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Notes from Forum Meeting KWMC 25th Feb 2016



### **Introduction**

Roz Hall leads an introduction of KWMC. She explains that KWMC is more complex than most organisations using co-produced arts practises as it's very direction is co-produced. KWMC grew organically, enthused by local people, from a small arts project originally about art and health.

### **Morning Session**

Jenny facilitates conversations around co-production in the projects. Gabrielle and Therese to briefly detail the first two projects. Gabrielle was unable to do this due to her train being delayed.

**Therese** - In BtB co-production was a way of re-orientating and refocusing concerns, the initial focus was around statutory spaces of engagement and this changed through the co-productive process. The project threw out possibilities for engagement across life-courses emphasising the significance of Islam across the life course and, for Muslim women particularly, across spaces. There were many contentious spaces around things that we 'should' or 'should not' have been discussing as part of this project.

Reflecting more widely, universities are powerful institutions but also powerful civic spaces, researchers, regardless of how we identify, are associated with these powers. But, as researchers, we tend to think about these things with nervousness, especially around occupying our own expertise.

Something has come out here about the nature of the university space and its strong moral/ethical imperative - in this civic space we can to come in a place which denotes that we (academics, communities and citizens) can discuss things that others don't like.

This project was brought sharply into the crosshairs of a multitude of public debates with a high level investment (from multiple quarters) in the outcomes and finding of the project.

**Project groups have table-top discussions to engage with the following questions:**

## **What have we learnt about Co-Production: Positives/Challenges/Surprises?**

### **LIFE CHANCES**

Helen Thomas-Hughes notes - added to by Marilyn

Ally talked about the demonstration of a deep commitment to widening participation and working with the diverse voices that SPAN had experienced through involvement in PM. 'Who knew that this sort of arts-based practice would be so positive?' Impact and giving voice to the grassroots. Ally likes hip-hop as a narrative form - suggests we could use hip-hop to deconstruct David Cameron's speech? Ally wants the Life Chances group at SPAN to go on to be part of a Policy and Research team at SPAN which will give participants a post-funding longevity.

Lack of anxiety about coming into this working group - Ally identified that this is personal and to do with the group dynamics.

Regarding the working group co-production -

- at the forming stage found we had a 'common language'.
- from the outset - egos were and have remained left at the door enabling in depth/intense discussions.
- we were there for a purpose; similar interests and approaches of organisations, so built up trust
- other working groups had a more specific subject but ended up with conflicts as there were different perspectives about what they thought they were working on. The LC working group got critical feedback from the Forum - struggled to find a topic at first.
- importance of structure - we were open to changing direction but had a strong scaffold which created freedom to move around. (An open ethos and open structure wouldn't work)
- co-production at different levels - eg organisations' involvement in RA and artist recruitment

Workshop level - still working on integrating arts practice, research process and research questions. We adapted the research to the artists' proposal. Some SPAN participants have set up a reading group, arising from power analysis discussions.

### **FOOD**

**Positives / Negatives - some of them are a fine line.**

- Connections developed across the city
- Participants have a chance to steer and potentially take the research down new avenues.
- Empowerment opportunities.
- Sharing new ways of thinking.
- Learning new transferable skills
- Lots of different voices - building to healthy tensions
- Understanding of each other's experiences - enriching exchanges.
- Can bring out levels of competition between organisations can be good or bad - can split or build something to rally behind.

## Challenges

- How do you bring different expertise together and realise that everyone has a skill to bring / equal recognition.
- Uncomfortable about funding / finances
- Need space and to be organic
- Each comes with a different ethos
- Tensions over limited resources: money / time / power

## ILOP

### What have learnt about co-production? (Flip-chart notes)

- Everyone thinks about it differently
- “Whirling vortex”
- How we define it is a political act -
  - Hijacked
  - professional/technical ‘fix’
- ‘Holding ‘ uncertainty - “attunement” / “scoring”
  - Improvisation - polyphony? Assemblages...
  - “Relational agency/expertise” - inhabiting each other's ways of knowing
  - “Crafting”
  - -ve: personal, embodied, emotional
  - +ve: outcome, timebound/timescales
- Accountability and outcomes
- Leadership?
  - Administration/management
  - Devised theatre
  - “Regulating for engagement” - can you teach people how to do it? What is being “produced”?
- Power

## REGULATION

Since this project has not started yet, the regulation group used this time to discuss their project proposal more fully. Working group members addressed the question in the wider group discussion.

### Group feedback:

- Recognise the energy and expertise in the room.
- Importance of a structure to hold the process together
- Worked because of similarity of vision.
- Hold uncertainty
- A third neutral space is important - takes it away from power relations / importance of who you put in that space.
- spaces may not always feel safe as co-production is risky - we self-regulate our expertise and this expertise is sometimes held in doubt
- Community partners were embedded deep in the research process (eg ethics) this has been both a challenge and an interest.
- Was like “jumping into a vortex”.

- Will not always be positive and work - you need to have tensions and disagreements.
- Be honest and Embrace the lessons learnt from conflicts
- Hold uncertainty.



**What have we learnt about regulation generally and what specific regulatory terrains are we engaging with?**

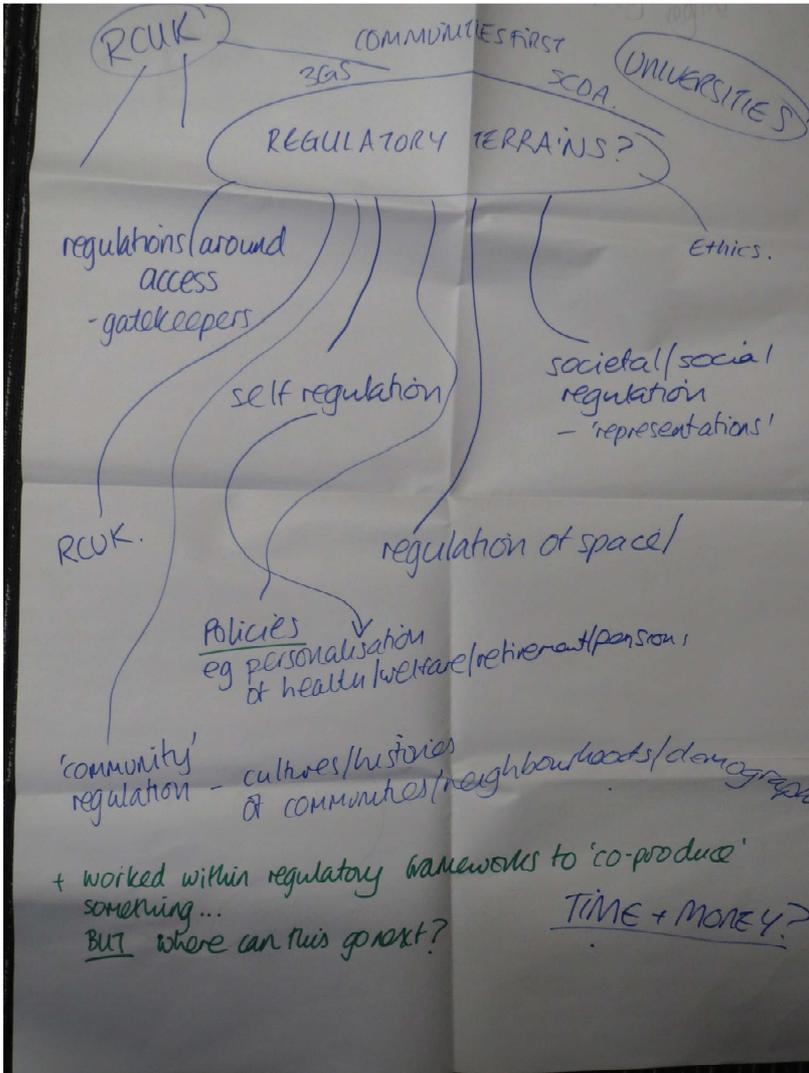
**LIFE CHANCES**

- Self-regulation occurs because of different ideologies we hold.
- Censorship - can be subverted. All regulation is contrived to create barriers.
- Regulators affecting research and participants.
- Some specific regulatory issues raised so far:
  - Immigration / nationality / asylum
  - Housing
  - Social security benefits and tax credits
  - Language
  - Income and attitudes surrounding it
  - Education
  - Crime and mental health
  - Social services
  - Equalities Act - protection can be obstructed/diffused depending on access
  - Benefits: What you can / cannot claim for
  - Understanding the benefits system
  - Highly qualified people cannot access jobs
- Each character in the novel has a different constellation of regulatory systems around them
- Complex and multiple systems - 'simple processes using complex systems to mask ideology'
- Regulatory systems are being used to implement austerity
- With complex systems it is hard to make visible, understand and get your head around them let alone reimagine them.
- Are there assumptions that experts at the university will understand each of these complex systems - challenge when they do not.

## FOOD

- Planning regulation
- Power of Local Authorities - lack of power
- Power sessions - empower people to understand and question systems / regulation
- Wider determinants of health.
- Government blames lifestyle choices for ill health - so putting the onus back onto the individual. Difference between first and second White Papers shows change from wider social factors to individual choice, which is also easier to measure.
- Do we have capacity to change any regulations in our local community?

## ILOP



- Regulation is drawn down from the different institutions.
- Different people act as gatekeepers
- Self-regulation - can be uncomfortable talking to people about loneliness.
- How is space regulated - eg who uses a cafe at certain times of the day.
- Funding bodies have regulations.
- Time: Personal time is regulated by others. Universities are adding more and more time constraints to academic staff. Also pressures on time in community organisations.

- Regulations can be a positive / supportive thing.
- Organisations become fearful that they will lose funding unless they fulfill the regulations.

## **REGULATION**

The regulation project will look at problems of over and under regulation. They will also look at “hot” and “cold” regulation. “Hot” regulation being reactionary, “Cold” being more thought-out and technocratic. Identified the need to think about “cold” regulation at a cross-programme level.

## **PM Forum 25 February 2016: afternoon session - Marilyn’s notes**

Bethan was introduced – she is doing a scoping study on co-production which has involved a literature review, interviews with policy-makers, think tanks and communities on how co-production is experienced.

### **Planning programme outputs and commitments**

ESRC require specific outputs from projects (not necessarily papers). List of papers identified from the October 2015 writing retreat was made available as the basis for discussion in working groups. The policy press book would no longer be themes but chapters would be ‘case examples’, ie each project would have one chapter. (This is where research findings would be described).

Groups were invited to add or delete from the list, and to prioritise no more than 5 using a ‘traffic light’ system:

- green = in press/done;
- orange/yellow = in process eg draft papers;
- red = not yet begun but needs to be done.

(discussion in working groups and flip charts to be collated)

### *Feedback session*

Article in Economy and Society is being re-written for April/May (Morag)

### *Life chances working group*

Talked about ‘scaling up’ the work with artists to take the work to wider audiences (not as in scaling up an intervention but scaling up as a legacy for the organisations). Includes commercial possibilities.

### *Isolation and older people*

Done pop-up/exhibitions, play and more artwork. Reports at different levels – community organisations, partners, participants and what’s useful for community partners not just academic articles. Policy briefing being planned.

### *Wales*

Two outputs, Gareth’s paper published and journal on data/da(r)ta . Young person’s story on website, now published practitioner’s guide on relationship education. Conferences all done: some coming up (eg Graphic Moves in Chicago and 2-day event on sex education in Wales). Co-hosted a Commission on poverty and arts

based practice. Exhibition – visual case studies and arts-based practice. Young people awarded a prize and presented their work at Wales Assembly. Emma has won a Cardiff Impact Award (embargoed)

#### *Food*

Less academic approach– done articles for local papers, British Cable film, online mapping interface, the 'fridge', ongoing blogs.

#### *General comments*

Timelines needed with working groups – link Co-I to bring these together.

Helpful to connect outputs to PM via Researchfish so that more people can access them

#### **New projects -**

##### **Regulation project**

The final project would have its primary focus on regulation and regulatory terrains across projects. The proposal came from a Regulation Working Group discussion which included input from Prof Janet Newman from the OU (who also has local government experience).

The group identified themes such as spatiality, place, citizenship, power/agency, action/change, expertise/work, and four concepts: internalisation, interaction, institutionalisation and imaginings.

#### *General comments*

- The project would aim to look at regulation collectively – and come to working groups to ask about experiences of regulation and to see if there are patterns across projects (similarities and differences highlighted this morning). All projects are interconnected. A risk is that everything can be considered as 'regulation' and so the term becomes meaningless. Janet's attempt to give us higher level categories is helpful. Food group is an interesting example of over- and under-regulation, and 'market' regulation not just the state (contrasting examples of how communities responded to MacDonald's – there may also be contradictions between young people's perceptions and other community voices). One issue is how far the environment/surroundings affect regulation and our behaviour – may run across all themes.
- The term 'expertise' may not be helpful as we are all learning. Perhaps more about knowledge and experience and willingness to enhance our understanding.
- Would a separate project be needed if all projects are looking at regulation? Though as each project is time-limited and focussing on a particular level of regulation there is still a programme level role to bring all of the learning from projects together, and perhaps talk to regulators. The project aims to highlight regulation in a way that the whole programme was set up to explore ('regulating for engagement'). Would the complexity of regulation play out in different ways which could make this difficult? The project could 'lay bare' regulation and allow us to critique ourselves. If regulation covers everything, there may need to be a process of selecting a regulatory focus, so any such process should be transparent.
- Project could include discussion of aspects of 'self-regulation', what informs this and how it plays out (eg in the food group); and in the currently government's emphasis on people

regulating themselves. Self-regulation as one side of a bigger question. Regulation may also be hidden.

- The project aims to synthesise and develop a conceptual framework to develop a PM position on regulation and to test against a policy object. The term 'test' may not be helpful in the context of some project work which is emergent, where effects may not be easy to capture and in the context of co-produced methodology. When abstracting out from enactments the process of engagement can be lost. 'Testing' might also carry tensions in a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary context (eg arts based practice). Perhaps the project could focus on what needs to be done for the programme, what new knowledge of regulation we are generating and how to get from here to there: 'sense-making'.
- Earlier discussions of the project had included whether to take concepts of regulation and apply it to a 'policy object'. Would this be detached from the understanding generated by the projects? Or would the final project offer any further engagement with regulators that projects may not have been able to do? At this stage it is left open as to whether there would be another policy object or whether there are commonalities across projects that could be drawn out.
- The word 'hope' in the title came from Janet Newman, from hearing about projects focussing on possible future regulation changes as well as current constraints. The term can be ambiguous - some people liked the connotation of optimism and hope for change, including hope for change collectively. Others preferred alternatives such as 'possibilities'. This could be seen in the context of what regulation does – 'hope' can imply regulation is always a bad thing.
- There may be some intersection with the futures group at Bristol University and the work of Susan McManus.
- The RA role is envisaged as taking place over about 18 months, starting with engaging with projects to develop a conceptual framework. Questions included whether it would be appropriate for an RA to write the first version of a framework and whether 18 months is enough to do a large and complex job. Role of the RA is not empirical but to draw on what's already there. Writing / academic / theorising skills will be crucial. Disciplinary perspective of the RA could be important in the context of multi/cross-disciplinary projects. RA role is pivotal in bringing out what is happening across projects.
- How do working groups contribute to the project? The regulation project would need to work with existing project RAs/working groups/participants. This is a central project to be involved in, and part of knowledge exchange is to bring everyone on board. Some involvement of community organisations in RA recruitment process would be consistent with co-production principles eg giving feedback to the interview panel. Working group discussions would be important to capture as part of this work. The RA could help gather / curate/write papers.
- Some basic mapping of regulatory practices across projects might be needed. There may be challenges with timing if the aim is to synthesise work of the projects before the end of July. Though there may be money for fieldwork expenses to bring people together eg writing retreats or seminars (as envisaged by the Life Chances working group).

- Suggestion that the project focus initially on developing a conceptual framework about regulation, which can then be taken to projects to see how it fits with the working groups' experiences of regulation, and then revised. So it is an iterative process.

*What next?*

- Revised version of the regulation project plan with job description
- RA post advertised

### **Wales project**

Discussed at the last Forum, some re-thinking being done to build on shared interest between Knowle West and North Merthyr on young people, technology, agency and change. Conversations continuing.

### **'Utopias' Festival**

Four projects look likely to get festival funding – food; Life Chances; older people; Co-exist (and Cardiff group excavating a roman fort, linking to utopia). The festival can help AHRC 'spectacularise' and demonstrate our work to the public. The Isolation and Older People project is running performances in places where the project has worked and there will be post-performance futures thinking. Life Chances will have a 'transactional analysis' space where people can interact with circular logo, and can make and sell jewellery. The Food group will be re-imagining food spaces using artists to help re-imagine local high streets, and also some digital mapping and live drawing by an artist to sketch an alternative vision. Coexist will do a film which will be powered by a bike, getting people to cycle to see the film to encourage them to take action.

Heidi will arrange accommodation etc for the fair centrally.

Money for the project to set up performance projects in London did not get funding.

Meeting closed, thanks to Jenny and Ros for facilitating.