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Analytical lens for investigating CSOs and state relations: the contributions of co-production and institutional logics perspectives

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Abstract: The 1990s saw what Della Porta (2020) calls the renaissance of civil society, from which studies on the relations between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the State grew exponentially. Based on this context, this theoretical essay aims to demonstrate how the theories of co-production and institutional logics can be used in a complementary way to understand these relations. We use a qualitative methodology of extensive literature review and study of the proposed literatures. We identify six contributions of this complementary use: on the understandings of (i) where coproduction occurs and (ii) how coproduction occurs, from a neoinstitutional perspective, (iii) what structural mechanisms influence coproduction, (iv) on overcoming the critique of reciprocity in coproduction, (v) on the further operationalization of analyses into institutional logics, and (vi) on the influence of institutional logics on coproduced outcomes. We hope that our theoretical-analytical contributions can be applied in empirical studies and improved in the future.

Key words: Co-production; Institutional Logics; Civil Society Organizations; State; Relationships.

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1. Introduction

State-centered theories were prevalent in the field of Social Sciences and of Public Administration for a long period of time. In the 1980s the main understanding was that after World War I the state became the dominant organization in society, with autonomy and structure based on the control and maintenance of order (Skocpol, 1985). In the following decade, however, Friedland and Alford (1991) would publish their seminal work "Bringing Society Back In," countering this understanding and bringing up issues such as governance and political participation. There is the renaissance of civil society (Della Porta, 2020), from which studies on the relations between Civil Society Organizations and the State have grown exponentially. They are done through multiple lenses: partnerships, networks, collaboration, cooperation, coproduction, etc. (Osborne, 2009).

Coproduction stands out for this paper. It is the process of producing goods, services, or public policies in which actors from different organizations participate (Ostrom & Baugh, 1973). Coproduced processes essentially build value, beyond outputs, for the relationships that are established among all actors - coproducers - in the course of producing the good, product, or public policy (Alford, 2015).

Friedland and Alford’s (1991) work also brought to the discussion a new concept: the one of institutional logics. Institutional logics are conChartd as macro components of the institutional relationships that make up institutional orders - large subsystems that order the institutions of society (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012). They are sets of socially constructed historical patterns from material practices, values, beliefs, rules, and assumptions that underlie the material and immaterial relationships within institutions (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

We believe that these literatures can be enriched, and some of their gaps overcome, based on their coming together. In this sense, this theoretical essay, based on a broad literature review, aims to demonstrate how the theories of co-production and institutional logics can be used in a complementary way to understand the relations between CSOs and the state.

The essay is divided into five sections in addition to this introduction. First, the methodology used for its production is presented. Then, in the next two sections, the concepts of co-production and institutional logics are presented. Then, the contributions of the complementary use of these two theoretical lenses are placed. Finally, there are the final considerations.

2. Methodology

A broad literature review was carried out regarding the theoretical lenses used, which were studied and analyzed in depth. The main references mobilized concerned, on coproduction: its first definition (Ostrom, 1993, 1996; Ostrom & Baugh, 1973), its redefinition based on the relationships established between coproducers (Boyle & Harris, 2009), the delimitation of what is not coproduction (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Boyle & Harris, 2009; Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016) and the generation of value from coproduced processes (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012). In turn, about institutional logics were: about their definition (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Jay, 2013; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Thornton et al., 2012), about their types of interaction (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Lee & Lounsbury, 2015), about the role of institutions and neoinstitutionalism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983;
Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2014) and about institutional field (Scott, 2014; Wooten & Hoffman, 2008).

After this first stage of literature review, the propositions brought in this theoretical essay were established. They were based on Suddaby's (2010, 2014) clarifications about the formulation of constructs and the relevance of theories. In this sense, sections 3 and 4 of this paper, which bring descriptions about the theories of co-production and institutional logics, aim to provide relevant definitions for our propositions. Moreover, we elucidate that their scope of application refers to the relations established between CSOs and the state in the context of contemporary Western capitalist countries - the context on which institutional logics are theorized -, analyzed at the institutional field level. In turn, the semantic relationship of our propositions and their logical coherence in relation to the general theoretical argument we intend to make will be explained in section 5, where the propositions will be duly presented and explained.

3. The co-production concept in the governance literature

During the 1970s, Elinor Ostrom highlighted the role of citizens and the collaboration between different organizations in public services, defining the concept of co-production. Co-production expresses a simple idea, that of mutual and active engagement between actors from various organizations. It seeks to overcome the distorted views of the role of the State, which were based on the interpretation that it was the sole provider of the public good (Ostrom & Baugh, 1973). This joint action generates synergy, allowing results that would not be achieved if each of the parties acted in isolation. Through co-production it would be possible to bring more efficiency to the public sector (Ostrom, 1993, 1996; Parks et al., 1981).

As time went by, the concept was rethought by several authors, who expanded its determination as they brought to light the issue of the relationships established between coproducers (Alford, 2015; Bovaird, 2007; Brandsen & Honingh, 2015; Poocharoen & Ting, 2015).

From the coproduced activity, the construction of value could occur in five dimensions: (i) value directly for the user; (ii) value for larger groups, usually of people close to the user; (iii) social value, fostering interaction and social cohesion; (iv) value for the environment, which ensures the sustainability of the policies that go through it; and (v) political value, which supports the democratic process (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012).

Several studies characterize different activities as coproduced. We chose to consider Bovaird and Loeffler's (2012) definition. According to it a phenomenon can only be considered co-produced if the co-producers are involved in activities that permeate both co-commissioning (co-planning, codesign, co-prioritization, co-funding, and co-monitoring/evaluation) and co-provisioning (co-management and co-delivery).

For co-production to effectively occur, a series of requirements must be met. To understand them, we have constructed Chart 1, below, based on a case study research produced by The New Economics Foundation (NEF) (2014), and the characteristics listed by the consolidated literature on the subject.

<p>| Chart 1 - Requirements for Co-production |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Categories</th>
<th>NEF (2014) Categories</th>
<th>Featured Categories of Literature</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>Recognition of people as assets, breaking their passive role in receiving services</td>
<td>Recognition of people as policy assets</td>
<td>Boyle e Harris (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Existence of direct and active contributions from citizens</td>
<td>Brandsen e Honingh (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of skills</td>
<td>Use of existing skills of all actors to produce services</td>
<td>Taking advantage of citizens' characteristics (skills, values, etc.)</td>
<td>Vooberg, Bekkers e Tummers (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td>Citizens' sense of belonging</td>
<td>Brandsen e Pestoff (2006); Bovaird (2007); Brandsen e Honingh (2015); Vooberg, Bekkers e Tummers (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalyst effect</td>
<td>Transforming the usual producers into catalysts for change at the expense of their action as service providers</td>
<td>Learning by policy producers about the different forms of agenda formation</td>
<td>Ostrom (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compatibility and openness of public organizations with citizen participation</td>
<td>Vooberg, Bekkers e Tummers (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Users encouragement in their transformation into co-producers</td>
<td>Ostrom (1996); Alford (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking barriers</td>
<td>Breaking barriers between co-producers</td>
<td>Coordination between citizens, usual producers and agency</td>
<td>Ostrom (1996); Alford (2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teamwork within the public agency and between co-producers

Ostrom (1996)

Availability

- Availability of both parties to perform the work

Alford (2015)

Reciprocity

Existence of incentives for reciprocity between co-producers

Reciprocal and balanced relationship between public service professionals and policy users

Boyle e Harris (2009); Brandsen e Honingh (2015)

Valuing the relationships between the various actors and their work

Boyle e Harris (2009)

Peer networks

Establishment of peer support networks, sharing experiences to expand the capacity of services

Sharing experiences, innovative capabilities and knowledge

Boyle e Harris (2009); Bode e Brandsen (2014); Alford (2015)

Process redesign

- Redesign of traditional conceptions of planning and administration of public services

Bovaird (2007); Verschuere, Brandsen e Pestoff (2012)

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Based on this framework, we observe that for the production of a good, service or public policy to occur through a co-production process, it is necessary to have: active participation of co-producers, use of their abilities, sense of belonging, catalyzing effect, encouragement to participation, breaking down barriers, willingness to participate in the process, reciprocity among co-producers, peer networks, and process redesign.

Co-production occurs, therefore, in the execution of the various stages by co-producers with a high level of participation. The activities would be undertaken in such a way that there would be synergy among them and the process would occur in an organic and cohesive manner (Bovaird, Stoker, Jones, Loeffler, & Pinilla Roncancio, 2016; Brudney & England, 1983).

It is noteworthy that these categories translate from an ideal conception of coproduction, a theoretical construct that emphasizes certain characteristics for the purpose of analysis, but which may not be found in its pure form in reality, as we will see below.

4. The institutional logics concept in the organizational studies

In the organizational studies, neoinstitutionalism understands the institution as a socially constructed body that results from planned and unplanned actions and interactions from non-rational social processes.

Institutions are social structures and mechanisms present in all spheres of life, which influence, regulate, delimit, and give perspectives to individuals' behavior, being created individually or in groups, and shaping these individuals or groups, in a reciprocal relationship of agent-institution and institution-institution interaction (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2014). In this process, institutions outline
not only ends to be achieved, but also the means and mechanisms that will be used to achieve these ends, so that individuals, groups, and organizations make use of them on behalf of their goals (Friedland & Alford, 1991), whether they are of public or private value.

Society operates on three fronts: (i) from competition and negotiation among individuals, (ii) conflict and coordination among organizations, and (iii) contradiction and interdependence among institutions (Friedland & Alford, 1991). These interactions can occur in various forms of complementarity and/or dispute, causing organizations and individuals to constantly change the existing institutional relations in society.

Institutional logics should be thought of as capable of providing a coherent set of organizational principles for a domain of social life, thus forming a "relational space" (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008). Accordingly, institutional environments should be conceived beyond their material aspects (structures and practices), but also by their immaterial and symbolic components (ideas and meanings).


In the case of investigations into the relations between CSOs and the state, we are especially interested in the community and state logics, whose main attributes are presented in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional order/logics characteristics</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic assumption</td>
<td>State as a redistribution mechanism</td>
<td>Common borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy source(s)</td>
<td>Democratic participation</td>
<td>Union of wills; belief in trust and reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority source(s)</td>
<td>Bureaucratic domination</td>
<td>Commitment to community values and ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity source(s)</td>
<td>Social and economic classes</td>
<td>Emotional connection and reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases of norms</td>
<td>Citizenship in the nation</td>
<td>Group participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases of attention</td>
<td>Interest group status</td>
<td>Personal investment in the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases of strategy</td>
<td>Increase of the collective good; public action; implementation of policies; accountability</td>
<td>Status increment; honor of members and practices; public action; solidarity; altruism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency source(s)</td>
<td>Coordination of public resources; creating rules; execution power</td>
<td>Organization and collective action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Laws; public procurement rules; duty of transparency</td>
<td>Participants expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Budget and electoral cycles</td>
<td>Campaign moments; inflection points; funding cycles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The state logic can be characterized through its survival dependent on the ceremonial demands of highly institutionalized environments, conforming to the definition of a more bureaucratized institution. It privileges issues such as legal coordination arrangements and hierarchical, bureaucratic, and rational procedures (Lee & Lounsbury, 2015; Thornton et al., 2012).

The community logic is based on the idea of directing collective efforts to an organized citizenship (Lee & Lounsbury, 2015), whose main characteristics are the definition of common values (Thornton et al., 2012), with multiple authority and participatory governance (Costa, Guarido Filho, & Gonçalves, 2014). Within it, CSOs depend on managing the demands of internal relations and external boundaries, divided into a heterogeneous range of configurations.

5. Co-production and institutional logics in the investigation of CSOs and state relations

In this essay, we argue that the complementary use of the theoretical lenses of co-production and institutional logics can generate theoretical-analytical contributions for both theories, as well as for the investigations in which they are employed. In this section, we list such contributions.

5.1. Where co-production takes place, from a neo-institutional perspective

Institutions and their institutional logics are elements of organizational life that operate at various levels. They are present at the macro (societal) level of institutional orders, but also at the meso level, of institutional fields, and at the micro level, of individuals and organizations. Co-production, in turn, occurs at the latter two levels.

When it comes to the partnerships established between the state and CSOs, we are talking here about the meso level, the institutional fields. They are arenas of interaction between individual and organizational actors, who interact more among themselves than with other actors, according to a system of common meanings (Scott, 2014) based on their relational/structural and symbolic/meaning dimensions (Machado-da-Silva, Guarido Filho, & Rossoni, 2006).

These institutional fields are spaces of interaction between the logics of the state and CSOs around a theme, relative to the partnership itself or to the public policy area to which it refers - health, education, culture, social assistance, among others. It is worth noting that, although we are talking about two predominant logics that inform the nature of the functioning of the state and CSOs - the state and community logics, as presented in chart 2 - as they operate in this diversity of public policy areas mentioned above, there are underlying logics that also influence these actors, as well as local differences and differences between levels of government.

By emphasizing the multiplicity of logics in the field of state-CSO relations, we have that they relate to each other in such a way as to generate, within this field, a new institutionality given by the interaction between actors and structures, characterized here by the phenomenon of co-production. The creation of this new institutionality, achieved through the interaction of state and community institutional logics and their underlying logics, materializes to the extent that there is a broad sharing of information, knowledge, experiences, organizational principles, values, and beliefs, among other factors that constitute the institutional logics of the actors involved.
What we propose, therefore, is an understanding of how institutional transformations are related to the creation of new social relations and new symbolic orders (Friedland & Alford, 1991), so that co-production would occur when there is a relationship between the institutional logics of the state and the CSOs in the proposed institutional field. In this way, co-production would occur in fields where different institutional logics are related.

5.2. How co-production occurs, from a neo-institutional perspective

If co-production occurs from the active participation of actors from different organizations in the production of a good, service or public policy, it then depends on the mobilization by these actors of material and symbolic resources linked to their institutional logics.

In this way, the sources of legitimacy of state and community logics, for example, respectively, democratic participation and the union of wills and the belief in trust and reciprocity, are mobilized so that categories such as "active participation", "catalyzing effect", and "breaking down barriers" of coproduction can be boosted. Similarly, the "use of skills" of coproduction is linked to the employment of the strategy bases, sources of agency, and structure of these logics, contained in Chart 2.

5.3. Structural mechanisms influence co-production

Just as individuals and organizations influence the institutions of which they are a part, these institutions influence these individuals and organizations. According to neoinstitutional theories, the actions of individuals and organizations are intertwined with their societal context, so that it is impossible to explain either one without considering the other (Friedland & Alford, 1991).

Studies on the motivations of different actors that lead them to coproduce (Alford, 2009, 2014; Fledderus & Honingh, 2016; Parks et al., 1981; Van Eijk & Steen, 2014; Vanleene, Voets, & Verschuer, 2015) usually give primacy to the agency of these actors, highlighting their willingness to participate in coproduction processes. However, it is necessary to question how reflexive these actors are and to consider, beyond agency, the structural mechanisms involved in this participation decision.

By bringing institutional logics into the discussion of co-production, we bring into play a contextual debate that has not yet been addressed through this theoretical lens. Actors, whether they are individuals or organizations, do not decide to participate in coproductive activity or take certain actions in the course of it based on a decision detached from context. Starting from this assumption means assuming the principles of rational choice (Simon, 1965), based on voluntarism and decision-making based on precise calculations that lead to a succession of factors and, finally, to the final objective, in a way that means and ends are hierarchized. There are, however, structural mechanisms, such as, for example, regulatory mechanisms (Lino, Aquino, Azevedo, & Brumatti, 2019), that conform, promote, or restrict these decisions and actions.

In this sense, institutional logics shape the interests and preferences of actors present in fields and how these translate into repertoires of behavior to be mobilized (Friedland & Alford, 1991).

It is important to say that what we argue here is also not the primacy of structures, but the recursiveness between structure and agency. Studies in institutional logics, while considering that institutions shape actions, highlight that these same institutions are the
fruit of them (Cloutier & Langley, 2013). Thus, co-production and institutional logics should be conceived from a relational approach. This perspective seeks to explain how we understand and situate action, considering that both structure and agency should be thought about and their relations explored, taking into account how actors are inserted in a given social context and respond to the situations present within it (Battilana & D’aunno, 2009; Emirbayer, 1997).

5.4. Overcoming the reciprocity criticism in co-production

One of the properties that characterize coproduced processes, according to the consolidated literature, is that of reciprocity: the establishment of a balanced and mutual relationship between coproducers, as placed in Chart 1. This is a point that has been receiving criticism by several authors (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Goodwin, 2018; Mitlin, 2008) for its excessively functionalist view, which ignores the fact that even in coproduced processes there are conflicts and asymmetries of power, capacity, and resources among the various actors involved.

Cultural and systemic impediments to the establishment of these reciprocal relationships are even more common when it comes to relationships established with the public sector, as is the case of partnerships between the State and Civil Society Organizations. It is in this sense that Bovaird and Loeffler (2012, p. 1121) state about the concept of co-production: "it insists on an 'equal and reciprocal relationship', a condition which has been rarely encountered in the sphere of public services".

Institutional logics bring to the discussion considerations of symbolic dimension, which point to the differences between the participating actors, based on the logic to which they respond, will mediate possibilities of cooperation and conflicts.

By providing a set of organizational principles for actors to act upon at the individual, organizational, and societal levels, logics provide them with frames under which to justify their action. To the extent that institutional logics affect different levels, there is therefore a significance to action based on the choice made (Friedland & Alford, 1991). Depending on how they affect a given space of interactions, institutional logics will shape what is done, in which direction - cooperation or conflict.

In this sense, to the extent that state and community institutional logics, which work with different basic assumptions and characteristics, give direction to different sets of actors, as occurs in state-CSO relations, it will be possible that from these interactions different objectives, as well as the ends and means of the actors' behaviors, will be available or restricted for them to take as a basis for action (Friedland & Alford, 1991), which is why conflict occurs.

Similarly, the theory of institutional logics helps to understand also how it occurs, from the understanding of how central different logics are to an organization or field - the level at which they are all important, occupying fundamental positions -, and how compatible they are - the degree to which they agree on the means and ends to be achieved (Besharov & Smith, 2014).

5.5. Greater operationalization of analyzes in institutional logics

Institutional logics are characterized by manifesting themselves in very broad, abstract categories that are difficult to operationalize empirically. To overcome this issue, their association with distinct theoretical, methodological, and phenomenological approaches is necessary (Durand & Thornton, 2018).
What this essay proposes is that the association, at the theoretical level, of the literatures of institutional and coproduction logics allows for greater operationalization to the former at least on two points.

First, we suggest that to the same extent that institutional logics add the issue of conflict in coproduced processes, coproduction collaborates in understanding how conflicting institutional logics (re)reconcile.

The exchanges between institutional logics do not always occur in the same way, conditioning the construction of meaning to different ways, spaces and times, as shown by studies on hybridity in the neoinstitutional literature (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Denis, Ferlie, & Van Gestel, 2015). As Cloutier and Langley (2013) state, studies in institutional logics have not yet produced typologies of how this happens. The categories mobilized by coproduction (Chart 2) could then help operationalize analyses that seek to mobilize institutional logics to understand how interactions between actors with different worldviews take place.

Second, we propose that the coproduction literature offers the institutional logics lens mechanisms of analysis that highlight the outcomes of the processes of production of goods, services, and public policies in more concrete terms while allowing us to observe the influence of institutional logics on what is produced in coproduction processes, a topic addressed below.

5.6. Influence of institutional logics on co-produced results

We have already suggested that institutional logics can collaborate in understanding the motivation that leads actors to coproduce by bringing to light the structural and symbolic mechanisms that shape the decisions of these actors. We now propose to understand the effects of institutional logics on coproduced outcomes.

What we suggest here is that different forms of incidence of institutional logics generate different coproduced results. In this sense, the co-produced results can be different, even when dealing with similar processes, depending on the degrees of centrality and compatibility of institutional logics manifested in the fields in which the interactions occur (Besharov & Smith, 2014).

In the case of partnerships between the state and CSOs, even if there is co-production of the production of the good, service or public policy, in the sense of the indispensability of the active participation of the co-producers in all stages of production, the various possible combinations between levels of centrality and compatibility will generate different results:

- **High centrality and compatibility**: the state and community logics are considered equally important in the process and agree on the means and/or ends to be adopted and achieved, generating results that can assume a hybrid form of the conceptions that feed into these two logics;

- **Low centrality and high compatibility**: one of the logics is considered more important than the other in the process, but both agree on the means and/or ends to be adopted and reached, generating results that can assume a hybrid form of the conceptions that feed these two logics. In this case, in the face of sporadic disagreements, the logic that is considered more important tends to make the decision;

- **High centrality and low compatibility**: the state and community logics are considered equally important in the process, but they disagree as to the means and/or
ends to be adopted and reached, generating highly disputed results that may tend towards the conceptions of either logic;

- **Low centrality and compatibility:** one of the logics is considered more important than the other in the process, and they disagree as to the means and/or ends to be adopted and reached, generating results aligned to the conceptions of the logic considered more important. If it is the state logic, the results may be influenced in the sense that they correspond more to its operating rationality, based on bureaucratic domination and process hierarchization, for example. If it is the community logic, these results may be linked to the community's values and ideologies.

6. **Final considerations**

Studies focusing on intersectoral relations and on state-CSO relations have been growing since the 1990s. In this environment, both the literature on the co-production of goods, services, and public policies and that on institutional logics have been extensively explored. Nevertheless, scientific research is an endless process, because for each answer found, multiple questions are raised.

It was with the purpose of discussing and proposing ways to address these questions that we wrote this theoretical essay. It aimed to demonstrate how the theories of co-production and institutional logics can be used in a complementary way to understand the relations between the state and CSOs.

To this end, we list here six contributions: on the understandings of (i) where coproduction occurs and (ii) how coproduction occurs, from a neoinstitutional perspective, (iii) which structural mechanisms influence coproduction, (iv) on overcoming the criticism of reciprocity in coproduction, (v) on the greater operationalization of analyses in institutional logics, and (vi) on the influence of institutional logics on coproduced results.

The discussions brought here are not exhausted in this essay. Our limitations concern the lack of empirical application of the theoretical assumptions proposed in case studies. In this sense, we hope that these assumptions will contribute to future studies, which may apply and improve them empirically.

**References**


