

CO-PRODUCING THE CITY



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Project Objectives

- Create a distinctive space for social innovation to co-produce, test and learn about new ways of governing cities
- Explore the value and practice of co-production to address complex urban problems and understand how to achieve fairer and more inclusive outcomes for all
- Initiate and learn from a series of social innovation projects to test what works for citizen participation in decision-making

About Jam and Justice

Beth Perry, Bert Russell, Liz Richardson, Catherine Durose and Alex Whinnom explain the Jam and Justice project, an initiative that is co-producing and researching spaces for social innovation and participatory urban governance



Beth Perry



Bert Russell



Liz Richardson



Catherine Durose



Alex Whinnom

What impact do you think Jam and Justice will have on Greater Manchester?

BP: Greater Manchester (GM)

Can you tell us more about Jam and Justice?

BP: Jam and Justice is creating spaces for social innovation to support citizens in getting more involved in urban decision-making. We want to facilitate more local expertise, creativity and innovation in urban governance. The 'jam' in the sandwich represents the gap between urban decision-makers and the many civil society initiatives taking place. We bring together diverse stakeholders to address shared problems. 'Justice' is about reconnecting with those who have been disenfranchised and excluded from the search for solutions.

BR: For me, Jam and Justice highlights how we should make decisions in society and who should be involved. We hope to realise our vision of what democratic urban governance could be and ensure that meaningful change is part of the process.

What makes Greater Manchester a good area to stage this initiative?

BP: We are committed to supporting wider societal change and believe in working locally with multiple stakeholders. Through devolution, we support the desire to open up decision-making in Greater Manchester.

The city-region has gained more control over key areas of policy such as transport, health and social care and housing, overseen by our first directly-elected Mayor who has expressed his desire for more co-productive decision-making.

How did you become interested in social innovation and urban governance?

BP: I was struck by the limits of formal partnerships between universities and city actors in the Global North and South. I wanted to explore different ways for academics to foster adaptable, participatory spaces for citizens to get involved in decision-making.

LR: I was inspired by creativity in problem-solving amongst grassroots community groups I worked with and wondered how to 'scale out' these activities on a wider regional level.

CD: My earlier research investigated how frontline professionals mediate between policy and community priorities to deliver area-based regeneration. I became interested in catalysing change in urban governance while valuing different voices and expertise.

has 10 local authorities, over 2.7m people and thousands of organisations working on different problems. We are a small project trying to inspire and leverage change in a much wider landscape. We work with local and city-regional decision-makers to put our findings into action through a partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. We have created social innovation spaces on topics such as energy democracy and health and social care. We are also building a wider coalition to #coproduceGM, working for more participatory urban governance.

What are the main challenges facing Jam and Justice?

CD: We wanted to create spaces that acknowledge, but aren't defined by, existing power dynamics between various stakeholders or by class, age, gender, professional status or position. We aim to negotiate difficulties that emerge and remain flexible. We haven't cracked it yet.

AW: Co-production can be slow and there can be a lack of clarity in decision-making. Ambition often outstrips the resources available. It's all about recognising difference and being willing to compromise. ●

Introducing the Action Research Collective

An Action Research Collective (ARC) has been set up by the Jam and Justice project to learn-by-doing about what works in the practice of co-production and develop new theoretical insights

Principal Investigator Beth Perry, Urban Institute, University of Sheffield, explains: 'The ARC is an extended peer community imagined as a co-productive boundary space where diversity is embraced and concepts of authority and expertise are blurred.' Perry adds: 'The ARC is responsible for co-creating, delivering, implementing and analysing action-focused projects on topics like public sector spending, health and social care, energy and the lack of involvement of young people in politics.' The mixed group of academics, voluntary workers and committed citizens hopes to develop insights and lessons about the potentials and pitfalls of co-production and to inspire local authorities to share power with other organisations and the broader citizenry.

FORMING THE ARC

Many of the partners in the project, across sectors, have been investigating and developing ideas on co-production for years. Perry says: 'The ARC was conceived as a mechanism through which our ideas could be tested and put into practice.' The nine ARC members come from academia, national and local charities, consultancies, community interest and benefit organisations and public sector bodies. Perry explains: 'We wanted a diverse ARC that crossed sectoral boundaries and layers of existing authority, with people who have different modes of thinking and approaches, who nonetheless shared a common desire for positive social change.' Co-investigator Catherine Durose, University of Birmingham, continues: 'We are fortunate to have assembled such a rich set of networks and partnerships, so we can draw on multiple forms of expertise, think creatively across sectoral and hierarchical boundaries and have great reach for our findings and impacts.'

KEY CONCEPTS

A number of key concepts are being tested. Perry explains: 'Three key concepts are transdisciplinarity, incompleteness and intermediation. Transdisciplinarity means learning by doing in an extended peer community through a research design that accepts the messy, fragmented social world and works with these dynamics in an inclusive and participatory format'. Incompleteness is a vital ingredient and allows co-contributors to influence the research. Durose adds: 'We wanted to avoid a situation where the details of what we would do were decided in advance.'

'We wanted a diverse ARC that crossed sectoral boundaries and layers of existing authority. We sought people who have different modes of thinking and approaches, who nonetheless shared a common desire for positive social change'

Instead, we have tried to create space to make decisions about the action research projects. The research has tried to embrace adaptation, creativity and uncertainty – a tough challenge! A third important concept

for the ARC is intermediation – working across organisational, sectoral and technical boundaries to catalyse social innovation and change. Lastly, co-investigator Liz Richardson, Manchester Urban Institute, University of Manchester, explains: 'Such hands-on social science is difficult to plan and measure. By using a hybrid research design that compares multiple action-based projects in a single place, we hope to navigate the complexities of co-production and causality within urban governance.'

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS

The ARC brings together people who do not usually work together. The starting point comprised project brainstorming and ideas generation. Some ideas were developed to delivery stage by ARC members, whilst others required further collaboration and co-design with external partners. 10 projects were finally designed, and co-analysis and dissemination is now underway. Project researcher Bert Russell, Urban Institute, University of Sheffield, elaborates: 'While we can now trace back and make sense of the ARC's progression, there was actually no neat linear process.'

The projects are already making an impact and creating interest from varied audiences. Perry explains: 'We have developed a partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, which is eager to learn from our project.' There is also significant support from practitioner peer groups and academics in similar research fields. Although the analysis is still at an early stage, the team agrees that getting the right facilitation is a critical part of the process. Perry concludes: 'There is a big difference between designing for and achieving co-production and all of us will continue to be ambassadors and catalysts for change.' ►

Co-researcher voices

Katie Finney, Andrew Burridge and Laura Williams, three members of Jam and Justice's co-production Action Research Collective (ARC), share their experiences of participating in the co-design and co-implementation of projects aimed at addressing complex urban issues



Katie Finney



Andrew Burridge



Laura Williams

How did you become involved with the ARC?

KF: As a citizen, I regularly participate in local authority strategy and service development. Professionally, I design and facilitate processes and training for effective group collaboration, often between citizens and the public sector. I bring experience of navigating bureaucratic systems as an outsider as well as an understanding of the nuance, skill and commitment required for being part of an action-orientated co-production group. This felt like an opportunity to bring together many of my interests and contribute to something important.

AB: I have worked in local government in health and social care throughout my career and felt my networks would provide useful connections and allow me to provide a public service perspective. Being a member of the ARC is a great chance to impact on how Greater Manchester involves citizens in decision-making. I believe devolution offers us a unique opportunity to make a difference.

LW: I'd recently been involved in establishing a campaign pushing for a new, clean energy company to be established for

Greater Manchester, giving workers, citizens and the local authority equal control over its direction and running. For me Jam and Justice appeared at just the right time. Being chosen to participate in the ARC was a great opportunity, allowing me to meet others also interested in demanding greater citizen control across a whole spectrum of issues.

What have the best and most challenging parts of your work with the ARC been?

KF: The best is working with such a diverse and inspiring group. I feel I've built some meaningful connections with fellow ARC members and I'm really enjoying being part of delivering projects. However, participating in co-production is hard. It asks me to really live my principles, values and ideals and that is not easy. I have often felt out of my depth and worried that I wouldn't find my place. Co-production requires a lot of trust and can be emotionally very challenging.

AB: Highlights include building relationships with the other ARC members, learning about different perspectives and challenging my own thinking. A trip to Scotland provided fascinating examples from another city and helped us reflect on how far we have come. One of the worse aspects is that co-production takes time! Establishing buy-in from public services has

been a challenge, although overall the response has been very positive.

LW: What's been most interesting is how the project's space for discussion, contestation and practical application has allowed us to acknowledge differences, test our approaches and allow perspectives to evolve. The ARC is by no means a place of complete agreement. It takes a great deal of compromise and restraint to reach a joint understanding on how to proceed.

What have you gained from your involvement with the ARC?

KF: I feel acknowledged and I've had space to experiment with my own professional practices. Having the space to experiment alongside others with the same values and goals in pursuit of something important is a real privilege.

AB: I've learnt a great deal about approaches to participation and co-production within the realm of city governance. I've become an advocate of these approaches in my day job and believe they are the way forward for cities and regions such as Greater Manchester.

LW: To create a movement that can demand power-sharing at all levels and across all sectors, our work must be seen as a beginning. Dissemination is important for spreading the word as it invites people into this space for knowledge-sharing, learning from other experiences and continuing to build shared values. ●

Lessons from the Action Research Collective

At a recent workshop held to assess lessons learnt from its work so far, the Action Research Collective (ARC) identified a series of takeaways regarding structure, flexibility, uncertainty and incompleteness

A key task is to devise ways of extracting common messages and lessons learnt from the ARC that could inform similar initiatives. Principal Investigator Beth Perry explains: 'We are interested in understanding what has worked to draw people into the project, create a buzz around co-production, build capacity through networks and spaces and generate interest and awareness.'

The ARC has a dedicated impact officer and instigated detailed record keeping by members to track key thoughts, ideas and progress. Perry says: 'We are interested in project impacts on policy direction, new initiatives and innovations. At present there is hot debate regarding metrics for action-focused projects such as ours. We need new metrics that ensure projects like ours are taken seriously and valued by academia and other sectors.'

EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY AND MAKING TIME

A recent ARC workshop sought to identify common messages from the shared experience. The Collective imagined what they would say to a mixed city delegation interested in setting up a similar initiative. Based on their experience, the workshop provided the opportunity to refine key pieces of advice. Perry says: 'It's a tricky

balance to recognise differences and also identify common messages. We hoped that imagining an external audience would create a bridge between personal experience and the collective narrative.'

The group found ways to work together without rigid consensus, through compromise and adaptability

These messages were grouped under six lesson headings. Lesson one is to expect the unexpected. This captures the need to embrace uncertainty and be comfortable with not knowing what outcomes will be. Projects are accustomed to planning structures and processes in advance and it can be difficult to accept surprises and learn from trial and error. Lesson two highlighted the importance of allowing time and space for collective discussion on how to proceed. Co-production is a process that unfolds slowly over time.

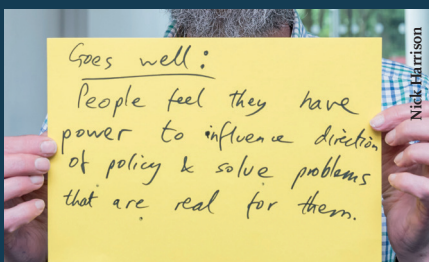
CREATING DYNAMIC BOUNDARY SPACES

Some messages related to creating appropriate spaces to nurture co-production. Many were complimentary, for instance, ARC member Adrian Ball noted that an 'uncorrupted space' had been developed, enabling the management of relational and other differences and a focus on building relationships. An important suggestion was the advice to tackle issues such as cultural, educational and power differences.

Participants were pleased that: 'The group found ways to work together without rigid consensus, through compromise and adaptability.' Some differences are products of the sectoral and domain spaces that members normally inhabit, including academia, the public sector and the voluntary or third sector. Each brings their own difficulties and there may be a temptation to stereotype individuals from different walks of life. All workshop participants agreed that co-researchers need open minds and must put aside their own prejudices.

BALANCING PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

The final two lessons concern structure and leadership. Most felt a balance was needed between 'an intimate co-production space' and improving the robustness of results by testing them through wider participation. Workshop participants mentioned that: 'leadership, roles and structure are recurrent themes,' and noted that each phase, 'has required different levels of structure and forms of leadership.' Furthermore, time could be saved by considering co-production limits initially, being clearer about, 'what is set in stone and what is up for grabs.' Operational issues, for instance, could have been decided in advance, leaving more time for the creative co-production of ideas and concepts. Perry says: 'There are common messages to inform other initiatives, particularly regarding structure, the need for embracing uncertainty and navigating boundary spaces.' Russell adds: 'We have reflected on how all our projects push at the edges of established urban agendas. This might be a key element in supporting social innovation and we plan to analyse this further.' ►



'What does good urban governance look like?' Ideas from the Jam and Justice launch, May 2016

Spaces for social innovation

The Jam and Justice initiative has instigated 10 social innovation projects in Greater Manchester, promoting participatory urban governance to ensure more voices are heard in decision-making and pooling the collective wisdom of a variety of stakeholders to address complex policy problems

The Action Research Collective (ARC), initiated by the Jam and Justice project, has created 10 sub-projects designed to achieve two primary goals. Firstly, as comparative projects to: 'better draw conclusions on what catalyses and what obstructs greater co-production in urban governance,' explains Jam and Justice co-investigator Liz Richardson. Secondly, the Collective seeks to inspire change, get involved in hands-on projects and make a real difference to the city-region, particularly for disenfranchised groups. Co-investigator Alex Whinnom, Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO), adds: 'The projects tackle different issues where we see potential for social innovation in the context of the Greater Manchester devolution agenda.' The Collective was also keen to involve groups not normally involved in formal decision-making, such as young and socially marginalised people.

In line with our hybrid design, each project is considered as a rich learning experience in its own right, as well as being part of a comparative dataset

SELECTING PROJECTS

The projects were selected by the ARC using a number of key criteria. These included the need to create spaces to generate respect for differences in opinions and knowledge, to catalyse opportunities for interaction and engagement and to enhance the possibility of influencing existing governance structures and agendas to become more attuned to citizens' views. Overall, the projects explore how different spaces for social innovation can challenge existing governance forms and be scaled to provide greater societal benefits.

Having 10 comparable cases in the same geographical region will provide strong evidence of how best to support co-productive urban governance, a solid base to test previously-generated ideas. Richardson says: 'In line with our hybrid design, each project is considered as a rich learning experience in its own right, as well as being part of a comparative dataset.' Data is being captured in numerous ways, including interviews, workshops and feedback from participants, civil society stakeholders and established governance strategists in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. ●

THE ARC'S PROJECTS IN GREATER MANCHESTER



1. **The 21st Century Councillor:** a collaboration with North West Employers and four local councils to test different ideas about roles for local elected members in their communities



2. **The People's Republic of Energy:** initiated by the Carbon Coop and Energy Democracy Greater Manchester, this project looks at different models that can give citizens, workers and members greater control over the energy system



3. **The System Doesn't Work:** a project supported by Community Pride CIC, working with communities currently disengaged from formal politics using photovoice techniques to produce an exhibition of #EverydayPolitics



4. **Transform GM:** kickstarting a mapping exercise to show the diversity of social economy initiatives in Greater Manchester with a focus on below-the-radar activities in the social solidarity economy (SSE)



5. **GM Decides:** a collaboration with Amity to explore how digital tools can effectively engage people in urban policy initiation and design



6. **People's Procurement:** working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, this project investigates how public and business spending can better support social value commitments



7. **The Care at Home Challenge:** Shared Future CIC's project uses a novel 'inverted citizens' inquiry' model to draw on direct experience of care at home and integrate emotional and practical considerations into decisions over healthcare delivery



8. **Space in Common:** a series of workshops run by the Democratic Society to explore how to have better conversations about spatial planning



9. **Young People Missing from Decisions:** a youth-led and designed project with the Children's Society, which surveys the views of young people in Greater Manchester about what they care about and the life skills they need to be taught in schools



10. **Co-producing the Green Summit:** through participation in the Green Summit Steering Group, this project sought to widen citizen engagement in the development of the city-region's environment strategy

Making an impact

*Each of the 10 **Jam and Justice** action research projects is spearheaded by a team whose responsibility is to develop and deliver key objectives through harnessing the efforts of a wider group of stakeholders*

Each of the Jam and Justice action research projects has received a share of the project budget and will conclude by July 2019. Principal Investigator Beth Perry says: 'Already, the projects have had some impacts and we expect these effects to grow and outlive the Jam and Justice project.' Some projects aim to support a more transformative economic agenda through submitting evidence to Greater Manchester's local industrial strategy; others call for the establishment of an energy company that puts citizens and workers at its core, or support the movement towards different procurement processes oriented to social value creation. Young people involved in one of the projects are planning to take their survey results to decision-makers in Greater Manchester and

London to influence the development of statutory and non-statutory life skills provision in schools. Key messages are also emerging around the need for greater compassion in care-at-home service delivery and the importance of reducing professional distance from people's lived experiences. The team is also working with several councils in Greater Manchester interested in how local councillors can be supported in building better relationships with citizens and communities.

Some specific examples include:

SOCIAL VALUE BUSINESS PLANNING

A 'social value' commitment is a standard component of tendering in the public and private sectors. Yet there is limited capacity to check how these commitments answer real needs or to verify how corporate bodies follow up on their promises. Supported by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), the People's Procurement project has been looking at how stakeholders might work together to optimise social value commitments. The project team is preparing a business plan to sustain a social value hub, offering training, resources and a cross-sector network to bring citizens and representatives from the voluntary and community sectors into decision-making about local procurement.

DEMOCRATIC ENERGY FUTURES

How do you get people involved in complex, technical debates about energy policy and forms of municipal ownership? With a lot of imagination. The People's Republic of Energy team included theatre maker Britt Jurgensen, who co-designed immersive theatre, taking participants through Manchester's energy history on foot. The team also produced GM Energy Futures,

a prospectus that maps out the imagined journey of a new energy company from 2020 to 2035. GM Energy Futures was launched at the Greater Manchester Green Summit in March 2018. Lead collaborators Carbon Coop are now applying some of the lessons learned in developing mPOWER, a Horizon 2020-funded peer-learning programme designed to assist municipalities in creating a fair, clean and democratic energy future. Carbon Coop have drawn inspiration from the creative facilitation tools developed during Jam and Justice and hope that the mapping exercises, site visits and immersive theatre techniques will allow participants to share their knowledge and build lasting relationships.

EMPOWERING LOCAL PEOPLE

Many people disengage from mainstream politics, yet they may be highly active outside formal politics. Recruiting community workers with a DIY ethos and training them in photovoice techniques, one of our projects worked to reveal 'the heart of politics' among minimally enfranchised communities. This equips people with different tools to represent community concerns to policy makers, ensuring more people recognise the importance of such grassroots activism. Early feedback indicates that the participants feel emboldened and better able to represent the value of everyday politics in the wider political system. 'There are many ways in which ordinary people create socio-economic change every day,' says Sarah Whitehead, ARC project lead. 'People who don't understand complex political systems, but who do understand that change starts with compassion and connection within communities. Working with photovoice as a tool has enabled this project to be truly inclusive and accessible.' ►



'Success factors for more participatory urban governance.' Jam and Justice launch, May 2016

How to co-produce the city

The Jam and Justice project seeks to close the widening gap between citizens and governing authorities and create co-productive urban governance in which citizens are respected, consulted and integral to the decisions that affect their lives

The Universities of Sheffield, Manchester and Birmingham and the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation are working on the Jam and Justice project, a 42-month programme funded by the Economic and Social Research Council through its Urban Transformations programme, and Mistra Urban Futures, an international urban network. Professor Beth Perry says: 'Jam and Justice arose from a shared sense that urban governance is not currently fit for purpose, either democratically or from a social justice perspective.' The initiative coincides with a move towards UK city-regional devolution and growing international recognition of the need for meaningful citizen participation in decision-making.

NETWORKING FOR IMPACT

The project aims to maximise impact through workshops, field-trips, international visits and links with similarly-minded city-regions and urban institutes. The Action Research Collective (ARC) members have gained experience and other perspectives from different places, including a recent visit to Glasgow to connect with What Works Scotland. Perry says: 'We are part of an international research and action initiative, Realising Just Cities, which includes several cities from the Global North and South wanting to learn about and implement co-productive governance, through the Gothenburg-based Mistra Urban Futures Centre.' The team has held workshops in Cape Town and Barcelona to spread knowledge and network with urban decision-makers and social scientists, and plans similar trips to other major cities. Co-investigator Liz Richardson says: 'There seems to be a large groundswell of change towards more inclusive urban governance and we hope to nurture and drive this movement.'

DISSEMINATION METHODS

Core ideas underpinning the project have been published in: *Designing Public Policy*

for Coproduction (Durose and Richardson, 2016), *Reflexivity: The Essential Guide* (May and Perry, 2017) and *Cities and the Knowledge Economy* (May and Perry, 2018). Project findings will also be disseminated to inform stakeholders, from ordinary citizens to decision-makers who can influence change at the highest levels. Jam and Justice researcher Bert Russell adds: 'We seek to share our learning with relevant international organisations including the UN, the International Observatory for Participatory Democracy and the United Cities and Local Government Network.'

CREATING NEW METRICS

The project argues for a new approach to metrics for action-oriented, participatory social science, where it is not possible to plan all aspects or control all variables. The team published a key paper in *Nature*, arguing for a more creative way to assess the value of these projects. Co-investigator Catherine Durose says: 'Research of this type is not neatly assessed with traditional quantitative statistical approaches. Our contribution in *Nature* emphasises the need to craft metrics that extend how we measure and assess the value of research.'

The varied strands of the project are designed to meet the initiative's overall objectives of developing participatory spaces to address major urban problems. It is critical to understand the potential of co-production as a means of addressing power imbalances and enhancing citizen engagement in urban decision-making. 'Citizen participation is one of the most important areas to focus on,' says ARC member Andrew Burrbridge. 'It is a priority for public sector reform and we are failing to take this seriously.' Progressive strategies to engage and involve citizens in urban decision-making and governance are needed. As ARC member Amanda Bickerton notes, 'power is not pie ... it's a renewable resource.' ●

Project Information

FUNDING

Jam and Justice is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Mistra Urban Futures Centre.

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