participatory Action Research and Community Psychology).In B. Zani (ed) Psicologia di comunità: Prospettive, idee, metodi. Carocci Editore, Rome. Available from* www.compsy.org

about experiences of community activists and the second , a project about intergenerational within migrant families.

Community activists project
During 2005, the community psychology team at MMU was approached by the Chair of a local residents' group (Angela). The group represented people who lived poverty in an area of the City that was characterised by multiple deprivation. She wanted to undertake some research to record and celebrate the work of community activists who worked tirelessly for improvement in people's lives. This idea had emerged firstly from the fact that some long life-long community activist friends had recently died and their testimonies had gone untold; secondly, from the 60th birthday celebrations of another life long activist, during which people had celebrated her achievements; and thirdly from her experiences of trying to encourage more people to become activists. Angela and I had worked together on a number of projects previously, and she thought that maybe her idea could be turned into a research project, with a member of the community psychology team, or with some community -psychology students. After some discussion, it was agreed that the idea would make a good project, but the immediate problem of finding time to work together on the project (especially from University staff) seemed irresolvable.

It happened that a postgraduate community intern (Simona) was to spend 9 months with the community psychology team. Her placement objectives included 'to work participatively with a community group on an issue of importance to the group '; 'to gain skills in executing a qualitative research project', and ' to use different sources of information in order to develop understanding of an identified neighbourhood characterised by multiple indicators of deprivation'.

This seemed like an ideal opportunity - a community issue identified by a community group, and the possibility of building in some analysis of the neighbourhood, using multiple sources of information.

Whilst there was a long history of collaboration and joint projects between the residents and the community psychologists, Simona was new to this kind of work. It was, therefore, necessary to spend some time for Angela, Simona and me to get to know each other and to clarify whether or not a productive project would be possible, and if so, what roles each should take. This 'getting to know you' stage, is fundamental to PAR, and indeed to all co-production processes, in order to build trust between the researchers and the people. It cannot be rushed.

Simona met Angela and other members of the group and spent several visits discussing the research possibilities presented by the idea. During this time I also explored with hem both how they might all work together, especially as I would be unable to be centrally involved. It was agreed that the project would be an interview based project with a small number of activists. Each interview would be filmed and an edited film made of them giving their accounts. Simona would work, initially as an assistant to Angela, helping her to refine the interview questions, securing the necessary equipment and ensuring that they were both able to use it. Angela would

get other activists involved, brief them as to the purpose and nature of the study and be the interviewer, whilst SR operated the camera and recording equipment. Both of them were to have a post-interview discussion with each participant. I was to act as an academic supervisor for Simona and occasional discussant for Angela.

It was not clarified at the outset, how the analysis would take place. However, through negotiation a process for doing this was agreed.

Angela, Simona and other participants identified central themes within each participants' account. Simona then transcribed and undertook a preliminary thematic analysis across all participants, discussing the process of doing this with me. Simona and Angela then refined this analysis and decided together how to structure the empirical part of the report and which sections should be edited for the film. Simona did a first edit of the film and then Angela discussed it and together they refined it. They both planned and organised the celebration event and dinner involving everyone connected to the project (Raschini et al., 2005) . Over the next few years, Angela sent the film and the report to lots of different people, gave talks (sometimes with me) to residents' groups, professionals and academics, in order to stimulate interest in community activism and understand some of the pressures activists were under.

Thus, this research was research in which community activists:
• 	had the idea;
• 	identified the research issue;
• 	secured resources in partnership with the University;
• 	worked collaboratively to identify and recruit participants;
• 	decided the research design and format of outputs,
• 	constructed an interview schedule as a means of collecting accounts,
• 	collected data,
• 	analysed data,
• 	edited film,
• 	arranged celebration event,
• 	engaged in dissemination for further action and change….

Intergenerational work with men in migrant communities

A different kind of example of a co-produced PAR project relates to intergenerational conflict in migrant communities. This was research where we were involved as partners with a community based community psychology project (Fatimilehin and Dye, 2003): I, and a Doctoral community psychology student, had the role of evaluating the work and acting as 'critical friend' to the project.

In one of the large cities in the North West of England, a problem had arisen between men of different generations in Somali and Yemeni communities. There was conflict between older men and their sons that resulted in considerable family and community tensions. The issue had come to light through some work that community psychologists had been doing with women from the communities over a

number of years. Families do not live in a vacuum, and in both communities there were community organisations as well as public sector services that were in contact with the families. It was important to ensure that these organisations were involved in any action research designed to create change: if they were not, there would be a strong possibility that they might sabotage (not necessarily intentionally) the work. So before any work could proceed, it was important to undertake a stakeholder analysis: to ask the questions who might have an interest in this issue beyond the women who had identified it in the first place? And what might their interests be? and how can these be harnessed to help the change process? Not only were other organisations important stakeholders to take into account, the older and younger men (and other family members) that had not raised the issue initially, were obviously of central importance. Having done the analysis, it was then necessary to work to build relationships and understanding of the issues: only then was it possible to work collaboratively with the men on a PAR process for change.

After several months of discussions, a group of older and younger men decided they wanted to explore the intergenerational conflict and take action for change. They worked with the community psychologists, exploring different ways that the issue might be explored and together they agreed that a storytelling process might be a useful way forward. It was the community psychologists who secured resources to undertake the PAR project. Together, the community psychologists and community members designed and prepared for some narrative workshops, which then took place over a meal. Both these aspects of the project (storytelling and food) were important culturally appropriate and relevant processes, valued by the men. During the workshops, older and younger men were able to exchange accounts of their experiences as migrants or British born, sand the concerns each had over the other generation. The research could have stopped at this point, but all agreed they wanted to take it further (Kagan et al., 2009).

Additional action research cycles were developed, participatively. The younger Yemeni men wanted to make a film about identify and belonging. The younger Somali men decided to produce a magazine about being Somali in Britain (Kagan and Duggan, in press). Both groups of older men wanted more discussions about the tensions of parenting across cultures. The researchers worked with each of the groups, negotiating resources and helping them acquire investigative and creative skills so that they could produce high quality film and magazine, and have informed and relevant discussions. They worked participatively to design dissemination events for communities and professionals more widely, and to design and secure resources for further educational work building on this research.

Thus, this research was research in which community members identified the problem to be addressed. However, this was the women from the communities and the focal research was with the men. Men from the communities:
•	negotiated how the issue might be explored;
•	participated in initial explorations and the identification of subsequent research cycles;

- decided the research design and format of outputs (film, magazine, parenting discussions),
- learnt about and used different ways of obtaining information as a part of the investigation, including historical research, interviewing)
- collected data,
- analysed and organised data,
- edited film, and magazine
- arranged and participated in dissemination events,
- identified further action required and worked to secure additional resources

The researchers
- Secured the resources for the research
- Negotiated specialist training for the magazine production and film production
- Facilitated learning about the gathering of data and its analysis
- Facilitated discussions and learning within the parenting groups
- Facilitated the continuing joint-community forum to take further action

Initially the research was not fully owned: the narrative workshops, whilst participatively and designed collaboratively could not be considered PAR. However the subsequent stages of the research were PAR. This illustrates an important point about how participative research processes can change over time. As community psychologists committed to working as participatively as possible, we need to remain open to the possibilities for moving to more participative ways of working where possible.

Obstacles to this kind of research (from Kagan, 2012)
Co-produced and participative research can face a number of obstacles. The strongest of these are the power of gatekeepers; attempted control over findings (usually by some kind of gatekeeper); and reluctance to participate. Examples are given of these obstacles, again from quite different kinds of co-produced projects.

The power of gatekeepers: participative arts and mental health

We were working with some participative arts projects which aimed to work with people marginalised through mental ill heath and living in areas of deprivation (Lawthom, Sixsmith and Kagan, 2007). We had been commissioned to undertake a participative evaluation (which itself is part of a PAR process). There were several different projects, all run by different artists. The major stakeholders were the project participants, the artists, people commissioning this kind of work and the arts umbrella organisation that had asked us to evaluate the work. Our initial starting point was to get to know the artists and discuss with them how we might move on to get to know the project participants in order to discuss how the research might proceed participatively. We spent time with different projects and in discussions with artists, and encountered tremendous resistance from the artists to participative ways of working. They were most concerned to 'protect' their participants and were reluctant to permit the researchers access in order to talk with them about the

research. This reluctance arose from the framing of the research in terms of mental ill health (even though this was the focus of the arts projects). The artists believed that we all have mental health difficulties and we cannot position project participants as different from artists or researchers and should not be asking how participation in the arts impacts upon mental health. We were in danger of reaching an impasse. In order to proceed at all, we undertook some Appreciative Inquiry workshops which served the purpose of artists and researchers together exploring values and understanding. We were able then to move on with the research, but not to do it in fully participative ways. We were able to work participatively with the artists but not with those they worked with. In this case the project participants had been prevented from taking part in early discussions and were unable to influence the research. Whilst ideally it would have been the participants themselves who would have come up with the idea of the research, there are always issues of power to consider where there are intermediaries, or 'gatekeepers' between the people and the researchers.

Attempted control over findings: intergenerational evaluation teams

We have been involved with over the last year, and were employing PAR to work with workless people living in difficult circumstances within the City. The project was an empowerment project which aimed to enable people of different ages to come together and explore the use of creative methods for the evaluation of community projects. Through the project it was anticipated that participants would gain confidence, skills and the ability to use these skills in capturing the impact of other community based projects. We worked with a number of organisations across the city to raise awareness of the project and stimulate interest in becoming involved. This took about nine months and during this time we forged partnerships with some community and youth organisations who were keen to collaborate with us. Through the awareness raising processes and with the help of the partner organisations, a number of people volunteered to take part in the project. The 'getting to know you' period involved everyone who was interested, and the researches, meeting together over food, going bowling together and going out for a meal together. The researchers then worked with the participants to decide which creative methods they wanted to explore and to arrange skills workshops. The intergenerational groups (ages ranging from 16-83) undertook poetry; photography; film; video diary; and creative writing workshops. They then decided how they wanted to continue. One group, all from one area that was undergoing extensive regeneration, decided they wanted to consolidate their skills and understanding by looking at life in the neighbourhood. Partnerships were formed with the local housing trust, community association and basic skills centre.   An opportunity arose for them to mount an exhibition in the local community centre and they worked with the researchers to produce three films, a display of poems and photographs. The researchers managed to secure resources to have work displayed to a high quality and to have poems printed on postcards which were available to visitors to take: each project participant had a pack of postcards to give to their friends.

In a short period of time they put on the exhibition and invited local politicians, professionals and residents to view it. The sense of pride that participants showed in the exhibition and in their work was enormous. After the exhibition, the researchers were contacted by the Housing and Regeneration workers. They wanted a block on all distribution of material from the exhibition or resulting from the research as the content of the films and particularly the poems 'reflected badly on the area and gave a depressing impression of living here'. They argued that it undermined the work they were trying to do to regenerate the area. The research team were taken aback a little by this reaction as these partners had been fully involved in the project and knew what was going. We had to explain that the work was PAR and that we did not control the content of the findings or what was done with them (and nor could they!). We have to do some more work to help the agencies understand that with PAR they cannot censor findings or control what is done with them. We will be facilitating discussion between the project participants and the agencies and to supporting development of the project to bring more people in. We will also be working with the agencies to help them see how they might learn from local people's expressed feelings about the area and that they cannot create positive sense of place by just insisting upon it!

Reluctance to participate: forced labour and migrant Chinese workers

There is growing concern across Europe (and indeed worldwide) about the growth in forced labour or modern slavery and the sometimes life threatening risks involved. We are nearing the end of a project working with a local Chinese Women's organisation about the experiences of forced labour amongst Chinese migrant workers (Kagan et al., 2011). Over the years the Chinese Women's organisation has supported many people in situations of forced labour and approached us to develop a participatory research project, for which we then secured funding form a funding body that supports participatory work. The plan was to work with migrant workers attending the Chinese Women's Society language classes. We had a co-researcher model where we would work closely with the migrants to identify the research format, collect, analysis and disseminate information. This co-researcher model is an empowerment model, and we argued that this process, for working with people in positions of vulnerability, participative methods are the least damaging.

We held discussions about the project and the nature of forced labour with potential participants. We went on trips to other towns for enjoyable days out, as ways of getting to know each other and to enable more informal discussions about the project and to help people begin to reflect upon their lives. We held a number of workshops with migrant workers exploring the issue of forced labour and the nature of research and different ways of collecting and analysing data. These workshops were conducted in Mandarin, were in a safe venue and included food (again, really important in the building of relationships). The researchers and Women's Society workers worked together to facilitate the workshops. In the end not one person wanted to participate as co-researchers, although most were happy to participate as research informants. The ain reason for this was that most of those we worked with were illegal migrants and were either awaiting decisions about claims for asylum or

had had their claims turned down. They were all anxious not to increase their visibility, due to their status. We were unable to reassure them that there participation would not be visible to the authorities and that the research would not expose them to greater risk. However they were not convinced. For people living in situations of vulnerability, there are real risks in being seen to take action. Pyrch (2007) draws attention to the wider issues of fear in society and the ways in which PAR processes might be an antidote to those oppressive forces that lead to fear.

In this project we had to abandon the co-researcher participatory part of the research process, although we are still working in a fully participative manner with the Chinese Women's Society.

What are the Benefits of Co-Produced Research?
There are benefits to co-production in research for both the researchers and their partners. These include relevance; enhancement; empowerment; better understanding and better evidence; learning and project improvement; advocacy and the giving of voice; and the production of new kinds of knowledge.
Relevance – benefits need to be two way, for researchers and for participants
Enhances impact for community and voluntary sector organisations and for universities (danger, this is political)
Empowerment – increases confidence, enhances skills and understanding, contributes to conscientisation, or a political awareness of the social circumstances in which we live. Although this is fragile and unless it also leads somewhere else – e.g. continuation of a project, employment for participants, a tangible product such as a film
Continuous improvement or understanding via reflection and evidence
Privileges the voice of research partners (although if they are not involved in analysis of information this effect is diluted)
May provide the basis for drawing down more resources
But more than relevant problem solving or change processes, co-production is about constructing new knowledge together – new ways of understanding that might lead to new ways of doing things, new projects or organisations.

Are there any Pitfalls with Co-produced research?
If not pitfalls exactly, there are challenges to co-producing research. These include reciprocal understanding of each other's needs; the nature of collaboration and alliances, particularly in situations of competition for resources or co-opetition; time; and knowledge in the community and voluntary sector of what might be possible I nowrking with universities.
How get to know of each others' existence and needs? (this links to the public engagement agenda in universities – but where is the push for community members, projects or organisations to get involved with universities, and more importantly where are the resources for this?)
Collaboration and alliances – we need a sophisticated understanding of collaboration and what this entails, also of participation and what this entails. Collaboration and

alliance forming require particular sets of skills to develop and sustain them. How many collaborative networks are we in where all the work is done by one, at the most two people – not really a collaboration and probably not an alliance.

Co-opetition – community groups and university researchers may be in competition for the same resources and this produces tension over ownership and procurement of resources, and ownership of knowledge. The most obvious way forward for co-produced research is to be disseminated via some form of commons or open source publishing. If the researchers involved are academic researchers, this might not fit with the demand so n them for a different kind of erudite publishing. These things have to be worked through so each partner in the alliance has a good grasp of the pressures on the others.

Time is needed to develop trust – where is this paid from? The assumption is often that the academic researchers need payment, citizens do not – they get 'free consultancy! This is an untenable position. If the citizens are part of an organisation, then this organisation should be costed into any project on a full economic cost basis, in the same way that the universities are. If they are unattached citizens then some form of payment (taking into account any potential loss of benefit or assumptions that because they are able to participate in research they can hold down paid employment, which is not always the case).

A central message to community groups is 'don't wait for universities to come and find you – be proactive in finding out about universities and their assets and expertise and make strategic contacts'. Some universities have a clear point of access: some do not. If all co=produced research depends on a limited number of links between individual researchers and individual citizens or organisation, the scope for social transformation will be small.

Politics

Co-production is a political process. There are dynamics of power; of whose world view is to prevail; of involvement (and exclusion); of compromise; and of voice and silencing.

Power – in addition to the power asymmetries between different partners in the co-production process that may exist from the outset, all partners have the power to engage and to drop out. There is sometimes a difference between co-production at the start of a research process, after which involvement ceases, and meaningful and full involvement throughout. The difference between these two forms is the difference between engendering cynicism or empowerment;

When there are different world different world views – whose views prevail? How are the differences managed? Do either partner have the skills and expertise for managing this dynamic?

Who is playing the game (Taylor, 2011): who is left out. And is this the right game to play to empower communities?

For university based researchers is there a compromise on criticality? How do we share an understanding of what being critical is and why this might be beneficial?

Are there compromises to be made on outputs? Do either partners have the skills and expertise to achieve progressive compromises that benefit all involved?

Is there agreement about what kinds of compromises are needed?

Does involvement in co-produced research act as a means of silencing those involved – after all, the research was co-produced? What are the ethical responsibilities of researchers to ensure research is beneficial?

Limits of coproduction
Some of the limits of co-production have been covered above. Here are some more things to be aware of.

- Trust (covered above).
- Mouthy people are the ones to get involved – researchers need to build skills of engagement so the people who should be included are included. This is not easy, but time spent trying to ensure this is time well spent and results in better research.
- In social science research there is a reliance on language (for gaining information) and text in presenting information – There is a danger this reproduces privilege, exclusion (Beebeenaum et al., 2013; Duggan and Kagan, 2008). Researchers and community partners need to find meaningful ways of gaining engagement and participation and creative methods of research production (Kagan and Duggan, 2011). Public engagement agenda in universities gives a push to more of this activity
- Difficulties of getting genuine partnership combining expertises (non technical experts might not have range of knowledge about methods etc (rely on questionnaires or interviews); technical experts might have limited knowledge about methods of engagement (rely on questionnaires and interviews!) need to capacity build in both directions
- Creative methods might meet more of the empowerment agenda, but are less easy for decision makers and policy makers to use the findings.
- Tyranny of co-production – what if people don't want to or can't get involved (Kagan, 2007)? Do we just go ahead with those we can get to participate- does it matter. Sometimes it will and sometimes it may not.
- It is really difficult to get funding for a process such as developing trust, getting to know each other, understanding contexts etc – so the development process (often time consuming) has to take place before funding!
- An alternative to this is secondments to each others' organisations – but this will only ever be limited.
- Authorship and ownership – Intellectual Property must be negotiated at the start – complex for us all and may need to be thought about differently - not just from the perspective of universities. The Creative Commons copyright and permissions service is useful here but may not meet the needs of university researchers.

So.. is c-oproduced research a good thing? Yes, definitely, as long as an eye is kept on the ideological and political context in which it is being promoted supported and then used to inform agendas beyond those of the people involved in the research. Co-production may have a limited life, but the active involvement of citizens along

side more technical experts in knowledge creation and production must continue - the alternative is inconceivable.

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