



New research program of CIRIEC international 2019-2020

Joint production and co-production of public goods and commons:

Source of a paradigm shift through creative destruction of public action?

Call for contributions

The book *Providing public goods and commons. Towards coproduction and new forms of governance for a revival of public action*¹ published in March 2018 under the aegis of CIRIEC's International Scientific Council subsequent to other CIRIEC works (led by Bernard Enjolras²) specified how, in recent years, joint production or co-production of public and common goods has taken place throughout the world through partnerships between public authorities, public organisations/enterprises and the social economy.

These partnerships result from profound transformations in the forms of public action and bring about changes that are characterised by:

1. The shifting of borders between public economy and social economy

The boundaries of the public economy and the social economy have become malleable as a result of the paradigm shift in public action that occurred after the “Washington Consensus”. The new public management that has spread throughout the world with the Anglo-Saxon conservative revolutions, as well as the demands for greater participation by civil society, have led public authorities to try to reduce the cost of public action by restricting the scope of direct public intervention. This was a source of expansion of public-private partnerships but also of public-social economy partnerships, with social economy organisations (including mutuals) especially taking responsibilities for public service activities, activities which had been sometimes originated thanks to associativism and mutualism. Because of their values and their way of managing resources, their competence in the field of solidarity, social economy organisations/enterprises are the bearers of common interests that the authorities seek to mobilise (frequently after local experiments) in a perspective of general interest and sustainable development.

¹ see: <http://www.ciriec.uliege.be/en/publications/ouvrages/providing-public-goods-and-commons-towards-coproduction-and-new-forms-of-governance-for-a-revival-of-public-action-philippe-bance-dir-2018/>

² <https://www.peterlang.com/view/title/11471>

2. *The implementation of economic and social innovations to serve the territories*

In order to achieve general interest objectives at reduced costs, public authorities mobilize social economy organisations/enterprises and partnerships with public enterprises to benefit from the specific cultures of organisations focused on social innovation and the development of ecosystems in local territories. The proximity of these hybrid organisations to stakeholders in the territories intrinsically facilitates the co-construction of innovative mechanisms. This is beneficial to public action and allows differentiated solutions according to local needs and expectations.

3. *Behavioural changes in public and social economy organisations*

Despite its advantages, the new model is frequently at the root of a trivialisation of public and social economy organisations, a loss of substance in what makes their specificities. The cooperations that were initiated between the public sector and the social economy, driven by the new public management, are now pushing, under the pressure of significant financing constraints, to subject to external requirements and to refocus organisations on their own interests. Consequently, a risk of opportunistic behaviours may hinder the effective co-construction of projects between partners. Public authorities or public companies can thus seek to exploit partner organisations by losing sight of the advantages of a truly pluralist, participatory and cooperative approach to the production of public goods or common resources.

These transformations at work are part of a process sometimes called “creative destruction of public action” characterised by the disappearance and creation over time of forms public authorities’ intervention and the modification of the profound nature of public action.

Before the 1980s, public action was dominated by the sovereign States which, in various institutional forms, embodied the general interest with relatively wide margins for manoeuvre in the conduct of economic policy.

The process that followed gave rise to a new global policy paradigm with two main drives:

- The most fundamental is the affirmation of a market vision of the general interest that
 - tends, on a global scale, to standardize public action, aligning it to that of markets in relation to their globalization,
 - uses PPPs, new public management,
 - and encourages, based on private management, the trivialisation of public behaviour.
- The second line of force stems from the introduction of new forms of public action, which complement those of States that have lost a great deal of capacity, i.e. the ability to act alone. These new modes can be, for instance, new forms of governance,

in particular multi-level governance; or also reliance on social and solidarity economy organisations as a means of expressing the general interest.

In this paradigm, public - social economy partnerships contribute, through the joint production or co-production of public goods and commons, to:

- a modulated implementation of public action in the service of the general interest,
- the deployment of solidarity with variable geometry,
- innovation in territories and to the development of territorial ecosystems,
- and to the experimentation of new modalities for the co-construction of collective action.

A variety of configurations appear, giving more or less precedence to the associative impulse, integrating to varying degrees the market logic, and forging more or less dense links with the public authorities.

The purpose of this call for contributions is therefore to carry out an in-depth analysis of the transformations under way in order to study their operational impact on the deployment of new modes of governance.

Is a paradigm of collective action (the nature of which must be specified in the diversity of possibilities) emerging, based on the co-construction of this action with all stakeholders and on sustainable development?

The research will be deployed via working groups dealing in particular with:

- 1) The role played by public and social economy organisations/enterprises in the joint production and co-production of public goods and commons in those new collective action processes, and the impact of those new multi-partner governance forms with respect to sustainable development at local and/or global level.
- 2) Possible complementarity and synergy between public and social economy organisations, in a perspective of co-construction of collective action according to new logics of general interest and sustainable development.
- 3) Public policies to stimulate or facilitate the joint action of public and/or social economy organisations/enterprises in the production of common and public goods, and the possible emergence of a new paradigm of collective action based on those partnerships.
- 4) The alternative between either the co-construction of public policies or the joint production of public goods and commons.

Timetable and provisional arrangements for the implementation of the research programme

Provisional timetable (2019-20)

Launch of the call for contributions to international working groups: December 2018

Sending of contributions proposals: 15 March 2019

Answer from the Scientific Committee to the authors: 15 April 2019.

In April 2019, working groups are set up and the first video-conferencing exchanges held within the working groups.

Work progress procedures:

- Video-conferencing and text transmission
- Milestone documents: October 2019
- International workshop: June 2020.

Publication of the work

The work will be promoted through publications that can be carried out on different media:

- CIRIEC Working papers
- Publication in various journals and in particular the *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics (APCE)*
- Collective work at the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021.

Submission of projects for participation in a working group

Contribution projects must be submitted in English in 2 pages according to the following procedures:

The first page mentions the title of the contribution and its inclusion in one of the study themes referring to the four points of the previous questioning, the author's name(s), the postal and e-mail addresses of the contributor(s) and his/her home organisation(s) (+ country).

The project addresses the following points:

- theme chosen (referring to the main point of the above questioning);
- presentation of the challenge of the contribution in relation to the chosen theme;
- originality of the contribution by situating it in the existing literature;
- nature of the contribution: theoretical, empirical;
- methodological approach: sources and tools;
- selective bibliography with 5 to 10 references.

These projects will be submitted exclusively by electronic means before 15 March 2019 to: ciriec@uliege.be

Project leader: Philippe Bance

Scientific Steering Committee: Philippe Bance, Marie J. Bouchard, Dorothea Greiling