

Grzegorz Gawron   
Uniwersytet Śląski



## SOCIAL SERVICES CO-PRODUCTION AS A SOURCE OF THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PRODUCTIVITY AMONG THE OLDER PEOPLE – A CONCEPTUAL MODEL PROPOSAL

While the notions of social services co-production and older people productivity have already been employed in the academic literature independently of one another, the relationship between the two has not been established yet. The article proposes a pioneering conceptual model that combines these two issues. Since the proposal is novel, the article introduces the concepts that allow to operationalize the model as well as the graphic diagram that explains the relationships between these concepts. The article presents social services co-production as a potential source of the personal and social productivity among the older people generated by the use of their human and social capital. Its aim is to stimulate a debate on this crucial topic and invite for a further development of the proposed conceptual model.

**Key words:** co-production; productive aging; social services; human and social capital

### Introduction

The phenomenon of population aging, which has been observed for several decades, is currently a leading issue in the public debate at the local, national, and international scales. This process has been referred to as the “age revolution”. It is treated both as a cause and effect of the observed development paths of modern societies (Caldwell et al. 2008). Globally, there is a visible regional differentiation in the aging process. Its first symptoms were seen many years ago, mainly in developed countries. They primarily consisted of a simultaneous decrease in the fertility rate (a lower number of births led to a reduction of the share of young people in the total population) and an increase in the percentage of older people in the population (caused by an extended life expectancy) (*Starzenie się ludności...* 2018: 4). In 2019, precisely every fourth person living in the territory of any European country was at least 60 years old. In the case of North America, every fifth resident represented this age group. At the same time, in both areas, the relatively lowest share of the youngest population was recorded (0-14 years – Europe 16%, North America 19%) (United Nations 2019a, 2019b). But we are already dealing with hyper-aging because Japan reports as older adult cohorts

reach 30% (Ogura, Jakovljevic 2018). While demographic aging has lagged behind in developing countries, there is now an unprecedented momentum there. While this process has taken place in developed countries for at least a hundred years, developing countries are projected to reach similar levels of population aging by the middle of this century (Bloom, Luca 2016: 7). Discussions about the necessity to adapt to the ongoing changes show exceptional dynamics. Initially, the main focus was on the anticipated negative consequences of an aging population. Observers drew pessimistic population scenarios (demographic panics), which built a perspective called apocalyptic demography (Gee, Gutman 2000; Szukalski 2009; Golinowska 2012; Krzyżowski et al. 2014). However, over time, the perception of longevity in terms of increasing financial pressure and an obstacle to economic or social growth ceased to dominate (UNECE 2017:1). It began to be recognized that the chance for an even longer life is an outstanding civilization achievement, the benefits of which should benefit not only people living to old age but also the communities in which these people function (*The State of Ageing...* 2019: 34). Therefore, it is boulder to move away from the vision of threats to the stability of the welfare state and intergenerational solidarity toward a much more positive image of aging societies. Older people do not have to be a burden on the public wallet or their families but can make a valuable contribution to social development as producers and consumers, volunteers, and caregivers (UNECE 2017: 2). This contribution is not yet widely recognized, and the need to strengthen cohesion in societies is becoming increasingly apparent by recognizing the potential of older people and promoting their opportunities to participate in social and economic life (Gawron 2020). The challenge of an aging society is finding a new exchange system that balances the needs of different age groups and their commitment to society. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a new, open perspective for developing solutions and mechanisms allowing for the efficient functioning of older people in the political, social, and economic dimensions (Fihel, Okólski 2014: 43). Wolfgang Reinhard even claimed that representatives of the post-war boomer generation, now gaining senior status, experience “*the old age of the second type*”. For the first time in history, the populations of both developed and developing countries are faced with the need to harness the time and potential of a growing number of older people (Reinhard 2009). In this changing arrangement, the positions of the older people can be significantly differentiated and simultaneously depend on a central system of ongoing social transfers and individual older people resources. That is why, in recent years, the various concepts of ageing are analytical frameworks to capture the different aspects of ageing including productivity, success, positivity, health, competence across different contexts and settings (Timonen 2016). Each of these concepts have been variedly treated as a process, outcome, model, theory or a goal. They represent a different approach to the benefits and

potentials of aging. But they also have had tangible policy implications for individual well-being and broader social benefits by encouraging better health and greater participation of older people in economic and non-economic activities (Boudiny 2013; Zaidi, Howse 2017; Foster, Walker 2015; Rowe, Kahn 1998). Successful aging has received much attention in recent years, which is due to the attractiveness and importance of the issue of aging in the modern world. The debate about successful aging involves searching for the factors and conditions that help us better understand the potential of the older people and identify ways to change the nature of aging (Nitrini 2011). However, successful aging does not follow any universal standards and forms. It depends on what we have to compromise: losses, defects, constraints, selective opportunities, and existing resources (Silagi et. al. 2015). The growing discussion in this area also gave rise to the concept of productive aging, which seems to accurately combine the contemporary global demographic, economic, and socio-cultural trends observed and discussed above. People live longer and healthier. The economy is changing, evolving from using agricultural production and muscle strength to building the power of machines and using human capital for the information age economy. From a cultural perspective, older people are looking for a new place in the social system that reflects both the needs and capabilities of aging individuals and the community in which they function (Donatti, Deans 2016).

### **Towards productivity of the older people**

The traditional, narrow and economical approach to productivity, which had previously been central in studies, generated a widespread belief that individuals become unproductive after retirement. This perception was mainly due to the persons 65 years and older no longer being labor market actors. Nonetheless, modern researchers have since been expanding the definition of productive activity. They suggest the definition should refer to activities anchored directly in the economy and those undertaken outside the market and not traded (Goldschmidt-Clermont, Pagnossin-Aligisakis 1995; Herzog, Morgan 1992; Dosman et al. 2006). This is crucial for economically inactive pensioners, who can no longer assess their potential social suitability as they are excluded from economic indicators. Older people's productivity should be considered in productive aging, which draws on the older generation (Białyżyt 2014).

Richard Butler and Herbert Gleason began to develop the idea of productive aging for this reason. A fundamental element of their vision was the assumption that older adults' skills, knowledge, and experience are inefficiently used by society. Meanwhile, they should be an essential source of contribution to the development of individuals and communities (; Butler, Gleason 1985). Therefore,

the term older people productivity was initially defined as a substitute for market services with an identifiable economic value. In addition, it was to include activities aimed at people within the social environments of older adults and those aimed at maintaining their independence and self-sufficiency. Butler continued this approach with Mia R. Oberlin and Mal Schecter. They identified productive aging as using individual and collective resources to meet society's and one's own needs (Butler et al. 1990).

Visible changes in the interpretation were brought about by Scott A. Bass, Francis G. Caro, and Yung-Ping Chen. Taking the productive activities equivalence as a market basis, the authors considered not including practices that satisfy only the needs of the older people involved as these actions do not directly and positively impact the functioning of society. At the same time, researchers have postulated that practices that give a chance of multiplying the productive potential of older people should be included in productive activities (Caro et al. 1993).

James Hinterlong, Nancy Morrow-Howell, and Michael Sherraden (2001) proposed the most restrictive definition of productive activity, which limited its scope to practices with quantifiable market value. Researchers have explained that one must distinguish between significant or valuable actions and productive activities (Jackson 2001).

Meanwhile, Lenard W. Kaye, Sandra S. Butler, and Nancy M. Webster (2003) adopted a relatively broader definition of productive aging. They supplemented the scope of activities with internally targeted and thus significant and satisfying for the older adults (Kaye et al. 2003).

Nowadays, various proposals for activities considered productive concerning the older people can be found in the literature. Researchers indicate here four areas of productivity: a) economic production mainly through labor participation; b) family care (including housework and caring); c) volunteering (community and social work activities and informal through friends and networks); d) lifelong learning (formal and informal learning) (Peng, Fei 2013; Morrow-Howell, Greenfield 2016; Visaria, Dommaraju 2019).

The context, concept, and implications of productive aging may differ in different societies and cultures. Therefore, some of the assumptions about productivity in old age may apply more to certain types of societies than others. While the older people in many societies may attach importance to good health, the role of family and intergenerational relationships may vary in different contexts or the value attributed to economic activity in old age may not be the same in different societies (Feng, Straughan 2017; Timonen 2016; Martinson, Berridge 2015). For further consideration, it is also essential that older people's productivity may be of value to themselves and other members of society (family, friends, and local communities). Therefore, one can speak of individual and social productivity. Therefore, in this article, the following definitions were adopted:

Older people's personal productivity is expressed in formal and informal market and non-market activities that generate specific personal values. They are identified mainly with satisfying individual needs and maintaining or achieving the desired independence and life activity level.

Older people's social productivity is expressed in their formal and informal market and non-market activities generating specific values in the social and civic sphere. They are identified mainly by increasing the intensity of social ties and civic engagement in public affairs.

Currently, the concept of productive aging is increasingly used to promote and optimize employment opportunities in old age (lowering employment barriers, creating part-time and flexible work, and increasing legal protection). In health policy, this idea influences the implementation of healthy and active life support programs to extend the life independence of the older people from society. Productive aging has also proven helpful in promoting stronger family and social ties (WHO 2002; Clarke, Warren 2007; Narushima et al. 2018). Such perceptions of older adults' position and role in society require developing a plan of specific actions at each organizational level. It must create the conditions for the active participation of older people in social life. A specific response to implementing such goals can be the idea of co-production.

### **The public services co-production**

The idea of co-production has been present in the literature since the 1970s. Vincent and Elinor Ostrom introduced this concept into scientific circulation after observing the growing public sector crisis in the United States. They were looking for a way to solve it by proving that citizen involvement can positively impact the quality of services provided (Kaźmierczak 2014; Bovaird et al. 2015; De Witte, Geys 2013). The public administration should open up to civic participation and strive to rebuild the public services system towards creating public-social partnerships (Sześciło 2015a; Ostrom 1996; Pestoff 2011). This concept has evolved, following changes in society and public administration over time (Osborne 2010). Today, it is identified with the consumer's involvement in the direct provision of public services and their planning, financing, or even evaluation (Robinson, White 1997: 25). Also, the list of expectations towards co-production is developing. It is treated as a valuable tool in solving problems faced by modern states obliged to meet specific social needs (Pestoff et al. 2006). It should be done primarily through the appropriate organization of the public service sector (Needham 2008; Clark et al. 2013), which will increase citizens' trust in public institutions (Jakobsen 2012), and thus improve the quality of democratic governance (Osborne, Strokosch 2013).

The literature on co-production was developed mainly in the United States, although gradually also in Europe and Australia (Ostrom, Ostrom 1971; Ostrom 1972, 1996, 1999, 2000; Sharp 1980; Whitaker 1980; Parks et al. 1981; Brudney, England 1983; Levine, Fisher 1984; Rosentraub, Warren 1987; Frederickson 1996; Alford 1998, 2002; Evers 2006; Brandsen, Pestoff 2006; Bovaird 2007; Bovaird, Loeffler 2009; Osborne, Strokosch 2013). Also, in the field of Polish science, the co-production has already been published by Polish authors, including Tomasz Kaźmierczak (2011, 2012, 2014), Dawid Sześciło (2014, 2015a, b, c, d) and Anna Ciepielewska-Kowalik (2016). However, no in-depth analyzes of this concept have been conducted so far for the issues related to the aging process of society. Only Maria Zrałek (2014b) and Grzegorz Gawron (2017b, 2020; Gawron et al. 2021) emphasized the specific potential in this respect. In this area, at least four elements seem to be essential characteristics of co-production: (a) direct and multi-stage involvement of people who are receiving social services based on cooperation between them and service providers (professionals); (b) the people's willingness to be involved in the service; (c) application of specific people's contribution (resources); and (d) obtaining specific social values as a result.

In practice, this means that despite the physical and mental deficiencies that appear at an advanced age, the older people should have a chance to actively participate in the life of their immediate family, local community, and the entire society. At the same time, its scope is determined by these people's real needs and desires and their individual capabilities (resources), and not externally and institutionally imposed patterns. It should be remembered that the cohort of older people is the most heterogeneous part of society (Gawron et al. 2021). Individual weaves of features of individual people generate fundamental differences in their actual needs, abilities, and tendencies to specific activities. Therefore, it is imperative to move away from the rigid procedures that only serve to achieve standardized goals and instead create friendly social networks, seeking energy where it exists to help deliver and expand public services involving older people (Boyle, Harris 2009). In the international debate, it is accepted that the older people are dynamic, able, and influential members of our society. They pass on knowledge, skills, and experience to the next generations. They contribute, both individually and collectively, to our economy, to our surroundings, and to tell us history. As family members, older people have a responsibility to foster cohesion and solidarity in our society (EKES 2013). More often, older people want their voices to be heard, their experiences understood, and their skills recognized and used. Nevertheless, they also need services, facilities, and support considering their real and time-varying needs (Zrałek 2014a). Therefore, co-production seems to be an effective way to achieve such a goal and thus create services available to a wide range of people while making the best use of limited

resources. As Helen Bowers said, „Co-production is a simple idea: the idea is that individuals, communities, and organizations have the skills, knowledge, and the ability to work together, create opportunities, and solve problems. Putting it into practice is not that simple, and for older people who need support in their lives, it is a relatively new phenomenon” (*Co-production involving...* 2013: 7). Therefore, in this article, the following definitions were adopted:

Public services co-production is the cooperation of people receiving social services and service providers in developing, implementing, and evaluating these services. It is based on the people’s voluntary contribution (resources) used in the services. It generates the specific values directly for the recipients and the broadly understood social environment.

The dissemination of the idea of productivity and co-production of older people in the collective public awareness may facilitate building a new dimension of later life, in which seniors’ potential and possible contribution to social development will be prioritized. The concepts of human and social capital of the older people may turn out to be helpful here. Older people should be able to choose the forms of engagement that best suit their needs, interests, and skills and, simultaneously, provide opportunities for building a significant social contribution, benefiting them selves and other members of society (Gawron et al. 2021).

### **Human capital, social capital – the older people’s resources**

The concept of human capital became widespread in the 1980s and 1990s. The basis of its perspective was the assumption that human individuals (employees) should be perceived as a workforce and as entities that generate (develop and complement) individual resources. Mainly, researchers discovered that, if necessary, people can transform these resources effectively, finding new ways to achieve their goals (Klimczuk 2012; Drucker 1992, 1999; Kunasz 2004; Rutkowska 2012).

Over the years, although the methods of estimating human capital have changed, the way it is defined today has not significantly differed from the original proposals. In the literature, one can find comprehensive approaches, such as the definition by Bernd Hamm. He proposes that “*all the qualities and abilities that can be attributed to a single person*” should be considered human capital (Hamm 2004: 52). One can also find highly narrow characteristics, where human capital is mainly identified by a given individual education (Zdrojewski 2009). Another definition, proposed by Theodore W. Schultz, includes “*all an individual’s psychophysical characteristics, i.e., innate abilities, knowledge, education level, skills and work experience, health state, cultural level, socio-economic activity and worldview*” (Klein et al. 2006: 348).



It is essential to see the productive nature of human capital for the issues addressed here. It consists of expenditures and activities related to the abilities of resource use that are of fundamental importance (Piekut-Brodzka 2004).

Therefore, human capital development requires a specific individual effort, sometimes supplemented by the support of the social environment. Indeed, human capital development is significantly contributed to by external investments deliberately undertaken by society and institutions established for this purpose. Their occurrence and functioning are based on the belief in the advantages of investing in people. These investments translate into increasing people's productivity, which, in turn, generates national income (Król 2006; Sadowski 2006; McDonald, Roberts 2002; Klein et al. 2006).

Based on a broad literature review, the model proposed in this article adopts the following definition:

Older people's human capital is their resources of time, knowledge, experience, skills and abilities, willingness to engage, and other qualities. Its activation and use can achieve specific personal (individual), social, civic, and economic goals. As a result, human capital can multiply older people's personal and social productivity.

In the above-presented development of the approach to social productivity of the older people, the concept of social capital also becomes essential. It has gained popularity among representatives of many scientific fields and has been described in various ways. Pierre Bourdieu defines *social capital* as a set of actual or potential resources embedded in a social structure or interpersonal network that can be controlled and used by individual actors or organizations (Bourdieu 1986; Carpiano 2007). James S. Coleman explains social capital from a function perspective, believing that such structural resources are a property of capital owned by individuals characterized by structural social resources (Coleman 1988, 2012). Robert D. Putnam describes social capital as a hallmark of social organizations, including trust, norms, and a citizen participation network that can improve the efficiency of society by promoting citizen participation behavior in cooperation (Putnam 2000). Lindon J. Robison, defined social capital as the sympathy or empathy of one person or group towards another person or group that may influence people's behavior (Robison et al. 2002). Jarosław Działek refers to a network of social connections of various types, linking individuals or groups from the same or different environments, accompanied by standards of trust and reciprocity, which condition the formation of social capital (Działek 2011: 107). Maria Theiss believes that social capital is a potential for interaction embedded in interpersonal connections and social norms, which can benefit individuals, groups, and societies (Theiss 2012: 13).

Meanwhile, Cezary Trutkowski and Sławomi Mandes postulate that we can talk about social capital primarily when people act together to achieve uniform



goals. This cooperation can lead to lasting effects of a triple dimension: for the individuals themselves, for strengthening the ties between them, and for the operation of institutions (Trutkowski, Mandes 2005: 46-47). When referring social capital to the older people, it is necessary to define what social relations can develop between them and what the potential benefits, advantages, and preferential treatment act on subjective wellbeing. This social relationship can come from many groups and sources (Xu et al. 2022).

Ryszard Domański also emphasized that although social capital should not be perceived as a fully independent category, its presence directly impacts physical and human capital. It is their essential interpersonal complement and increases their efficiency. It contributes to the increase in the effectiveness of the activities of individuals and groups. It thus increases the productive potential of the community (Domański 2000), generating the desired personal and social values. Jerzy Bartkowski claims that along with a specific economic mechanism, a determinant of human resource productivity can be distinguished, and thus also the aspect of the value of social capital. Like other forms of capital, it is productive because it brings specific payments (benefits) to its holders (Bartkowski 2007: 56). This perspective gives rise to the following definition:

Older people's social capital is a network of social connections (formal and informal) generating their ability to work together. It allows achieving personal (individual), social, civic, and economic goals, which can generally develop these people's personal and social productivity.

### **Social services – the specificity of the co-production potential**

Social services are one of the three basic public services types, alongside administrative and technical ones. They are managed, organized, and financed mainly by the state sector or on its behalf (Żuk 2007). Usually, they are also implemented within the state's public policy-sensitive dimension, which is social policy. Most authors agree that assigning "*social*" categories to individual services mainly separates specific forms of personal assistance from private dependencies and their institutionalization (Krzyszczkowski 2015: 10). The main goal of their implementation is to shape the conditions of life and social coexistence corresponding to social visions and expectations (Żuk 2007). Therefore, social services can be defined in both narrow and broad ways. In the former sense, it is assumed that these are "*benefits in kind as opposed to cash benefits, which generally relate to the care of children, the older adults and the disabled, and specialized services*" (Fitzpatrick et al. 2006: 1300). In the latter (broad) sense, social services are considered to be "*all activities that deal with the social needs of citizens, i.e., money transfers, health care services, education, personal*

*social services, care services, housing services, employment services, and specialized services for different target groups*” (Fitzpatrick et al. 2006: 1300).

When referring to the older people, one should also accept the necessity to apply a specific way (methods) of organization, financing, and implementation of these services. Adequate satisfaction or support in satisfying the diverse needs of individual seniors requires versatility and personalization of the services offered. They should be prepared and provided in an individualized and integrated manner to give the best possible chance of achieving the set goals identified with the solution of a specific crisis or the fulfillment of individual needs. As a rule, these services are based on solidarity, and since their provision depends on public funding, equal access is ensured, irrespective of ownership or income. Thus, organized circumstances may favor the people’s civic attitudes and contribute to social integration, social cohesion, and intergenerational solidarity (Grewiński 2013: 31–32). Therefore, it can also be assumed that:

Social services are public services that meet and support citizens’ individual (social) needs. They shall be organized, financed, and provided by or on behalf of public bodies. The implementation of these services is based on cooperation between service providers and people receiving social services and the interdependence of their contributions.

It justifies that, the concept of co-production seems particularly useful here. It should not be seen as a fully universal concept because the real possibilities of its internalization within the public service sector are strictly conditioned by the specificity of their areas (Sześciło 2015a: 81). As Zoe Gannon and Neal Lawson, among others, emphasize, the nature of social services makes co-production particularly relevant in their area. They are most often individualized, related to a specific location, have a lasting impact on people’s lives, and, most importantly, require constant dialogue between the participants (Gannon, Lawson 2008). Catherine Needham and Sarah Carr also agree that *“people who use social services are necessarily heavily involved in their care production. Therefore, co-production is not a new mechanism for social services providing. It is an approach that affirms and supports the active and productive role of those who use the services, and the value of collaborative relationships in delivering results negotiated with their users”* (Needham, Carr 2009: 7). Recognizing this perspective, one can adopt a definition:

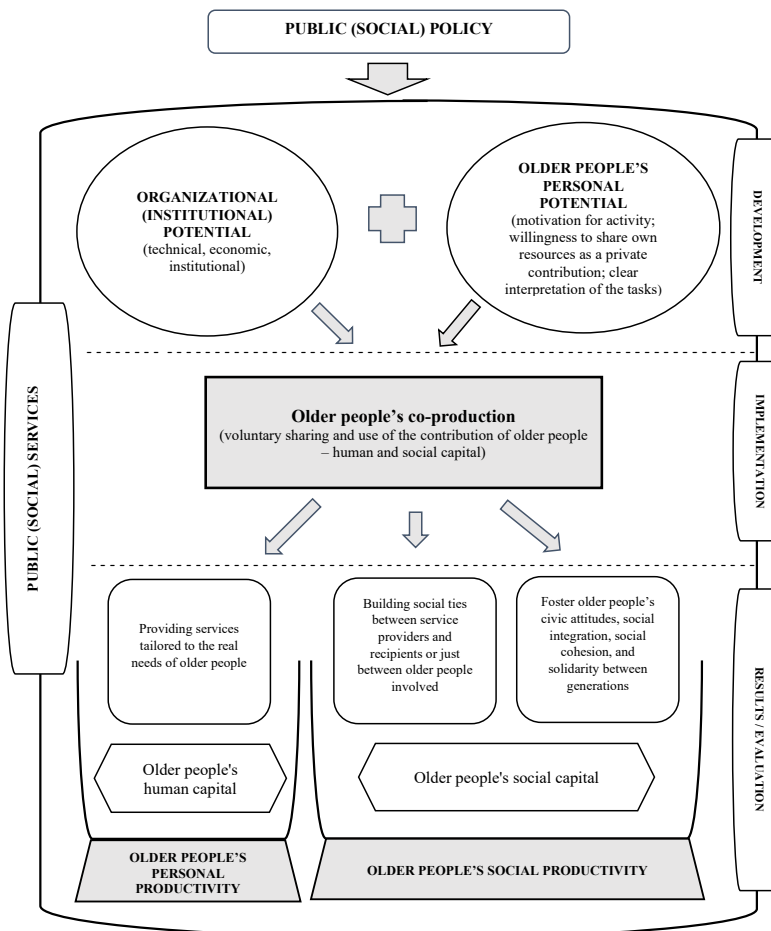
Co-production of social services is the cooperation between people receiving social services and service providers in developing, implementing, and evaluating these services. It is based on the voluntary service contribution of these people. It generates specific values directly for the recipient and the broadly understood social environment.

In this way, the older people’s services area is crystallized. Their implementation should be based on broadly understood cooperation between service providers and recipients and the actual use of older adults’ potential constituting

their human and social capital. This is why the author has attempted to develop a model approach that combines the co-production of social services with older people's productivity.

### Social services co-production as a source of the older people's productivity – the theoretical model proposal

The legitimacy and difficulty of developing a co-production model as a source of older people's productivity are emphasized because it is a pioneering task. So far, these issues have not been subjected to in-depth sociological analysis that considers their co-occurrence and reciprocal determinism. The model components are presented in a graphical diagram (Fig. 1).



The first and, at the same time, the overriding element of the proposed model is the social and public policy of the state. Co-production is a concept in which the attention is increased to the direct participation of end users in social services and thus to the implementation of the assumptions of public (social) policy (Jakobsen, Andersen 2013; Sorrentino et al. 2018; Ma, Wu 2019). The critical support areas are defined at this level, influencing the scope of public social services addressed to the older adults. However, the proposed model focuses on a particular services level.

Many factors can influence the co-production process, including customer awareness and ownership, social capital, the mindset of officials and policymakers, collaborative decision-making, people's preferences, and the relationship between users and suppliers (Khine et al. 2021; Radnor et al. 2013).

The co-production process is based on using resources and stakeholder input, including professionals and non-professionals, individually or collectively (Thomsen, Jakobsen 2015), to achieve the expected results (Sicilia et al. 2016; Jakobsen, Andersen 2013). Therefore, also the author assumes that it is necessary to have two basic types of potentials at the service organization stage – organizational (institutional) and personal (individual). The former is a contribution prepared by formal organizers (public institutions and their representatives). It covers technical, economic, and institutional considerations that form the basis of each service organization and cannot be replaced by anything. (; Filipe et al. 2017). These conditions may determine the belief of older people about the external effectiveness, i.e., proper institutional and organizational preparation of services, and thus their effectiveness, which together will favor the tendency of older people to engage (Craig et al 1990; Abeysekera 2015). The latter type is the personal potential of the older people – the contribution source of an individual direct user. Its most important elements are the motivation for activity, willingness to share own resources as a private contribution, and awareness (clear interpretation) of the entrusted tasks. Older people as end-users contribute resources, skills, and opportunities, user empowerment, interactive communication, and a positive attitude (Khine et al. 2021; Gawron 2020). Also, their readiness should be considered a necessary element of co-production (Bovaird 2007; Alford, Yates 2015). Factors involving socio-economic attributes and attitudes can influence beneficiaries' willingness to be involved in services. The scope of co-production may also be influenced by the attitudes of public officials and politicians. Therefore, the contribution and attitude of the parties' involvement are commensurate here (Parrado et al. 2013). Encouraging the older people to involvement has resulted in a shift from results-focused to process-focused logic (Auh et al. 2007; Bendapudi, Leone 2003). Co-production is manifested in the interdependence of the producer's and user's contributions, creating a specific conglomerate of factors that condition the service implementation process and the final value achieved.

However, it should be emphasized that the central axis of the model is being built in the analysis of co-production attitudes of the beneficiaries of social services and not their formal organizers. The author has assumed that the primary source of the service users' contribution, whose involvement is necessary for developing co-productions, is their human and social capital. The older people's resources of time, knowledge, experience, skills, abilities and social connections (formal and informal) can generate their ability to work together to achieve personal (individual), social and civic goals. So older people co-production is about their voluntary sharing and use of the contribution (Khine et al. 2021; Gawron 2020; Thomsen, Jakobsen 2015; Andrews, Brewer 2013).

It must be emphasized that the strength of the impact of these and other elements depends on the specificity of service type, the individual situation of seniors, and the realities creating the overall situational context. Co-production can occur at all stages of service production, including planning, design, management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation (Bailey 2011; Verschuere et al. 2012). As a result, co-production should be seen as a highly heterogeneous phenomenon (Sorrentino et al. 2018).

Therefore, the author assumes that developing co-production of older people in social services will give multi-dimensional results. These can be distinguished into three basic categories (Irvin, Stansbury 2004; Neshkova, Guo 2012; Wang, Van Wart 2007; Vanleene et al. 2015). The first is providing services tailored to the user's actual needs, thus helping them according to personal expectations. The involvement of older adults already at the service organization stage and later in its implementation intensifies the chances of a result being achieved (Neshkova, Guo 2012; Golder et al. 2012). At the same time, it can be the development source of older people's human capital and thus define their personal productivity framework (Andrews, Brewer 2013). The second result's category of older people co-production, distinguished in the model, is the social ties between service providers and users or just between the older adults involved. These result from good cooperation and the involvement of both sides in the service-providing process. The co-productive relationship can consist of issues such as mutual learning, trust, and how service providers consider seniors' needs (levels of accountability, responsiveness, and transparency). We can also expect two kinds of achieved values here: individual and mutual (collective). Personal values include increasing self-esteem, enjoying participation or self-effort (sense of usefulness), and gaining social acceptance and loyalty. Mutual values include relational values that result from the collective involvement of older people in services. The results may concern the directly involved seniors but also people from outside this group – most often members of the local community (Kim, Lee 2012; Vanleene et al. 2015). We also can expect value creation in the co-production process. Close collaboration between seniors and formal service providers

should generate openness, relevance, integration, credibility, trust, legitimacy, and usefulness. All these values could also raise the level of accountability and transparency, which can strongly determine the development of the democratic spirit. (Parrado et al. 2013; Rich 1981; Pestoff 2012). Therefore this cooperation can stimulate and develop the socio-civic involvement of older people. This is the third possible co-production results category. Such organized circumstances can foster older adults' civic attitudes, social integration, social cohesion, and solidarity between generations. Thus, the co-production can be the source of the creation and multiplication of older people's social capital, constituting their source of social productivity. It is also strongly related to building a belief in the social significance of their individual or group contribution among older people. They gain awareness of its usefulness by engaging in services and making their own potential (human capital) available. This can motivate them to become involved in social matters and involvement in local democracy (Pestoff 2006; Halvorsen 2003; Herian et al. 2012).

To summarize, older people's productivity can be expressed by developing their human and social capital. It determines the chances for efficiently solving personal crises and problems. Consequently, it indicates the operational effectiveness of older people within local grassroots initiatives and institutions. This productivity can also be expressed in the interpersonal relationships (including intra- and intergenerational) that arise in every sphere of activity of the older people (Gawron et al. 2021; Xu et al. 2022; Boyle, Harris 2009).

### **Final reflections**

In many developing countries, the impact of co-production or the role of the older people in public services, especially in decision-making or policy-making, remains limited. But when public services (formal organizers of these services) recognize the potential for citizens to contribute to social services, they seek to use co-production as a tool to achieve individual and social goals (Khine et al. 2021; Vanleene et al. 2015; Xu et al. 2022). Proponents of productive aging hope that older people will gain the opportunity to choose the engagement forms that best suit their needs, interests, and skills at an early date. Simultaneously, those activities should provide opportunities to build a meaningful social contribution that benefits society as a whole (Hinterlong et al. 2001). The social productivity of older people should be seen mainly in the individual's efforts and synergistic collective activity. Therefore, one can see a special justification here for the co-production phenomenon.

There is no doubt that it will be necessary to transform the structure of public spending and investment soon. It should give ample opportunities to

meet older adults' growing and dynamically changing expectations and needs. An essential element of this process will be the cooperation of public authorities and institutions with the older people in shaping favorable living conditions in society. It is necessary to have mechanisms for facilitating members of the older population's social participation to achieve this. They will become entities and not just passive beneficiaries of available services (Błądowski et al. 2012; Gawron 2017).

In the author's opinion, the co-production of social services should be seen as one of the significant opportunities for development in this direction.

The present study does not exhaust the possible areas of exploration and interpretation of the analyzed phenomena. However, the author hopes that the proposed model will be a source of inspiration for further analysis and discussion.

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