

A Case Study in Translating the Narrative: Co-Production and the Convergence of Policy Stories in County Durham's Creative Sector

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Abstract

Narratives shape how policy problems are understood, yet most research assumes a top-down power structure between those who decide and those decided for. This study asks what happens to narrative exchange when that gap is deliberately narrowed through co-production. Using Into the Light¹, a County Durham creative-sector partnership between Durham County Council, Durham University, and a network of cultural organisations, as a single case study, it examines how narratives of the challenges creatives face and their solutions translate between participants and programme coordinators. Findings show strong narrative convergence between participants and coordinators, supporting claims that narrowing the actor-beneficiary gap fosters narrative convergence. However, divergence around funding priorities and the purpose of culture suggests some narrative mistranslation persists even where co-production is structurally embedded. The study extends narrative policy scholarship beyond elite, top-down contexts, while acknowledging limitations of single-case research.

¹ A link to Into the Light's website <https://www.intothelightdurham.co.uk/>

Introduction

Narratives are widely treated as the most influential factor in interpreting policy decisions. Often, we think of them as weapons in a politician's arsenal - pushed onto the public. Yet narratives are also our brain's preferred method of explaining our own views to others, even to ourselves (Gunn & Mintrom, 2022). We often feel that power dynamics play a large role in what is or is not believed - not incorrectly - yet in the context of co-production, where the asymmetry of power dynamics is minimized, theoretically, narratives converge.

I aim to map how the narrative of the challenges for creatives in County Durham and their solutions is translated between participant and programme coordinator. The analysis returns to the central question: do these narratives converge, and if so, what does that convergence tell us about Into the Light's co-production as redistribution of narrative power. Into the Light offers a well-suited case for this inquiry. Now in its third year, the programme is a partnership between Durham County Council, Durham University, and a network of cultural organisations. It works collaboratively with the Council and partner organisations to respond to what creative practitioners in the county need. For Into the Light co-production is built in, with recurring feedback sessions shaping decision-making.

My own position within Into the Light as evaluator and volunteer gives me unique insight into how it functions. As my project supervisor, Dr. Alison Whelan's proximity as Lead Evaluator of Into the Light also gives me access to evaluation reports and unpublished podcast episodes. However, it also raises the question of how my close involvement may cloud my judgement,

therefore throughout my research, I will keep memos reflecting on my own thought process to mitigate this.

Literature Review

Public policy, as Smith and Larimer (2017) argue, remains ‘an intuitive concept’ amounting to something like ‘a government-directed course of action in response to pressure about some perceived problem’. Much of policy research exists to bridge the gap between the public and policymakers; it is precisely this gap that makes Into the Light’s philosophy of co-production such a strong case study. Into the Light is designed to minimise the distance that most policy environments assume - between those who decide and those who are decided for. This raises a question at the heart of this study: what happens to narrative exchange when the gap it usually bridges has been narrowed?

Epistemology

Narrative within a public policy context has typically been studied through either a positivist, quantitative approach or postpositivist, qualitative lens. Jones and McBeth (2010) argue that narrative analysis in policy has, historically, leaned towards qualitative methods, they class unfalsifiable. It is against this backdrop that they introduce the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), now among the most widely used frameworks for narrative policy analysis, as a ‘quantitative, structuralist, and positivist approach to the study of policy narratives’. The NPF reduces narratives into generalisable structural elements - setting, characters and morals - operating simultaneously at micro, meso and macro levels.

However, this strategy has acknowledged flaws. Its outputs depend on subjective value judgements and reveal the ideology of the researcher as well as the narratives under study; because positivist approaches necessarily flatten nuance to render narratives countable, they risk excluding

certain marginalised groups. Even so, the NPF is defended as offering greater certainty than qualitative methods due to its capacity for deductive reasoning, though its proponents stress that both approaches can be valid.

This study responds to these flaws directly. Rather than choosing one over the other, it uses quantitative methods to guide qualitative analysis. Counting the frequency of inductively derived codes functions as a tool to identify where to look closely. However, the inductively derived codes mean that the dependence on researcher value judgements is not eliminated. Nonetheless, qualitative abductive reasoning reintroduces nuance and detail that a purely structural count strips away.

Gunn and Mintrom (2022) set out the assumptions underpinning the NPF: that the social constructions people use to interpret policy matter; that reality is bounded, rather than freely constructed by those social constructions and their contexts; that policy narratives are generalisable and countable; that narrative operates across three interacting levels - ‘individual, group, and cultural/institutional’ - and that storytelling takes precedence over reasoning in how policy is interpreted. Several of these assumptions are central to this research: the conception that narratives are the primary vehicle of policy interpretation and they therefore matter is foundational. Here, the three levels of NPF have an even stronger level of interaction since co-production is designed to break down hierarchical barriers.

Where we diverge is that this study does not assume that policy narratives can be adequately captured through generalised, counted forms alone; nuance must be reintroduced by

other means. Nor does it assume that reality is bounded by rational social constructions. Rather than sorting into villains and heroes, this study treats narratives as less rigidly structured - better understood as prescriptive rather than strictly descriptive.

Qualitative Applications of NPF

Gray and Jones (2016) offer an alternate route in arguing for NPF's compatibility with qualitative, inductive methods and a constructivist epistemology. They suggest the framework stands to benefit from more grounded theory and thick description, particularly in policy areas where quantitative approaches are limited. Their own study focuses on elite actors in US campaign finance regulatory reform - a single issue of policy debate, leaving open a clear avenue to extend this inductive, constructivist approach both across levels (not elites alone) and into a different policy context.

Shanahan et al. (2025) push the NPF's treatment of power further, developing a conceptual model for analysing how power operates within narratives - specifically, how the NPF's own structural assumptions frame narrative around power relations. Their model assumes that policy actors hold power over beneficiaries, that narrative is wielded with the intention to shape outcomes and that this power is mirrored by a corresponding absence of power among beneficiaries. This assumption is disrupted in a co-production context, where power is, in principle, redistributed more evenly, so the NPF's top-down frame and its stark separation of those with 'power to, with and over' struggles to capture the nuance of co-produced policy environments. The limits of existing NPF scholarship assumptions are revealed when applied to the case of *Into the Light*.

Yang and Zhang (2026) go some way towards addressing the field's top-down bias, examining citizen narratives within China's tiered healthcare reform. They code a large qualitative dataset and treat the NPF as a sensitizing concept rather than a backbone for the analysis, aligning their method much more closely with constructivist grounded theory. Yet their case remains one in which the system is imposed upon citizens rather than co-produced. Their contribution fills the gap in looking at the bottom-up narrative production in a non-Western setting, but it does not extend to capturing both policy actors' and beneficiaries' narratives.

Co-Production and Power

However, Crompton (2018) looks explicitly at both sides of the story, using qualitative methods to examine whether a disconnect exists between elite policy narratives and stakeholders' experience of what co-production is meant to be. Her findings show that 'meaningful' co-production is difficult to achieve in practice and what 'meaningful' means to participants is itself not stable. She suggests that participants 'give meaning to, and take meaning from, both the processes and consequences of co-production', this study takes up this idea when evaluating Into the Light's co-production through the translation of narrative. Another of Crompton's conclusions is also carried forward: that the success of co-production lies with the quality of dialogue, not merely the decisions it produces. Into the Light offers a case that follows both of Crompton's central recommendations - that stakeholders should be involved from the beginning of decision-making and events are held with individual stakeholder groups.

Bovaird (2007) provides a conceptual scaffolding for treating co-production as a negotiation amongst many interacting systems, rather than a single top-down process. Here, co-

production functions as a mechanism for integrating otherwise siloed stakeholders and mobilising resources. Thus, for the present study, the degree to which narrative content and framing are shared rather than divergent between participants and leadership becomes a plausible indicator of how well Into the Light's co-production is functioning. Ostrom's (1999) work lends further weight to this as the gap between policy actors and beneficiaries is treated as a hindrance to higher levels of welfare and synergy between the two as the more promising path to efficient and equitable government. Taking both studies together, this suggests that narrative convergence in environments of co-production is a signal of exactly the synergy co-production is meant to produce.

Yang and Northcott (2019) caution that beneficiaries sometimes had incentives to overstate positive outcomes. Nonetheless, they also found that co-production gave third-sector professionals a 'grassroots' perspective on outcomes. Accordingly, convergence should not be interpreted uncritically as it may reflect participants shaping accounts towards expectations, emphasising the importance of this study's abductive analysis.

Positioning

Taken together, this body of work leaves an area that this study expands upon. Substantively, while co-production research has examined whether stakeholders and elites share a common understanding of co-production as a process, and narrative power research has the top-down power asymmetries typical of most policy environments, far less attention has been paid to how differently positioned actors narrate the substance of shared problems within a partnership that has already, and deliberately, minimised the power gap between them. Successful convergence

means participants and coordinators agree on the primary issues creatives face in the County and their solutions. This study cannot assume Into the Light succeeds at redistributing power; this is treated as an open question that the results will address.

Methodology

The **core assumption** of my research is that:

1. Knowledge is not discovered but actively built through collective narratives.

Data Sources

Primary Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four key members with diverse roles within Into the Light. Julia Handelman-Smith, Programme Director; Anna Hodgson, Communications Director; Dr. Alison Whelan, Lead Evaluator and Ged Matthews, Director of Light Years - a partner of Into the Light and Durham University. Unfortunately, due to time constraints the interviews were limited to only the most important members for the scope of this study while retaining a spread of different roles.

The aim of the questions was to gauge:

1. To what extent Into the Light was a genuine endeavour in co-production
2. What were the primary issues it was believed that participants faced

The interview transcripts were then extracted from the video recordings utilising Microsoft Teams built-in transcription software, then manually checked.

Questions were not revealed to members prior to the interview and were also designed to reveal information indirectly to mitigate the effect of prepared responses that may contain bias.

Interviews lasted about 22 minutes. The use of deliberately open-ended questions to draw out more narratorial-type of answers contributed to extended interview time.

Field notes were also taken of participant stories in informal, conversational contexts to ensure that tone was not modulated to a more formal context which may lead to self-censorship. However, as these were not recorded through video or voice nor were the questions asked prepared, rather they followed the flow of natural conversation, these field notes will be used to inform the abductive section of my methodology and will not be coded and quantified.

Secondary Data

The greatest source of data comes from the Year 1 and Year 2 evaluation reports which highlight the primary partnerships of the programme and the main issues tackled in each year. As Into the Light is currently in its third year, only two reports have been released. Still, this provided a great point of comparison to analyse how the programme has shifted across the years and responded to the narratives within participant and partner feedback. It must be noted, however, that the Year 1 report had two authors, one of which being Dr. Alison Whelan, whereas, the Year 2 report was authored solely by Dr. Whelan. This will be taken into consideration during the abductive analysis of the reports.

Another source of secondary data was the 'Spotlight: Creative Career Journeys' podcast, an Into the Light student-led media outlet for creatives in County Durham. This interview-style podcast investigates guests' stories behind their creative careers. These unstructured story-led conversations were ideal for this study as they tease out narratives naturally, offering a thglimpse

into what guests believe is necessary to succeed as a creative within County Durham. Although, the presence of a camera (Herath et al., 2026) and the podcast's online publication may have influenced guests' answers, which will be considered in abductive analysis. Transcripts were extracted using TurboScribe and manually corrected.

A third source of secondary data came from Into the Light's tent at the Durham Miners' Gala. Tables were set up with questions for the public to answer as they pleased by placing a post it note with their response or writing directly onto the paper tablecloth, shown in Figure 1. Answers were gathered and anonymised where necessary. Convenience sampling was helpful here as it meant we could take advantage of an event with an attendance of an estimated 200,000 people (Fatkin, 2026). Nonetheless, this sampling method has serious limitations: attendees cannot be generalised as representative of the population. The Gala is also a deeply political event, celebrating trade unions and left-wing ideals, and has a heavy focus on County Durham's mining heritage, so may self-select for those who align themselves with either or both. Into the Light's tent was also marketed as creative focused, attracting more creatives. Given these factors, information gathered at the Miners' Gala is kept in its own category and used lightly as guidance and not certain. The questions consisted of:

- How can we make Co. Durham the best place to be an artist?
- What would you like to see in your community?
- How can we build a creative 'scene' here?
- How do we create 'space' to take risks?
- The action I would like to see or take is

- One thing that would help is



Figure 1 Public Responses from the Miners' Gala

The final source of data came from Into the Light's 'Creative Call' event including 94 participants selected from those already aware of Into the Light or who had already attended another event. The data came from a panel titled 'Trying, Testing, Learning, Innovating' including: Huw Lewis, a key member of the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority; Ged Matthews, Into the Light partner from Durham University leading Light Years, along with Ellie Mathieson, Light Years Project Coordinator; Dr. Alison Whelan, Lead Evaluator; Lizzie Lovejoy a beneficiary of several Into the Light projects including Durham Creative Community Fellows; and Martin Wilson director and co-founder of TIN Arts, one of Into the Light's partner organisations. This was a semi-structured group interview with pre-defined guiding questions and Ged Matthews as the panel's host, occasionally also stepping in to answer questions. At the end, the panel was opened to audience questions. This was a useful selection as speakers spanned partner programmes including policy leaders, programme leadership and a participant. The

spontaneous nature of audience questions also meant that less filtered responses were also included. However, as this was an event specifically hosted for Into the Light, responses may be tailored to this audience; for the purposes of this study, this may be beneficial rather than detrimental. The questions on this panel consisted of:

- Why does culture need room to experiment rather than always delivering predetermined outcomes?
- What can the creative sector and the culture sector learn from other sectors?
- What have Into the Light and Partners tested and learned, particularly from that actual impact, actual effect point?
- What would you like to see the next big cultural innovation be encountered in Durham with the North East?
- What can we learn from working across different places and sectors and communities like you have?

The first-year evaluation report consisted of 4839 words, the second-year report consisted of 20,554 words. I analysed nine podcast episodes consisting of 44,474 words, though many of these were not relevant to this research, such instances of small talk. There were 696 words within the Miners' Gala data and the transcript from the panel from the Creative Call event consisted of 9694 words, again, some of which was not relevant to this research. Interview transcripts summed to 13,553 words.

Analysis

A mixed-method qualitative-dominant analytical approach was used which involved:

1. Close reading the source material and taking notes throughout,
2. Utilising inductive reasoning to identify broad themes through comparison of notes,
3. Identifying code theme frequency throughout source material as a focusing tool, not as a measure of objective significance
4. Comparing frequencies of different source materials to guide qualitative analysis,
5. Utilising abductive reasoning to construct a coherent argument for the narrative that is grounded in the notes and broader themes identified,

Limitations

1. This can only be a snapshot and not a full view of how storytelling functions as a mechanism of co-production within policy, given time and word budget.
2. As an insider, I may not have enough critical distance from the programme to fully assess it, though, as I mentioned before, this will be mitigated through memos.
3. This is also only a single case study and thus is not a generalisable framework, though this may also be an advantage as it is customised for this project.
4. As a single coder, there will be no inter-code reliability check, thus the effect of my own biases will be amplified.
5. Sources can also be biased and therefore cannot be trusted at face-value. Nonetheless, this will be mitigated by the close reading done in the abductive reasoning stage of my methodology.

6. Sources from the Miner's Gala utilise convenience sampling methods and thus cannot be generalised to represent an entire population and can only be said to capture a glimpse of the full narrative of the public of County Durham.
7. Time constraints and solo research mean interviews may be limited.

Ethics

This study adhered to standard ethical research practices. Informed consent was obtained from all individuals who were interviewed, following a clear explanation of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and how their data would be used. For any names or identifying details included in the study where explicit consent to be named was not obtained, anonymised identifiers have been used to protect participant confidentiality. All data has been handled in accordance with relevant institutional and ethical guidelines governing research involving human participants.

My dual position within Into the Light, as both evaluator and volunteer, combined with my supervisor's role as Lead Evaluator creates the risk that findings could be shaped to benefit the programme. Safeguards were used to mitigate this. First, reflexive memos were kept throughout the research process. Second, critical findings about the programme were retained in the analysis rather than softened.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis

Every data source was read multiple times for familiarisation. Inductive notes were then taken on all the data sources except the field notes as initial open codes with representative words as well as utilising in vivo codes. This study focused on answering the central question of what the challenges are for creatives in County Durham and in what ways these could be solved.

Worked Example of Inductive Coding Process:

In the first podcast episode, Julia Handelman-Smith mentions wanting to ‘improve access for people to creative careers’. Realising that this was a significant quote for the purposes of my study, I noted: ‘Again, giving agency - improve access - support is offered, not a given’. Upon returning to my notes on this and other quotes after I finished the inductive notetaking, I noticed there was a repeated theme of improving ‘access’, rather than utilising the language of ‘giving’ which removes agency from participants. I combined these references to access with related quotes on confidence, choice, investment and opportunity to create the more central theme of Agency, as all these comments focused specifically on how to help people help themselves. The sub-themes of ‘access’, ‘opportunity’ and others above would have been less useful as they did not capture the underlying reason why these issues mattered: they did not afford creatives the *agency* to choose and build creative career for themselves.

Using this process, I refined my notes into six broad themes:

- Agency: This is in reference to participant access, opportunities, confidence, choice and investment.
- Heritage: This is in reference to the historical local identity of County Durham, particularly referring to industrial/mining heritage.
- Forgotten County Narrative: This is in reference to the idea that County Durham is generally overlooked by the greater UK government.
- Community: This is in reference to community and connection building, the importance of strong networks and interpersonal relationships.
- Ecosystem: This is in reference to the creative sector benefitting other sectors or the overlap of creativity with a variety of other areas.
- Culture: This is in reference to a building of a future cultural identity for the County, beyond preserving a heritage of culture.

These themes were then coded into each relevant line of text, following the guidelines above. Since there was only one researcher coding the data, it may be subject to bias. However, immersion within data sources and memo-keeping, mitigated bias.

The frequency of these codes were then calculated by theme and by individual. Where necessary individuals were anonymised and sorted into either 'Participant', 'Partner' or 'General Public' in the case of the Miners' Gala respondents. The proportion of which each theme appeared within each of these groups was then calculated alongside the proportion of which each theme appeared in each of the two years' reports. This data was then graphed and displayed as pie charts.

Discussion

Partners

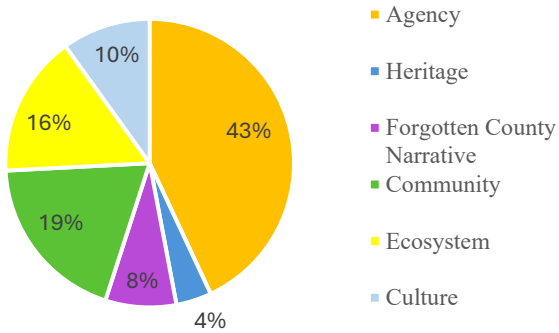


Figure 2 Pie Chart of Partner Theme Frequency

Participants

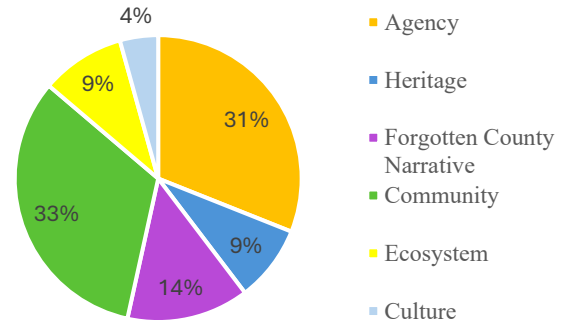


Figure 3 Pie Chart of Participant Theme Frequency

General Public

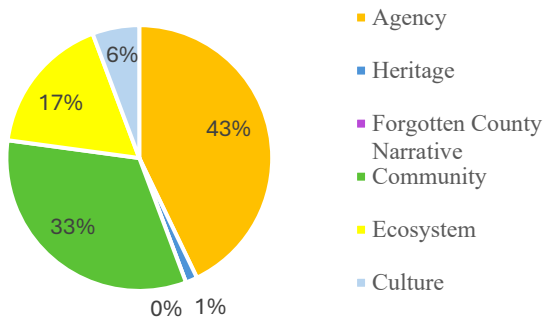


Figure 4 Pie Chart of General Public Theme Frequency

Programme Coordinators

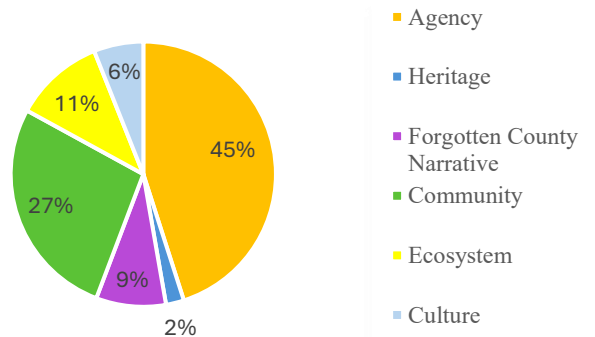


Figure 2 Pie Chart of Programme Coordinator Theme Frequency

The focus on Agency between programme coordinators, partners and the general public was the largest, with all three of these groups spending almost half of their time on it. However, the Participant group focused on Agency 31% of the time whereas Community occupied 33%. This divergence suggests a narrative mistranslation between leadership and participants. Based on the source data and field notes, participants often value Community over Agency as Community – especially a creative one is seen to lead to organic opportunities between community members. As the Year 1 Evaluation states: ‘Several Fellows had already secured additional commissions and

opportunities through new connections developed during the programme. However, participants may feel that Agency cannot be improved on greatly by coordinators and partners. As one participant claimed, investment should not be the priority ‘with the current resources’. Funding is a particularly large concern for both sides: participants speak out about a desire for a ‘universal basic income’ and generally ‘funding support’. Partners also express ‘Uncertainty regarding continuation beyond current funding.’ The narrative misalignment lies in whether each group believes more investment is even possible, which demonstrates a potential mistranslation of narratives as programme coordinators continue to focus on an issue which is not ranked as highly among participants. Agency being more prevalent within leadership rather than participants may indicate a lack of faith participants have in the programme’s power to give them agency. This points to the conclusion that a shared concern does not guarantee a shared narrative, funding being the clearest mistranslation in this dataset.

Community was a highly present theme in all groups but slightly less so in partners. This may be because partners have a greater concern for Agency, as there is a larger focus on funding artists directly. Even so, Community is also seen as essential to both participants and programme coordinators, this demonstrates a form of convergence as even when partners’ focus lies elsewhere, Community is still narrated as important. Moreover, partners and coordinators highlight its importance for similar reasons: it creates opportunities for collaboration and strengthens cultural identity. Year 1’s report reflects this as it claims ‘Creative networks are strengthening, with growing evidence of artists initiating their own collaborations’. A participant also expressed that ‘connection not competition’ was the key to creating a creative ‘scene’ in County Durham.

Community is where narrative appears to converge best, offering evidence that co-production creates clearer narrative translation.

There is also a large focus on Ecosystem as partners expressed a desire to ‘attract investment into County Durham’ and secure ‘Cross-sector partnerships.’ The General Public group also had a large focus on Ecosystem, yet this was most likely due to the non-creative attendants of the Miners’ Gala, thus focus on how creativity can benefit those outside of the field. A comment mentioned ‘Keep all the arts in schools! No matter the age! This form of expression is essential for mental health’. This concern with Ecosystem is echoed elsewhere: a participant stated, referring to portraying world news in theatre, ‘I think it's very important to get a source from theatre, a hundred percent, because it's real.’ The leader of a partner organisation articulated a desire to ‘have artists, designers, town planners, governments all working together’. The Year 1 evaluation also claimed that ‘Every £1 invested in arts and culture generates an estimated additional £1.23 in wider economic value.’ This shows good narrative convergence: every group seems to be on the same page about Ecosystem’s importance.

Interestingly, however, there was a very small emphasis on Heritage and a Forgotten County Narrative for the General Public group. Both themes centre on the past and given the heritage focus of the Miners’ Gala, this outcome was surprising. However, across all groups Heritage remained a minor theme, below 10%. Into the Light’s interactive art exhibit within the tent also tended to attract a younger audience perhaps explaining a greater look towards the future; the sentiment of ‘Making it possible for young children to see working in the arts as a real

possibility' was expressed in several of the answers upon the tables of Into the Light's tent. The shared low weight given to these two themes across every group also represents narrative convergence, as there is a collective distancing of narratives surrounding the county's past.

Culture remains a small, though important focus for both as it is recognised that it shapes the future of the region. As the programme's director explains, the goal is to 'reignite the county through creativity and culture'. Though there is less of an emphasis on culture from the participant side and when it is mentioned it is usually in conjunction with community not future, such as this comment: 'Art, culture, music & creativity is the key to tackling division. Solidarity!' This is a smaller version of the same mistranslation around funding. The theme is given equal weight but its meaning shifts between a future focus for coordinators and a emphasis on community for participants.

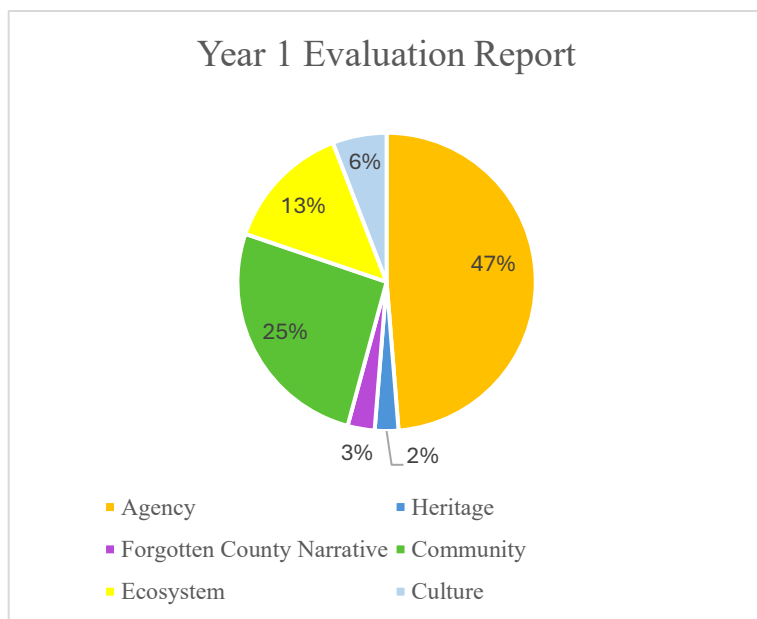


Figure 6 Pie Chart of Year 1 Evaluation Theme Frequency

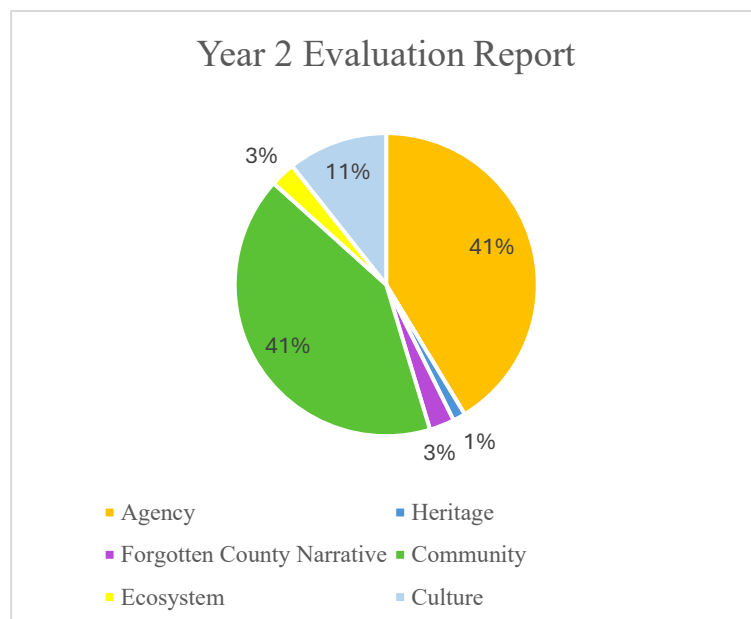


Figure 7 Pie Chart of Year 2 Evaluation Theme Frequency

Between the first and second years' reports the focus on Agency decreased. This follows with participant feedback and field notes as the focus on community increased over the same period. Also, as the first year's report was more centred around Into the Light's partnerships, the proportion of Ecosystem is greater. Heritage and Forgotten County Narrative is a small factor in both report which also aligns with the groups discussed above. The focus on Culture increases across two reports, suggesting, perhaps, a greater concern with the future as the programme comes into its final year. This suggests that coordinators' narratives shift across the life of the programme towards better reflection of both partner and participant narratives.

These patterns should not be read only as confirmation of co-production working as intended. An alternative explanation is that participants simply adapt to and adopt the programmes own narratives rather than co-production success.

Conclusion

Overall, the frequencies suggest a good alignment between participants and programme coordinators. Community and Agency together accounted for 67.5% of coded references across all sources, consistent with field notes from conversations with participants, where ‘investment’, ‘access’ and ‘creative networks’ were said to be what most mattered for the future of creativity in County Durham. The clearest exception to this alignment is funding; participants and coordinators both treat it as a fundamental challenge but diverge on whether further investment is realistic given current resources, pointing to a mistranslation of narrative. Culture shows a milder version of the same pattern, as it is valued by both sides but understood differently: coordinators frame it as the region’s future whereas participants more often fold it into a bolstering of community.

These findings are limited by single-coder analysis, mitigated partially by reflexive memos, and by my dual position as volunteer and evaluator; my supervisor is also the Lead Evaluator for this programme. The Miners’ Gala data was gathered through convenience sampling at a politically specific event and cannot be generalised. As a snapshot of a single case in its third year, this study offers a customised account rather than a generalisable framework.

This study extends current co-production and narrative policy literature by assessing narrative convergence directly within a case that has already minimised power asymmetries typically assumed. The high thematic alignment found supports Bovaird and Ostrom's claim that narrowing the actor-beneficiary gap produces genuine synergy. However, the funding divergence and different interpretation of the importance of Culture and the alternative explanation of

narrative familiarity together complicates this, suggesting narrative mistranslation persists and that convergence alone is not sufficient evidence of successful co-production. Nonetheless, the level of convergence still indicates most narrative is, overall, well translated, thus supporting the case for co-production's success within *Into the Light*.

Future research could revisit the case of *Into the Light* after its final year to more fully trace its trajectory. The funding divergence may also warrant investigation into why participants may lose faith in cultural sector investments. Finally, a comparison between this case against a non-co-produced programme may clarify whether the alignment found here reflects the success of co-production specifically or broader dynamics within the field.

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