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The Relationship of the Public Sector and Citizens – Co-production in Polish Local Government Units. Empirical Study on Forty-One Units Forming Metropolis GZM

Relacje sektora publicznego i obywateli – koprodukcja w polskich jednostkach samorządu terytorialnego. Badania empiryczne na czterdziestu jeden jednostkach tworzących Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowską Metropolię

Introduction

The last few decades have provided evidence of how governments at different scales are called upon to effectively respond to rapidly changing social needs and expectations. One important area in this respect is the interaction and collaboration between public sector agencies and citizens. It is widely recognized that members of civic society may be involved across both narrow and wide spectra in the implementation of public policy, especially in the formulation and delivery of public services. In contemporary scientific discourse it is increasingly recognized there is the need to innovate new considerations on how the public sector can achieve effective goals through its own citizenry (Falanga, 2014, p. 12). Due to their widespread prevalence in diverse societies, these developmental paths should be regarded as a commonplace aspect of the transition occurring in public administration from state-centric service to network-like partnerships and cooperative relationships (Eriksson, 2012; Kettl, 2002). One of the more interesting manifestations of such cooperation may be co-production, which is developing within public services.

This article presents the findings of a study conducted across forty-one cities and towns forming the Metropolis GZM, which is the first formally established metropolitan area in Poland. The study examined the extent to which co-production has developed across three types of local civic initiatives: Participatory

Budget (PB), Local Initiative (LI), Village Fund (VF), all of which may be voluntarily undertaken at the Polish local government. These are not the only currently observed forms of collaboration at the local level of social life. However, they deserve special attention due to their organizational specificity, schematics, and repeatability, which give vast analytical opportunities, not fully used in this article. The author has indicated the co-production potential of selected forms of formal cooperation between local government administration and residents below.

1. The relationship of the public sector and citizens

Both historically and pragmatically it can be observed relations between the state and its citizens are in a state of constant flux. This is readily illustrated in continual adaptations in both the approach and provision of services, especially in public services. These new approaches are also a summons to the state in terms of incorporating them (approaches) into the existing state model. Above all, these new approaches appeal to the state to determine the scope and real-time expression of its obligations to the citizens and their needs (Clark, Brudney & Jang, 2013; Needham, 2008; Needham & Carr, 2009; Ostrom & Ostrom, 1971; Sharp, 1980; Sześciło, 2015b).

The last decades of the twentieth century, most acutely in industrialized and developing societies, saw a crisis of public confidence in the state authority's capacity to deliver on the fundamental services expected within a democratic state. This crisis mainly stemmed from the dissatisfaction of citizens with the growing costs of maintaining the public sector combined with the perceived inability or indifference of the state to meet their real needs (Gawron, 2017; Kaźmierczak, 2011, p. 175; Needham, 2008; Needham & Carr, 2009; Ostrom & Ostrom, 1971; Sharp, 1980). There was an ardent need to refashion and improve upon the practical function of public administration organizations, doing this would allow re-establishing eminence of the state and lessen the burden on public finances (The Association for Public Service Excellence, 2013, p. 14; Osborne, 1994).

Therefore, society (as a whole) had to endure and resolve itself with significant public sector reforms which, it is assumed, intended to achieve the aforementioned goals. The need to reconfigure strict principles of bureaucracy differently highlighted by New Public Management, New Governance and New Public Service has prepared the ground for the enactment of numerous participatory processes worldwide. Demands for greater social inclusion concerning governance effi-

ciency has yielded interesting results. It has shown the effective convergence of multiple entities and interests within the public domain to establish their interests to be an intrinsic aspect of participatory democracy. As a result, the formulation and implementation of public policies with new networks of social actors and economic agencies has revealed the inherent flaws of previous organizational and cultural configurations of the public sector (Clark, Brudney & Jang, 2013; Falanga, 2014; Needham, 2008; Needham & Carr, 2009; Sześciło, 2015b; Osborne, 2010; Gawron, 2020).

In this perspective, it is worth referring to the observations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) experts who postulate that:

[...] the complexity and scale of emerging governance challenges, governments cannot hope to design effective policy responses, nor to strengthen legitimacy and trust, without the input, ideas and insights of as wide a variety of citizens' voices as possible. Public engagement will increasingly be recognised as another lever of governance – and become part of the standard government toolkit of budgeting, regulatory, e-government and performance management tools (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2009, p. 17).

Numerous initiatives incorporating civic society participation, at various scales, have been created around the world. As a whole, evolving participatory democracies encompass a wide range of experiences that mark new spaces for substantiated discussion between political institutions and their civic societies. It also provides new opportunities for a given civic society to influence public policy making (Arnstein, 1969; Bobbio, 2006; Cornwall, 2008; Falanga, 2014; Fung, 2006).

In this sense, the relationship between government, economy and citizens has undergone a profound transformation. Public sector agencies operating at various organizational levels (central, regional and local) have partially withdrawn from direct management practices. To this end, there is now a growing prevalence for governmental entities to share responsibilities with citizens, organizations and businesses. The boundaries between various administrative sectors have become blurred and the relationship between public administration and other social entities is multi-faceted (Eriksson, 2011; Hirst, 2000; Kettl, 2002; Pierre, 2000).

The contemporary social scientific community suddenly found itself with a relative dearth of theoretical models and concepts which illustrate the importance of collaboration between the public sector and the citizens it serves. A response to this has been the concept of co-production with direct reference to the planning and delivery of public services (Brudney, 1985; Brudney & Eng-

land, 1983; Eriksson, 2011; Parks et al., 1981). Although its first incarnation was developed already in the late 1970s, in Europe, it is still a poorly known concept. In a broad sense co-production casts citizens and users as producers of the same services alongside one another within a common state, county, or municipal body. The idea of co-production is closely interlaced with activation policies. These are mainly social policies by which recipients are empowered to participate in the delivery of public services of their own accord. Its main function is first and foremost to improve all aspects of public services, however due to this participation, it is a further manifestation of democracy (Kaźmierczak, 2011; Sześciło, 2015b; Gawron, 2017).

2. The idea of co-production in public services

As already indicated, co-production is not a completely new idea for organizing public sector cooperation with citizens. The first conceptual framework for co-production was developed at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s by a research team under the direction of Elinor Ostrom, working at the University of Indiana. This team articulated a new way of seeing users of social services (they focused in particular on municipal services, such as: waste collection, parking, road maintenance and neighboring police) as co-producers of their own services. This was somehow a side effect of their research on the management of public goods by autonomous communities (Brudney, 1985; Brudney & England, 1983; Eriksson, 2011; Parks et al., 1981; Whitaker, 1980).

Despite promising beginnings, co-production failed to gain widespread recognition among public sector representatives and public service beneficiaries. For many years, it was known only to a relatively narrow group of researchers who tried to refine its conceptual assumptions (Kaźmierczak, 2014). After the failure of the New Public Management (NPM) doctrine to deliver, public administrators were in a position to amend their function and instill public trust. The concept of co-management in its many incarnations was adapted to be an influential mechanism in subsequent administrative reforms (governance, New Public Governance, collaborative governance, participatory governance) (Sześciło, 2015c, p. 10). The current interest in co-production is characterized by extending the boundaries of this concept and giving it a stronger, normative face (Robinson & White, 1997, p. 25). Thus, it becomes a response to the current need to define a new framework for cooperation between the public sector and citizens (Cepiku, Marsilio, Sicilia & Vainieri, 2020). Researchers and co-production implementers agree on several

basic issues that are conditions for its development in public services (Chaebo & Medeiros, 2017, p. 17):

- participants – co-production is mainly built on the basis of relations derived from mutual cooperation between service providers (representatives of public administration) and end users, but it can also apply to a wide range of citizens and volunteers (Alford, 2002; Ostrom, 1996; Parks et al., 1981);
- public administration roles – activities undertaken as the main producer, regulatory authority, and source of funding; the public sector should also be open to cooperation and sharing of responsibility with citizens for the implementation of services (Alford, 1998; Lam, 1996);
- institutional conditions – formalization of cooperation between the public sector and service beneficiaries; there must be a clear definition of the responsibilities of all persons involved in the service (Lam, 1996; Parks et al., 1981; Verschuere, Brandsen & Pestoff, 2012);
- technical conditions – organization of cooperation between major producers and users ensuring interdependence of their efforts and contributions (Ostrom, 1996; Parks et al., 1981);
- level of implementation – depending on the efforts and benefits expected by users, co-production can develop at three levels: individual, group and collective (Bovaird, Van Ryzin, Loeffler & Parrado, 2015; Brudney & England, 1983; Pestoff, 2014);
- economic profitability (efficiency) – is recognized in the potential to relatively reduce service costs thanks to the above-average involvement of service recipients (Ostrom, 1996; Parks, et al., 1981);
- democratic aspects – possible stimulation of the increase in the level and scope of citizens' involvement contribute to the development of the ability to influence public policy (Rantamaki, 2017; Vanleene, Verschuere & Voets, 2016).

With regard to these points, co-production today spans a much wider spectrum of potential than at its inception. Among other things, it is to contribute towards improving the quality of public services and improving the efficiency of their provision (Clark, Brudney & Jang, 2013), increasing citizens' confidence in those in power and building social capital (Jakobsen, 2012), empowering less prosperous groups of citizens (Watson, 2014) or even seeking to reduce corruption (Sześciło, 2015b).

For this reason, defining co-production is not an easy task, especially in its current, greatly expanded formula. Victor Pestoff points out that the definitions of co-production range from a mix of contributions that public service representatives and citizens make to the delivery of public services, to partnerships

between citizens and public service providers. With regard to the difference between these definitions – according to this author – by and large they are culturally based (Pestoff, 2012, p. 15).

Therefore, co-production is not only limited to the direct end users of a given service. Anyone who, due to public or private interest, sees the need for participation can be involved in co-production. It is about individuals as well as formal and informal groups of citizens (Sześciło, 2015a, p. 81). Some researchers also believe (Alford, 2009; Bovaird, 2007) that the level of co-production develops on a continuum. Individual co-production would be at one of its extremities, and its collective variety would be at the other end, with intermediate grades between them (Chaebo & Medeiros, 2017, p. 620).

It naturally follows that the involvement of public service users is still under development in both theory and practice. Nowadays, researchers agree that co-production can develop not only in the service provision phase (i.e., during its initial inception in the seventies), but may also include other (earlier and later) phases of shaping the value chain, planning services, designing, launching, management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation (Bovaird, 2007, p. 847; Osborne, Radnor & Strokosch, 2016).

There is an effort to create greater participation at every political level, in new practices as well as in discourse. However local government is, indeed, most acutely influenced by it (Akkerman, Hajer & Grin, 2004; Bherer, 2010).

Local government authorities and public administration institutions and agencies on the local level are mainly responsible for the proper organization and distribution of public services. In this sense, the commune is a community of inhabitants of a given territory, which has developed on the path of natural, unforced evolution as a formula for satisfying collective needs, and not an institution of power (Ryan, 2012, p. 317; Sześciło, 2015d). In its local expression, co-production is based on:

- recognizing people as assets because people themselves are the true wealth of society;
- identifying work differently, perceiving everything done to raise families as work, (this includes caring for people, maintaining healthy communities, promoting social justice and good governance);
- promoting reciprocity, giving and receiving – because it builds trust among people and promotes mutual respect;
- developing social networks, because the physical and mental well-being of people depends on strong, lasting relationships (Cahn, 2000, p. 14).

That is why these development pathways should be seen as a natural part of the transition taking place in public administration at the local level. These management practices are becoming more and more visible, involving members of local communities around the world (Kettl, 2002, p. 134).

3. Polish co-production at the local government level

In the last thirty years, one can observe how it has become increasingly prevalent in public policy sectors to initiate citizen participation (OECD, 2001). Gradually, new expressions of public participation have been implemented at various levels of public management. Public hearings, neighborhood councils, citizen juries, consensus conferences, *ad hoc* or permanent consultative commissions, participatory budgets, deliberative polls have become an essential part of the public activity of many societies (Fung, 2006). These participatory arrangements vary in terms of their functions, but they share a similar participatory ideology, an equal wish to engage citizens in public decision making that goes beyond traditional electoral mechanisms (Bherer, 2010, p. 287). Local governments play the most important role in the development of these various forms of involvement. Of all public sector agencies, they are most accessible to the people, and they most often create real opportunities to cooperate with the citizenry (Akkerman, Hajer & Grin, 2004; Bherer, 2010; Denters & Rose, 2005).

However, it should be emphasized that the organization of participatory mechanisms by local governments requires initiative and careful planning. It requires tremendous effort from both local authorities and the citizenry who understand and are willing to increase their public involvement. Certain factors favor or hinder the creation of such mechanisms, regardless of political level. That is why the situation is different in individual communes (Oliver, 2001).

Researchers in this area agree that most often public involvement is determined by two factors:

- a citizen demand for participation, especially from urban social movements concerned with the democratization of municipal politics;
- the presence of local leaders, elected officials and public servants, convinced of the need to open up political processes to citizens (Bherer, 2010, p. 288).

So, aside from a few variances unique to the society, co-production in Poland theoretically possesses the same potential to develop and be exploited along similar pathways as elsewhere.

In Poland, since January 1, 1999, a three-level administrative (territorial) division has existed. Accordingly, the territory of Poland has been divided into

16 voivodships (provincial jurisdictions), 314 counties and 66 cities recognized with county jurisdiction and 2,477 municipalities (including 302 urban municipalities, 638 urban-rural municipalities and 1,537 rural municipalities) – they are Polish Local Government Units (LGUs).

There are three main forms of cooperation between local governments and citizens which are sanctioned by government resolutions. As already mentioned, these are not the only forms of possible and developed cooperation between local governments and citizens. But they can be good examples of how to organize this cooperation and at the same time show the potential of co-production. Each of them has its own specificity but all are based on activating citizens and building partnerships between the parties involved. To demonstrate the differences and convergent elements of these three forms of cooperation, a list of their main features has been made (Table 1).

As one can see, the three forms of cooperation between local governments and communities were implemented at different times. The Local Initiative (LI) was adopted first in 2003. Next was the Village Fund (VF) (from 2009) and the last one the Participatory Budget (PB) (in 2011).

Though presently each of them is implemented on the basis of national law (Acts of Republic of Poland) it must be emphasized that, in the Polish legal system until January 30, 2018 there were no provisions defining the rules for the functioning of PB. Therefore, cities autonomously determined the conditions and scope of this budget as well as the amount of financial resources allocated to projects.

What is pertinent here is that laws do not oblige an LGU to implement these three types of initiatives. It is always the responsibility of local authorities: whether, to what extent and how long these forms of cooperation with citizens will be developed. A shared aspect is also a wide range of problems. Very different projects can be implemented in any form of cooperation. They can solve an almost unlimited range of problems and give various types of support. However, it is vital and non-negotiable that they meet the requirements the LGU individually sets out in its resolutions.

The procedures are also similar in each instance. An LGU resolution is necessary to start the procedure. Then projects are submitted by residents or directly on their behalf. The final decision is always taken by local authorities, but within the scope of choices made by the residents. The only difference in this respect can be reduced to voting among all residents, which is carried out in the case of BP and VF but not LI.

The source of financing is also relatively identical, i.e., public financial contribution dominates, and only in the case of LI is the financial contribution of citizens possible.

Table 1. Key elements of the three forms of cooperation between Polish Local Government Units and their communities

Selected features / elements	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Fund (VF)
Year of implementation	2011	2003	2009
Legal basis	Act of the Republic of Poland: Amending some acts (January 11, 2018); Annual Resolutions of the Commune Council of Local Government Units (LGUs)	Act of the Republic of Poland: On public benefit activities and volunteering (April 24, 2003); Annual Resolutions of the Commune Council of Local Government Units (LGUs)	Act of the Republic of Poland: On the village council fund (February 20, 2009); Annual Resolutions of the Commune Council of Local Government Units (LGUs)
Local government units (LGUs) authorized to implement	Only LGU with a city statute (including a counties or urban-rural municipalities)	All LGUs	Only LGUs with the statute of rural and urban-rural municipalities
Source of financing	LGU own resources	LGU own resources + private funds of the inhabitants involved	LGU own resources + return from the state budget (40–20 per cent)
Entities authorized to submit applications / projects	Directly the residents of an LGU; The residents in cooperation with NGOs; Local NGOs	Directly the residents of an LGU; The residents in cooperation with NGOs; Local NGOs	Directly the residents of an LGU
Basic procedures	Resolution of the decision-making body of an LGU; Submitting project proposals by citizens; Voting by residents; Selection of projects to be implemented; Implementation of projects	Resolution of the decision-making body of an LGU; Submitting project proposals by citizens; Selection of projects by the authority appointed by the LGU; Implementation of projects	Resolution of the decision-making body of an LGU; Preparing a list of projects at the meeting of at least 15 residents of the village council; Submitting the list of projects to the commune head (mayor, city president); Selection of projects to be implemented; Implementation of projects
Possible range of projects	Until 2018, the LGU itself defined the scope of implemented initiatives; The projects may concern a wide range of activities listed in the Act	The projects may concern a wide range of activities listed in the Act	The scope of activities is optional, but with the requirement to meet three formal conditions of projects: they serve to improve the living conditions of residents, they are the municipality's own tasks; they are in line with the commune development strategy

Selected features / elements	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Fund (VF)
Roles of citizens	Residents decide to allocate a portion of the local budget for projects submitted directly by citizens, but they are not required to participate in the implementation process	Citizens directly submit proposals to local authorities and after selection jointly implement the best projects	Residents make decisions about the distribution of the fund at meetings, but they are not required to participate in the implementation of the project
Possible scope of citizen participation	Submission of project applications; Control of deadlines and quality of project implementation	Submission of project applications; Supplementation of projects (work, in-kind or financial contribution); Control of deadlines and quality of project implementation	Submission of project applications; Control of deadlines and quality of project implementation

Source: own preparation.

Table 1 also shows the clear differences between these forms of cooperation. They concern organizational issues that ultimately have a decisive impact on the level and scope of possible citizen involvement.

The first difference is that all three types of initiatives are not necessarily accessible to all types of LGUs. More specifically, only LI can be organized in any type of community, BP is intended only for entities holding a city statute (such as counties or urban-rural municipalities), and VF only for those with rural status.

There is another difference in who is authorized to submit applications. In BP and LI this group is relatively wide – all adult residents; NGO's and other entities that can act on behalf of and in cooperation with citizens. However, in the case of VF – only residents have the right to participate and vote during civic meetings when projects are selected for implementation.

The scope of envisaged citizen involvement also varies in what consequently differentiates their possible roles. Within the BP, residents decide to allocate a portion of the local budget for projects submitted directly by citizens, but they are not required to participate in the implementation process. Therefore, the possible scope of citizen participation includes: submission of project applications and control of deadlines and quality of project implementation. Within the LI, citizens submit ideas to local authorities and after selection, jointly implement the best projects. That is why their roles can be very broad, from the submission of project applications, through the implementation of projects (work,

in-kind or financial contribution) up to the control of deadlines and quality of project implementation. Finally, during VF resident meetings decisions are made about the distribution of funds, however, resident participation is not required during the implementation of the project.

So, the possible scope of participation including submission of project applications and deadline control and project oversight is similar in VF to BP.

The primary purpose of this article is to analyze the importance these forms of cooperation in terms of fulfilling the conditions essential for co-production.

Table 2 is helpful here as it shows which co-production conditions are met as part of activities implemented in these three forms of cooperation.

Table 2. Co-production conditions in the three forms of cooperation between Polish Local Government Units and their communities

Co-production conditions	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Council Fund (VF)
Cooperation of local governments with citizens (building public-civic dialogue)	yes	yes	yes
Development and / or increase of public / social participation of citizens	yes	yes	yes
Generating a sense of driving force and decision-making power of citizens	yes	yes	yes
Adapting local government activities to the real needs of citizens	yes	yes	yes
Initiating / submitting projects for implementation by citizens	yes	yes	yes
Citizen participation in project implementation	possible	yes	no
Citizen participation in monitoring results	yes	yes	yes
Citizen involvement at individual and group level	yes	yes	yes
Financial contribution of citizens	no	possible	no
In-kind contribution of citizens	no	possible	no
Intellectual contribution of citizens	yes	yes	yes
The contribution of citizens' work	possible	possible	no
Long-term nature	yes	yes	yes
Democratization of the decision-making process within the activities of local governments	yes	yes	yes

Source: own preparation.

As one can see, all three forms of cooperation have strong potential for co-production implementation and development. They are all based on building public-civic dialogue which aims to build a common vision of development for the local community. They develop and increase public and social participation of the residents, which generates a sense of driving force and decision-making power. Whenever projects are initiated and submitted for implementation by the citizens so that they meet the real needs of citizens there is an opportunity for individual and group level involvement. This, in turn, amplifies the propensity for democratization of the decision-making process within the activities of local governments.

It is also apparent that the main differences between these three forms of co-production rest within the theme of citizen participation. There are different ranges of acceptable engagement. The widest forms of activity for members of local communities are possible in projects organized under LI. As it is highlighted in the Table 2, it is the only form of cooperation that enables involvement in every possible dimension where citizens can participate in project implementation, have intellectual, financial or in-kind, and work contribution. They also can participate in monitoring results.

With regard to BP, citizen participation is limited to their intellectual input, mainly when preparing the application and then monitoring results. Possible (however not very common) participation in project implementation does exist but it is very uncommon – still restricting financial or in-kind contribution from citizens.

Finally, the most limited range of citizen participation is in VF. There, citizens can only involve themselves conceptually, mainly when preparing the application and then monitoring results. There is no possibility for residents to involve themselves in project implementation.

It is very interesting how popular these three forms of cooperation are among local governments and citizens of Polish LGUs.

4. Co-production in Metropolis GZM

Metropolis GZM was established in 2017 within forty-one LGUs of the Silesia Voivodeship (roughly equivalent to a state, province, etc.) with the seat of the authorities in Katowice. This is why GZM is a polycentric metropolitan area. Only two cities have over 200 thousand residents, seven cities are in the range of 100 thousand up to 200 thousand inhabitants, and the remaining municipal-

ities have fewer than 100 thousand residents. GZM is characterized by both cities with a high population density ($3.785 \text{ ppl/km}^2 - 3.280 \text{ ppl/km}^2$) as well as municipalities with a low population density ($67 \text{ ppl/km}^2 - 76 \text{ ppl/km}^2$). Large urban areas are characterized by a relatively high quality of life, lucrative labor markets, higher levels of education (relative to rural areas). They offer a variety of services, e.g., national and international public transportation and amenities. GZM is accessible for people regardless of their financial standing. It is primarily a derivative of the coexistence of a very broad spectrum of employment opportunities and required qualifications and skill sets (Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia [GZM], 2018, p. 48).

GZM recognizes the role of residents and social, cultural, and economic organizations that make a significant contribution to the development of the metropolis. It is anticipated that appropriate tools for dialogue with the environment will be launched and residents and organizations will be involved in activities aimed at improving the quality of life in the metropolis and taking advantage of development opportunities (GZM, 2018, p. 62). The three forms of cooperation discussed in this article may have already fulfilled this role.

Sociological research conducted for the purposes of this article concerned the implementation of three forms of cooperation (BP, LI, VF) undertaken annually and individually by each GZM LGU. The research included two main sources of data. The first was desk research – analysis of documents, data sets and annual reports obtained from websites and directly from the LGU. The documents contained lists of detailed information about the implementation of the three forms of cooperation in each LGU in the years 2003–2019. They included data about: total number of implemented projects; scope (problem areas) of implemented projects, annual budgets in LGUs allocated to initiatives, budgets for individual projects. The analyzes of these data were carried out taking into account selected features characterizing individual local government units: the types of LGUs, population, population per km^2 , total income (in millions), income per capita (in PLN). This made it possible to distinguish interesting differences between LGUs in the area of co-production development of their local communities. The second source of data was non-standardized Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) done with representatives of LGU city offices. Interviews were conducted with representatives of all forty-one LGUs. These were local officials responsible for organizing and developing cooperation with residents – including those responsible for the implementation of three forms of cooperation (BP, LI, VF). During the study, representatives of local governments described the current level and development of collaboration with residents to

implement these initiatives. They were asked about organizational issues, the level of interest of residents, development of cooperation, potential problems in this matter, and ways of solving them.

Such designed use of statistical data and qualitative data allowed for an interesting analysis, which highlighted the differences in the level and scope of the potential for the development of co-production in the LGUs forming the GZM.

As can be expected, GZM consists of cities that differ in many respects. Therefore, the analysis included some features (basic characteristics) that are relevant to the development of co-production of citizens. This analysis presents LGU types in the administrative division of Poland including their size, population density, gross income and income per capita (Table 3). From this, many interesting results were obtained.

Table 3. Basic characteristics of Local Government Units forming Metropolis GZM (2019)

The names of Local Government Units	The types of LGU	Population	Population per km ²	Total income (in millions)	Income per capita (in PLN)
Będzin	urban municipality	56,804	1,520	247.8	4,342
Bieruń	urban municipality	19,605	484	100.0	5,087
Bobrowniki	rural municipality	12,044	234	53.5	4,470
Bojszowy	rural municipality	7,860	227	38.0	4,843
Bytom	county	166,795	2,402	891.6	5,317
Chełm Śląski	rural municipality	6,320	271	34.8	5,550
Chorzów	county	108,434	3,262	663.7	6,108
Czeladź	urban municipality	31,677	1,934	147.1	4,632
Dąbrowa Górnicza	county	120,259	637	787.8	6,523
Gierałtowice	rural municipality	12,051	317	66.5	5,427
Gliwice	county	179,806	1,343	1,213.0	6,712
Imielin	urban municipality	9,153	327	50.1	5,531
Katowice	county	294,510	1,789	1,958.5	6,629
Knurów	urban municipality	38,402	1,131	191.5	4,983
Kobiór	rural municipality	4,894	102	26.1	5,344
Lędziny	urban municipality	16,822	532	74.3	4,427
Łaziska Górne	urban municipality	22,334	1,113	113.9	5,092
Mierzęcice	rural municipality	7,664	155	36.3	4,728
Mikołów	urban municipality	40,813	515	223.8	5,511
Mysłowice	county	74,586	1,137	362.7	4,863
Ożarówice	rural municipality	5,793	126	30.7	5,338

Piekary Śląskie	county	55,299	1,383	280.4	5,056
Pilchowice	rural municipality	11,887	170	52.4	4,410
Psary	rural municipality	12,117	263	52.4	4,338
Pyskowice	urban municipality	18,456	597	85.1	4,620
Radzionków	urban municipality	16,818	1,274	73.9	4,398
Ruda Śląska	county	138,000	1,775	770.4	5,574
Rudziniec	rural municipality	10,623	67	51.6	4,853
Siemianowice Śląskie	county	67,154	2,633	354.8	5,270
Siewierz	urban-rural municipality	12,477	110	62.3	5,026
Sławków	urban municipality	7,043	192	36.3	5,154
Sosnowiec	county	202,036	2,219	996.3	4,906
Sośnicowice	urban-rural municipality	8,874	76	45.3	5,144
Świerklaniec	rural municipality	12,248	274	56.6	4,661
Świętochłowice	county	50,012	3,757	243.4	4,850
Tarnowskie Góry	urban municipality	61,356	733	273.4	4,458
Tychy	county	127,831	1,563	825.6	6,447
Wojkowice	urban municipality	8,936	699	31.1	3,480
Wry	rural municipality	8,226	238	43.3	5,312
Zabrze	county	173,374	2,156	871.6	5,015
Zbrosławice	rural municipality	16,112	109	76.7	4,783

Source: own study based on data from Local Data Bank of Statistic Poland.

The analysis shows that so far, twenty-five of forty-one (60 per cent) of LGUs decided to develop co-production among their residents by implementing projects under three types of initiatives (Table 4). PB proved to be by far the most popular method of co-production development. This is how twenty-three local governments decided to cooperate with citizens. Representatives of LGU officials participating in CATI claimed that citizens demanded such actions. Inhabitants saw the potential for the development of their participation in building their community but at the same time showed readiness to assume responsibility. According to the officials surveyed, it was an opportunity for residents to satisfy their needs which stemmed from their local society. Therefore, observing how PB operates in other cities, the inhabitants of subsequent LGUs suggested replacing LI with PB. In the opinion of the officials surveyed, this developed strong cooperation in these cities.

Table 4. The implementation of the three forms of cooperation in Local Governments Units of Metropolis GZM (the period of time: 2003–2019)

Types of Local Government Units (LGU)	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Co-council Fund (VF)	No action
County	13	5	0	0
Urban municipality	8	1	0	5
Urban-rural municipality	1	0	0	1
Rural municipality	1	0	2	10
Total	23	6	2	16

Source: own preparation.

Also, VF, as a potential third way, proved to be an unattractive way of developing co-production for the inhabitants of the vast majority of LGUs. The analysis showed that only two out of thirteen rural municipalities (which could take this type of initiative) decided to implement projects. The officials surveyed at these types of LGUs stated that residents were not interested in the development of VF because it offered a limited scope of participation. Citizens could only engage conceptually, mainly when preparing an application and then monitoring the results. Residents could not get involved in the project. The respondents emphasized that it was challenging to include residents in such initiatives. They were used to operating in their clubs informally. But they also admitted that the local authorities had not made any vigorous attempts to encourage the inhabitants.

The development of co-production within GZM largely depends on the LGU type (Table 5). It turns out that all counties are continually developing the scope of co-production and cooperation with their citizens. The years 2014–2015 were key to this, when ten LGUs from this group implemented the BP initiative; it is noteworthy these areas had already implemented LI projects before. Data indicate that counties in GZM are the most active in activities aimed at developing civic co-production of their inhabitants.

Table 5. The total number of implemented projects by type of Local Government Units forming Metropolis GZM

Types of Local Government Units (LGU)	Total number of implemented projects	Percentage of implemented projects
County	2,462	84.5
Urban municipality	112	3.8
Urban-rural municipality	7	0.2
Rural municipality	333	11.4
Total	2,914	100.0

Source: own preparation.

They are mainly interested in cooperation with residents, their activation and use of resources that are available in local communities. As a frame of reference to the overall scope or magnitude of activity in the examined period (2003–2019), in all twenty-five LGUs in GZM (which took all initiatives), a total of 2,914 projects were realized. Meanwhile, as much as 84.5 per cent (2,462 projects) of all projects were organized as part of the co-production cooperation of residents with county officials. It may come as a surprise that a further 11.4 per cent (333 projects) of all projects were realized by civic and local government teams organized in rural municipalities. The remaining 4 per cent of projects (119 projects) were carried out in urban municipalities and sporadically in urban-rural municipalities.

The reason for this is not only the passivity of local officials, but also the lack of interest from residents. This is confirmed by interviews with local officials, conducted for the purposes of the presented analysis. They claimed some of the smaller LGUs were introducing resolutions on the possible development of PB or LI but it turned out that citizens were not interested in them. In addition, in large municipalities often residents themselves demanded the organization of BP or IL, and in these urban-rural and rural areas this never happened. In most rural municipalities, co-production of inhabitants by PB, LI or VF has not developed yet. They constitute the main part of the group of sixteen metropolitan LGUs which, so far, have not decided or been able to launch any of the initiatives discussed. Officials representing these LGU claimed that the main reason for the lack of development of co-production is the unavailability of people who would have the potential to run such projects, encourage people to engage and cooperate but also be prepared for bureaucratic procedures. Therefore, there is a lack of leaders who could effectively develop the use of local social capital. Besides, in these LGU there is a growing group of new residents (migrants from cities) who do not yet identify with the local community. Therefore, it is difficult to encourage residents to joint projects, because they do not know each other and are not used to working together.

When we look at the income of LGUs, it underscores a clear correlation of co-production among residents. In other words, authorities of LGUs with a higher tax base are more willing to finance civic projects as part of the three forms of cooperation (Table 6).

Table 6. The implementation of the three forms of cooperation by the total income of Local Government Units forming Metropolis GZM

Total income (in millions)	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Council Fund (VF)	No action
38–49.9	1	0	0	9
50–99.9	4	0	2	6
100–199.9	3	1	0	1
200–299.9	4	0	0	1
350–363	2	1	0	0
660–872	6	3	0	0
990–1,213	2	0	0	0
1,960	1	1	0	0

Source: own preparation.

One finding is that the wealthier the municipalities of GZM (with budgets ranging from 350 million to 1960 million), the greater the financial support in terms of co-production. Conversely, authorities of the less prosperous LGUs showed the least want to allocate part of the local budget to develop co-production of residents. In the ten LGU group with an annual budget not exceeding 50 million, only one LGU decided to support such projects, and in the twelve LGU group with a budget from 50 million to 99.9 million, only half declared such support. The officials representing the richest LGU (with the largest budgets) claimed that their residents are used to the fact that city authorities are open to investing public funds in various projects and activities for the local community. Therefore, in these LGUs there are many groups of active residents (acting formally and informally) who are interested in cooperation with officials and thus in the development of co-production.

The situation is no different when we consider the number of real funds allocated to co-financing civic projects. In general, the annual subsidies provided by LGUs did not exceed the threshold of 1 per cent of annual budgets. However, the analysis shows that there is strong differentiation (Table 7).

Table 7. The implementation of the three forms of cooperation by the average annual amounts allocated from budgets of Local Government Units forming Metropolis GZM

Average annual amounts (in thousand)	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Council Fund (VF)
80–199	2	2	0
200–499	2	0	2
500–999	6	1	0

1,000–1,999	4	0	0
2,000–3,999	6	0	0
4,000–7,160	2	1	0
over 17,000	1	0	0

Source: own preparation.

The minimum annual amounts earmarked for the implementation of co-produced projects ranged from 80 thousand to 199 thousand Polish złoty (PLN), the maximum amounts even reached 17 million. In addition, the funds allocated on initiatives depended on their type. The highest amounts from local budgets were allocated to the implementation of projects under the PB. Although the amounts varied, subsidies exceeding 1 million and even reaching the ceiling of the said 17 million dominated here. For the activities implemented under LI, they allocated amounts ranging from 80 to 400 thousand, but reaching a maximum ceiling of 5.5 million. The relatively lowest annual local government subsidies were allocated to projects organized through VF – they did not exceed the threshold of 400 thousand.

The implementation of projects conducive to the development of co-production of residents strongly correlates to their population density (Table 8).

Table 8. The implementation of the three forms of cooperation by the population per km² in Local Government Units forming Metropolis GZM

Population (per km ²)	Participatory Budget (PB)	Local Initiative (LI)	Village Council Fund (VF)	No action
67–749	7	2	2	15
750–1,499	5	1	0	1
1,500–2,249	7	3	0	0
2,250–2,999	2	0	0	0
3,000–3,785	2	0	0	0
Total	23	6	2	16

Source: own preparation.

The least densely populated towns (range 67–749 ppl/km²) form a group of LGUs in which no activities in the field of PB, LI or VF were undertaken. Meanwhile, almost all municipalities with higher population levels (over 750 ppl/km²) supported the development of citizen co-production by funding civic projects.

The last important issue of the analysis is the scope of projects implemented in the period under review (Table 9).

Table 9. The scope of implemented projects by type of Local Government Units forming Metropolis GZM

Types of Local Government Units (LGU)	Volunteering	Social integration	Culture	Sport	Education	Health	Ecology	Infrastructure	Other	Total
County	26	276	182	401	298	69	58	1,043	109	2,462
Urban municipality	1	8	6	26	9	0	3	48	11	112
Urban-rural municipality	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	4	0	7
Rural municipality	3	50	24	40	61	14	5	106	30	333
Total	30	334	212	467	370	83	67	1,201	150	2,914

Source: own preparation.

As already indicated above, a total of 2,914 projects were implemented at GZM in the period under review (2003–2019). The inhabitants of most LGUa implementing these initiatives most often showed co-production involvement by submitting and participating in the implementation of projects enriching urban infrastructure, there were a total of 1201 which constituted 41.2 per cent of the total. These projects mainly concerned the construction or renovation of roads, sewage systems, water supply and public space facilities. Also, although with a much smaller representation, sports projects ranked 2nd overall (467 projects = 16 per cent). They brought together projects promoting and developing the sports activity of the metropolis residents. The third most common type of project was in the field of education and public education (370 projects = 12.7 per cent). These were initiatives to improve access to education and educational support. Next were activities (334 projects = 11.5 per cent) devoted to building and strengthening local social integration. They involved a wide range of local communities and helped augment their belonging and local identity. Initiatives enabling the development of co-production of inhabitants in the area of culture (212 projects = 7.3 per cent) included projects in the promotion of culture, art, protection of cultural assets and national heritage, but also in Polish tradition e.g., development of national, civic and cultural awareness. Surprisingly, projects for the development of voluntary, pro-health and pro-ecological attitudes were the least popular among residents. It is in these thematic areas that the fewest

projects were reported and implemented. During interviews the officials pointed out that residents propose various solutions and newer topics to be implemented under three types of initiatives. They often show local authorities where there is a new or forgotten problem, what the residents' needs are and what actions should be taken to meet them. Many issues are important for the residents, so they do not give up even if their projects do not get financing the first time – they try next year.

Conclusions

Organizing co-productive cooperation is most often connected with the idea that an active and participating citizenry is the basis for a well-functioning democracy. No less important are the members of the public sector being aware that the user or client is a valuable resource on how to meet their own needs. This customer orientation is already well-recognized at all levels of public administration, not only in Poland (Eriksson, 2011; Kettl, 2002; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013).

It can be said that in Poland there are two main aspects of the implementation of the three forms of cooperation in LGUs. Firstly, they are tools for the inhabitants' activity. In these cases, the citizens themselves identify a specific local problem, determine the proposal themselves, how it can be solved, and submit a proposal for cooperation to the bodies of the local government unit. The key to implementing this model of cooperation is the administration being receptive to the needs of the residents. Local government functions, at the outset, to assess the initiative of residents. The authorities, as the task implementer or sponsor, hold the final say regarding the viability, and authorization of the joint venture. However, the decision of the local government must be based on objective criteria which had first been officially announced, published, and made public. Therefore, it is important to determine, by resolution of the decision-making body of an LGU, the detailed criteria for assessing applications that residents will submit. The second aspect of implementation of the above-mentioned local initiatives in Poland is based on the assumption that they can be used to stimulate local activity. Here, the basis for implementing the initiative is a specific public task whose fulfillment is the responsibility of the local government. Its implementation requires the local government to seek out partners and put the project out to tender. LGUs can thus stimulate the activity of residents,

showing them the opportunity to implement joint ventures that can directly address relevant problems or meet social needs (Serowaniec, 2013, pp. 261–262).

The analysis shows that the level of interest in the development of civic co-production among the LGU forming Metropolis GZM is varied. Twenty-five out of forty-one LGUs forming the Metropolis decided to develop co-production among their residents by implementing projects under three types of initiatives (PB, LI, VF). In examining where there is prevalence of co-production, it is more often within larger more populated and wealthier municipalities. Their local governments tend to be receptive and proactive when it comes to collaborating with their citizenries. These LGUs are developing intensively and have high tax budgets, which is why they can invest in co-productions of residents, build the co-productive nature of relations between local governments and citizens as recipients of local public services. It is these LGUs that show the greatest potential for the development of co-production on the local GZM scale. This situation reflects a nationwide trend (Pistelok & Martela, 2019). A certain degree of anonymity, characteristic of large cities, favors the development of public participation and broadens the possibilities of residents to influence decisions made at the local level. The situation in an average large city is better than in an average small or medium city. The best regulations usually apply in the biggest cities, and residents have the most opportunities to initiate new urban ventures. Big cities also seem to be centers where they learn the fastest and can open up to new ways of functioning, which is certainly conducive to the most extensive and specialized administration.

Simultaneously, especially small LGUs need support in building their awareness of their possibilities and local potential for the development of co-production. Their local authorities and residents must learn to listen to each other, cooperate and act for the common good. Organizational dilemmas result from the fact that the forms of cooperation described in the article are relatively young instruments. Local authorities and residents often learn which solutions and organizations will be the most effective through trial and error. However, the reality is dynamic and transforming, so the process of resident participation is also changing. Simplifying decision-making processes and introducing reasonable technological solutions may result in a greater willingness to develop co-productive involvement of residents (Błaszak, 2019; Cisek-Lachowicz & Kichewko, 2018).

In the analyzed period (2003–2019) PB was mainly used in building co-production relations between LGU authorities and residents. This form of cooperation aroused the widest interest on the part of LGUs and their citizens. For many LGUs,

PB proved to be an important tool for activating residents and stimulating their involvement in the development of their hometowns and the communities they most closely identify with. Therefore, this form of cooperation should be seen as the most effective way for developing local co-production.

At the same time, looking at the scale of implementation of the other two forms of co-production, despite the passage of several years since the introduction of LI and VF, they are not readily used in LGUs to stimulate residents to co-productive act for the benefit of local communities.

Implementation of projects complements and develops the offer of public services for citizens. Citizens are the main originators and often implementers of these services, therefore the level of their identity with the inhabited commune and its community increases, and these are undoubtedly the most important factors in the development of society on a local level.

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Summary

The concept of co-production offers a solution to some of the challenges facing modern societies. It provides an original model for relationship building and a platform for initiating and managing the practicalities between the state and citizenry. When scaled down to the local level, co-production takes on a special role, i.e., public administration liaises directly with citizens through public services. Subsequently, there is value to be gained in observing how co-production develops in this domain. The main purpose of this article is to present the findings regarding the potential co-production has in the implementation of three types of local civic initiatives (Participatory Budget, Local

Initiative, Village Fund), all of which may be optionally undertaken in Polish local governments. The empirical basis for this study is the author's research, conducted in forty-one cities and towns forming one of Polish Metropoliz GZM.

KEYWORDS: co-production, public sector and citizens, Participatory Budget, Local Initiative, Village Fund

Streszczenie

Idea koprodukcji usług publicznych stanowi oryginalny model budowania relacji oraz platformę do inicjowania i zarządzania stosunkami między państwem a obywatelami. Opiera się bowiem na wielowymiarowej współpracy formalnych organizatorów usług z ich odbiorcami, nadając obydwu stronom równorzędną podmiotowość w procesie opracowania i wdrażania usług. Jej implementacja nabiera szczególnego znaczenia na poziomie społeczności lokalnych, gdzie wspomniane stosunki mają charakter bezpośredni. Głównym celem artykułu jest opis założeń idei koprodukcji oraz prezentacja podejmowanych praktyk na przykładzie realizacji trzech rodzajów lokalnych inicjatyw obywatelskich (Budżetu Obywatelskiego, Inicjatywy Lokalnej, Funduszu Wiejskiego), z których wszystkie mogą być opcjonalnie organizowane w polskich samorządach. Podstawą empiryczną niniejszego opracowania są badania autora, przeprowadzone w czterdziestu jeden miastach tworzących Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowską Metropolię.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: koprodukcja, sektor publiczny i obywatele, Budżet Partycypacyjny, Inicjatywa Lokalna, Fundusz Wiejski

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