

# The Raffles Review

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## At the Other End of Engagement



### SOURCE

[Why engage in co-production of public services? Mixing theory and empirical evidence](#) was first published online on 5 June 2015 in the *International Review of Administrative Sciences*.

### KEY POINT

Understanding why only a limited number of citizens respond to co-production initiatives, and what motivates citizens to engage in co-production of public solutions, can help governments to improve participant recruitment and the design of engagement processes.

### BIG IDEAS

- Co-production covers a range of activities that engage professionals and citizens in the commissioning and provision of public services. These include co-planning, co-prioritization, co-managing, co-delivery and co-assessment.
- Little is known about what motivates citizens to participate. Integration of literature on co-production, political participation and volunteerism reveals three factors that contribute to willingness to co-produce: 1) perceptions of the co-production task and competency to contribute to the process, 2) individual characteristics, and 3) self-interest and community-led motivations.
- Citizens judge the value of engagements based on their perception of a topic's importance, weighed against their investment of effort. They consider their own competencies and the potential results of their engagement.
- Individual characteristics related to socioeconomic variables, social connectedness and trust within (and between) networks affect attitudes and behaviours towards participation.
- Public Service Motivation also applies to citizens. People who have altruistic or community-led motivations are more likely to deem participation in co-production as worthwhile. But (collective) self-interest and dissatisfaction with the status quo can also be positive motivators.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

- To engage a broader range of potential co-producers, activity designers must bear in mind, and take advantage of, the various factors that attract and motivate citizens to participate.
- The type or design of activities will draw participants with varying expectations or levels of involvement. For instance, citizen-initiated co-delivery (e.g. neighbourhood watch schemes) have stronger feedback loops than institutionalised co-planning and co-management (e.g. through civic bodies).
- Further insight into co-production is needed for scholars and practitioners to better understand processes and maximise the impacts of citizens' motivations.

**The Raffles Review**  
aims to ruffle your thinking!

This weekly offering summarises  
insights on public service  
matters to challenge  
assumptions and question  
the status quo.