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Neutral Experts or Passionate Participants? – Renegotiating Expertise and the Right to Act in Finnish Participatory Social Policy

This article examines a case of participatory social policy in which former beneficiaries were invited as 'experts-by-experience' into Finnish social welfare organisations. It combines a governmentality perspective with the analytical tools of the sociology of engagements to explore *as what* the projects' participants are engaged, and how the differing demands made on their ways of being are made to appear as legitimate. The article shows how different definitions of expertise are used to steer the participants' forms of engagement, and how these definitions appear valid only within a specific frame of justifying civic participation. It concludes that the participants' expertise is defined in terms of their ability to 'projectify themselves' according to the projects' specific objectives: rehabilitation, co-production or the exercise of civic rights. The article suggests that this demand to align one's way of being with project purposes is what makes it possible to evaluate and select participants.

Keywords: expertise-by-experience, participatory governance, lay expertise, sociology of engagements, governmentality

Introduction: Lay experts in participatory governance

In the course of the last 30 years, most Western democracies have adopted participation and citizen engagement as their norm of governance (Polletta, 2016; Saurugger, 2010). In the context of social welfare and health policies, this has, among other initiatives, taken the form of incorporating 'lay' or 'experience-based' expertise in policy-making and service co-creation (Epstein, 1995; Noorani, 2013; Demszky & Nassehi, 2012). Service users and other laypeople are increasingly being invited to participate as 'experts on their own lives', making the equivocal notion of expertise a central object of struggle (Rabeharisoa, Moreira, & Akrich, 2014; Barnes, 2009; Meriluoto, 2017).

In social welfare, experience has become a source of authority both because of its content – the ability to articulate 'real-life evidence' into decision-making (e.g. Eyal, 2013; Rabeharisoa et al., 2014; Smith-Merry, 2012) – and because of its 'location'. Because it is possessed by 'lay citizens', it neatly serves as a tool to fulfil the public engagement requirement for participatory governance (Stewart, 2016; Leino & Peltomaa, 2012; Polletta, 2016; Demszky & Nassehi, 2012). Furthermore, acknowledging people's experience-based knowledge as a form of expertise is thought to empower marginalised groups in particular (Healy, 2000; Nez, 2016; Randall & Munro, 2010).

The prominence of experience-based expertise has, unsurprisingly, resulted in varying interpretations of what forms the participants' expertise should take (see Knaapen & Lehoux, 2016). Previous studies have noted, for example, how citizens are often invited to participate *based on* their experience-based knowledge, but are required to abandon and surpass their personal views when actually participating in participatory initiatives (e.g. Lehoux, Daudelin, & Abelson, 2012; Neveu, 2011; Thévenot, 2007, 420). This ambiguity in meaning exemplifies how the inclusion of experience-based

expertise opens the door to a myriad of interpretations of what constitutes expertise, and who can be considered – and allowed to act as – an expert (Rabeharisoa et al., 2014).

In this article, I wish to articulate the notion of expertise not only as a central object of struggle in participatory initiatives, but also as a *tool* for crafting the subjectivities of participants and for making specific kinds of participation conceivable and legitimate (see also Newman & Clarke, 2009, 138; Rabeharisoa et al., 2014). Previous studies have shown that the process of involving the public is often elite-driven (e.g. Bevir, 2006; Warren, 2009); definitions of expertise become powerful tools in determining who gets to have a voice in participatory arrangements.

This article investigates the process of 'making experts' through a grassroot governmental study from the Finnish social welfare sector. It investigates ethnographic and interview data produced in seven participatory initiatives aimed at introducing 'experts-by-experience' into social welfare. The experts-by-experience were people with prior social problems who were invited to participate in tasks such as service planning, evaluation and project co-ordination, bringing their 'experience-based knowledge' to the policy processes. The paper's point of departure is the observation that, although the initiatives studied share a participatory-rationality of governing, they produce very different interpretations of this paradigm in practice. In other words, although all of the projects shared the aim of increasing civic inclusion, they produced distinctly different definitions of who should be allowed to participate and how.

My aim in this paper is, first, to make visible the different participant-roles crafted in the initiatives by illustrating the different meanings assigned to 'expertise'. Second, by combining a governmentality-approach with the analytical tools of the sociology of engagements, I conceptualise the participatory projects as 'plans', and connect the different forms of legitimate participation with different objectives set for

the projects. This works to illustrate how a certain perception of 'good participation' is made to appear logical in the context of the projects by appropriating different reasons and justifications for civic participation (also Barnes, Newman, Knops, & Sullivan, 2003; Ganuza, Baiocchi, & Summers, 2016; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008; Martin, 2008).

I begin by discussing previous studies on expertise, and then connect them with the governmentality literature, viewing the concept of expertise as a tool in conducting the lay experts' conduct. I then move to a discussion of how a governmentality perspective can be combined with the analytical tools of the sociology of engagements to elucidate the political nature of the everyday practices that steer people's ways of being. Conceptualising the projects studied as 'plans' (Thévenot, 2014a), the analysis examines how different justifications put forth for increased civic participation are used to legitimise a certain form of engagement on the parts of the participants (also Charles, 2016; Thévenot, 2014a; Berger & Charles, 2014). The three main justification frames of the projects – rehabilitation, co-production and the exercise of civic rights – all make use of the notion of expertise in distinct ways in order to construct their participants as specific kinds of experts. The paper concludes by considering what implications these findings may have for developing the democratic potential of the projects, and the future possibilities for combining the sociology of engagements with governmental analysis.

Bridging governmentality and the sociology of engagements

Expertise as a governmental device
The amount of social science research on expertise has expanded in recent years, as the concept of expertise has been challenged and redefined, especially from 'the bottom up' (see Nichols, 2017; Liberatore & Funtowicz, 2003; Nowotny, 2003). The core question

for the sociology of expertise is, under what conditions, through which processes, and for what purposes can someone be called 'an expert' (Collins & Evans, 2007, 2; see also Eyal, 2013; Edwards, 2010; Fischer, 2000). This has become increasingly difficult to answer and crucial to probe since the introduction of new forms of lay or experience-based experts (Blencowe, Brigstocke, & Dawney, 2013; Noorani, 2013; Barnes, 2009; Rabeharisoa et al., 2014).

In addition to identifying its different forms (e.g. Collins & Evans, 2007), or illustrating the ways it can be used to rule or assign others to rule (esp. Rose, 1993, 291–292; Rose, 1998, 86), expertise has received attention due to interest in the process of 'making experts' (see Eyal, 2013; Rabeharisoa et al., 2014). Joining this growing body of literature, the present article directs attention to the notion of expertise as a tool of subject-formation. I will examine how the concept of expertise is assigned different meanings in the project contexts, and enquire into how differing interpretations of expertise are deliberately used to guide the participants towards certain forms of being.

This governmentality approach builds on Michel Foucault's thinking. For Foucault, modern forms of government operate *on and through* the people being governed, making the subject both the product and tool of governing (Foucault, 1982). Liberal forms of government work through subtle techniques such as offering suggestions, encouragement, examples and ideals geared to influence people's willingness and ability to conduct themselves in a certain manner, that is to affect the construction of their selves (Foucault, 1994, 783–785; Foucault, 2004, 108–113; also Miller & Rose, 2008, 55; Dean, 1999, 12). Nikolas Rose has argued that this form of governing has contributed to – and is enacted through – 'the psy disciplines' (Rose, 1998, 81), making skills in conducting people towards acceptable ways of being the

specific domain of, for example, social workers' psychological expertise (Rose, 1998, 86–88; for an example, see Randall & Munro, 2010).

The governmental outlook on participatory measures, and especially 'empowerment projects' (Eliasoph, 2016), is by no means a new imaginary (e.g. Cruikshank, 1999; also Miller & Rose, 2008). A number of recent studies have suggested that participatory projects' aims lie not so much (if at all) in promoting people's possibilities to influence decision-making or impacting societal issues (e.g. Polletta, 2014; Walker, McQuarrie, & Lee, 2015), but in making people 'govern themselves in appropriate ways' (Newman & Clarke, 2009, 23), construct themselves as subjects of a certain kind (Miller & Rose, 2008, 98–107; Newman, 2005, 123; Ganuza et al., 2016).

However, it has been noted that participatory initiatives' ideal subject takes on very different meanings in different contexts (e.g. Richard-Ferroudji, 2012; Dagnino, 2007; Berger & Charles, 2014; Martin, 2008). For example, Talpin (2006) persuasively shows how the 'speech situation' where participation takes place contributes to differing views on what it means to be 'a good citizen'. In a similar vein, Carrel (2007) has identified how different conceptions of democracy and the social responsibilities of the state are connected to different participatory projects with different outlooks on citizenship and civic participation (see also Berger & Charles, 2014). In service-user involvement schemes more specifically, Martin has identified 'democratic' and 'technocratic' rationales, contributing to participants being perceived as either 'representatives' or 'experts' (Martin, 2008). Hence, participatory initiatives do not manifest 'a coherent governmental strategy' (Newman & Clarke, 2009, 166; also Polletta, 2016; Blondiaux, 2008), but are better conceptualised as tools in various, even contradictory, projects that create subjectivities consistent with the projects' own

strategic goals (also Charles, 2016; Marinetto, 2003). Thévenot (2014a) calls this

'governing through objectives', suggesting that participatory projects all measure and

evaluate – and consequently steer – civic participation according to their specific, value-

laden objectives.

Forms of engagement as normative fields of action

To better understand the 'confluence' (Dagnino, 2007) of participatory initiatives' goals

in the construction of 'the participative subject', I draw here on the sociology of

engagements, building on the work of Laurent Thévenot. The focus of the sociology of

engagements is on the situational coordinations that shape how a person's activity in a

given situation is valued and evaluated, and how these factors then shape and offer the

contours for one's 'coordination of oneself' (Thévenot, 2016; Thévenot, 2007;

Thévenot, 2014c; Thévenot, 2014b).

I posit that it is also possible to view the differing forms of engagement from a

governmental perspective in terms of the normative fields of action in which the

initiatives' participants are called to take part, hence structuring the participants'

subjectivities. This view bridges the underlying value-assessments and moral

connections of the different fields of action, which define what kind of participation is

valued and why, with the governmental aims of the initiatives which seek to shape the

figure of 'the good participant' (see also Charles, 2016; Thévenot, 2014a). As Julien

Charles (2016, loc. 28) has perceptively noted, '*Participation does not mean doing*

whatever, however, with whomever you want.' Instead, it requires transformation of the

participant to comply with the modality of engagement and way of participating that

'*the participative dispositive is ready to receive*'.

Thévenot (2007) operates with three 'regimes of engagement', each connected

to its own 'grammar', i.e. valued ways of speaking and relating to each other (also

Thévenot, 2014c). In the *regime of familiar engagement*, engagements are intimate and close, valuing well-being and personal stories and employing 'a grammar of close affinities'. In *engagement in a plan*, a person 'projectifies herself into the future' (Thévenot, 2007, 417), i.e. makes plans, determines goals and works to achieve them. Here, the criteria for appropriate action are always determined through the goals of the particular plan. Finally, in *the justifiable action engagement regime,* all actions must be publicly justifiable.

The moral foundations of publicly justified action are conceptualised as different 'orders of worth' by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). Each of the (now) seven 'orders of worth' takes a different view of 'the common good', and evaluates people, their behaviour and their arguments accordingly (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; also Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). For the purposes of my analysis, two of the seven are of particular interest: *civic worth,* which evaluates all things and actions in respect of how they contribute to the community and people's sense of belonging, and in which the winning argument is the one that can persuasively tap into the values of equality, mutual respect and the common good (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, 185–193); and *industrial worth*, which evaluates actions in terms of efficiency and productivity, valuing experts who can contribute to increasingly seamless and efficient production (loc. cit., 204). A legitimate actor in a given context must possess capacities that guarantee her ability to act in accordance with the common good employed. Thévenot calls these aptitudes 'qualifications', or the criteria that determine the appropriateness of the participant and their 'valued forms of engagements' (Thévenot, 2014c, 13). This provides the framework for the construction of the actor's subjectivity (see also Autto & Törrönen, 2017).

The theoretical outlook of governmentality may be bridged with the analytical tools of sociology of engagements by looking at the *strategic use* of different justifications to prioritise a specific form of participation. Thévenot (2014a) has suggested that current participatory schemes follow the modality of engagement in a plan, in which people are induced to engage according to, and within the limits of, a project plan, and in which their participation will be evaluated though the lens of the plan's objectives. This observation is analogous with the critical governmental perspective on initiatives, as both contain the suggestion that project mantras of empowerment and deliberation (Eliasoph, 2016) are in fact used as governmental devices to define, measure and induce 'appropriate' forms of participation (e.g. Gourgues, Rui, & Topçu, 2013; Blondiaux, 2008; Martin, 2011).

Hence, I will make the theoretical assumption that participatory projects are plans with given objectives based on specific sets of values, and employable as steering devices to define what kind of participation is desirable. These objectives are made explicit and defended in public, connecting the different justifications given for public participation with specific project objectives according to which people's participation and ways of being are assessed. Different underlying moral valuations can therefore be evoked to justify what counts as expertise in different arenas, and consequently who (or rather *what kind of* people) can legitimately participate and in what manner (Charles 2016, loc. 28).

Context and data

In the 2000s, a new participatory emphasis was introduced into Finnish public policy,[1]

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[1] See e.g. the Ministry of the Interior's Inclusion-project of 1997–2002, and the Ministry of Justice's Citizen Participation Policy Programme of 2003–2007.

stressing the importance of active citizen engagement and encouraging new innovations to involve and activate citizens (Salminen & Wilhelmsson, 2013). The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health defined 'inclusion' and 'customer-initiated service production' as the primary goals of its National Development Programme for Social Welfare and Health Care (Kaste). In a similar vein, the main funder of Finland's civil society organisations (CSOs) for social welfare, the Finnish Slot Machine Association,[2] started to reduce funding for organisations focused solely on service production, requiring proof of 'effective civic activities'. This resulted in an explosion of new initiatives seeking to strengthen the participation of beneficiaries, such as projects developing expertise-by-experience.

The term expert-by-experience was introduced in the Finnish context by mental health organisations. Drawing on examples from the UK and Denmark (e.g. Barnes & Cotterell, 2012; Noorani, 2013), the idea then spread to many other sectors, to public sector organisations as well as CSOs, especially in the 2010s (Rissanen, 2015). Crucially for this paper's investigations, the Finnish version of expertise-by-experience was very strongly governance-initiated (cf. Beresford, 2002; Noorani, 2013 in the UK). That is, the incentive came from the organisations, not the beneficiaries. In many instances the tasks of the experts-by-experience, as well as the overall objectives of the practice, were determined beforehand.

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[2] The Finnish Slot Machine Association (RAY) was a public organisation that had a monopoly on the gambling industry in Finland. Its profits went towards the funding of civil society organisations working in the health and social welfare sector. Through the allotment of grants, it provided resources and thus had a significant influence on the work done by Finnish CSOs. In 2017, RAY supports just over 850 organisations with a total sum of € 317.6 million. The organisation was merged with two similar gambling companies at the beginning of 2017 and is now called Veikkaus.

Although the term has been widely adopted, it remains a contested and ambiguous concept, used to signify a variety of people and activities. In the seven projects investigated here, the term is used to refer to people with problematic backgrounds (such as substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, gambling addiction, homelessness), who act as consultants in service production, peer support, advocates in public debate, or in training and education. Very often they also give lectures or interviews about their own history to provide professionals, decision-makers and the general public with 'experiential knowledge' only attainable through personal experiences.

This paper draws on thematic interviews[3] with 23 experts-by-experience and 14 professionals, conducted in seven projects,[4] all funded publicly by either the Finnish

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[3] The interviews were conducted between 4 April 2014 and 16 October 2015 by the researcher. They were conducted in Finnish and the excerpts were later translated into English by the researcher. The interviewees were invited to participate through an open invitation sent by e-mail to the following projects:

[4] **1. Finnish Central Association for Mental Health: '**The establishment of expertise-by-experience and evaluation-through-experience in the development of mental health and substance abuse services'

2. The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters: 'Miina – The participation and empowerment of women who have encountered domestic violence'

3. No Fixed Abode: 'The utilization of expertise-by-experience in the design and production of services for the homeless (Own keys –project 2012-2015)'

4. Muotiala Accommodation and Activity Centre Association: The project of preventive mental health work – experience-based knowledge about mental health issues for the working-age population (Turning experience into knowledge –project 2005-2009)

5. Sininauhaliitto ry: A low-threshold information and support centre for gambling problems (Tiltti 2010–2014).

6. City of Vantaa: Key to the Mind (Mielen avain) project for developing mental health and substance abuse services in Southern Finland.

7. City of Tampere: SOS II – To Social Inclusion through Social Work (2013-2015).

Slot Machine Association or the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The interview data is complemented by the projects' and project funders' texts concerning expertise-by-experience. In addition, my interpretations draw on my ethnographic observations as a practitioner in one of the CSOs studied.[5] In 2011–2014 I participated in, and was responsible for arranging, training sessions, meetings and workshops focusing on developing expertise-by-experience as a practice. The participants were both experts-by-experience and professional practitioners, and the data produced in these gatherings ranged from co-produced paintings, presentations, guidebooks and letters, to my own written notes.

The interviewees were either volunteers, paid professionals or 'semi-professionals' performing 'paid gigs' on invitation. Their tasks varied from consulting on service production and project steering committees, to evaluating services and providing training and peer support. The professionals, for their part, all worked in projects tasked with developing expertise-by-experience in their respective organisations. Their positions ranged from project employees to executive directors. The interviews took place at a time when the concept and policy of expertise-by-experience had rapidly risen in popularity. As new organisations, working in various different fields, started to adopt the concept and translate it to their own work culture, a plethora of interpretations appeared concerning the purpose, position and the desired outcomes of expertise-by-experience, making the notion a site of negotiations between the experts-by-experience, the professionals and the administrators in the different fields.

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[5] For anonymity reasons, I have chosen not to identify the CSO.

Methods of analysis

My analysis proceeded in two stages. First, I conducted a category analysis on my data to identify the characteristics that the informants highlighted as the organising principle of the expert-by-experience as a new actor category. As the analysis revealed conflicting interpretations of the same organising principle, 'expertise', I took this conflict as my interpretive focal point, asking *why* the interviewees employed their particular definition of expertise to construct and legitimise a certain kind of participant role.

I related the conflicting interpretations of expertise to the background information I had regarding the interviewees, their organisations and ways of working. However, there were no correlations to be found between the interviewees' different definitions of expertise, and the organisational backgrounds, the primary mission of their organisations, or the interviewee's position (practitioner or expert-by-experience). In fact, the same interviewee might present various, even contradictory interpretations of expertise and of the role a participant should play. Different qualification criteria for the participants only made sense when I introduced the projects' different objectives as the framework within which the participation took place.

Consequently, I conceptualised the projects as 'plans' and employed framing analysis (Rein & Schön, 1996; Yanow, 2000) as a method to unravel the differing objectives of the initiatives, and through this the plan within which participation of the experts-by-experience was evaluated. The act of framing, in a public policy setting, often takes the form of identifying (or creating) problems, hence also implying how to best resolve them (Bacchi, 2010; van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). What the sociology of engagements adds to these interpretations is the connectedness of the frames to certain moral valuations and views of the principle of the common good (or order of worth, see

Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). For instance, as we shall see in the following analysis, participation can be valued as a means of recovery, as a valuable input or as a source of democratic legitimacy.

The different objectives set for the projects developing expertise-by-experience then provided me with an entry-point towards understanding the differing definitions given to 'expertise', the expected and valued engagement of the participants, and the set(s) of rules applied when evaluating their participation. Hence, my analysis connected the figure of 'the good participant' with the meanings and justifications the interviewees gave to increased civic participation.

It should be noted, however, that the focus of this paper is not in identifying which orders of worth are invoked in order to justify the new, public role of the expert-by-experience (as I regard Boltanski and Thévenot's classification of seven justification regimes as a contingent social construction of its own: see also Lehtonen & Lonkila, 2008; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016), but rather in identifying *how* the differing valuations are used for the purpose of legitimising or delegitimising certain forms of participation, with consequences for the participants' subject-construction.

Analysis: Constructing subjectivities by governing through objectives

Participation as rehabilitation – Expertise as a tool to empower

The first objective set for the projects of expertise-by-experience treats the notion of expertise in a very distinct way: as a tool to be used in one's 'individual plan' of self-development (Thévenot, 2014c, 14–15). Expertise is, above all, a feeling of mastery over one's self. Consequently, it has a dual role: through developing 'better expertise over oneself' one can become 'empowered' and differentiate one's current self from one's previous, problematic state (also Eliasoph, 2016; Barnes, 2008). At the same

time, this form of expertise is not to be used as a source of legitimacy or as an input in policymaking, but as a rehabilitation device *inside* an organisation (also Barnes & Gell, 2012).

This is the rehabilitation frame, and its context of participation is very limited. In it the value of participation stems from the rehabilitative effects on the individual, and the notion of expertise is primarily a therapeutic tool to 'make people feel better about themselves and their capabilities', as the following CSO practitioner explains:

> P8:[6] I think it [expertise-by-experience] is a means of rehabilitation and a way to
> feel important. I mean, it is very important for your holistic well-being that you
> feel part of a community or a society, active participation of that sort.

The rehabilitation frame was prominent especially among the social-work professionals. While a majority of the experts-by-experience named some sort of empowerment as *a benefit* of participation, only three of the 23 gave personal empowerment as a justification for their participation. In contrast, ten of the 14 practitioners named empowerment as one of the reasons for increasing their clients' participation. They often positioned the participants' *feelings of inclusion* above everything else. To put it bluntly, it was less significant whether the participation had an actual impact on public decisions than that people *felt* included, as is clearly visible in the following discussion among three public sector professionals:

> P10: One of our participants worked on a citizens' initiative to have e-bank access
> in public libraries. She distributed leaflets about where to sign and so on. Well, it
> didn't quite get 50,000 signatures, but I mean it was great that she went on with it.
> It also increased her knowledge and her influence in its own way.

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[6] In interviews quoted here, the abbreviations E1–E23 refer to the experts-by-experience, P1–P14 to the professionals and TM to the interviewer.

P12: Yeah, and I thought that it was important for her, having a rough substance-abuse background and all. So that was what kept her from.... And she went around town on a bike so it kept her fit, too.

P11: And our cheering her on, that was important for her as well.

Eliasoph (2016, 254) describes how the value of participation in these empowerment schemes is the 'aesthetic experience' they provide for their participants. Civic participation, in this frame, is not valued because of its outcomes, but as having an independent value for the participants. As the above quotation makes clear, it is *the act of participating,* with its supposedly transformative effects, that is at the core. Expertise is, above all, valued as a *feeling,* as means to make everyone feel valuable as is characteristic of intimate engagements (Thévenot, 2014c, 13), making *the use* of everyone's local knowledge equally important. The following quote from a CSO expert-by-experience shows the success of this use of the concept:

E4: I think as a concept, it [expert-by-experience] is far more beautiful than if we were to talk about, say, victims. It is appreciative. It's the expertise that gives you the idea that 'We value your experience.'

In this frame, expertise does not entail criteria. On the contrary, it is used as an honorary title to give value and a feeling of empowerment to the participants.

However, while the rehabilitation frame favours familiar modes of engagement – such as intimate discourse and emotion-filled speech – they are esteemed only for their instrumental value as tools to meet the projects' objectives of individual feelings of empowerment. Familiar forms of engagement appear as markers of the participants' willingness to start work 'on themselves' in line with the plan's objectives. Furthermore, while everyone is considered *an expert on their own lives* when the plan is to rehabilitate, this is most often not the case when moving beyond the nurturing environment of the organisation, as we shall see in the following.

Participation as a contribution – expertise as objective knowledge

The second interpretation evaluates experts'-by-experience expertise by the same criteria as for professionals' technocratic expertise. It justifies their active role through arguments such as the need for 'more diversified knowledge', which eventually translates into 'more thorough expertise', more efficient services and better public decision-making. The active role of experts-by-experience is legitimised because they can bring *useful knowledge* into public decision-making.

This expert-construction situates civic participation in contexts of service production and evaluation. In these administrative settings, the discussions take place *among experts* – albeit of different origin – whose right to participate stems from the *contributions* they are thought to bring to the table, as illustrated by the following public sector expert-by-experience:

> E19: Maybe in times like these, when you have to save and cut back on everything, they have started to notice that it's beneficial to society to listen to experts-by-experience. I mean, instead of defining laws and systems that are completely detached from reality, you introduce the voice of a regular person, and make things work better that way.

The particularity of the co-production frame is its emphasis on knowledge and the value of the participants' contributions to decision-making. The value of participation lies in the inputs it produces (see also Charles, 2016, loc. 30; Thévenot, 2014a). Furthermore, the participants' expertise is seen as a valuable input not on the grounds of equality but because of efficiency, as the next CSO practitioner explains:

> P3: I believe that the underlying idea is something like user-driven service-design. I think that during these times of productivity and efficiency, it is pretty self-evident that in order for us to get these treatment paths working, the voice of the customer who uses the services is worth listening to and incorporating.

As a result, when the experts'-by-experience participation is valued because of the contributions it might bring to public decision-making, expertise is logically defined as the ability to produce objective and generalisable information for the discussion. The following CSO practitioner explains:

> P7: I think expertise-by-experience requires having reorganised your past life and everything it entails, and put it in the past as, I hate the word resource but that's what it needs to become. Like, as a peer supporter, you can just go to places and talk about your personal experiences, but as an expert-by-experience, you need to analyse your past and do something more with the knowledge. You need to parse together several peers' experiences and draw conclusions, and then take the expertise into the darned organisation.

All of the interviewees justified experts'-by-experience participation at least in part through the contributions it produced. But it was the informants in the public sector projects, as well as the CSO projects that co-operate with the public sector in service production, who framed participation in this manner the most. In the co-production frame, the expertise (and the right to act) of experts-by-experience is evaluated in technocratic terms, using many of the same criteria as are applied to other experts in the field. Instead of 'just talking about yourself', the distinctive feature of expertise-by-experience is that the knowledge is 'analysed'. The personal, emotion-filled experiences need to be forged into a coherent and neutral story that is 'on a more abstract level', as one CSO practitioner put it (also Blencowe, 2013; Barnes et al., 2003). This meant, for instance, the ability to refrain from 'emotional outbursts' or personal points of view (also Martin, 2011; Meriluoto, 2017). The virtue of a good participant was the ability to produce 'reliable information' that could be utilised in service production, and consequently this required the ability to 'rise in generality' out of the regime and discourse of familiar engagements (see Richard-Ferroudji, 2012, 168).

This interpretation epitomises engagement in a plan, since it demands that the participants conduct themselves in a way that works towards the overall goals of the project. From a governmental perspective, it is indeed significant how these characteristics of expertise are presented *as preconditions* for entering the actor category. As presented by a professional in the quotation above, the information an expert-by-experience delivers *needs to be* on a general level. Access to public debate *requires* reorganising your past and representing it in a neutral, general manner. This technocratic view of expertise taps into industrial worth-claims to form a set of expert-criteria one has to meet in order to be considered a valuable participant in the public debate, potentially ruling out people who do not meet the criteria of possessing 'useful' or 'reliable' knowledge (see also Berger & Charles, 2014).

Participation as a civic right – everyone's expertise

The 'rights frame' is the one that could be imagined finding when looking for justifications given to people's active role in society. It draws on civic values such as the right to participate, freedom of speech, equality and solidarity (Thévenot, 2007, 419). Here, civic participation is taken as a value in and of itself, and no other arguments are needed to justify the goal of increased participation. Quite strikingly, only three of my 37 interviewees justified the experts'-by-experience participation primarily *as a right*. Instead of calling for experts-by-experience to participate because they have the right to be heard, the vast majority of my interviewees defended their participatory rights by emphasising the epistemic value their experience-based knowledge would bring to the discussion.

Participation was a 'no-brainer*'* mainly in the context of CSOs with no service-provision tasks. There, a few interviewees presented civic participation as something so fundamental that it goes almost unnoticed, as expressed by these CSO practitioners:

P6: This organisation was founded by the people suffering from this problem. So their inclusion... I mean it has been self-evident from the very beginning that we include everyone who is involved in our activities.

P7: Or we don't even include them, but they have created everything and have then included us professionals!

This view was shared particularly among the organisations whose focus was less on service development and more on public advocacy. These organisations saw themselves as enabling civic participation, and some even referred to their participants as *citizens* – a term that stands out among the much more common rhetoric of clients, customers, and co-producers. The following CSO expert-by-experience is among the very few in her emphasis on civic values:

E6: I think expertise-by-experience is... should I even say that it is a civic right. I mean, people should be listened to more.

In the rights frame, the notion of expertise becomes the target for contestation. Instead of viewing expertise in technocratic terms as the capacity to contribute neutral and objective knowledge, experience-based expertise is defined precisely as something that is distinct from other forms of expertise. In this frame, the notion of expertise is used to stretch and question the boundaries set for legitimate participation in the dominant co-production frame, as illustrated by the following CSO expert-by-experience:

E13: It's impossible to define when you're an *expert*-by-experience. It would be different if I had studied to become, say, an engineer. Then there's a certain, concrete set of knowledge that I have to acquire in order to become an expert in engineering. But experience is so much more than that. It's both the things that happen to you and your own personal way of dealing with them. When each and every experience is valuable, who has the right to define expertise when it's based your experiences? Anyone can and should be allowed to be an expert-by-experience, even if it is only for a minute.

The above quotation crystallises the definition of expertise as every individual's particular view on the world. By pointing out the contingent nature of experience-based knowledge and the problems regarding its evaluation, the interviewee discredits the notion of 'usable knowledge' as a criterion for granting admission to the category of experts-by-experience. This view, present particularly among CSOs with no service provision tasks, adheres to the rhetoric of expertise and knowledge, yet defines expertise very differently. Instead of a technical contribution, here expertise is a means of building '*mutual understanding*' or '*empathy*', hence constructing the participants not as contributors, but as members of the same community (also Berger & Charles, 2014; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). As such, it can be seen as an attempt to 're-descend' (Richard-Ferroudji, 2012, 172) from the general, and to extend legitimate forms of participation to include emotion-filled and personal discourses, as in the regime of familiar engagements.

This twist in using the notion of expertise then appears as an attempt to disrupt valuing participation solely in relation to 'the plan'. It is used to contest the practice of evaluating and legitimising people's right to participate according to their 'level' of expertise. Peculiarly, however, the interviewees purporting the rights frame did not abandon the notion of expertise altogether when defending everyone's right to be included and heard. Instead, they embraced the idea of expertise-based participation, but used redefinitions of these notions as their tools in contesting exclusive expert-categories and ways of contributing that are constructed within the co-production frame.

Finally, the civic vocabulary was also employed by several public-sector practitioners, who called expertise-by-experience 'a means to fulfil the participatory norm'. In this 'duty frame', which is an inversion of the rights frame, justifying participation as having a value of its own made it possible to construct participation

'for-the-sake-of-participation'.[7] However, by flipping the right into a duty, the practitioners also exempted themselves from having to justify the need for increased civic participation altogether, taking the position of 'merely carrying out their assigned tasks'. At worst, this lead to a merely symbolic form of participation that was not intended to have any other effect than to fulfil the new participatory demands of good governance, making all other forms of engagement beyond mere physical presence appear illegitimate. More than anything, greater civic participation appeared here as a tool needed to ensure the smooth functioning of the administration, hence drawing on the industrial 'worth' while employing civic vocabulary.

Table 1 summarises the frames of justifying civic participation identified in the data, along with the corresponding preferred modes of engagement, the notions of expertise crafted, and the 'worths' drawn upon to make these constructions appear legitimate.

[insert Table 1 here]

Table 1. Experts-by-experience as participants and their preferred modes of engagement.

Discussion: Experts of self-conduct

Above I have shown how different modes of participation are made to appear preferable in participatory projects through different definitions of expertise. I have argued that the preferred forms of participation correspond to the objectives of the specific project. I have also shown how these objectives are publicly justified by drawing on civic or industrial worths in order for the project goals, and the corresponding demands made on

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[7] My thanks to Reviewer 2 for pointing me towards this important feature.

the participants' way of being, to appear fair and reasonable.

The main conclusion, based on the cases studied, is that expertise in these participatory projects comes to mean the ability to conduct oneself according to the project's objectives, in other words to know and present oneself in line with the project's demands. This requires the skill to identify which mode of engagement, in terms of speaking about oneself, is acceptable in the context, and it demands the ability to align one's rapport towards oneself according to these rules. For example, when engaging in a project that seeks to empower, the experts-by-experience need to manifest the will and ability to talk about themselves in a detailed and intimate manner. In a co-production setting, such talk is deemed inappropriate. Consequently, the experts-by-experience become experts in 'reading the room', in knowing themselves in multiple repertoires, and in presenting themselves in different modalities. Expertise as the ability of 'conducting conduct' – traditionally the domain of experts in the psycho-social field – is now also construed as one's ability to 'conduct one's own conduct'. One becomes an expert in and of one's own self-government.

From the point of view of participation studies, the article has shown how valuating participation as an instrument within a particular plan also enables the corresponding forms of evaluating participants. The 'reduction' (Thévenot, 2014a) of civic values into tools towards the objectives of a plan makes it possible to define criteria for 'appropriate' or 'worthwhile' civic action. As a case in point, the powerful ethos of co-production, valuing participation not as a right but as an input, makes it possible to evaluate civic participation in terms of epistemic contributions. If civic participation is not defended because it is a right, but rather because of something it can produce, evaluations of one's knowledge for its 'value' and hence participation for its legitimacy become not only possible, but necessary. They, in turn, contribute to the

creation of participants as an exclusive actor category with entry criteria (or 'a threshold', see Berger & Charles, 2014) defined according to the needs of the government.

I have also shown how redefinitions of the notion of expertise can be used to disrupt ways of evaluating participation within a plan. By defining expertise as a quality possessed by everyone, a contestatory justification for civic participation was introduced, one that attempts to broaden the feasible modes of engagement for the participants. While the neutral, technocratic experts of the co-production frame are placed in discussions of how specific services or policy questions would best be resolved, the view of 'open expertise' is actually focused on redefining who should be heard in the discussions. The neutral experts can be perceived as agreeing with the pre-set definitions and roles of experts in technocratic governance, while for the passionate participants, this is precisely the setting they seek to question.

This critical frame brings to light how neither the construction of expertise nor the frames that determine valuable forms of participation are ever static, nor is the process of 'making experts' ever finished. Rather, as the frames and the conceptions of expertise coexist, overlap and sometimes collide, they are constantly in motion, being reworked and redefined through contestation and critique, allowing potentially new ways of framing and interpretation to emerge. Studying expertise through the lens of the sociology of engagement, then, opens a new avenue for the interpretive study of expertise. It makes visible how the process of determining what is accepted as expertise is, in itself, already a value-based assessment, accepted and evaluated in relation to specific political objectives. This insight, in turn, allows us to see beyond the currently ever-so-popular narrative of objective evidence-based policy-making, by opening up expertise and knowledge as political concepts.

A justification analysis (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio 2016) seems, then, a worthwhile point of departure when attempting to develop the practices of participatory governance from a democratic perspective. As the organisations operating under a network-governance rationale are now in the novel position of being gatekeepers and facilitators, they have come to possess significant powers to define whose voice gets heard. Making their justifications for increased civic participation explicit, and possibly moreover inclusive, could be one way of making their definition processes of 'good and acceptable participation' more democratically robust. An explicit examination of the justifications underlying the participatory processes would build up their legitimacy, as well as making contestation and critique of them possible.

In addition to these practical implications, the article has attempted to develop the analytical tools of the sociology of engagement in connection with Foucault's notion of governmentality, concentrating on the conditions under which human beings are formed as subjects, and the concrete practices through which this governing gets done. The combination of the sociology of engagement and governmentality develops the vocabulary of the former into governmental framing tools of the kind that are deliberately used by political actors to create different possibilities for being. As such, they should not be solely employed to identify which values are invoked or which forms of engagement are preferred in order to make an action seem logical and reasonable, but they should be further developed as tools in ethnographic governmental analysis, concentrating on how different governing rationalities are made practical (e.g. Brady & Lippert, 2016; Li, 2007). Since it is in these concrete, grassroots actions that a governmental rationality is made into being, the sociology of engagements might help us draw connections between the often messy and blurry activities that construct the

contours of possibilities for people, and the governing rationale that is drawn upon and

regenerated through these actions.

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