

Focusing on Actors, Scaling-Up, and Networks to Understand Co-Production Practices: Reporting From Berlin and Santiago

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Abstract

In different policy agendas, such as the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, co-production is introduced as a desirable urban planning practice to validate the engagement and inclusion of diverse actors/networks. Nevertheless, some scholars argue (e.g., Watson, Robinson) that the Western planning approach faces difficulties incorporating rationalities beyond the Global North–South division. In this context based on the research project DFG-KOPRO Int for the German Research Foundation on Chilean and German cases and the local context, this article seeks to explore how local groups are undertaking co-production, which means of legitimacy are used, and which socio-spatial results develop. In doing so, the research focuses firstly on the negotiation processes (governance) between stakeholders by undertaking network analysis and, secondly, on understanding the impulse for urban development by analysing the project's socio-spatial material patterns. Chile's neoliberal context and the case studies showcase diverse cooperative forms that try to close governance gaps within strong political struggles. In the German context, actors from different areas, such as cultural institutions, universities, and private actors undertake diverse mandates for testing regulatory, persuasive, or financial instruments. As different as local realities are, the overall results show that co-production occurs mostly in highly contested fields such as housing projects and highlights a three-part constellation of actors—state, private, and civil society—in urban development. However, negotiation processes take place, ranging from conflictive to cooperative. Hence, co-production challenges prevailing social and political structures by providing an arena for new forms of collective and pluralistic governance.

Keywords

Delphi study; governance framework; international urbanism; neoliberal urban development; planning instruments; urban co-production

1. Introduction

Co-production was defined by Ostrom (1996) as a conceptual framework, a process in which resource management, its production, and reproduction emerge through the contribution of actors coming from different organisations. Accordingly, Ostrom's definition implies that diverse actors (e.g., citizens) can take an active role in the provision of goods and services that concern them. On the other hand, co-production is conceived as a right to the production of space. Here, the spatial resource is central and refers to the "right to the city" concept which, according to Lefebvre (2003), is based on social interactions in the production of space. Hence, co-production frameworks are processes that bring together different actors and rationalities, create socio-political awareness, and thus strengthen the capacity of communities to act. In this sense, its implicit transformative character, in which different actors come together, opens up the possibility of making urban processes more equitable in both its planning and management frameworks (Alfaro d'Alençon & López Morales, 2018). Despite the enthusiasm in debates, other voices have been critical, especially regarding its framing and adaptation outside the Global North. Scholars such as Watson (2014) and Robinson (2022) have argued that Western-rooted planning practices are neither representative nor necessarily adequate to a Global South context in which diverse rationalities and common practices take place based on complex societal struggles.

As part of the neoliberal turn, the withdrawal of the state and the entry of large-scale private actors in the field of urban development have fostered a clear shift towards a more complex network of actors. In this way, co-production also seems to represent a field of conflict and negotiation in which governance and institutional systems are challenged. Turnhout et al. (2020) argue that most of the academic research about co-production understates the concrete role of power and politics involved in its real practice. According to these perspectives, global urban planning epistemology and theory need to advance to local conceptualisations based on situated practice underlying a political context. In this regard, as Watson (2014) argues, although the co-production concept is imprecise, the study of different co-production cases can inform different practices and, by doing so, expand the knowledge of the concept.

Based on this framework, we started the research project DFG-KOPRO Int for the German Research Foundation (DFG) as a joint and comparative research on co-production practices between and about Berlin and Santiago de Chile. The research framework was focused on exploring co-production as a potential source for collective, cooperative approaches within the framework of neoliberal urban development. It focused on the potential to challenge the distribution of political power, counteract marginalisation, and affect governance models at both the local and macro levels. This context justified the selection of case studies as Santiago de Chile and Berlin, Germany. Even if both research fields are fundamentally different in the Global North and South, urban development trends share a similar context of neoliberal development, characterised by growing economic inequality, social polarisation, and the need to mobilise resources for equitable urban development through cooperation. Thus, co-production plays an essential role among the state, civil society, and private actors. Santiago has represented a substantial and spatial laid-out case of neoliberal urbanism since the 1980s, with the withdrawal of the state in terms of development strategy when the neoliberal model was applied and introduced in Chile while Berlin's urban development was intensively changed in the 1990s by the neoliberal turn. Hence, both cases act as complementary knowledge sources. Whereby the findings should be gained based on a comparative empirical study, the comparison is in this case not defined as a method but as a strategy for gaining knowledge (McFarlane, 2010).

The project started in 2019, and research teams have been jointly working on the two case study areas, closely linked to the local context, debates and citizen groups, public actors, and academics involved in the projects. The data collection for the evaluation and documentation of the research has been done. In order to open local field research, a Delphi study was employed in both cities as its test settings, to compile cases, opinions, and experiences from “experts,” ranging from diverse backgrounds such as academia, public service, civil society, and the private sector.

The objective was to understand: (a) how urban co-production practices are locally conceptualised; (b) its effects on existing or resulting governance settings; and (c) the spatial results of local developments. To summarise our main findings, this article is based on the study’s most representative cases, such as the case of the Maestranza San Eugenio housing project in Santiago de Chile and the Blumengrossmarkt project in Berlin. In both cases, co-production is managed over urban resources related to the provision of housing and by doing so embodies potentials as an inclusive and innovative urban development model. However, the practices of co-production represent substantial differences related to the form in which actors negotiate and are involved since the management of the projects is deeply linked to local institutional frameworks of planning and governance.

2. Theoretical Framework

According to general academic literature, co-production is generally understood as a collaborative process in which diverse actors work together to design and deliver public services or projects. It involves sharing responsibilities, decision-making, and resources to create more effective and sustainable outcomes over time. Accordingly, co-production becomes essential when citizens lack access to basic services and safe environments, for instance, when local governments do not cope with local infrastructure demands (Castán Broto et al., 2022). Co-production differs from other engagement processes such as co-design and participation. Co-design focuses specifically on involving local communities and stakeholders in the design process, but it is not related to resource and responsibility management. Participation refers to involving individuals or groups in urban planning or decision-making processes. It can range from passive involvement, such as providing feedback, to active engagement. In addition, participation always depends on, and is managed by, the actor who controls more power and resources.

On the contrary, co-production is about engaging citizens and stakeholders in all the planning and decision-making stages of urban development. It goes beyond simply gathering input and seeks to involve them in the entire process, from problem identification to implementation and management. Against this background, we understand co-production as an approach or strategy for involving communities in the planning and decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihoods (Castán Broto et al., 2022). Therefore, co-production embodies empowerment and engagement. It can be a significant mechanism to incorporate “unheard voices” to produce more egalitarian outcomes in many critical sectors, especially under the current climate and economic crisis. In the urban arena, the political dimension is explicitly related to an integration and learning experience of diverse knowledge into planning and decision-making, thus challenging the dominance of conventional planning approaches, hierarchical governance, and siloed thinking (Schön, 1984). In this sense, it is important to highlight that decision-makers involved in co-production will always be subject to political and social pressures, and it is important to foster “horizontal” rather than “hierarchical” relationships between actors. Against this background, co-production

is both a knowledge-making and urban practice that is inevitably imbued with unequal power relations that need to be acknowledged but cannot be managed away (Turnhout et al., 2020). Hence, co-production requires deepening engagement with inequality and exclusion and involves a direct confrontation with current power asymmetries. The potential of co-production to promote wider societal transformation depends on the extent to which it addresses power dynamics and promotes inclusivity and equitable developments. Hence, it is important to recognise and address the political dimensions of co-production as well as its social and spatial results.

3. Research Context: The Challenge of International Comparative Research on Co-Production

This research is framed in empirical qualitative research in international planning theories. It explores how different approaches to cooperative urban development enable collaborative action in different stages of development and the outcome. The research framework was set to explore essential dimensions of co-production in urban development to understand: First, the urban governance, its network character and the conceptual as well as normative frameworks in which processes take place; second, the negotiation processes, their different conditions, and steering forces in different stages of development to identify and categorise the respective potential and benefits of partnership approaches; and third, to explore urban dynamics in terms of social-spatial factors, such as the capacity of projects to enable and facilitate different material development patterns of public and/or community spaces in distinction from other projects. Accordingly, data was collected based on the clarification of concepts, actors that initiate and develop cooperation, and the socio-spatial results of co-produced urban development and projects.

3.1. Methodology

The research process was based on a Delphi study in both contexts, as a qualitative and multi-level “expert” survey with 37 respondents in Chile and 40 respondents in Germany. Major trends and particularities could be identified around local “co-production” concepts, the context of actors and governance, as well as the resulting urban projects/policies/practices and their social-spatial qualities. “Experts” for the survey were defined as the variety of possible actors involved in different local co-production practices ranging from sectors like academia, NGOs and civil society, municipalities, urban development ministries, planners, and architects. The survey’s following step was to evaluate (a) actor constellations and governance, (b) common-based resources, and (c) spatial typologies. The last step was characterised by in-depth research with focus groups to discuss and achieve consensus/dissensus on the learnings in cross-sectoral workshops. The topics were the effects of cooperative urban development, its action patterns of involved actors, social-spatial dynamics, and applied instruments. The purpose was to understand the influence of “co-production” on administrative structures and formal regulations and its changes. The research also included the evaluation of socio-spatial dynamics in project areas. Mappings of spatial production could recognize the different practices (Figures 1 and 3) and inform about the resulting processes, functions, urban types, building typologies, and spatial qualities.

3.2. Case Study Context and Selection and Criteria: Types and Profiles of Co-Production

As a result of the survey process, a series of urban group typologies for co-production emerged, allowing the framing of understandings along different and co-existing local profiles. These types follow the social-spatial

logic of the local context based on essential dimensions such as segregation, fragmentation, polarisation, and co-existing developmental trends. To contextualise the findings, it can be stated that demands for co-production in Santiago are mainly related to affordable housing and the “right to the city” context. The Berlin cases are not primarily restricted to affordable housing and it is likely to find a broader variety of purposes and types. In particular, the differentiation can be made concerning the engagement of the civil society (groups) in more differentiated ways.

This is increasingly supported, for example, by cultural institutions and bodies (“Kulturträger”) which arise as relevant (new) players in various actor constellations. The Chilean study made clear that the term co-production as such and the associated theories per se are rarely discussed. In practice, however, processes that can be described as co-productive meet great interest, not only in the context of state projects that are intended to enable user-oriented self-government (“autogestión”). The interest also applies to historical cooperative practices from the 1960s and 70s developed with municipal, civil society, and private actors, which are today evaluated as successful approaches to overcome spatial segregation and informality towards mixed residential areas and a more inclusive urban society. These inputs, alongside the descriptive typology structure wherein the most frequently cited examples of co-production could be categorised, are the basis for this article. In both cases, the resource for co-production is housing. In the Chilean case, it is the Maestranza San Eugenio housing project, a project promoted by the movement of Ukamau residents. The German case represents the ex-Blumengrossmarkt project, an urban redevelopment developed by a group of residents and different architecture offices. Each case is described in the following section.

3.3. The Case of Ukamau and the Co-Production of the Maestranza San Eugenio Housing Complex

3.3.1. Context

The Chilean State has a subsidiary financing scheme for social housing provision based on the neoliberal rationale of urban policies. The scheme involves several actors, among them: (a) The Regional Housing and Urbanisation Service (SERVIU), which is the government entity in charge of implementing public policies for access to housing at the regional level; (b) individuals and families who meet the requirements to receive housing subsidies through Housing Committees; (c) the Sponsoring Entities, which together with the Housing Committees manage the design and construction of new housing complexes; (d) banks and other financial institutions that grant mortgage loans for the purchase of dwelling; and (e) the Housing Committees that can participate in the design and execution of housing projects through the Sponsoring Entities. As part of its operation, this subsidiary scheme is based on the delivery of subsidies to individuals or Housing Committees that must have secured a purchase option in a project of social interest or apply together with a Sponsoring Entity, which acts as a real estate developer in the design and building of the project. In both modalities, the subsidy contributes an additional amount to family savings, which must finance not only the design and construction of the project but also the purchase of the land. Thus, in the operability of this model, there are three relevant actors: The Ministry of Housing and Urbanism (central state) through SERVIU, which administratively controls the process; the Sponsoring Entities, which develop and execute the projects; and the Housing Committees, which are groups of organised families who apply with a project and land through the Sponsoring Entity.

CASES OF CO-PRODUCTION IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE

HOW IS PROJECTING CO-PRODUCTION:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM SANTIAGO DE CHILE

Research on Actual Co-Production Practices in the Framework of Neoliberal Urban Development within the Research Project DFG KoPro_int.

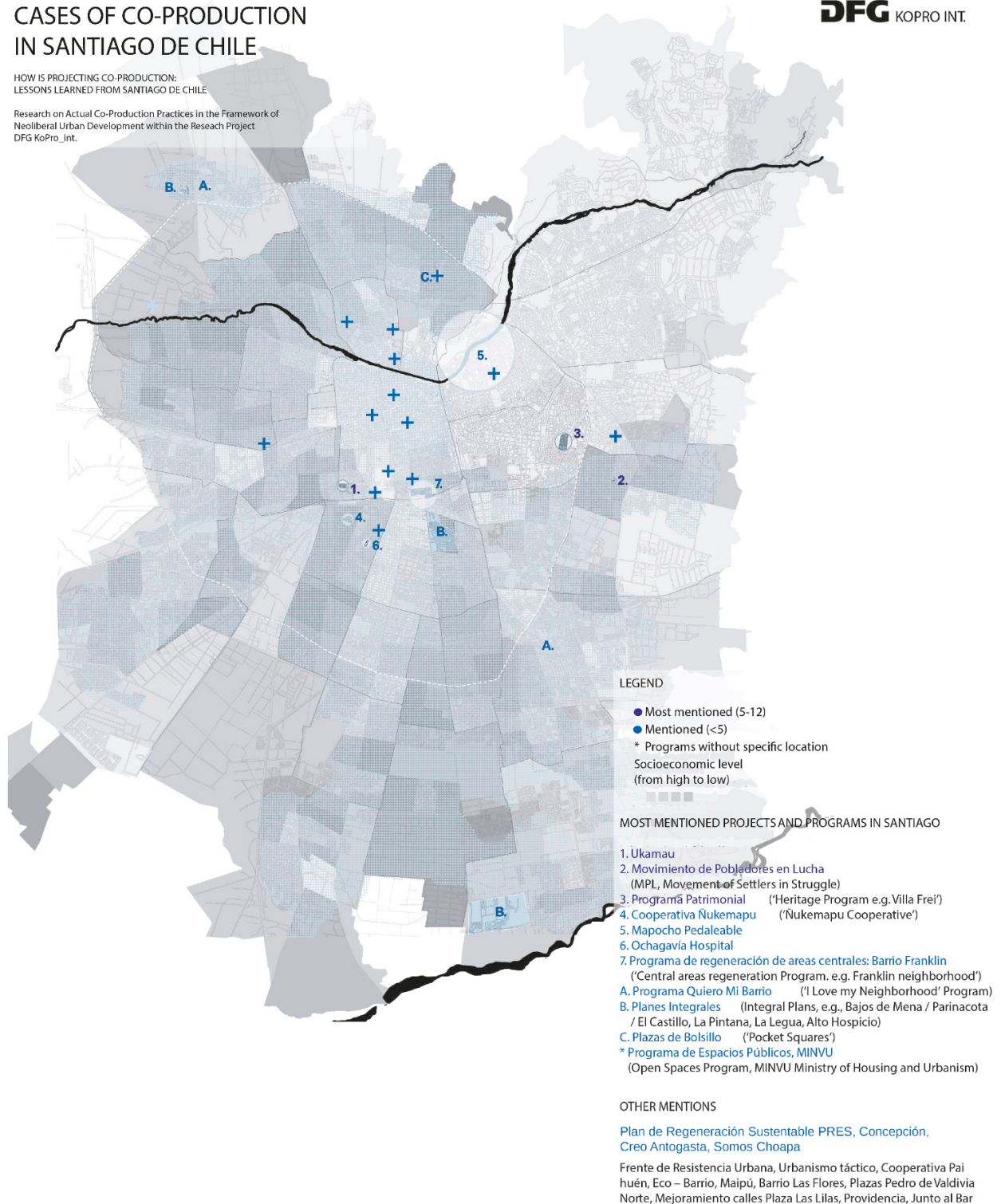


Figure 1. Cases of co-production in Santiago de Chile; in specific areas, related to state programmes for housing. The urban poor are spatially concentrated in socially disadvantaged areas of the city corresponding with the polarised landscape of neoliberal urban development. Only the projects related to environmental sustainability transcend the typical localisation and also reach affluent districts in the northeast of the city. Source: Courtesy of DFG-KOPRO Int research project.

Thus, under this model, the relationship between actors (Figure 2) is established administratively and indirectly between the state and civil society. The Sponsoring Entity fulfils the role of representing the Committee in front of the state without greater involvement from the families in terms of the definition of the structural conditions of the housing production model. In other words, there is no major level of participation of families in this model and the relation with the State is always indirect. In addition, in the Chilean case, the municipalities do not have institutionalised participation in the provision of housing except in helping the Committees to find available land. This model was originally introduced in 1980 as part of the neoliberal restructuring policies during the Pinochet dictatorship, focused on stratifying and targeting housing financing to the most vulnerable groups. Although the model was relatively successful in the 1990s concerning the mass production and provision of housing, most of the provision of housing was done over suburban land. The reason behind this decision was the incapacity to finance better locations because of the limitations of the subsidiary scheme of funding. As a result of these policies, most of the housing complexes have been built without considering access to services and employment and far from the urban cores which present major labour and economic opportunities. In this way, although the production of social housing over the last four decades has been marked by an evolving subsidiary scheme, it has not introduced structural change in its real estate system (del Romero, 2018), which has contributed to the formation of

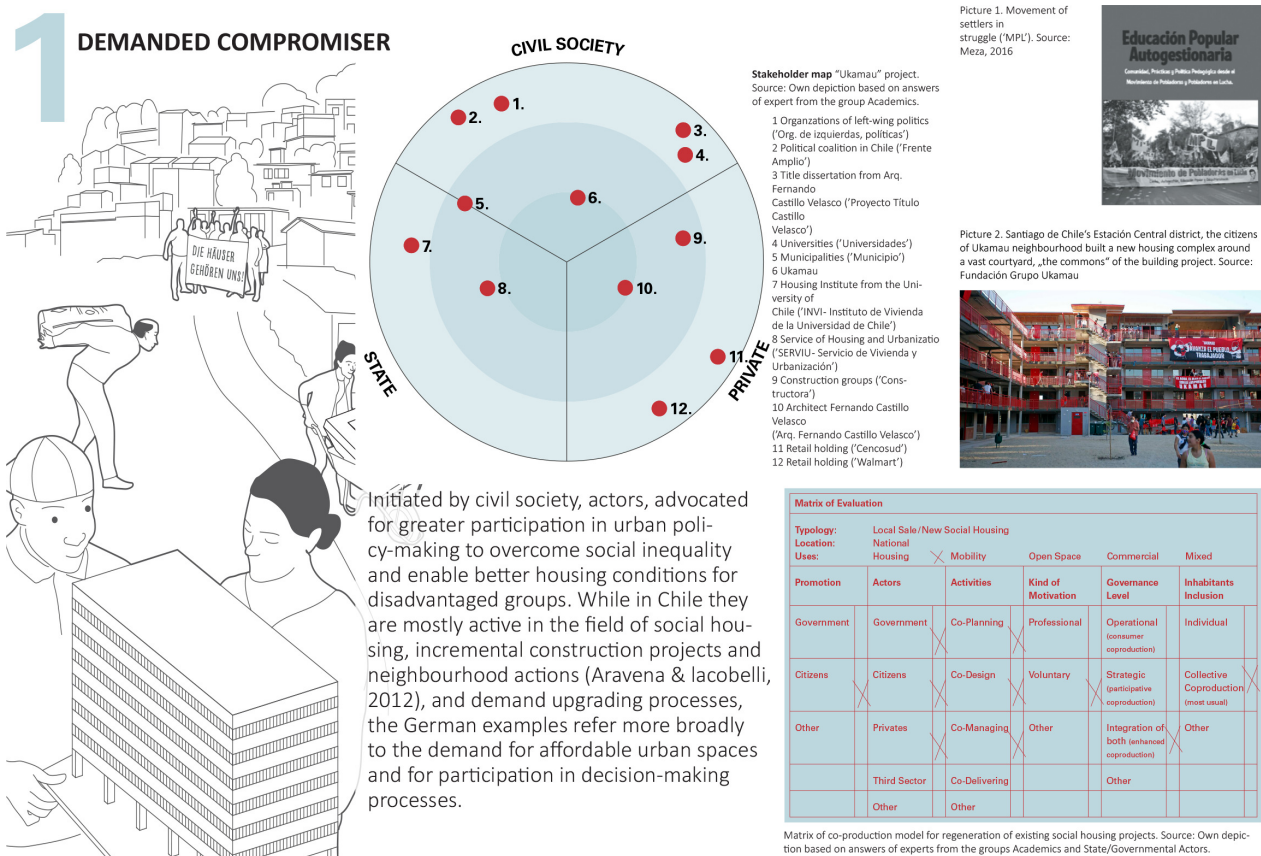


Figure 2. Type of co-production: Demanded Compromiser. Ukamau, Santiago de Chile, Chile. Initiated by organised civil society groups, the actors campaigned for a greater active role in urban decision-making and project development to overcome social inequality and provide better living conditions for disadvantaged groups. Source: Courtesy of DFG-KOPRO Int research project.

socially segregated urban areas with few opportunities for integration to rest of the city. Although this aspect has been widely studied and questioned (e.g., Aravena et al., 2005; Fuster-Farfán, 2019; Hidalgo Dattwyler et al., 2022; Pincheira Hill, 2014), it is not the focus of this article. However, this situation creates a context in which a series of social movements arise demanding not only access to better housing but also better locations as part of a generalised claim based on the right to decent housing and cities.

3.3.2. The Ukamau Movement and the La Maestranza San Eugenio Project

It is precisely as part of this context and the crisis of access to housing in Chile that the Ukamau movement arises. The Ukamau Residents Movement originated in 2010 when members of the Ukamau Cultural Centre decided to create the movement. From the beginning, they proposed to work in defence of the right to housing and the construction of a fairer and more inclusive city. Together with a group of 424 families from the Commune of Estación Central in Santiago de Chile, they began a process of mobilisation and pressure on the government through a series of systematic demonstrations and political negotiations. In this way, they began to establish their local demands in the public debate until they achieved the building of a mega social housing project in Maestranza San Eugenio for their families, in a central area of the Santiago metropolitan area, in the Estación Central district. In this regard, one of the main objectives of the movement was to acquire land in this central district, where the residents lived. For this, Ukamau obtained a commitment from the State Railway Company (Empresa de Ferrocarriles del Estado—EFE) in terms of handing over a part of the property of the old Maestranza de San Eugenio for the building of the housing project. This process involved a strong negotiation process with EFE putting pressure on the SERVIU of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, through countless protests and political demonstrations by Ukamau. Finally, after wide mobilisations, the movement managed to push SERVIU to acquire the land from EFE to build the Project.

Thus, the operation involved the purchase of about two ha of land from EFE in Estación Central district in order to save it for the housing project named Maestranza San Eugenio. Additionally, the Maestranza San Eugenio project was conceived under a housing self-management model, the result of a co-design process between the members of the Housing Committee, the 424 families, their political leaders and the architects who collaborated pro bono. The architecture office in charge was led initially by the famous Chilean architect Fernando Castillo Velasco, who personally participated in the design of the project. In this way, the movement and its architects were able to establish a different design model for the housing complex, according to the socio-community characteristics desired by its community, far exceeding the traditional density of units with these characteristics in suburban areas. Indeed, the flats were designed with more surface than the standard allowed and were distributed according to the level of participation in the Ukamau Social organisation. At the same time, the common spaces included community facilities and playgrounds inside the courtyards of the complex. In this sense, the Master Plan included collective spaces designed specifically according to the necessities of the community. This process pushed SERVIU and the Ministry of Housing regarding the minimum standards required for this type of project. Finally, the movement established a management committee for the Complex based on democratic votes and a regime of periodical participation beyond the requirements of the Chilean condominium law.

To summarise, Ukamau's experience was based on a series of conflicting negotiations and exceptional collaborations which managed to pressure and change the institutional settings prescribed for this type of housing policy. In the first place, the movement implemented a political and protest strategy against the

Ministry of Housing to obtain the purchase of EFE's land by SERVIU, exceeding the amount of subsidy required to acquire high-value land with central characteristics. In turn, the movement did not apply through a sponsoring Entity but was partially transformed into it, subordinating the figure of architects to a community co-design process. Finally, through the political capital obtained and with the support of other figures of public relevance, they managed to establish a design and management model with different standards than those traditionally allowed with the subsidiary model of social housing and the condominium law in the periphery. In this way, the development process of the Maestranza San Eugenio as a whole was based—in practice—on flexible horizontal governance, in which the positions of actors were levelled based on their political capital. Consequently, although this dimension generated research interest by itself, in terms of innovation and conflictive negotiation, the political process led by Ukamau was able to set precedents for other housing movements.

3.4. The Case of the Blumengrossmarkt and the Co-Production of the Südliche Friedrichstraße Area in Berlin Kreuzberg

3.4.1. Context

The Südliche Friedrichstadt in Berlin has a high density of programmes and projects, some of which overlap in their objectives, spatial spread, and constellation of actors. The area where the Blumengrossmarkt project is located was formally designated as a redevelopment area in 2011 and was subject to the “Special Urban Development Law,” which means that redevelopments follow the “simple procedure” in which the specific laws and provisions of urban redevelopment are not applied. Instead, redevelopment procedures are accompanied by an advisory board, which consists of experts from the unit “Stadtkontor,” a local unit and organising partners for the redevelopment such as architects, planners, representatives from the district and the senate, as well as local actors. The local actors are elected among those affected by the redevelopment as tenants, tradespeople, owners, and educational and cultural institutions. As a final programme, the südliche Friedrichstadt was registered as a Milieuschutzgebiet in 2017. As an urban development ordinance, the registration of “Milieu–Schutzgebiet” aims to maintain the social structure within a district. Although this has no direct impact on existing or new institutions within the area, this ordinance regulates the district's possibilities to intervene in the housing and development market, e.g., to slow down to avoid privatisation patterns towards a more inclusive development. The aim in these areas was to achieve a high degree of diversity and a mixture of residents and usage structures in its redevelopment. Since the site's attractive and central location in Berlin was undergoing a massive gentrification process, which included expensive housing in the neighbourhood, there was a risk of privatisation of public land. The living area was oriented towards the community and has a correspondingly designed development with public space as well as communal areas. In addition, the local advisory board acting in the area would also work with other actors in a new urban instrument, the Bauhütte, a temporary building at the plot, which would serve as a place for undertaking a series of meetings to inform about current building projects, discuss the development objectives and undertake joint planning sessions. In addition, the intention of collective development promoted by civil society, architects and stakeholders in the area was to redress this trend, notwithstanding the current need for development, by launching and working on different formats such as the concept-linked award procedure for the central flower market site. Two out of five surrounding land plots were sold to the highest bidder, while the other three fields were awarded as part of Berlin's first Konzeptverfahren, the concept-based real estate procedure.

CASES OF CO-PRODUCTION IN BERLIN

URBAN REASONING IN AND AROUND CO-PRODUCTION:
BUILDING ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

Research on Current Co-Production Trends within the Framework of
Berlin and Germany
DFG KoPro_int.

DFG KOPRO INT.

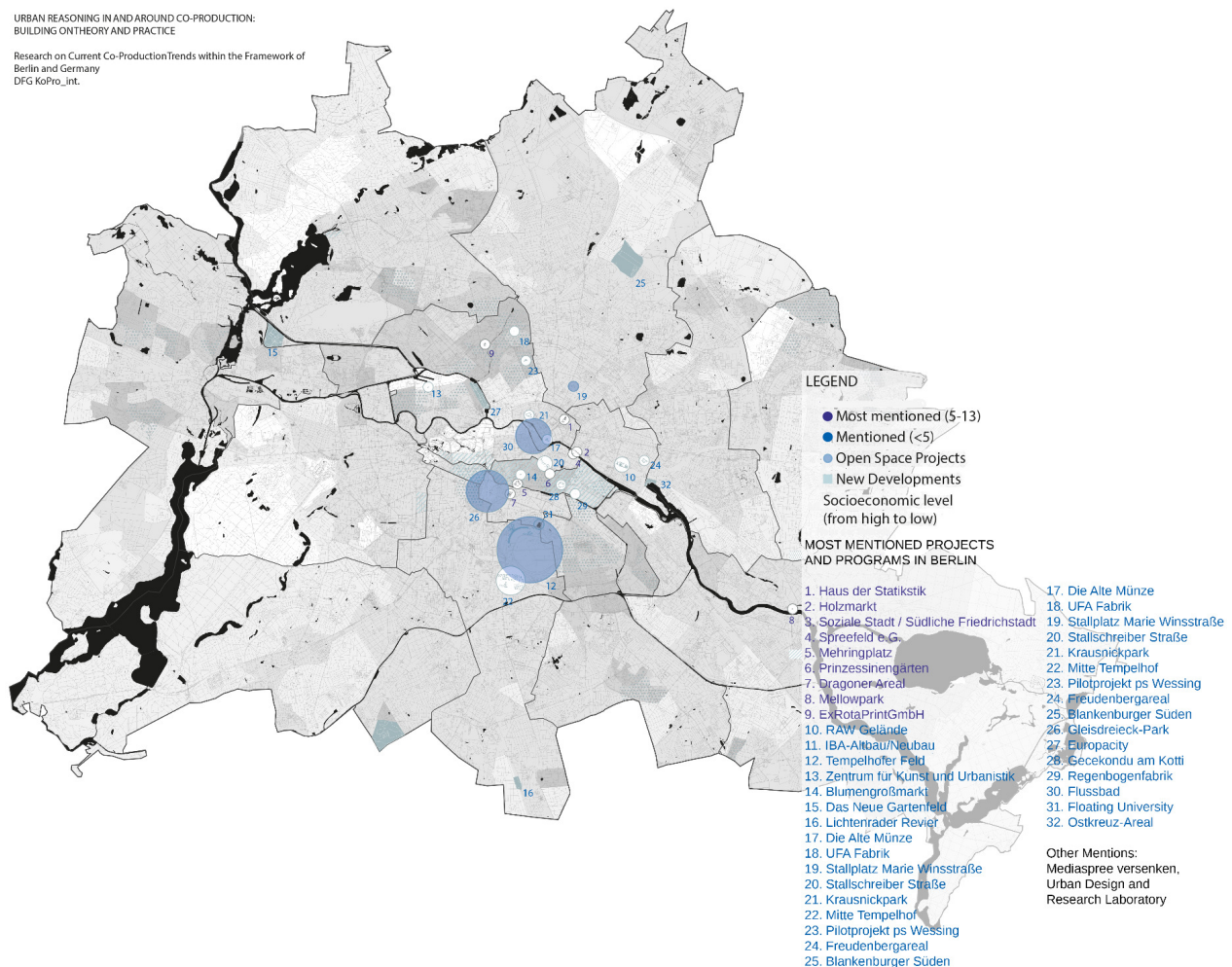


Figure 3. Cases of co-production in Berlin, Germany. Diverse settings and types of projects in the city, based on public policies, programmes, projects organised by privates and the organised civil society as well as diverse institutionalised forms of urban development oriented towards the common good. Source: Courtesy of DFG-KOPRO Int research project.

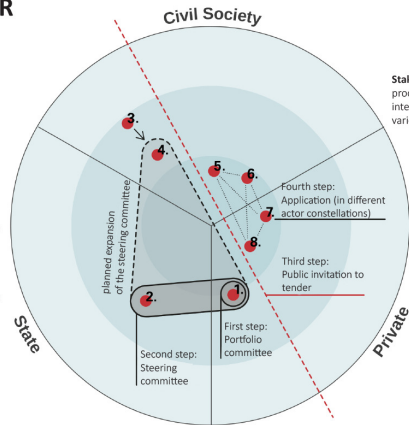
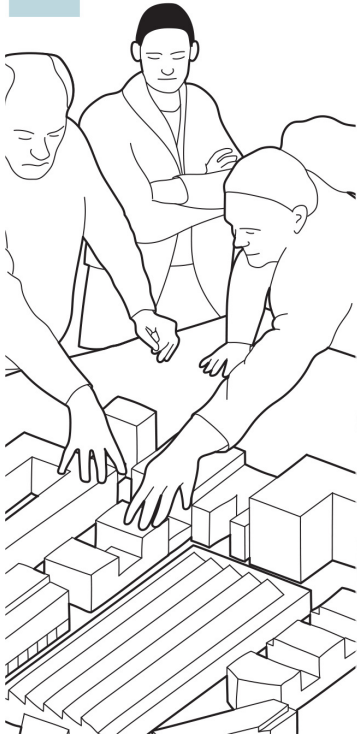
An innovative multi-stage qualification process was developed in collaboration with the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg local authority, the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, local stakeholders (Figure 4) and independent experts, whose aim was to support the ongoing project and assure the quality of architecture and urban development for a social mixture. The quality of the submitted concept is since then determined by the development concept, based on diversity in utilisation, social mixture and ecological aspects. Concept procedure is undertaken nationwide today and represents a new urban planning instrument for urban design and architecture competitions, which allows governmental actors to award land plots in lease not to the highest bidder, but rather to the party with the best social-spatial concept. In this term, it can be stated that the co-production that started at the Blumengrossmarkt was the source to introduce new urban instruments, scaling up from the project to an instrument as the concept procedure, creating a space of new possibility within the market forces of urban development for more alternative and cooperative forms of urban processes.

3.4.2. Integrative Building Project at Blumengrossmarkt

In 2010, the wholesale flower market in the area was shut down and gave rise to the development. The hall itself had already been acquired by the Jewish Museum in 2009 and was then converted into the Academy of the Jewish Museum. A private initiative suggested converting it into an art gallery, but the city of Berlin soon made clear that the Jewish Museum opposite would have room for an expansion. The remaining site—at least two and a half ha in a good inner-city location—was to be sold to the highest bidder. The local advisory board and the further association of curators, politicians and artists had now become a well-organised project office, which highlighted in the media the potential of the remaining property for the surrounding area and now advocated for an art and creative quarter. The idea quickly found political support at the district level. The state-owned Berliner Großmarkt GmbH, which as the formal owner has been sensitised to city politics thanks to other market hall sales, also played a role. To achieve the creative quarter as desired, an award procedure was carried out in 2010, which would not only take into account the value of the bids but also the usage concepts. The Konzeptverfahren applied in its first version and the *Blumengrossmarkt* (ex-central flower market site) represented a test case to develop the procedure and started as a bidding process. Three building projects were convincing and started within this framework, the project Integratives Bauprojekt am ehemaligen Blumengrossmarkt as the self-building cooperative in collaboration with architects ifau and Heide & Von Beckerath, the “Metropolen-Haus” by architects and developers as bfstudio Partnerschaft von Architekten mbB and the Frizz23 building by Deadline Architekten and Forum Berufsbildung.

The building area included the former wholesale flower market, which was developed beside diverse housing units into a cultural and creative quarter. In the southernmost part, the area was additionally built for social institutions such as a school, urban gardening projects, and open areas. The buildings contain flats, studios, and commercial spaces and thus attempt to combine living and working. The self-building cooperative has a stake in the project together with private building group members and social sponsors. The three projects aim to achieve a high degree of diversity and a mixture of residents and usage structures. On the ground floor, studios and commercial units have been built, creating a “communicative zone.” The living area is oriented towards the community and has a correspondingly designed development as well as communal areas. For example, one house has shared workrooms and workshops, terraces, communal gardens, a laundry room, and a summer kitchen. In addition, the desired mix in the house is supported by different flat sizes and types. The project interweaves three different financing models: residential, studio, and commercial units are used by the self-building cooperative Berlin eG, private developers and a social sponsor. The favourable land price linked to the concept can thus cross-subsidise the residential and commercial units. In short, the survey confirmed that co-production favours the interaction of different actors in urban development and changes in governance structures can be identified. In particular, the key is to stimulate the development of knowledge as a fundamental resource. In this development, mandates such as steering committees and advisory boards were important for further distribution to enable the group to act further in knowledge building. Within knowledge acquisition, power structures are changed through expertise about processes, sources, and networks to develop the project and move forward. In terms of planning instruments, this knowledge also arises beside the project itself in a broad exchange in local, national, or international networks of actors. In terms of project design, co-designing and acquired knowledge enable particular civil society actors to articulate and implement needs in their future living environment in terms of affordable housing solutions and infrastructure. In the same way, their contribution made a significant move towards changing the knowledge pool in urban development projects.

2 COMMUNITY INNOVATOR



Picture 1. iBeB. Rue Interior. Source: Andrew Alberts, Heide von Beckerath, 2018.



Stakeholder map of exemplary concept procedure. Source: Own depiction and interpretation based on answers of a variety of interviewees.

- 1 BIM (Berliner Immobilien Management)
- 2 Senate Administration
- 3 Civil Society Association („Runder Tisch Liegenschaftspolitik“)
- 4 Civil Society Advisory Council
- 5 Private Owners
- 6 Cooperatives („Genossenschaften“)
- 7 Developers
- 8 Architects ans Planners

Picture 2. Integrated building project at the former Blumen-großmarkt (iBeb). Source: Andrew Alberts, Heide von Beckerath, 2016.



Innovative principles/test areas for possible future developments represent an important impulse in co-production. Characteristic of the Chilean research context and shaped by economics use and DIY urbanism, these are often temporary appropriations of under-used spaces. These projects are characterised by civil society engagement and the involvement of private sector actors. In the German research context, projects are characterised by cultural workers and cultural promoters who experiment with constellations of actors and places and develop new forms of living and working together. Art and culture become a bridging element between project participants and in the neighbourhood.

Matrix of Evaluation					
Typology:	Urban Regeneration / New Development				
Location:	Urban				
Uses:	Housing	Mobility	Open Space	Commercial	Mixed
Promotion	Actors	Activities	Kind of Motivation	Governance Level	Inhabitants Inclusion
Government	Government	Co-Planning	Professional	Operational (consumer coproduction)	Individual
Citizens	Citizens	Co-Design	Voluntary	Strategic (participative coproduction)	Collective Coproduction (most usual)
Privates	Privates	Co-Managing	Other	Integration of both (enhanced coproduction)	Other
NGOs and Foundations	Third Sector	Co-Delivering			
Other:	Other:	Other:			

Matrix of co-production model for Holzmarkt. Source: Own depiction based on answers of an interview from the group Academic Actor / Expert.

Figure 4. Type of co-production: Community Innovator. Blumengrossmarkt, Berlin, Germany. Innovative planning and designing processes/test fields for possible future urban developments are important drivers for co-production dynamics. These projects resulted in changes in urban policies, such as the “Konzeptvergabe,” which is active today in different German cities as a new urban policy for more “inclusive” urban development. Source: Courtesy of DFG-KOPRO Int research project.

4. Discussion

The study of both cases illustrates that urban co-production can be conceptually traced back to Ostrom’s definition. However, it is strongly related to struggles for the right to the city in terms of the necessity to protect private interest over public urban domain and needs in current and future urban development. In particular, this approach can be found when diverse actors from different sectors are acting toward a shared outcome in their design and management process. Nevertheless, the political way in which this occurs varies according to institutional and governance frameworks and this has socio-spatial and institutional consequences. In this sense, some relevant reflections from the research can be obtained related to co-production implications in planning practice related to governance, negotiation, and the socio-spatial dimension as follows.

4.1. Governance Dimension

4.1.1. Urban Co-Production Can Be Conflicted or Collaborative

Urban co-production is not necessarily a consensual institutional practice among actors. In a centralised and more vertical institutional governance framework, as in the Chilean case, participatory practices are precautionary and principally consultative. In the case of Ukamau, co-production emerges as a forced model in which pressured government actors must “adapt” institutional models and practices to drive a plan. In this regard, conflicting negotiation implies yielding power regarding attributions and decision-making space. This is subject to a process that forces together different actors, creates socio-political awareness and thus strengthens the ability of communities to act. Conversely, in the German case, co-production could take the form of collaborative relations in which parties and actors are linked to yield power and negotiate to obtain a more desirable agreement. It evolves from the contestation to a conceptual framework, as a process in which a common resource is created through the contribution of actors from different organisations.

4.1.2. Co-Production of Knowledge Does Not Necessarily Translate Into Structural and Institutional Change

Both case studies confirm that the involvement of civil society groups is often based on a concrete need for action and recognised shortcomings and thus usually leads to individual spatial and functional solutions. The socio-spatial dimension usually requires a committed community to ensure the security and development of the project. It relies on a mutual, locally-based learning process to gain financial resources to realise the projects. This competence, where knowledge is shared to overcome the deficit, becomes the decisive impetus for development. As it was observed in Ukamau’s case, even with creating an emergent model of co-production of housing which involved different relationships among planning departments, the designers and the community, the different innovations in terms of collective knowledge in the process were not translated into the housing policy.

4.2. Negotiation Processes and Network Dimension

4.2.1. Urban Co-Production Occurs in Highly Contested Fields Over Critical Resources Involving Different Rationalities

In all the cases addressed by the research, co-production experiences are related to urban resources critical for urban living such as housing, water provision and ecosystem services. Housing provision is particularly sensitive in a global crisis in which all the institutional systems are pressured for rapid solutions. In this regard, the conflict over common resources engages different actors with diverse perspectives and rationalities. Ukamau’s case is paradigmatic in this context since the movement’s political strategy forced different institutional arrangements through social protest and actions. This struggle resulted in the incorporation of additional actors to achieve the expected outcome in a restrictive subsidiary and financial context of housing provision. On the contrary, the German cases are based on a more flexible institutional system that can adapt to the demand but can also generate new and innovative constellations of civil actors and urban programmes. In this regard, co-production can be found in cases ranging from neighbourhood redevelopment programmes to specific integrative art production clusters and supporting policies.

4.2.2. Urban Co-Production Works as a Dialogical and Innovative Process in the (Re)Negotiation of Power Relations and Decision-Making Processes

Urban co-production involves different arrangements and dialogical processes among actors. In both cases, the research illustrates that these relationships are not always institutionalised and evolve through different stages by creating new rules and institutional practices in which new temporary alliances are created circumstantially (Figure 5). Particularly in the German case, along this process, negotiation is a regular aspect of engagement and institutional planning frameworks support involvement among actors. At the same time, decision-making is shared, equalising the power and legitimacy of different actors. As different as the local modes of action are, it can be deduced from the research that the arrival of large private actors and the simultaneous withdrawal of the state has caused a clear shift towards a more complex network of actors involved. The consequence is a conflictive urban development in which different strategies are used to overcome power asymmetries, with a constant process of negotiation and joint decision-making in the production of space.

4.2.3. Cross-Scale Approaches (Scaling-Up) as an Implementation Method and to Secure Co-Production Practices

In both cases, the concept of co-production as such and the associated theories per se, are novel but somewhat elaborated, at least in institutional practice. In practice, however, processes that can be described as co-productive are met with great interest from academics and scholars because, in the Chilean case, the traditional trend to user-oriented self-government (“autogestión”) by involving organised movements or communities is implied. In this regard, there is an agreement in the academic discussion that co-production can be seen as the key to creating viable and inclusive cities. As diverse as discussions are, there seems to be a consensus that it represents a new form of participation that allows power relations and decision-making processes to be renegotiated in the nexus of individual and collective interests.

4.3. Socio-Spatial Dimension

4.3.1. Co-Production Creates New Socio-Spatial Organising Principles

Although institutional frameworks do not necessarily adopt governance innovation, spatial outcomes of co-production reveal new social possibilities around the urban fabric. Thus, innovation in terms of social organisation around a common or critical resource allows the creation of new spatial settings that reframe conventional urban and architectural programmes based on the social needs of communities. In this regard, in particular, from the German case: The neighbourhood space for planning actions is considered and linked to the overall planning level. This activation of local resources for spatial organising principles helps to develop heterogeneity and multifunctionality as the basis for community-based renewal programmes. Common uses and the development of unused areas become possible sources for collective living concepts. In addition, projects such as the Blumengrossmarkt secure social land use programmes with new instruments, such as concept procurement. Hence, co-production can create new social-spatial morphologies that allow new contributions to community uses, in urban programmes and for collective housing.

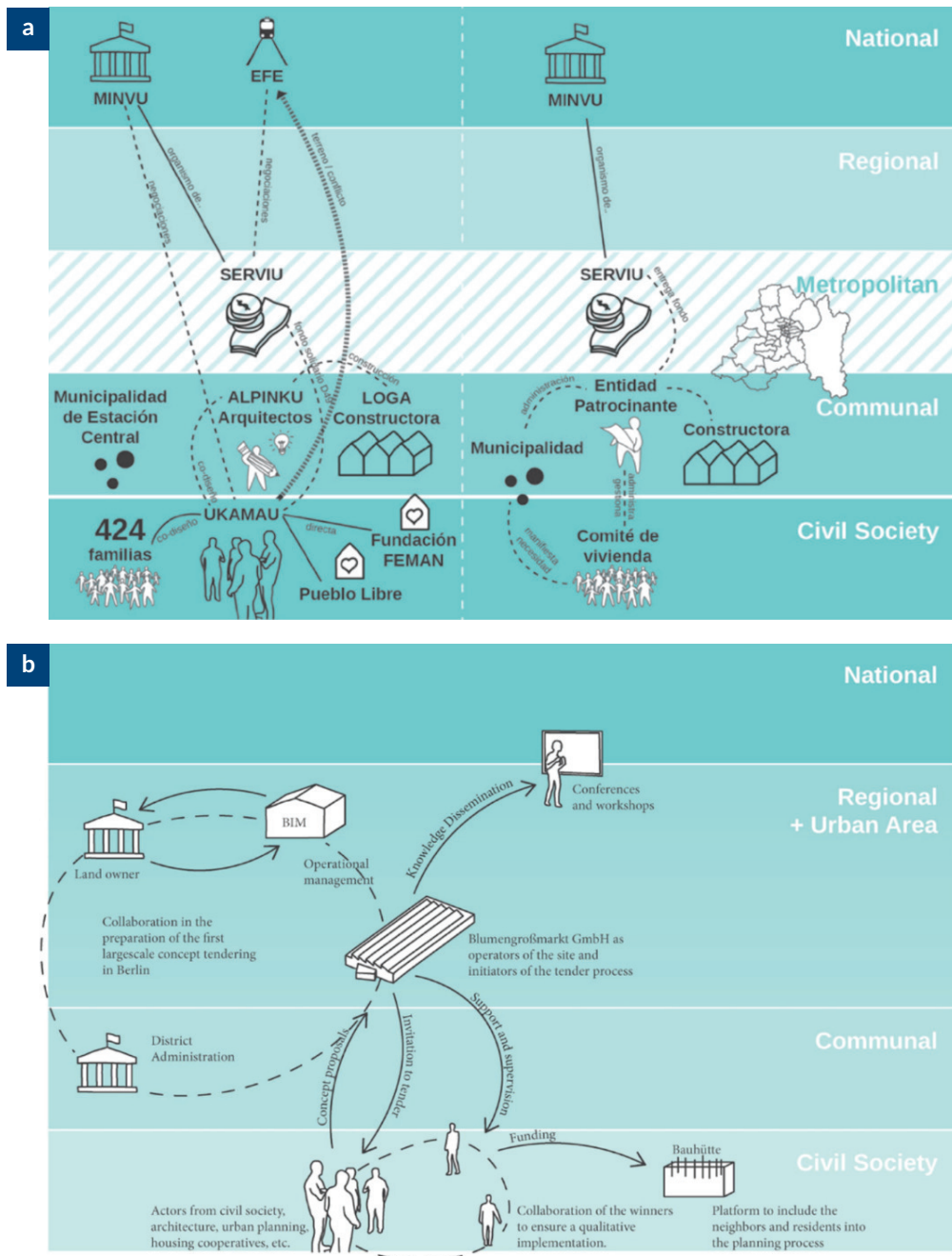


Figure 5. Negotiation processes and network analysis: Contested (a) vs. Collaborative (b). From the case study in Chile of the Ukamau project, it can be concluded that project structures and processes undertaken are primarily based on protest. A further co-produced development of the project, promoted by co-production agendas and cross-scale approaches defined as a goal in theoretical discourse (e.g., Watson, 2014) as the ability of co-production to enable actors to enter into sharing of resources still stands out. In the German context, from the development of the ex-Blumengrossmarkt project, the implementation capacity and procedures to create a cross-scale approach play a major role in enabling actors and developing the project further. Key topics in the collaboration are a high diversity of mandate forms in the corporations that have the possibilities because of legitimisation to try to close governance gaps; involved actors from various areas (artists, cultural institutions, universities and private actors) have their own networks and co-produce knowledge on how to develop the project further. These practices require from the acting collective a deep knowledge of regulatory, persuasive, or financial instruments and the development of a set of rules in which the resources can be managed jointly. Source: Courtesy of DFG-KOPRO Int research project.

4.3.2. Co-Production Under Neoliberal Hierarchical Urban Policies Does Not Overcome Governance Gaps or Fragmented Urban Development

From the Chilean research context, it can be observed that co-production is geographically concentrated in socially disadvantaged areas of the city and usually arises due to a need for resources which is exacerbated by austerity measures or inadequate provision. Consequently, despite many of its defining features within projects, co-production does not necessarily lead to greater inclusion in a broader sense. As mentioned, these processes contribute to community empowerment and the appropriation and preservation of living space at the local level but do not imply improving institutional processes.

Indeed, it cannot be confirmed that governance gaps are closed and that locally (successful) interventions at the project level are, in fact, relevant at the macro level. From the German research, it can be reported that within the existing diverse and dynamic projects, co-production arguably has innovative potential to challenge the traditional spatial planning frameworks, through the involvement of a large number of new actors, personal commitments, new ideas, practices, and experiments. In this regard, the possibility of “scaling-up” of projects and urban policies leaves the possibility open to act and incorporate the specific project context to a greater part of society. This is particularly important to social inclusion since projects introduce inclusive housing models for disadvantaged parts of the society through social mixed over tenure and renting models.

5. Conclusions

Our research confirms the transformative character of co-production to involve different and diverse actors in terms of critical provision of urban resources. The general approach, focused on providing and optimising urban services (Moretto & Ranzato, 2017), is concentrated on several dimensions such as planning, design, and management, on the baseline of mutual collaboration. However, as we confirm in our research, the main critical aspects of co-production are related to the negotiation of actors in asymmetric power relations and the capacity of the governance institutional framework to assume them. In this sense, both case studies, Santiago de Chile and Berlin, were key for understanding this. In Germany, related local discourses to possible actions in the context of the ongoing privatisation of spaces and processes and its occurring conflicts, as well as social and spatial impacts. In Chile, the reference frame helped, in particular, to discuss collective processes and, above all, new institutionalised forms of urban development oriented toward the public good. Thus, the comparative and complementary analysis of two different local experiences of co-production allowed us to expand the dimension of conflict around the concept. Specifically, co-production can be a conflictive process when actors are not represented in equal conditions and when they pursue different objectives related to the urban resource in question. Institutional frameworks and capacities play a relevant role in its capacity to foster and absorb the implications of the co-production approach. These implications are mostly related to the diverse interests and rationalities of different actors. In this regard, it is valuable to highlight that actors are always political; they have power, resources, and strategies that can be mobilised. At the same time, this mobilization through conflict has consequences for institutions and communities, which can be critical.

As Ukamau’s case illustrates, co-production does not occur in asymmetrical political circumstances, and actors can start disruptive processes of urban transformation. This can happen when resources are critical for communities and organisations; their claims can start a process of radical innovation that can pressure institutional frameworks. However, this is not necessarily a guarantee of structural change in governance

and planning institutional models. On the other hand, Berlin's case shows a partially underlying base for institutional learning. In this case, it is clear that from the project context, it requires a translation into the administrative and political frame. In addition, these boards can actively be part of budget decisions for urban policies and the development of instruments such as, for example, the "Konzeptverfahren." In the case of Berlin, this is related to the development of contested mandates that have been acquired by different actors as well as the development of boards that act to open up the political decision-making process, from the "local ground" to "political decision-making table." In this regard, for the last phase of the "scaling up" of projects, institutional change needs political action in the formal state apparatus. Thus, planning and implementation processes that are promoted by co-production agendas and enable cross-scale approaches should be installed at the cultural level of institutional systems. Otherwise, higher levels of participation and inclusion on planning as co-production promotes can be highly conflictive for all the actors involved.

In addition, it is important to recognise the limitations of our research in terms of the representativity of the cases for planning frameworks and applied instruments. Since, for example, Ukamau's case seems to be a very particular experience in which co-production appears as an emergent process, while the rest of the cases addressed in the research show less conflictive processes and more involvement in the legal planning framework. On the other hand, the purpose of the research was to explore the capacity of co-production to challenge prevailing power and institutional settings. In this regard, the German case helped to contextualise the capacity to learn about planning instruments.

Lastly, this aspect is related to the conditions and rules that have to be created for co-production. Only a well-established set of rules can solve disputes among different actors. Furthermore, this process needs to secure transparency, traceability, and responsibility in cooperation, but mainly to establish a culture of collaboration beyond political and ideological divergences.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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