Received: 5 March 2021 | Revised: 7 February 2022 | Accepted: 18 February 2022

DOI: 10.1111/padm.12839

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

public administration WILEY

Neutralized, enhanced, tokenistic: The influence of formal employment of service-users on processes of co-production

Trishna Chauhan | Charlotte Croft | Dimitrios Spyridonidis

Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

Correspondence
Trishna Chauhan, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK.
Email: phd17tu@mail.wbs.ac.uk

Funding information
NIHR CLAHRC West Midlands

Abstract

Can formally employing service-users in co-production roles redress the problematic power imbalances inhibiting co-production in the public sector? In this paper, we analyze service-users formally employed in co-production roles. Through semi-structured interviews, we illustrate how actors use their voice, experience, and identity to respond to different power imbalances. First, through the process of "inverting professionalism" structural limitations resulted in *neutralized co-production*. Second, through the process of "embedding expertise" formally employed service-users challenged collective expectations of their role and meditated power imbalances, resulting in *enhanced co-production*. Finally, through the process of "perpetuating rejection" a new exacerbated power imbalance emerged when their employment became a negative resource, resulting in *tokenistic co-production*. We extend understandings of how formally employing service-users has potential to redress power imbalances. However, we caution against policy taking this for granted and argue that more consideration of the influence of different forms of power is needed.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.
© 2022 The Authors. *Public Administration* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Co-production, "*an arrangement where both clients and 'regular' producers contribute to a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services*" (Fledderus et al., 2014, p. 427), ostensibly aims to challenge the dominance of professionals in public sector organizations by putting service-users at the heart of planning and delivery of services (Bovaird, 2007; Osborne et al., 2012). Co-production processes rely on developing relationships between professionals and service-users to encourage equitable collaboration, regardless of status differences (Bovaird, 2007; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Brandsen & Honingh, 2016; Palumbo, 2016). However, co-production processes are characterized by inherent power imbalances (Beresford, 2019; Williams et al., 2016), which continue to endure despite a political agenda increasingly focused on the need to resolve such disparities (Bevir et al., 2019; Emerson et al., 2012). As a result, the impact of co-production on public service design and delivery remains variable (Steen et al., 2018).

Problematically, the same political agenda advocating the need to challenge professional dominance may paradoxically reinforce inequality in co-production processes. This is due to the complex interplay of democratic governance and professional expertise which are seldom balanced in co-production (Steen & Tuurnas, 2018) augmenting unequal power positions bound by competing knowledge, expertise, and resources (Steen et al., 2018). As a result, professionals continue to compete in processes of co-production, viewing themselves as experts (Thomas, 2013), resisting co-production initiatives if they perceive them as a threat to their professional jurisdiction and control over services (Owens & Cribb, 2012; Tritter, 2009), or protecting their jurisdiction by self-selecting acquiescent service-users who will not challenge the status quo (Martin, 2008b).

In response to the challenge of professional dominance, an increasingly popular policy trend focuses on the assumption that paying service-users as employees within organizations offers an opportunity to change power relations between service-users and professionals in processes of co-production (Bell & Pahl, 2018; Mayer & McKenzie, 2017). Formally, employed service-users occupy a unique position by leveraging their lived experiences of using services to become integrated within an organization and then co-produce that same service. As such, formally employed service-users can occupy a brokering role (Siantz et al., 2018). They are theoretically able to translate differing professional and user perspectives, based on their own experiences, developing the collaborative relationships necessary to mediate professional dominance in processes of co-production. However, the success of these initiatives is contested (Head, 2009). While some argue that formally employing service-users, and viewing them as equal contributors rather than passive recipients, holds the potential to redress the inherent power imbalances characterizing public services (Park, 2020a; Rose et al., 2016), this view is not shared by all. Others question the positive influence of formal employment and note the continued undermining of formally employed service-users within processes of co-production (Park, 2020b), counter-intuitively suggesting that formal employment can negatively impact the equitable involvement of service-users in co-production (De Corte et al., 2018).

In short, the success of policy initiatives to mediate professional control over processes of co-production by formally employing service-users is varied, but the reasons for this variation are not well understood. We suggest this is because existing research is limited by how "power" is understood in co-production research. Power is often conceptualized as a resource allowing the most dominant to exert their influence over other, less dominant, actors (Clegg et al., 2006). This prevailing perspective drives research considering how power is constructed and wielded over others, but neglects explorations of the interpersonal relationships influencing how power is produced and reproduced in co-production processes (Farr, 2018). Relatively little research has been conducted on the enduring power imbalances in the co-production literature, despite important research on the democratic and technocratic principles of representative and unrepresentative users (Bovaird, 2007; Halvorsen, 2003; Leach, 2006), which are implicitly framed by issues of power.

As a result, extant research often positions co-production positively but fails to address the unequal power dynamics that emerge in the decision-making process. Understanding how to ensure participation often receives more attention than how to negotiate underlying power dynamics (Shybalkina, 2021), allowing tokenistic forms of co-production to proliferate (Ocloo & Matthews, 2016). While some studies limit understandings of power to "one

dimension," particularly with regard to decision-making power which is common in co-production (Amann & Sleigh, 2021; Crompton, 2019), more recent studies have considered a more comprehensive overview of processes of power in co-production, taking into account agents, structures, and social interaction (Farr, 2018). However, this emerging work does not sufficiently account for the complexity surrounding the concept of power, in that it can be deployed explicitly, generating coercive means, but can also be unconsciously deployed (Lukes, 2005). Further to this, there is relatively little knowledge about *what* aspects of power are held over others, and *how* they influence processes of co-production. While some have considered the ongoing debates surrounding the perceived legitimacy of users' expert knowledge (Martin, 2008b), our insight into the constituted mechanisms through which power influences processes of co-production remains limited.

To address this research gap, we seek to further illuminate the power dynamics influencing processes of co-production by considering the experiences of formally employed service-users. Specifically, we focus on how formal employment influences three forms of power identified by Lukes (2005): decision-making power, non-decision-making power, and ideological power, to understand the interplay of *resource*, *structure* and *collective expectations*. Therefore, in this paper, we ask: how does formal employment of service-users in public service organizations influence the enduring power imbalances in processes of co-production?

Exploring this question in an empirical setting, our research is situated in the English National Health Service (NHS), and focuses on a group of formally employed service-users known as peer support workers (PSWs) whose salaried role is to be formally involved in processes of co-production. Across 69 interviews, we identify how power is negotiated by formally employed service-users through constructs of "voice," "experience," and "identity", which interact in three different ways. In our analysis, we outline how these constructs interact differently across Lukes three faces of power: decision-making, non-decision-making, and ideological power. We then explore how the different forms of interaction have implications for the way power is negotiated in processes of co-production. We show that by *inverting professionalism*, non-decision-making power prevails, and formally employed service-users express non-professional constructions of voice, experience, and identity, meaning power imbalances remain unchanged due to structural limitations, resulting in neutralized co-production. Second, *embedding expertise* enables formally employed service-users to challenge ideological power by expressing expert constructions of voice, experience, and identity, leveraging their expertise as a resource, resulting in enhanced co-production. Finally, by *perpetuating rejection*, through the interplay of decision-making power and ideological power, rejected constructions of voice, experience, and identity are expressed and a new form of power imbalance emerges, resulting in exacerbated powerlessness and tokenistic co-production, contrary to policy aspirations.

Our work contributes to understandings of enduring power imbalances embedded within co-production processes and offers insight into how, and why, in some circumstances formally employing service-users creates new power imbalances. Specifically, we discuss how constructs of voice, experience, and identity interact in different ways, reflecting variation in the ways in which power imbalances are negotiated based on resource, structure, and collective expectations. We illustrate how resulting interactions of voice, experience, and identity challenge, exacerbate or have no effect on power in processes of co-production. In doing so, we develop insight for research and policy about why different forms of co-production may develop in response to formal employment of service-users, and discuss why formal employment of service-users should, or counter-intuitively should not, be encouraged in public sector organizations, depending on the prevailing form of power imbalance prevalent in specific contexts of co-production.

2 | POWER AND CO-PRODUCTION

International policy relating to co-production emphasizes the importance of positioning service-users as equitable co-participants and experts alongside service providers (Alford, 1998; Bovaird, 2007). Traditionally, co-production was defined as the involvement of actors "*who are not in the same organization*" (Ostrom, 1996, p. 1073). However, as

models of co-production have progressed, newer definitions acknowledge the multitude of prospective roles both inside and outside of the organization involved in co-production processes (Fotaki, 2011). As such, newer definitions of co-production acknowledge the emergence of new forms of involvement, where co-production can be seen as "*an arrangement where both clients and 'regular' producers contribute to a mix of activities at the point of delivery of public services*" (Fledderus et al., 2014, p. 427). More inclusive understandings of forms of co-production are designed to manage and redistribute power among the various stakeholders involved, and in particular to facilitate "meaningful" co-production (Pestoff, 2013; Vigoda, 2002). Meaningful co-production is characterized as a process of inclusive and democratic decision-making (Osborne et al., 2016), where those involved both give and gain something from the process (Crompton, 2019), resulting in enhanced decision-making or service design (Osborne & Strokosch, 2013).

However, there is a "dark-side of co-production" which exacerbates existing power imbalances and undermines meaningful co-production (Palumbo, 2017; Steen et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2016; Williams, Sarre, et al., 2020). Indeed, in some circumstances, co-production has been criticized for giving a "*false impression of citizen power*" (Dahl & Soss, 2014, p. 504). Issues concerning democratic principles of co-production in the context of power are often called in to question (Bovaird, 2007), including processes being controlled by professionals, for example through self-selection of users (Martin, 2008a). Professionals may resist initiatives they consider a threat to their professional power (Owens & Cribb, 2012; Tritter, 2009), meaning that professionals continue to exert dominance in processes of co-production (Contandriopoulos, 2004). Ongoing professional dominance has a significant influence on decision-making within processes of co-production (Rutter et al., 2004), resulting in acquiescent service-user representatives (Croft et al., 2016; Martin, 2008b). As a result, while it is assumed that service-user involvement in co-production holds the potential to reduce power imbalances (Bovaird, 2007), this is often not the case.

Emerging conceptual work suggests formally employing service-users within organizations, where their role is explicitly to be involved in processes of co-production, could redress entrenched power imbalances (Park, 2020a). For example, Mayer and McKenzie (2017) found that formally employed service-users reported an increased sense of equity between themselves and professionals during co-production processes. However, other studies suggest that power imbalances will prevail, as dominant professionals continue to undermine the involvement of formally employed service-users (Park, 2020b). However, while research suggests power imbalances are implicated in processes of co-production, we lack understanding of the different types of power that might shape co-production. Specifically, when considering the influence of power on the decision-making process at the center of co-production, it is important to differentiate between three different types of power: decision-making power, non-decision-making power, and ideological power (Lukes, 2005).

2.1 | Decision-making power: Wielding resources

Arguably, successful processes of co-production enhance decision-making with regard to service design and delivery (Bevir et al., 2019; Martin, 2008b). Problematically, pre-existing organizational hierarchies are imbued with self-interest and are spaces in which expertise and knowledge claims can be leveraged as an influential resource (Watson, 2014). As a result, dominant actors within organizations are able to wield specific resources to leverage decision-making power (Fleming & Spicer, 2014; Lukes, 2005).

Theoretically, service-user involvement may challenge the dominance of other organizational actors by drawing on their own experience as a resource, unsettling traditional power relations (Carr, 2007). However, empirical research into processes of co-production suggests decision-making power is the reason for many enduring power imbalances (Hodge, 2005), especially where the "expert" knowledge of professionals diminishes the value of service-user experience in co-production (Brown & Head, 2019). For example, in another organizational context, Weaver (2019) found that prison inmates were successfully involved in co-production processes of decision-making to improve some aspects of prison services. However, their lack of influential resources ensured that the impact of user involvement on enduring power imbalances was ameliorative rather than transformative. As a result, dominant

organizational actors continued to wield decision-making power, disempowering service-users and resulting in co-production where the dominance of professionals prevailed (Needham & Carr, 2009; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013; Purdy, 2012; Weaver, 2019).

2.2 | Non-decision-making power: Manipulating structure

As Lorenzi (2006, p. 91) states "*a non-decision is a decision designed to avoid the emergence of values and interests contrary to those of the decision-maker*." Non-decision-making power manifests in the reinforcement or manipulation of organizational structures to exclude actors who do not align with the decision-making agenda of dominant organizational actors (Lukes, 2005). Manipulating structure alters the involvement of service-users in co-production, potentially rendering them powerless (Williams, Sarre, et al., 2020) or promoting their input if it aligns with the interests of those wielding decision-making power (El Enany et al., 2013; Martin, 2008b). Non-decision-making power can be identified implicitly in many accounts of processes of co-production (Steen et al., 2018) and centers on dominant organizational actors' prioritization of self-interest (Martin, 2008b; Steen & Tuurnas, 2018). The manipulation of organizational structures determining "who is in the room" when services are being discussed means control can be exercised over non-employed service-users (Croft et al., 2016), including their potential exploitation (Croft & Currie, 2020) in processes of co-production.

2.3 | Ideological power: Drawing on the collective ideal

Ideological power (Lukes, 2005) is a form of societal control over prevailing attitudes, beliefs, and practices in an attempt to maintain the status quo (Farr, 2018). In co-production processes, service-users are often influenced by collective expectations of an "ideal" representative (El Enany et al., 2013), shaped by professional expectations (Croft et al., 2016) and within which service-users are either rewarded for compliance with that ideal or punished for non-compliance (Purdy, 2012). Ideological power relegates service-users to the boundary of a political agenda that justifies the current status quo and prevents radical service change (Fledderus et al., 2014; Jukić et al., 2019), resulting in tokenistic forms of co-production (Ocloo & Matthews, 2016; Williams et al., 2016).

For non-employed service-users involved in processes of co-production, the three forms of power outlined above can act in a multiplicative fashion, restricting their influence due to a lack of resource, inability to influence organizational structure, and their required compliance with a collective ideal. However, several studies suggest that formal employment of service-users may hold the potential to disrupt the existing status quo in processes of co-production (Battilana, 2010; Nancarrow & Borthwick, 2005). Yet, despite increasing policy interest, we have little understanding of the influence of how the formal employment of service-users in public service organizations influences the enduring power imbalances in processes of co-production. This is the focus of our paper.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Empirical context

Our work is positioned in the context of the English NHS. Health services present an opportunity to study co-production as they often have groups of service-users specifically for this purpose, that is, service-user involvement groups, patient and public involvement groups. Specifically, we focus on the globally emerging role of PSWs, individuals formally employed to work in a co-production role with a prerequisite of their own, ongoing, lived experience of

using mental health services (Gillard, 2019; Lawn et al., 2008; Rogers, 2017; Stratford et al., 2019). In the terms of their employment, they are explicitly required to use these lived experiences within their co-production role.

The PSWs described in this paper held various formal responsibilities for co-production processes within the organization, designed to give service-users more autonomy and meaningful involvement in decision-making (Boyle & Harris, 2009) and facilitate collaborative relationships with healthcare providers based on mutual respect for differing expertise (Charles et al., 1997). PSWs are involved in co-designing and co-facilitating mental health courses for current service-users alongside professionals, offering an alternative approach to clinical care, and co-producing changes in service, activities associated with co-production (Nabatchi et al., 2017; Park, 2020a; Voorberg et al., 2015).

3.2 | Data collection

A total of 69 semi-structured interviews (20–120 min in duration) were conducted with staff involved in co-production processes in one NHS Mental Health Services hub in England from January 2019 to February 2020. We interviewed 34 PSWs; 23 professionals including clinical staff such as psychologists, practitioners, occupational therapists, as well as non-clinical staff such as senior managers. We also interviewed 11 non-professionals (team leaders, secretaries, and employment specialists) and three volunteers.

The research team initially approached managers of teams involving PSWs prior to data collection. These managers subsequently introduced the study to their staff, generating our sample. We note that this highlights one of the issues outlined in our literature review, that managerial agendas can leverage decision-making, non-decision making, and ideological power, resulting in the promotion of "ideal" service-user representatives (Martin, 2008a, 2008b). However, we also advertised the study via organizational email, giving all individuals employed in the organization an opportunity to participate in the research without notifying management.

Initial data analysis took place in tandem with data collection, allowing emergent themes to be explored in-depth in subsequent interviews. The primary focus of our research was the involvement of PSWs in co-production processes, understood through their everyday work and experiences with colleagues and service-users. A combination of face-to-face and phone interviews was conducted, recorded digitally, and transcribed verbatim. Interview questions were designed to be reflective and prompted individuals to give examples of their experiences. Specifically, we were interested in their experience of collaborative processes of co-production. Therefore, we implicitly centered our questions around issues relating to power, including relationships between colleagues, their ability to express their opinion, and to what extent they felt able to use their lived experience as a resource in processes of co-production. In doing so, we aimed to understand the power relationships shaping the role and influence of formally employed service-users in co-production processes. For example, we asked: *How do you think your colleagues see you within the team and why? Can you give me an example of any difficulties you have faced in the workplace in relation to your colleagues? When there has been something you do not agree with, how have you handled and responded to this? How do you view your lived experience, and how do you use it in the organization? Do you feel you have the ability to influence others within the organization (and why/why not)?* These questions led to further discussions exploring themes as they emerged. Similar questions were asked to professionals and non-professionals who worked alongside PSWs, to understand the influence of other employment relationships in processes of co-production. For example, we asked: *Can you describe your relationship with PSWs when you co-facilitate with them? What elements of their role are useful to the organizations' co-production processes? What issues have you faced with the new role of PSWs in your organization, particularly concerning co-production initiatives?*

3.3 | Data analysis

Data analysis was a three-stage process intended to develop and refine analytical generation across each of the three stages (Yin, 2013). After each interview, the first author documented a short summary of the interview,

drawing on any surprising themes; the same process occurred when transcribing the interviews. Transcripts were also read after transcribing and once again before initial coding.

During the first stage of coding, we used an open coding system (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using NVivo software, we coded line-by-line "informant-based" open codes. These included how PSWs were involved in co-production, how they communicated with professionals, and how they dealt with challenges in the workplace based on their formal employment within the organization. For professional actors, codes were related to how they viewed PSWs; difficulties PSWs faced in processes of co-production, and their opinions on the success of the formalized role in supporting meaningful co-production. Once completed, we followed a process of axial coding, structuring the data into theoretical categories (second-order concepts) and finally aggregate dimensions.

Among the PSWs there was considerable variability in how they engaged in their daily work and how they talked about themselves in relation to various processes of co-production, as well as variability in the way other professional actors talked about PSWs. Engaging in abductive theorizing, we discovered that these aggregate dimensions could be linked to Lukes (2005) three faces of power: decision-making, non-decision-making, and ideological power. For example, some PSWs talked about not feeling able to use their voice to challenge other professionals because of their lack of power within the organization (decision-making power), whereas other PSWs felt able to actively use their voice to challenge professionals on topics they disagreed with (challenging ideological power). Relatedly, some PSWs used expressions of non-professional language (voice) but noted their voice was often controlled or changed by other organizational actors (non-decision-making power). Some PSWs reported they thought their lived experience was rejected in the organization (decision-making power), whereas others reported feeling it was accepted (challenging ideological power), and some reported feeling that using their lived experience was controlled by other organizational actors (non-decision-making power). We identified that these different responses gave rise to a set of distinct theoretical categories characterizing three types of formally employed service-users: rejected employee, non-professional employee, and expert employee. These theoretical categories formed our three aggregate dimensions, indicating three responses to the power imbalances within processes of co-production. Our coding structure is presented in Figure 1.

4 | FINDINGS

Our findings suggest that PSWs varied in their responses to the power imbalances underpinning processes of co-production. As our abductive theorizing suggested, the outcome of different interactions identified in our coding structure broadly aligned with Lukes three faces of power. Moving beyond arbitrary circumstances in which power is deployed, we identify *how* different types of power can be influenced when PSWs used their voice, experience, and identity together in different ways. Specifically, we identify these constructs as being rudimentary to the power imbalances in processes of co-production, and illustrate the ways in which they are negotiated are underpinned by Lukes three faces of power: inverting professionalism, embedding expertise, and perpetuating rejection.

4.1 | Inverting professionalism

We identified a group of PSWs engaging in a combination of responses we labeled "*inverting professionalism*" in which, despite actively engaging in their formal co-production role, more powerful professional actors controlled their involvement. This group of PSWs used non-professional expressions of voice, experience, and identity, but struggled to leverage significant influence during processes of co-production.

These PSWs rejected professional language in favor of non-professional language. For example, we found that not only did PSWs dislike clinical language, they actively sought to change it by using their non-professional voice:

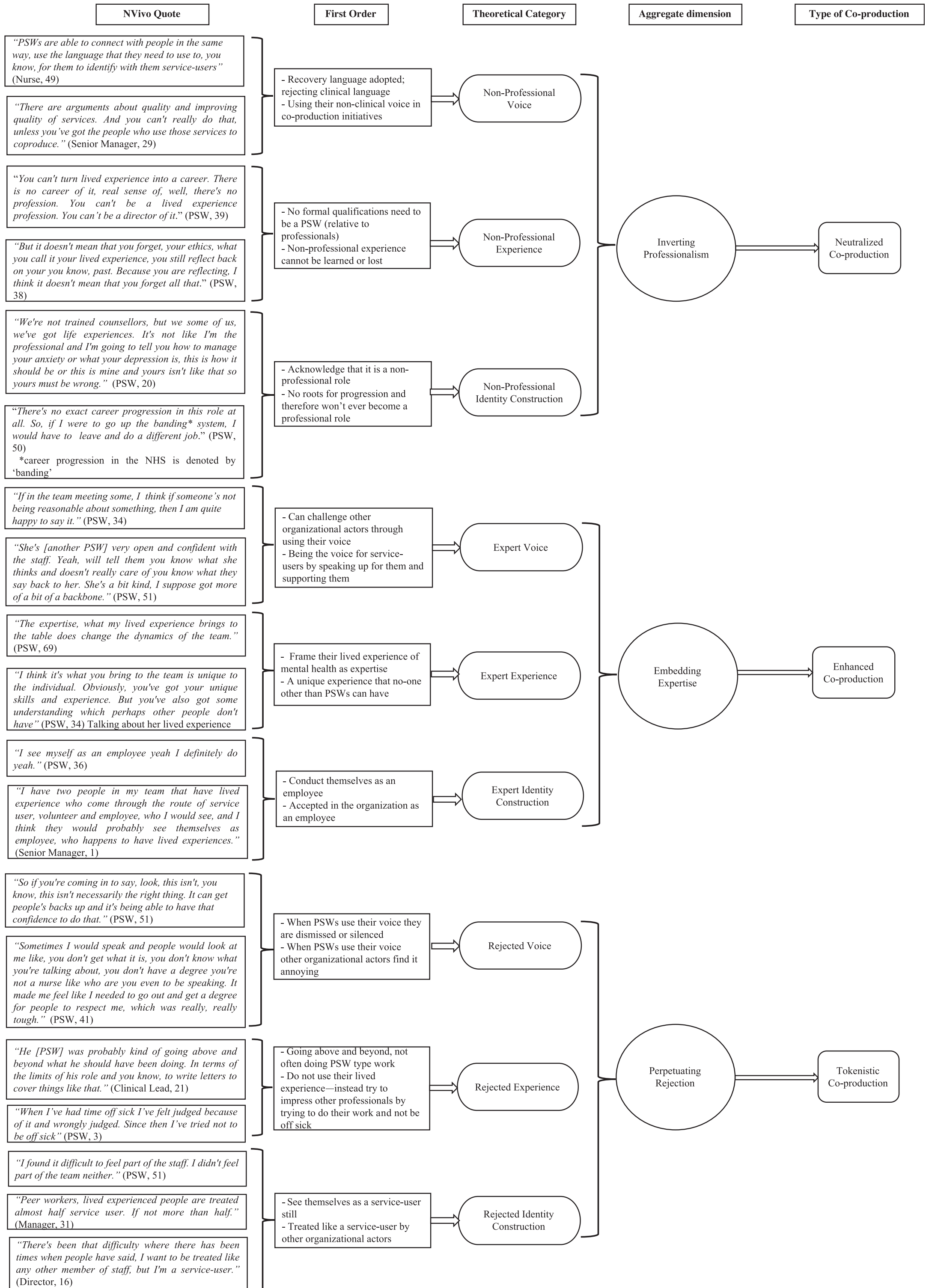

FIGURE 1 Coding structure. PSW, peer support workers

> "*I noticed a lot of the language that was used in care plans around me; I adopted within a clinical setting, purely because that's what was done… And that went on for a couple of months, until I thought, 'no, I can't do this, like, this is not me.' So I'd be sitting there writing clinical notes, and everyone else would be writing 'own diet and fluids administered' or whatever I'm not doing this. I'd write, 'she had a drink'.*" (PSW, 28)

We noted that several PSWs attempted to leverage influence using their non-professional voice within their formal role. They did this by encouraging other organizational actors to change their language to mirror the PSW "recovery voice": "*Alongside all the other professionals, I'm trying to work with them and with Sarah* [a PSW] *to challenge them in terms of their thinking. Maybe the language that they use*" (Senior Manager, 23). It was, however, acknowledged that it was difficult to influence or change: "*old school people*" (PSW, 44) because "*changing people who've worked a certain way for 20-odd years is near enough impossible. Just having that mentality which is difficult to change is because they're stuck in their own ways.*" (Senior Manager, 56). In particular, PSWs felt managed in certain situations: "*I did some work with an OT (occupational therapist) once. He was quite defensive in terms of what we were both doing in the room… I wasn't told not to get involved with them per se, but I felt slightly managed in that situation.*" (PSW, 39). These situations demonstrate that despite being involved in processes of co-production, it was difficult to redress power imbalances, due to the prevailing influence of non-decision-making power of professionals.

Using their non-professional voice to communicate their distinction from professionals led to an emphasis of the formally employed role for PSWs as: "*Not the same things that any other clinician would do. But we just come at it from a different angle.*" (PSW, 66). In particular, the emphasis of non-professional experience as being particularly important encouraged PSWs to view themselves as non-professional in a positive way:

> "*I think it's good in the sense that, from a non-professional point of view, when people come in and I say 'I'm non-professional, I've got similar experiences to yourself, I can kind of relate to it if you want to talk about it. For service-users who come in, it relaxes them a bit more.*" (PSW, 20)

Professionals supportive of the PSW initiative described the impact of their non-professional experience on processes of co-production: "*They'll* [PSWs] *say: 'Look, we know exactly where you're coming from. I've been there myself.' And you can just see it. It has an instant impact, where if you've learnt that, great, but it doesn't have the same kind of impact. That's what I mean by the power of lived experience. So, I do build in as much of that as I can really because it just means so much more to people than standing and reading off slides*" (Recovery Lead, 52). However, we noted that professionals continued to leverage control over the extent to which PSWs were "allowed" to be involved in co-production processes. For example, "*There are occasions where a professional and a peer worker is doing the presentation, and a professional is standing at the side pretty much holding their hand. I mean what on earth is that about? It's implying that they're still a patient or service-user. I think people think that 'we don't want them to do too well because they'll take our job.' Maybe that's it, it's control.*" (Manager, 31).

It was acknowledged that PSWs would never be seen by others as employed professionals unless they are "*going out and shedding your peer identity and becoming a 'professional' or about that being the main hat you put on*" (Recovery Lead, 43). While this could undermine their influence within processes of co-production, several PSWs suggested they were content being positioned as non-professional: "*I'm not one of those people who want to be a manager.*" (PSW, 11) because "*I would not want to lose the lived experience side.*" (PSW, 39).

In summary, we saw these PSWs adhere to the conditions of their role as formal employees. Expressions of voice, experience, and identity as non-professional meant that PSWs tried to incorporate a recovery-focused approach in their role, resulting in *inverting professionalism*. However, institutionalized power imbalances within processes of co-production remained unchanged due to the continued control of more powerful actors who manipulated structures of co-production and decided "who was in the room" when decisions were being made.

4.2 | Embedding expertise

We identified another group of PSWs engaging in a combination of responses we labeled "*embedding expertise*." These PSWs drew on their expert voice, expert experience, and expert identity, which they used to challenge ideological power.

We observed PSWs using their expert voice when they challenged other organizational actors: "*He'd* [a PSW] *be challenging everybody in some form of authority*." (Practitioner, 68). This was facilitated when PSWs noted they: "*can make challenges on stuff I want to. Or I can say things they can think about them if they want to. Oh, a challenge, well, a recent one is 'are they over-medicated?' that was to a nurse. They often have explanations as to why things are in their own minds but at least it's worth challenging*." (PSW, 47). This enabled several PSWs to challenge dominant professionals, ensuring they could use their voice to exert influence in processes of co-production.

Utilizing their expert voice to challenge other organizational actors was intertwined with how they talked about their own experience: "*I have got lived experience, I have got expertise*" (PSW, 69) which made them "qualified" for an employed role: "*We have lived so much of our life with mental health that we are, in some ways very qualified*." (PSW, 63). They suggested that no professional could possess this experience: "*having lived experience is something that you can't learn from any other way apart from having that experience. And you bring an extra dimension to the work*." (PSW, 34). Some professionals also acknowledged the PSWs lived experience as a source of their expertise: "*Peer workers should absolutely be using their lived experience, it is a skill they've got that nobody else has*." (Senior Manager, 58).

Expression of expert voice, experience, and identity enabled PSWs to position themselves as expert employees: "*I present myself as an employee and as a member of staff. I am punctual and professional, I do my work in a timely fashion. I exceed myself in my daily duties*" (PSW, 40). These PSWs saw themselves as: "*An employee that can use my time as a service-user to enhance my role as an employee. I think especially recently I've used my lived experience as a force for inspiration and good*." (PSW, 4). In short, they drew on their lived experience as a resource that increased the influence they had in their formal role as a PSW.

Expressions of PSWs expertise as an employee were also reinforced by professional staff who held the view that: "*They're employees. They're paid by the organization to do a job. They are employees in the light of the law*" (Senior Manager, 1) and that they are: "*treated in the same way as any other member of staff*" (Senior Manager, 29). They are also viewed them as colleagues and not ex-patients: "*They are Goldencare staff members, and more importantly they're my colleagues. They're not ex-patients or professionally unwell people. These are people who have a role and function within our team*." (Senior Manager, 2). This allowed these PSWs to fulfill their role as an employee where they felt trusted: "*My colleagues within the team, they definitely trust me. My peer manager trusts me*" (PSW, 48). Subsequently, by being viewed as an employee they were not controlled by dominant organizational actors.

In summary, these PSWs were able to "*change the balance of power really, which has always been in professional hands*" (Senior Manager, 29). They leveraged the expertise of their voice, experience, and identity as a resource, engaging in the process of *embedding expertise*. In doing so, allowed these PSWs to challenge institutionalized power imbalances inherent in processes of co-production.

4.3 | Perpetuating rejection

We identified several PSWs engaging in a combination of responses we labeled "*perpetuating rejection*" through which they felt unable to challenge the power imbalances inherent in processes of co-production. For example, in some situations, it was felt PSWs' voices were deemed irrelevant by dominant organizational actors: "*it's felt very, very difficult to actually voice your concerns because it may be seen as not necessarily relevant*." (PSW, 53). In other circumstances, PSWs felt silenced and undermined by professionals:

> "*What was really difficult was one of the times that I had stood up for this person and I put my foot down and I said, 'no, not having it, this person is really unwell'… And the discussion was quite heated. And then my manager took me aside and said to me that I had overstepped, 'you did seem to become quite strong and did seem to go on a bit. Do you think we should have some safe words I can use, something I should say when I think you're becoming too compassionate about something?' I felt like a four-year-old child being told, 'we're going to use a safe word that I'm going to say to you and I want you to stop talking'. There was no way he would have said that to a nurse.*" (PSW, 41)

We identified a number of situations in which PSWs felt silenced by others within the organization. However, we also noted that, while some were silenced by others, some remained silent through choice because: "*they can't speak up*." (Senior Manager, 31). Despite being formally employed, PSWs commented on an ongoing awareness that they would be treated differently to professionals if they spoke up as they would be seen as non-compliant with collective ideals:

> "*There are times when things will happen and what I want to be able to say 'actually that was really upsetting' but what I worry about is that if I say it, it will have a different connotation, in that they'll go straight to 'oh my gosh, she is going to have a breakdown.' Whereas, if another professional said it, it would be discussed in a different way*." (PSW, 60)

Further, we found that if PSWs questioned practices within the organization, professionals negatively referred to the PSWs' lived experiences to silence them:

> "*Every time I did try and say I am not happy with this, I'm not happy with that, or can you give me some advice? It was 'maybe you're not well enough to do this job.' For someone else, especially your manager or people that you work with, make you feel like you're poorly.*" (PSW, 61)

These situations made PSWs feel like their experiences were unworthy and undervalued, spurring a negative response to how they felt able to draw on their lived experience during processes of co-production. Instead, these PSWs attempted to gain influence with other organizational actors by doing their work for them:

> "*I felt like from the minute I stepped onto the ward to the minute I went home, I had to prove that I was worthy of being there. I just went above and beyond with staff. I did a lot of their work for them. Because I wasn't treated very nicely, I really wanted to be liked, I'd say, 'oh I'll do this for you, I'll do this for you' and ended up burning myself out and nobody appreciated it anyway. But it's so, so difficult because you're really trying to please but still be yourself.*" (PSW, 61)

Awareness of the enduring power imbalances created a feeling of being unwanted: "*even line managers said there's no role for PSWs here*" (PSW, 41), and led to some PSWs avoiding taking time off for illness due to negativity surrounding their previous lived experiences:

> "*Someone said that: 'She'll never do it.' I got told that after that there were quite a few people who said: 'She'll not do it' because I've been quite ill in the past 'She'll never do it. She'll not manage, shouldn't have these peer workers' but I did and I proved them all wrong. But that's part of me because if I hear something like that, I just go: 'Right. Sod you, I'm going to do it.' And for five years, I haven't had one day off for five years.*" (PSW, 55)

Feeling that their voice, experience, and identity were rejected meant these PSWs were positioned as service-users rather than formal employees: "*One peer support worker mentioned on the ward they weren't allowed to look at clinical notes and weren't allowed in the office at one point. Or they couldn't listen to confidential conversations. I think the staff didn't quite get that they were staff*." (Recovery Lead, 43). These situations meant several PSWs: "*found it difficult to be part of the staff*" (PSW, 51) and that "*sometimes they have just felt more like a service-user*" (Secretary 9), who leverage little to no influence in co-production processes. Some PSWs commented on how they were treated in a derogatory way, rather than respected as a colleague: "*I was told by certain members of staff that I was too mental to do the job*." (PSW, 61).

While these conditions were created by other organizational actors, resulting in a sense of rejection, professionals occasionally suggested some PSWs actively positioned themselves a service-user: "*when it suits they can sometimes say 'I'm a service-user*'" (Manager, 12) "*sometimes the individual peer support worker wanted to play the service-user card*" (Director 16).

In summary, we saw this group of PSWs disassociate from their role as a formal employee. When they attempted to leverage any influence over processes of co-production which was seen as a challenge to the collective expectations of their involvement, rejection of their voice, experience, and identity, both by themselves and others, meant that PSWs struggled to leverage any form of power, remained silent, were undermined by other actors and positioned as service-users rather than employees. Through this process of *perpetuating rejection* power imbalances were exacerbated, creating a new power imbalance, through the dynamics of both ideological and decision-making power.

5 | DISCUSSION

Previous research suggests that formally employing service-users has the potential to redress the inherent power imbalances undermining meaningful co-production (Park, 2020a; Rose et al., 2016). However, our findings suggest that this is not always the case and instead, in certain circumstances, new power imbalances may emerge. First, in situations where power imbalances remained unchanged, we identified a process of "inverting professionalism," resulting in *neutralized* co-production. Second, where several PSWs were able to challenge traditional power differentials in processes of co-production, we identified a process of "embedding expertise," resulting in *enhanced* co-production. Finally, through the process of "perpetuating rejection" formally employed service-users created new power imbalances that problematically exacerbated power relations, resulting in *tokenistic* co-production, where formally employed service-users are rendered powerless.

In the first circumstance, formally employed service-users who engaged in the process of "inverting professionalism" were able to reject professional language and expertise in favor of non-professional language (voice) and their non-professional lived experience. These findings challenge existing research suggesting service-users are easily co-opted into managerial and professional-driven cultures (Croft et al., 2016; El Enany et al., 2013). Such previous studies focused on non-employed service-users, describe how service-users change their behaviors, language, and identity to fit into existing institutional arrangements. However, we suggest formal employment mediates some of the problems of voluntary co-production, such as acquiescent service-users (Croft et al., 2016; Martin, 2008b), exploitation of service-users (Croft & Currie, 2020), and professionals questioning the experience, voice and identity of service-users (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Martin, 2008a, 2008b; Renedo & Marston, 2011). In our findings, formally employed service-users were not necessarily co-opted into "becoming" professional and instead positioned themselves as "non-professional" to leverage influence within co-production processes. This mitigates the risk of proto-professionalization (Dent, 2006; Hilton & Slotnick, 2005) or becoming "professionalized service-users," which is an existing problem in various forms of co-production, including patient and public involvement groups (El Enany et al., 2013; Thompson, 2007).

However, we also noted that *inverting professionalism* did not seem to have any influence on the continued control of dominant organizational actors. In particular, we noted that the involvement of these PSWs continued to be shaped by non-decision-making power in which dominant organizational actors determined where and when it was appropriate for them to be involved. In the context of co-production, this may be considered a form of "intermediate," or "neutralized" co-production (Needham & Carr, 2009; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013; Weaver, 2019), in which changes may occur to improve processes, but control remains with dominant organizational actors who limit co-production by manipulating organizational structure to determine "who is in the room."

In the second circumstance, "embedding expertise," formally employed service-users positioned themselves as inherently different from professionals. They leveraged their "expert" identity as a resource enabling them to challenge dominant professionals during the design and delivery of services, drawing on their own different type of expertise. However, we noted that professionals did not see these PSWs as a threat. Instead, by positioning themselves as inherently different from professionals, formally employed service-users became non-threatening expert employees who used their expertise and knowledge claim as a resource that did not compete with professional control, but instead complemented it (Laage-Thomsen, 2021).

We found that PSWs embedding expertise primarily mediated the influence of ideological power by challenging collective expectations of an "ideal" representative and crafting a new role for themselves as an employee. Challenging ideological power subsequently allowed these PSWs to use their unique knowledge (lived experience) as a resource to successfully mitigate the limitations of decision-making and non-decision-making power inherent in processes of co-production. Thus, formally employing service-users offers an opportunity for an "enhanced" form of co-production (Osborne & Strokosch, 2013), when they are able to challenge ideological power by embedding expertise.

Finally, "perpetuating rejection" generated a new form of power imbalance. In these circumstances employed service-users were seen as challenging collective expectations of their involvement and were subsequently unable to use their voice, experience, or identity as resources, counter-intuitively reducing their influence on processes of co-production. This aligns with previous work highlighting the ongoing impact of the decision-making power of dominant professional actors over service-users, whether formally employed or not (Contandriopoulos, 2004; Rutter et al., 2004; Williams, Sarre, et al., 2020). However, our findings move beyond this, demonstrating how a new power imbalance emerges through the formal employment of service-users due to the interplay of ideological power and decision-making power. When PSWs were seen as challenging ideological power in a negative way by directly challenging the control of professionals, those professionals leveraged their decision-making power to restrict or undermine the resources of PSWs, rendering them powerless (Williams, Robert, et al., 2020). When these PSWs attempted to speak up, they were silenced by other organizational actors whose derogatory comments served as a form of "punishment," further undermining their involvement in processes of co-production (Purdy, 2012), demonstrating the prevailing decision-making power dynamics. This finding aligns with recent work depicting the pervasive nature of decision-making power when dominant organizational actors influence co-production to favor their own interests (Park, 2020b). Thus, in these circumstances, formally employed service-users fall into the trap of tokenistic co-production, which has a long-standing history in public service co-production (Ocloo & Matthews, 2016; Williams, Sarre, et al., 2020).

We make two key contributions. First, by drawing on Lukes (2005) and taking a broad overview of power accounting for the influence of resource (decision-making power), structure (non-decision-making power), and collective expectations (ideological power), we demonstrated the complexities of power imbalances ingrained in processes of co-production. In doing so, we illustrated how different forms of co-production may emerge due to the influence of formal employment in mediating different types of power. When formally employed service-users continue to be restricted by the influence of non-decision-making power, in which dominant organizational actors structure co-production processes to limit their involvement, formal employment will have little to no impact on inherent power imbalances, resulting in neutralized co-production. Conversely, when formally employed service-users are able to change collective expectations of an ideal representative, leveraging their employment to challenge ideological power in a non-threatening way, they can subsequently challenge the decision-making and non-decision-making power of dominant organizational actors, and formal employment results in enhanced co-production. However, if

challenging ideological power is perceived as threatening to professionals, their lived experience of using services, which characterizes their formal employment, is undermined as a resource or even used against them. As a result, formally employed service-users may find themselves rendered entirely powerless by the decision-making power of dominant organizational actors. They will be unable to use their voice or experience as a resource, and formal employment will render their involvement in co-production tokenistic.

Second, we suggest our work explains why, despite suggestions of solutions to mitigate inherent power imbalances (Filipe et al., 2017; Park, 2020a), co-production processes remain inherently challenging. While it appears intuitive that formally employing service-users may redress power imbalances in co-production, as such a role gives them a formal position within the organization, we should not be so reliant on this assumption. As noted above, that assumption is reliant on the extent to which formal employment has an influence on decision-making, non-decision-making, or ideological power within an organization. Meaningful co-production is reliant on challenging ideological power, but this is only possible when formally employed services-users are able to position themselves as a non-threatening expert employee. Service-users employed in processes of co-production need to agentically position themselves so they do not directly compete with or threaten professional power. Counter-intuitively, this non-threatening position enables them to change collective expectations of their role and subsequently gain greater influence within processes of co-production. However, if formally employed service-users are unable to do this, and in fact engage in a process of perpetuating rejection, formal employment reinforces the inequalities that prevail in co-production. These siloed formally employed service-users experience a more significant power imbalance between all those involved in co-production processes, and the novelty of our findings emphasizes that we should not be so quick to assume that formal employment will render power imbalances obsolete.

Our study adds to the existing literature on co-production by extending existing understandings about power and processes of co-production (Bovaird, 2007; Farr, 2018; Williams, Sarre, et al., 2020) and highlighting the complex interplay of structure, resource, and collective expectations under conditions of power. Specifically, we illuminate how constructs of voice, experience, and identity interact and how these trajectories challenge, exacerbate or have no effect on power in co-production. Theoretically, we demonstrate the complex nature of power within processes of co-production here-to neglected in extant research. Specifically, by drawing on Lukes three faces of power, we demonstrate how different forms of power can be wielded to achieve different outcomes. While ideological power, according to Lukes can be hidden from direct observation, we argue that non-dominant actors can challenge elements of this by deploying their own expertise. Indeed, expertise in co-production is the one resource that seems to separate professionals from service-users (Brandsen & Honingh, 2013), yet such expertise can be utilized powerfully to challenge ideological power imbalances in co-production. In our case, this was evident when expert expressions of voice, experience, and identity interacted in a way that enabled some PSWs to embed expertise.

Second, we build on existing studies which make reference to power imbalances in co-production, particularly with regard to marginalized groups (Bovaird, 2007), where we intuitively expect power imbalances to exist. However, we challenge this assumption by showing how power can be deployed in different ways (decision-making, non-decision-making, and ideological) resulting in different forms of co-production. We break down the concept of power to illuminate a dynamic interplay of structure, resource, and collective expectations, rather than treating power as being deployed in the same way in all circumstances. We reject the assumption that marginalized groups will always be limited by power imbalances and illustrate how they may leverage different expressions of voice, experience, and identity to maximize their influence.

Practically, we encourage both researchers and practitioners to consider the context in which different forms of co-production (neutralized, enhanced, tokenistic) may emerge. By identifying these forms, we contribute to the conclusions of other studies identifying different types of co-production (Bovaird, 2007; Brandsen & Honingh, 2016; Park, 2020a; Voorberg et al., 2015), and develop understandings by demonstrating different outcomes in relation to negotiation of power imbalances, that is, where neutralized co-production occurs, contrary to policy aspirations, power imbalances remain unchanged. Moreover, while we position our research in the context of formally employed

service-users, some of our findings could extend to voluntary service-users who have a prominent role in co-production, with regard to how they use their voice, experience, and identity as a voluntary user. Finally, we draw on the impact of lived experience (whether viewed as a form of expertise or not), such that in some circumstances it may instill an element of trust between all stakeholders involved in co-production (Park, 2020a) but in other circumstances may undermine user involvement (Park, 2020b).

We acknowledge that our findings represent a snapshot in time of the experiences of PSWs. It is not unrealistic to suggest that over time formally employed service-users may progress dynamically across these different processes to negotiate the different forms of power outlined. For example, they may initially express a "rejected" identity, voice, and experience, as time progresses they may engage in a process of inverting professionalism and express a "non-professional" identity, voice, and experience. Over time, they may gain enough trust and acceptance from their team to engage in a process of embedding expertise and express an "expert" identity, voice, and experience to be used as a resource to complement other professionals' expertise. The mechanisms underpinning such potential transitions and processes require further investigation to understand how power imbalances may dissipate over time or if, in continued circumstances of perpetuating rejection, the new power relation outlined above remains. Further attention should be paid to understand the underlying dynamics hindering or improving processes of co-production, and clarifying the potential for transition through tokenistic, neutralized, and enhanced forms of co-production.

6 | CONCLUSION

We contribute to the literature on power imbalances inherent in co-production by exploring how formally employing service-users influences the pervasive nature of power in co-production processes. Extant research on power imbalances in co-production focuses primarily on the voluntary involvement of service-users. However, in moving away from this context, our findings show how formally employed service-users influence, and are influenced by, different forms of power. By exploring different types of power inherent in processes of co-production, we give insight into three potential outcomes of how formally employed service-users respond to power imbalances. For some, despite formal employment, non-decision-making power means structural control by dominant organizational actors renders co-production *neutralized*. Conversely, others may be able to challenge collective expectations, mediating the influence of ideological power, resulting in an *enhanced* form of co-production. Crucially, this must be done in a way that does not threaten the power of professionals. Finally, when dominant organizational actors leverage decision-making power to render the formal employment of service-users as a negative, rather than positive, resource, co-production is *tokenistic*. Therefore, we warn that formal employment of service-users to mediate the power imbalances inherent in co-production may be a double-edged sword, holding the capacity to challenge or exacerbate (and create new) inhibitory power imbalances.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was funded by NIHR CLAHRC West Midlands.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ORCID

Trishna Chauhan https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6017-3665

REFERENCES

Alford, J. (1998) A public management road less travelled: clients as co-producers of public services. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, *57*(4), 128–137. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.1998.tb01568.x

Amann, J. & Sleigh, J. (2021) Too vulnerable to involve? Challenges of engaging vulnerable groups in the co-production of public services through research. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *44*(9), 715–727. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1912089

Battilana, J. (2010) The enabling role of social position in diverging from the institutional status quo: evidence from the UK National Health Service. *Organization Science*, *22*(4), 817–834. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0574

Bell, D.M. & Pahl, K. (2018) Co-production: towards a utopian approach. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *21*(1), 105–117.

Beresford, P. (2019) Public participation in health and social care: exploring the co-production of knowledge. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *3*, 41. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00041

Bevir, M., Needham, C. & Waring, J. (2019) Inside co-production: ruling, resistance, and practice. *Social Policy & Administration*, *53*(2), 197–202. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12483

Bovaird, T. (2007) Beyond engagement and participation: user and community coproduction of public services. *Public Administration Review*, *67*(5), 846–860. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00773.x

Bovaird, T. & Loeffler, E. (2012) From engagement to co-production: the contribution of users and communities to outcomes and public value. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *23*(4), 1119–1138. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-012-9309-6

Boyle, D. & Harris, M. (2009) *The challenge of co-production*. London, UK: New Economics Foundation. Available at:. http://www.camdencen.org.uk/Resources/Public%20services/The_Challenge_of_Co-production.pdf

Brandsen, T. & Honingh, M. (2013) Professionals and shifts in governance. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *36*(12), 876–883.

Brandsen, T. & Honingh, M. (2016) Distinguishing different types of coproduction: a conceptual analysis based on the classical definitions. *Public Administration Review*, *76*(3), 427–435. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12465

Brown, P.R. & Head, B.W. (2019) Navigating tensions in co-production: a missing link in leadership for public value. *Public Administration*, *97*(2), 250–263.

Callaghan, G.D. & Wistow, G. (2006) Publics, patients, citizens, consumers? Power and decision making in primary health care. *Public Administration*, *84*(3), 583–601. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2006.00603.x

Carr, S. (2007) Participation, power, conflict and change: theorizing dynamics of service user participation in the social care system of England and Wales. *Critical Social Policy*, *27*(2), 266–276.

Charles, C., Gafni, A. & Whelan, T. (1997) Shared decision-making in the medical encounter: what does it mean?(or it takes at least two to tango). *Social Science & Medicine*, *44*(5), 681–692.

Clegg, S.R., Courpasson, D. & Phillips, N. (2006) *Power and organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Contandriopoulos, D. (2004) A sociological perspective on public participation in health care. *Social Science & Medicine*, *58*(2), 321–330. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(03)00164-3

Croft, C. & Currie, G. (2020) Realizing policy aspirations of voluntary sector involvement in integrated care provision: insights from the English National Health Service. *Health Policy (Amsterdam, Netherlands)*, *124*(5), 549–555. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2020.03.008

Croft, C., Currie, G. & Staniszewska, S. (2016) Moving from rational to normative ideologies of control over public involvement: a case of continued managerial dominance. *Social Science & Medicine*, *162*, 124–132. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.06.010

Crompton, A. (2019) Inside co-production: stakeholder meaning and situated practice. *Social Policy & Administration*, *53*(2), 219–232. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12466

Dahl, A. & Soss, J. (2014) Neoliberalism for the common good? Public value governance and the downsizing of democracy. *Public Administration Review*, *74*(4), 496–504. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12191

De Corte, J., Roose, R., Bradt, L. & Roets, G. (2018) Service users with experience of poverty as institutional entrepreneurs in public services in Belgium: an institutional theory perspective on policy implementation. *Social Policy & Administration*, *52*(1), 197–215.

Dent, M. (2006) Patient choice and medicine in health care. *Public Management Review*, *8*(3), 449–462. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719030600853360

El Enany, N., Currie, G. & Lockett, A. (2013) A paradox in healthcare service development: professionalization of service users. *Social Science & Medicine*, *80*, 24–30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.01.004

Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T. & Balogh, S. (2012) An integrative framework for collaborative governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *22*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mur011

Farr, M. (2018) Power dynamics and collaborative mechanisms in co-production and co-design processes. *Critical Social Policy*, *38*(4), 623–644. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018317747444

Filipe, A., Renedo, A. & Marston, C. (2017) The co-production of what? Knowledge, values, and social relations in health care. *PLoS Biology*, *15*(5), e2001403. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.2001403

Fledderus, J., Brandsen, T. & Honingh, M. (2014) Restoring trust through the co-production of public services: a theoretical elaboration. *Public Management Review*, *16*(3), 424–443. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2013.848920

Fleming, P. & Spicer, A. (2014) Power in management and organization science. *Academy of Management Annals*, *8*(1), 237–298. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2014.875671

Fotaki, M. (2011) Towards developing new partnerships in public services: users as consumers, citizens and/or co-producers in health and social care in England and Sweden. *Public Administration*, *89*(3), 933–955. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2010.01879.x

Gillard, S. (2019) Peer support in mental health services: where is the research taking us, and do we want to go there? *Journal of Mental Health*, *28*(4), 341–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2019.1608935

Halvorsen, K.E. (2003) Assessing the effects of public participation. *Public Administration Review*, *63*(5), 535–543. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6210.00317

Head, E. (2009) The ethics and implications of paying participants in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *12*(4), 335–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570802246724

Hilton, S.R. & Slotnick, H.B. (2005) Proto-professionalism: how professionalisation occurs across the continuum of medical education. *Medical Education*, *39*(1), 58–65. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2004.02033.x

Hodge, S. (2005) Participation, discourse and power: a case study in service user involvement. *Critical Social Policy*, *25*(2), 164–179.

Jukić, T., Pevcin, P., Benčina, J., Dečman, M. & Vrbek, S. (2019) Collaborative innovation in public administration: theoretical background and research trends of co-production and co-creation. *Administrative Sciences*, *9*(4), 90.

Laage-Thomsen, J. (2021) Professional expertise in policy advisory systems: how administrators and consultants built behavioral insights in Danish public agencies. *Public Administration*. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12725

Lawn, S., Smith, A. & Hunter, K. (2008) Mental health peer support for hospital avoidance and early discharge: an Australian example of consumer driven and operated service. *Journal of Mental Health*, *17*(5), 498–508.

Leach, W.D. (2006) Collaborative public management and democracy: evidence from Western watershed partnerships. *Public Administration Review*, *66*(s1), 100–110. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00670.x

Lorenzi, M. (2006) Power: a radical view by Steven Lukes. *Crossroads*, *6*(2), 87–95.

Lukes, S. (2005) *Power: a radical view*, 2nd edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martin, G.P. (2008a) 'Ordinary people only': knowledge, representativeness, and the publics of public participation in healthcare. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *30*(1), 35–54. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2007.01027.x

Martin, G.P. (2008b) Representativeness, legitimacy and power in public involvement in health-service management. *Social Science & Medicine (1982)*, *67*(11), 1757–1765. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2008.09.024

Mayer, C. & McKenzie, K. (2017) '…it shows that there's no limits': the psychological impact of co-production for experts by experience working in youth mental health. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, *25*(3), 1181–1189. https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12418

Nabatchi, T., Sancino, A. & Sicilia, M. (2017). Varieties of participation in public services: The Who, When, and What of coproduction. *Public Administration Review*, *77*(5), 766–776. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/puar.12765

Nancarrow, S.A. & Borthwick, A.M. (2005) Dynamic professional boundaries in the healthcare workforce. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *27*(7), 897–919. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2005.00463.x

Needham, C. & Carr, S. (2009) *Co-production: an emerging evidence base for adult social care transformation*. London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Ocloo, J. & Matthews, R. (2016) From tokenism to empowerment: progressing patient and public involvement in healthcare improvement. *BMJ Quality & Safety*, *25*(8), 626–632. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjqs-2015-004839

Osborne, S.P., Radnor, Z. & Nasi, G. (2012) A new theory for public service management? Toward a (public) service-dominant approach. *The American Review of Public Administration*, *43*, 135–158. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074012466935

Osborne, S.P., Radnor, Z. & Strokosch, K. (2016) Co-production and the co-creation of value in public services: a suitable case for treatment? *Public Management Review*, *18*(5), 639–653. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2015.1111927

Osborne, S.P. & Strokosch, K. (2013) It takes two to tango? Understanding the co-production of public services by integrating the services management and public administration perspectives. *British Journal of Management*, *24*, S31–S47. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12010

Ostrom, E. (1996) Crossing the great divide: coproduction, synergy, and development. *World Development*, *24*, 1073–1087.

Owens, J. & Cribb, A. (2012) Conflict in medical co-production: can a stratified conception of health help? *Health Care Analysis*, *20*(3), 268–280.

Palumbo, R. (2016) Contextualizing co-production of health care: a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *29*(1), 72–90. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-07-2015-0125

Palumbo, R. (2017) *The bright side and the dark side of patient empowerment: co-creation and co-destruction of value in the healthcare environment*. Switzerland: Springer.

Park, S.(Ethan). (2020a) Beyond patient-centred care: a conceptual framework of co-production mechanisms with vulnerable groups in health and social service settings. *Public Management Review*, *22*(3), 452–474. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1601241

Park, S.(Ethan). (2020b) Representative bureaucracy through staff with lived experience: peer coproduction in the field of substance use disorder treatment. *The American Review of Public Administration*, *50*(8), 880–897. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074020930414

Pestoff, V. (2013) New public governance, co-production and third sector social services in Europe: crowding in and crowding out. In: Pestoff, V., Brandsen, T. & Verschuere, B. (Eds.) *New public governance, the third sector, and co-production*, 1st edition. New York, NY: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203152294-28

Purdy, J.M. (2012) A framework for assessing power in collaborative governance processes. *Public Administration Review*, *72*(3), 409–417. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02525.x

Renedo, A. & Marston, C. (2011) Healthcare professionals' representations of 'patient and public involvement' and creation of 'public participant' identities: implications for the development of inclusive and bottom-up community participation initiatives. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *21*(3), 268–280. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1092

Rogers, E.S. (2017) Peer support services: state of the workforce-state of the field in the USA. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, *21*(3), 168–175. https://doi.org/10.1108/MHSI-03-2017-0015

Rose, D., MacDonald, D., Wilson, A., Crawford, M., Barnes, M. & Omeni, E. (2016) Service user led organisations in mental health today. *Journal of Mental Health*, *25*(3), 254–259. https://doi.org/10.3109/09638237.2016.1139070

Rutter, D., Manley, C., Weaver, T., Crawford, M.J. & Fulop, N. (2004) Patients or partners? Case studies of user involvement in the planning and delivery of adult mental health services in London. *Social Science & Medicine*, *58*(10), 1973–1984. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(03)00401-5

Shybalkina, I. (2021) Toward a positive theory of public participation in government: variations in New York City's participatory budgeting. *Public Administration*. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12754

Siantz, E., Henwood, B. & Baezcondi-Garbanati, L. (2018) From physical wellness to cultural brokering: unpacking the roles of peer providers in integrated health care settings. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *54*(8), 1127–1135.

Steen, T., Brandsen, T. & Verschuere, B. (2018) The dark side of co-creation and co-production. Seven evils. In: *Co-production and co-creation: engaging citizens in public services*, 1st edition. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 284–292.

Steen, T. & Tuurnas, S. (2018) The roles of the professional in co-production and co-creation processes. In: *Co-production and co-creation*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 80–92.

Stratford, A.C., Halpin, M., Phillips, K., Skerritt, F., Beales, A., Cheng, V. et al. (2019) The growth of peer support: an international charter. *Journal of Mental Health*, *28*(6), 627–632. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2017.1340593

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J.M. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, p. 270.

Thomas, J.C. (2013) Citizen, customer, partner: rethinking the place of the public in public management. *Public Administration Review*, *73*(6), 786–796. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12109

Thompson, A.G.H. (2007) The meaning of patient involvement and participation in health care consultations: a taxonomy. *Social Science & Medicine*, *64*(6), 1297–1310. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.11.002

Tritter, J.Q. (2009) Revolution or evolution: the challenges of conceptualizing patient and public involvement in a consumerist world. *Health Expectations*, *12*(3), 275–287. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1369-7625.2009.00564.x

Vigoda, E. (2002) From responsiveness to collaboration: governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration. *Public Administration Review*, *62*(5), 527–540.

Voorberg, W.H., Bekkers, V.J.J.M. & Tummers, L.G. (2015) A systematic review of co-creation and co-production: embarking on the social innovation journey. *Public Management Review*, *17*(9), 1333–1357. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2014.930505

Watson, V. (2014) Co-production and collaboration in planning – the difference. *Planning Theory & Practice*, *15*(1), 62–76.

Weaver, B. (2019) Co-production, governance and practice: the dynamics and effects of User Voice Prison Councils. *Social Policy & Administration*, *53*(2), 249–264.

Williams, B.N., Kang, S.-C. & Johnson, J. (2016) (Co)-contamination as the dark side of co-production: public value failures in co-production processes. *Public Management Review*, *18*(5), 692–717. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2015.1111660

Williams, O., Robert, G., Martin, G.P., Hanna, E. & O'Hara, J. (2020) Is co-production just really good PPI? Making sense of patient and public involvement and co-production networks. In: Bevir, M. & Waring, J. (Eds.) *Decentring health and care networks: reshaping the organization and delivery of healthcare*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 213–237. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40889-3_10

Williams, O., Sarre, S., Papoulias, S.C., Knowles, S., Robert, G., Beresford, P. et al. (2020) Lost in the shadows: reflections on the dark side of co-production. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, *18*, 1–10.
Yin, R.K. (2013) *Case study research: design and methods*. London: Sage Publications.

How to cite this article: Chauhan, T., Croft, C., & Spyridonidis, D. (2022). Neutralized, enhanced, tokenistic: The influence of formal employment of service-users on processes of co-production. *Public Administration*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12839