

INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF STRENGTHENING ACTIVE SOCIAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE PROCESS OF URBAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

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Abstract: In the paper, in an interdisciplinary way, an attempt was made to define the term "social innovation" in the context of strengthening active social policy and community organising. It appears that multifaceted tendencies and changes in the development of technological and social innovations determine the need to take into account numerous tasks, functions, needs, determinants and systematic efforts to ensure that community inhabitants have good living and development conditions.

Keywords: human being, innovation, prognosis, adaptation, change.

Introduction

K. Głąbicka distinguishes two principal functions of active social policy (referred to as ASP). The first refers directly to the individual and concerns satisfying the needs of the person, shaping the work habits, learning work, developing a sense of responsibility in the work process, shaping attitudes, developing physical fitness and mental performance, developing interests and self-realization. The second covers broader social phenomena, such as social security, social inclusion and the development of the social economy (Gagaćka, Głąbicka, 2014, pp. 17-23). In the dynamically changing environment, the functions of ASP set by K. Głąbicka are becoming particularly important in shaping the process of organizing the urban community. The indicated process means including numerous tasks, functions, needs and conditions, as well as continuous striving to provide the community of residents with the right living conditions and development (Nowakowska, Przygodzki, Rzeńcy, 2016, p. 40). City management becomes a complex issue, the solution of which requires an appropriate methodology that combines the objectives and tasks of the city's development policy and planning. The assumptions of the new approach pay attention to both internal relations of cities and external relations of cities with their surroundings in the political, social, technological and economic dimension, in particular

in the field of sustainable development. The policy treated as a set of goals, as well as the means and tools to achieve them, plays an important role in managing a city. Measures and tools firstly include all legal basis as well as management and planning methods and public-private partnership, organization, financing and information. The city's development policy is usually aimed at satisfying the needs of its residents in the best possible way (Bryx, 2014, pp. 27-36).

This is especially noticeable – in the context of the dynamic disclosure of new processes threatening the integrity and functionality of urban communities – in the local dimension. It seems that one of the significant determinants of the indicated processes is the view presented by A. Giddens, who included a pessimistic picture in his theory of structure, in which he notices that people are less and less connected by common local history, collective relations or worldview (Giddens, 2001, p. 201). A. Giddens shares the opinions stating that in the near future the significance of local communities will rapidly decrease. The area of life is separated from the external determinants associated with the place, and the very notion of the place loses its importance in the face of the development of uprooting mechanisms. In most traditional cultures, regardless of the relatively frequent migrations of their populations and the areas they sometimes travel across, the social life was generally related to the place. The basic factor of the change of such state is not the intensification of mobility, but the fact that the places have been completely penetrated by uprooting mechanisms that have linked local activities to spatial and temporal relations with an ever increasing range. As Giddens emphasizes, it is a consequence of the structure of modernity, which questions the identity of the individual and puts it in a completely different perspective than in the previous centuries (Giddens, 2007, p. 48). This results from the fact that the development of modern social institutions and their global reach create incomparably greater chances of a safe and rewarding life than in any of the pre-modern systems. Modernity also has a dark side, which has become clearly visible in this century. This dark side of modernity mentioned by Giddens is the confusion of the individual between the global aspirations of modernity and the local dimension of human existence, the breakdown of the time-space relation, the reorganization of social relations within the network society, or the constant struggle with the processes of marginalization, differentiation and exclusion (Giddens, 2008, p. 5).

Considering the mentioned theses and views, it seems that in the situation of dynamic urban development with the systematically growing importance of innovativeness in the development of territorial units there are also favourable conditions to develop technological innovations in their strategic activities and strengthen them with social innovations. It seems that such ideas are favourable, although, they are not free from limitations.

Sources and determinants of innovation

The term innovation comes from the Latin word *innovates*, meaning creating something new. It appeared around 400 AD in the Latin church as an *innovatio*, meaning renewal – change (Słownik wyrazów, 1980, p. 307). In the 13th century, this concept was used in Italian by Machiavelli (*innovatore*). The definition proposed by J.A. Schumpeter is the starting point for reflections on the importance of innovation in the modern economy. He defined innovations through the prism of specific situations, among which he distinguished such aspects as (Schumpeter, 1960) the introduction of a new product with which consumers have not yet dealt, or provision of a product with new features; introduction of a new production method that is still practically untested in a given field of industry; the opening of a new market, i.e. one in which a given type of domestic industry had not previously operated, regardless of whether the market existed before or not; acquisition of a new source of raw materials or semi-finished products, regardless of whether the source already existed or had to be created; introduction of a new organization structure for an industry, e.g. creating a monopoly or stopping it. Innovations are also defined in the theory of economics. Four types of innovations stand out in this approach (Stawasz, 1999),

- product innovations – they rely on the improvement of the product already produced in an enterprise,
- process (technological) innovations – change of production (or service provision) methods. It can be based on changes within devices or the organizational sphere of production,
- organizational innovations – understood as the introduction of a new organizational method in the field of business practices or external relations of an enterprise,
- marketing innovations usually associated with the change of marketing strategy, which include changes in pricing policy, appearance, packaging, promotion or product positioning, and are based on the perception of a product (service) as new, even if, from a technological point of view, it has not changed significantly.

Innovations are also defined according to the area of impact and are divided into global innovations, regional innovations, local innovations, innovations on the scale of the industry, innovations on the scale of the enterprise. In turn, due to the importance of novelty, the following two types of innovations can be distinguished – surge (bulb invention) and linear (next generations of televisions) innovations. From the point of view of the changes they cause, the following innovations are known (Bryx, 2014),

- radical (new products, technologies or business management method),
- recombinant (the use of existing technological, production and organizational solutions to create new products, technologies or management systems),
- modifications (they rely on slight changes in the existing products, technologies and management systems intended to improve them).

Anticipating Schumpeter's thoughts, it should be noted that innovation means introducing a new solution into practice. The subject of his deliberations are primarily technical innovations and their impact on the economy. Any dissemination of innovation is a separate type of change, referred to as imitation (Bryx, 2014).

As K. Koziół-Nadol observes, according to the latest theories, innovations are the result of numerous complex interactions between individuals, organizations and the environment in which these individuals and organizations operate. The development of the theory of innovation and innovative processes indicates further evolution of these phenomena along with the progressing processes in the modern economy, which will result in the creation of more complex and corresponding models of the innovation process. One of them is the open approach (open innovation, open invention), which is based on various concepts and theories (Koziół-Nadolna, 2012, pp. 295-303) described and developed by H.W. Chesbrough (Chesbrough, 2003). He states that in the world of widely distributed knowledge, companies cannot rely solely on their own research, but should acquire patents or licenses for inventions and other innovative solutions from other companies. In addition, companies should make their inventions which they do not use available to other entities on the basis of license sale, creation of consortia or spin-off companies becoming increasingly popular in Poland (Sieniawska, 2010). The message of the open model is based on the following view – if it is not impossible to stop the changes on the market, then there is a need to learn how to profit from it (Chesbrough, 2002).

In turn, in the context of the closed approach to innovation, it is worth noting that it has been characterized according to the following several principles (Chesbrough, 2002),

- the company employs the best employees, the most intelligent people in the sector, employees themselves invent and develop ideas for new products or services,
- an enterprise which develops innovations on its own will achieve the priority effect on the market, the company that first launches the product usually wins,
- the company will allocate the largest amount of investment funds for Research and Development (referred to as R&D) in the sector, which will cause the largest number of the best ideas, which in turn will lead to attaining the position of a market leader,
- an organization must have control over intellectual property so that competitors do not profit from not having their ideas.

On the basis of economics, another proposal for the definition of innovation was proposed by Philip Kotler, who stated that innovation is everything perceived as a novelty (Kotler, 1994, p. 322). His concept was extended by Peter F. Drucker who noticed that innovation is a conscious and beneficial change resulting from the needs or systematic observation of the environment (Drucker, 1992, p. 9). In this respect, innovations can be determined by human activity, which must lead to the creation of something new. This principle can support the assumption that one of the most common definitions is the one according to which ‘innovation is a process of transforming existing possibilities into new ideas and putting them into practice’ (Okoń-Horodyńska, 2013). In Poland, the word innovation means ‘introducing something new,

a newly introduced thing, a novelty, a reform' (Słownik wyrazów, 1980, p. 307). Therefore, the innovative activity consists of all activities of a scientific, technical, organizational, financial and commercial nature that actually lead or are supposed to lead to the implementation of new products (Raport o stanie..., 2000).

Social innovations in regard to active social policy and the urban community

Innovations are of interest to many sciences. Taking as a basis their distinction – area, field or discipline of sciences – technological, non-technological, organizational, soft, management, architectural, ethnic, distracting and social innovations can be distinguished. In this context, referring to the main subject of the article, further elaboration will draw special attention to social innovation.

It seems that nowadays the source for determining the innovative approach in the social sciences are numerous processes that had not occurred to such a scale and with such development dynamics before. They include three key aspects which seem to shape the social and economic order of the world in the coming decades; they are climate change, technological change and demographic change. An important element of these changes is the community policy mentioned in the introduction of the article. It finds itself in the idea of building a civic society and a social economy, based on the principles of social solidarity and subsidiarity, which form a part of the contemporary model of the previously mentioned ASP (Karwińska, 2008, pp. 379-395).

When combining ASP with economic development, in particular the social economy, the following functions of its impact should be noted. The first function is the creation of social benefits and complying with the following elementary principles: the priority of work on capital, democratic decision-making, implementation of services for local communities as a superior goal, strengthening credibility, quality and durability of operations. Another function is to combine economic activity with social goals, the result of which is limiting the phenomenon of marginalization and social exclusion by promoting activation and social integration (Rosiak, 2006, p. 40). Creating a climate for social cohesion, taking care of creating workplaces, encouraging entrepreneurship, building a pluralist, participative, democratic society based on solidarity – these are functions that also shape and determine ASP in the social economy (Hausner, 2007, p. 2). An especially important issue is system evolution which is possible in the future thanks to ASP. It is an evolution from the welfare state to the decentralized and auxiliary state. Two main ASP ideas reveal themselves in this process – self-governance and responsibility. As K. Głąbicka writes, ASP wants to build a society based on individuals responsible for themselves and others, a society in which individual motivation and mobilization are intertwined with civic solidarity. It is dominated by the principle of social

solidarity (Gagacka, Głabicka, 2014, pp. 17-23). In this context, as J. Auleytner noticed, Poland, while practising the principle of subsidiarity, is entering a new, fourth stage of building social policy, in which an organized society will gradually replace the state in the implementation of their social functions. European Social Space is being created, in which the resolution of social issues becomes a matter for local communities (Auleytner, 2005, p. 20).

On the basis of the analysis of the indicated regularities, tendencies, processes and prognosis associated with ASP, mega trends are projected with an attempt to develop long-term forecasts, focusing on changes occurring in the world and their impact on the future shape of global leadership (Building..., 2014, pp. 5-8). Describing the future, taking into account the previously mentioned technological change, there are numerous new processes characteristic of a dynamically changing environment in which changing societies operate at different levels of development. They include such phenomena as the financial crisis, pandemics or cyberterrorism. Both the indicated premises and the processes preceding them imply in practice the need to adapt global strategies to local markets. This is achieved by stimulating local participation in making global decisions in more culturally diverse conditions of cooperation. It is worth noting that the best global companies act as flattened 'matrices' (Building..., 2015, pp. 5-8), where the flow of information and the institution takes place in all directions. It is an activity based on international mobility and adaptive abilities as well as cultural sensitivity. This determines the state in which organizations must be aware and sensitive to the changing political and economic reality (Senge, 2012).

The need to search for new forms of solving social issues in the global dimension will also determine the already mentioned climate change, which will be accompanied by the increasing scarcity of basic natural resources guaranteeing the continuation of human civilization (Witkowska-Dąbrowska, Napiórkowska-Baryła, 2014, p. 150). This is directly related to the phenomenon of increasing CO₂ emissions and the temperature of the earth's surface. The growing scarcity of strategic resources such as water, minerals, metals and fossil fuels will lead to a price increase and may be a source of regional and global conflicts. This implies the need for greater social responsibility for the environment, which should be inherently invested in clean technologies. Enterprises must accept the growing costs both in terms of raw materials and the implementation of greener activities. In this process, the leaders of such enterprises will have to demonstrate outstanding cognitive functions, the ability to balance competitive requirements with the financial success of the company and social responsibility (Building..., 2015, pp. 5-8).

The development of the indicated forecasts is another challenge, which includes the growing population and its ageing. As the leaders of the Leadership 2030 report point out, those countries whose economies will be based on the traditional industrial model will be particularly exposed to the effects of demographic change. The countries indicated may be first of all affected by social pressure related to the effectiveness of social benefit systems and growing migrations. The brain drain will be a serious challenge for such countries. It is worth noting

here that the term brain drain was first used by the Royal Society in the early 1960s in relation to the emigration of young Britons (Aráuz Torres, Wittchen, 2010, p. 91). Over time, the term brain drain was adopted in other countries, including Poland. A frequent example of the phenomenon associated with it in Poland is the wave of Poles' emigration in the years 1981-1988. It is estimated that among almost 700,000 people who left Poland at the time, as many as 15% had an above-average education. It was a significant number since the share of people with higher education was only 7%. In practice, this meant that in the given period the volume of emigration of highly qualified specialists amounted to approximately one fourth of all graduates of Polish universities (Kaczmarczyk, 2006, p. 11). As a result of the changes described above, industrial countries may be experiencing numerous shortages, the implications of which may be several social problems and conflicts. This is particularly visible in the phase of return of migrants, which can undoubtedly accelerate local development at the expense of increasing competition on the labour market as a result of the increasing supply of highly-developed professional qualifications. The authors of the Leadership 2030 report refer to this phenomenon directly as 'the war of talents' (Building..., 2015, pp. 5-8).

While developing the topic of ageing, it should be noted that local communities will have to be prepared to integrate and develop international policies towards the phenomenon of migrants in old age, especially for women. This may mean the need to introduce models of a social policy oriented towards the elderly – with an emphasis on 'care policy' – employment, education, housing and health policy. Together with these policies, the need to build an intergenerational development program will be expected. The program is not only built in the context of knowledge transfer but, above all, it is aimed at integrating and motivating people of different ages and coming from various cultural areas to work together to determine the development of inhabited areas. A special role in these areas should be attributed to the method of mentoring – as an element of the method of age management – in which, in the foreground, a partner relationship between the master and the student is noticed. Thanks to this method, the student develops their self-awareness related to the responsibility for the activities performed and makes self-assessment of the chosen development (Litwiński, Sztanderska, 2010, pp. 11-15). In this context, it should be noted that mentoring is an element of the age management method (Naegele, Walker, 2006, pp. 19-21), which is part of the human resources management method; and, more specifically, an element of diversity management. It is worth noting that the Europe 2020 Strategy shows how the European Union can emerge from the economic crisis stronger, becoming an intelligent, sustainable and socially acceptable economy. Diversity management is an important element in achieving fast and lasting results related to this ambitious strategy. In order to survive, enterprises must adapt, change, introduce diversity management and integrate it strategically in their operations. The European Commission has conducted pan-European surveys and analyses for diversity on business cases. They show that companies are making steady progress in implementing diversity and equality strategies in the workplace (Bret, 2006).

The above-mentioned processes correspond with another challenge, which is the freedom of choice perceived as individualization in the life of a given community. This aspect can be briefly described as follows. Today, an individual is freed from the necessity of being identified as a member of a particular community, but people still want to share with each other aspects of their life (Olcoń-Kubicka, 2009, p. 195). As noted in the aforementioned Leadership 2030 report, the aspect of individualisation is associated with soft factors such as recognition, self-improvement, and valuation. In this context, individualism is a form of seeking a balance between work and life. It is worth pointing out that this trend of perceiving individualism reveals the primacy of the already mentioned balance between professional work and life over remuneration. As a result, it created a new phenomenon, a decentralized place of employment where the work performed is characterized by flexibility and versatility as well as freedom and autonomy.

In the context of the aforementioned technological change, it is interesting to anticipate and project the process of growth and development of the digital society (Zrozumieć politykę, 2014). In this society, the so-called class of digital employees who can work anywhere and create numerous digital personal and business contacts stands out. In this way, the class determines the process in which digital knowledge becomes the foundation of the power of the global economy. In a world shaped in such a way, digital creativity and curiosity, which are the features that mainly characterise young people, predominate. In this process, a need to exchange knowledge between young people and the older generation is clearly visible. The indicated relationship is based on the urgent need to reduce the growing intergenerational information gap. It seems that only communities in which the indicated gap will not take place will be able to create new technologies and solutions in a world based on digital knowledge. A significant aspect in this respect is the preservation of traditional forms of contact. Not every aspect can be based solely on virtual communication. It is important to preserve traditional forms of intergenerational cooperation based on joint decision making, motivation for cooperation, loyalty and honesty. In an increasingly digitized world, supporting intergenerational integrity and openness is – as the Leadership 2030 report notes – of paramount importance to digital wisdom (Building the, 2015, pp. 5-8).

Summing up, the process of using digital technologies to create innovations develops on the basis of climate change, technological and demographic changes and the digital society. They shape and express through the process of convergence between nano-biological, information and cognitive technologies (hereinafter referred to as NBIC technologies). NBIC technologies develop extremely rapidly to achieve progress in the field of health care, energy, environment and production, leading to the conversion of other areas, even non-technical – outside their area of interaction. As a result, the convergence process determines integration, openness and comparability leading to visionary solutions. Equally important is the result of the convergence of internal and external collaboration in the creation of innovation and breaking down barriers to innovation mentality in order to strengthen their acceptance (Zirk-Sadowski, 2014, pp. 175-186).

Innovation policy in the context of active social policy and urban community

When learning from numerous sources, it is important to try to define the term social innovations in the context of strengthening the development of ASP and the urban community. As demonstrated in previous deliberations, the definition of the term innovation focuses exclusively on technical and technological phenomena and processes. The emergence of the term innovations in social phenomena and processes – as it has already been noticed before – was visible only in the first two decades of the 21st century (Mulgan, 2006; Loogma, Tafel-Viia, Ümarik, 2012, pp. 238-301; Beinare, McCarthy, 2012, pp. 889-893; Maruyama, Nishikido, Iida, 2007, pp. 2761-2769; Philips, Laforest, Graham, 2010, pp. 189-199; Teets, 2012, pp. 15-32; Moulaert, Nussbaumer, 2005, pp. 2071-2088). It is worth emphasizing, however, that the social implications of innovation have been thoroughly discussed in the literature, starting with Schumpeter's ground-breaking works (Moulaert, Nussbaumer, 2005), which was developed in 1957 by Robert Solow in his work titled *Technical Change and the Aggregate Production Function* (Solow, 1957, pp. 312-320). Thanks to this work, Solow contributed to the almost universal acceptance of the thesis that technological progress (development of knowledge) is the greatest driving force of the economy. Thus, Solow proved that the increase in work efficiency observed in the American economy in the years 1909-1949 can be attributed to as much as 87.5% of innovations. It was a huge surprise and it contributed to the intensification of research on the role of innovation in the development of civilization. The supplementary view in this matter is represented by W. Kwaśnicki, who notes that, in fact, innovations are closely related to the development of capitalism; one can even say that they are synonymous with capitalism. The capitalist development initiated in the mid-18th century (first in Great Britain and then in other countries of the Western Europe and North America), sometimes called the First Industrial Revolution, was associated with innovations in the textile industry. Often, the 19th century is called the age of innovation because in fact the number of innovations in this period was incomparably greater than in any other period in the past in the scale of civilization development on the entire globe. It seems that the greatest novelty of the 19th century was the institutionalization of the search for innovation. The first research laboratory, whose primary goal was to systematically search for inventions and implement them, was a laboratory created by Thomas Alve Edison in Menlo Park, New Jersey, USA in the 1870s. That is why Edison is often called "The Wizard of Menlo Park". This innovative development is continued in the 20th and 21st centuries. It can be said that Edison's idea was a breakthrough social innovation (Kwaśnicki, 2015, pp. 1-23).

In this context, it is worth emphasizing that social innovations are an important element of innovation policy, related to solving social problems and creating value in areas serving the society. Returning to the concept of open innovations (Chesbrough), it is worth noting that even a large-scale expenditure in the R&D sector in a closed system, namely single organizations,

will not be enough to create innovation in the 21st century. As already noted, the dilemmas of innovative development force the paradigm shift from the so-called closed innovations to open innovation (Chesbrough, 2003). In this context, from the concept of open innovations, it is worth moving to the sphere of utilitarianism, i.e. fields in which in the present sense they can play important roles in the sense of *largo*. In various conceptions, social innovations can be observed in the following areas (Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick, Norman, 2012):

- social transformation (the role of civil society in the process of social change and the role of the social economy and social entrepreneurs in the implementation of economic growth and social integration; the role of business in social change – corporate social responsibility and the role of enterprises in conducting another wave of innovation and productivity by focusing on ‘social’ areas such as education or health care),
- organizational management model (developing business strategies including changes in human, institutional and social capital, which lead to the improvement of organizational efficiency as well as of competitiveness, organizational restructuring, modernization of industrial relations and human resources management, non-profit management),
- social entrepreneurship (development of new and innovative ways to overcome difficult social challenges by engaging ‘socially sensitive’ entrepreneurs. Social enterprises are mainly enterprises with social goals, the surpluses of which are reinvested in this enterprise),
- development of new products, services and programs (meeting of social needs, implementation of public sector innovations and provision of public services by social enterprises and civil society organizations, provision of public services and other redistributive measures towards budgetary savings in the welfare state),
- governance model, empowerment and increase in the capacity of social institutions (improvement of mutual relations between various social entities, improvement of skills, competences, social capital among the actors of social life involved in the development and implementation of programs and social and economic strategies).

It can be concluded, based on the definition of social innovations, according to Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick and Norman, that it is possible to distinguish elements whose use constitutes social innovation in a strict sense, novelty, from idea to implementation, effectiveness, meeting of social needs and improvement of the ability of society to act.

While conducting further analysis of the impact of ‘social innovation’ on ASP and the urban community, it is worth noting that the demarcation line between technical (material) innovations and social innovations is difficult to determine and will always be artificial (Kwaśnicki, 2015, pp. 1-23). Therefore, currently there is no full agreement as to the definitional understanding of the term ‘social innovation’. This view is extended by the aforementioned W. Kwaśnicki, who states that social innovations are rarely presented as a concrete and clearly defined concept. Usually this term is used as a kind of descriptive

metaphor in the context of social and technical changes (Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick, Norman, 2012).

It seems that in this approach, social innovations can be looked at through the prism of specific types. This approach was particularly developed during the implementation of the TEPSIE project, the theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe, which provided a good overview of the existing definitions of social innovations presented in the theoretical post-project report, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe (Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick, Norman, 2012). The project's achievements indicate that through social innovations we mean new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes) which at the same time meet the social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved causative capabilities of society and better use of resources possessed (Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick, Norman, 2012). On the basis of the TEPSIE project, a set of key types of social innovations was identified, which are: products, services, processes, technologies, principles, ideas, markets, platforms, organizational forms, legislation, business models, social movements, etc., and a combination of several of them. Each type of innovation has been assigned a given example indicating its objective, goal or message. In this context, social innovations such as:

- new products exemplify technologies supporting people with disabilities with products such as voice synthesizers,
- new services, micro-credit, mobile banking – e.g. M-Pesa in Kenya (Bułkowski, 2006),
- new processes, a peer-to-peer collaboration model – further referred to as P2P (Bułkowski, 2006), crowdsourcing com (The Rise of..., 2006, pp. 1-5),
- new markets, Fair Trade, time banks,
- new platforms, new models of care for people with intellectual disabilities and those in 'social isolation' – e.g. Tyze,
- new organizational forms, social enterprises,
- new business models, social franchise, use of JIT– just-in-time – strategy (Logistyka, 2013) in the face of social challenges.

The implication of the above-described state is the presence of social innovations in a series of political initiatives of the European Commission, such as a European platform to fight poverty and social exclusion, Innovation Union, Social Entrepreneurship Initiative, Employment and Social Investment Packages, the Digital Agenda, New industrial policy, European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing and Cohesion Policy. Social innovations are also developed in Poland. The National Centre for Research and Development gives a special rank to innovation – further referred to as NCBiR – (Opis programu, 2012). This institution states that innovations enabling creative response to social challenges, e.g. related to the situation on the labour market (e.g. an increase in the number of well-educated people who cannot find their place in the labour market despite good preparation), deserve

attention as well as globalization of many economic activities. In response to such a perception of innovation, NCBiR periodically announces the possibility of financing special research programs in the area of social innovation Program „Innowacje Społeczne”. The main determinant shaping the need to search for and implement social innovations is demonstrated in the Diagnosis of the needs of the National Development Strategy 2020, the still observed low level of social capital (Pogonowska, 2004,) accompanied by ‘low level of public debate and low quality of social dialogue at the stage of policy development and preparation of regulations’ (Strategia Rozwoju Kraju, 2012, p. 176).

The initiatives mentioned above, in accordance with the purpose of their application, can be focused on social innovations in relation to subsequent attempts to define them. In the context of the provisions of the Guide to Social Innovation (Guide To Social..., 2013) issued by the European Commission, these initiatives are perceived as innovations that are social both in their aims and in their means, remaining open to territorial and cultural diversity, etc. Social in the sense of both the process and social goals that every person would be eager to achieve. The guide defines innovations as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) in order to meet social needs and create new social relations and cooperation. In other terms, social innovations are defined as a response to social needs that are not traditionally met by the market or existing institutions and are addressed to vulnerable groups in the Empowering people society (Empowering people, 2011). Another approach to the definition of social innovation is presented by the Vienna Innovation Centre (further referred to as ZSI). ZSI Kesselring and Leitner experts (Kesselring, Leitner, 2008) argue that social innovations should not be assessed on the basis of economic criteria. They emphasize that in opposition to technical innovations, social innovations focus on a system of values and are not oriented on economic dependencies. It is worth noting that the issue of the impact of social innovations on the need to solve the social problem is clearly shown in the ZSI approach.

The mentioned focus on innovation in solving social problems is clearly emphasized by the European Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (further referred to as OECD). Its approach is characterized by social innovations as distinct from economic innovations. A key premise for the distinction is the adoption by OECD experts of the following thesis – social innovations do not refer to the introduction of new types of production or exploitation of new markets due to their use, but their main purpose is to meet new needs, not provided by the market, or creating new, more satisfying ways of activating, providing people with job opportunities and changing their roles in the production process. According to the OECD, social innovations provide opportunities to improve the well-being of individuals and communities through employment, consumption or participation, so that it provides solutions to individual and collective problems. In this context, it should be emphasized that social innovations seek new answers to social problems by identifying and providing new services that improve the quality of life of people and communities, enable the development

and implementation of new processes of integration in the labour market, new skills, new jobs, new forms of participation, as well as various elements that contribute to improving the situation of people in the labour market (Committee for Scientific..., 2011).

The initiatives indicated above correspond with the processes that take place in Poland from the early 1990s. They can be described through the prism of positive and negative changes. Positive changes include an increase in material well-being, progressing in Poland for years and based largely on technological innovations, socio-economic progress, favourable changes in the social position and well-being of a large part of the society, a milestone in the economy, expressed in the improvement of many economic indicators for measuring changes in the macro (country) and microeconomic (enterprise) scale. However, at the same time, negative consequences of the current development path were revealed. They are expressed, among others, in (Olejniczuk-Merta, 2013, p. 12) increasing social inequalities, rising unemployment, social exclusion, as well as increasing environmental pollution and its impact on the health of the society.

In view of the above, it can be concluded that the external factor of development, namely technological innovations, is exhausted. This resource is people and their knowledge and skills. Knowledge and skills of people constitute an endogenous factor of development, shaping their attitudes, behaviours, and thus affecting the activity, creativity, commitment and effects of activities undertaken. On the basis of the above, there is no doubt that the processes of creating and disseminating innovations depends on social capital, that is, the mobility of people and ideas, the flexibility of creating new ideas, teams, mobilization of resources, culture of co-operation, readiness to experiment, trust, etc. All these factors are not, however, the background or the ground, but the fundamental factor of innovation itself (Giza-Poleszczuk, Włoch, 2013, pp. 65-81).

Conclusion

On the basis of A. Giddens' *largo* theory, it can be considered – as was previously noted – that modernity kills identity, although it creates incomparably greater chances of surviving a safe and rewarding life than in any of the pre-modern systems. Anticipating the above thesis, the question arises about the choice between identity and modernity. The implication of searching for an answer to the question formulated according to Giddens is the confusion of the individual between the global aspirations of modernity and the local dimension of human existence, the breakdown of the time-space relation, the reorganization of social relations within the network society, or the constant struggle. This is particularly evident in processes based on technological innovations that can lead to the above-mentioned consequences without co-participation of social innovations. Clearly, there is a need to carefully formulate views

shaping processes based on innovations. It seems that one of the aims of innovation, the introduction of a new solution along with the creation of social benefits, corresponds well with this approach.

It is worth noting that the negation of the sense of *largo* of this approach is the dissemination of innovations that are not their creation but only an imitation.

It seems that on the basis of all the considerations carried out, the mentioned thesis is confirmed that since it is impossible to stop the changes in the market, one must learn to profit from them. The view expressed above regarding the changes in the market implies several important technological and social changes, including those deserving special attention,

- increasing the importance of local participation in making global decisions in more culturally diverse conditions of cooperation,
- the need to implement projects based on international mobility and adaptability and cultural sensitivity,
- the need to increase public awareness in relation to the responsibility for the natural environment.
- disappearance of state policy in the implementation of social functions and taking over by increasingly organized local society.

An indispensable element of the ongoing changes that determine the need to strengthen technological and social innovation – especially in highly developed communities – will be a highly positive external migration balance (Kałuża-Kopias, 2014) and the reversal of the age pyramid as well as the associated demographic depression and aging of the population (Marszowski, 2017). This process will force the need to develop innovative solutions that can integrate and develop international policies on the phenomenon of migration of older people, especially for women. In response to these changes, it seems that the priority activities should be focused on building innovative solutions that respond to the need for intergenerational integration programs related to retaining older people's economic activity for as long as possible, at the same time reducing the growing intergenerational information gap. The potential for success in this area will most likely be impacted by the ability to prepare innovative solutions that ensure a balance between work and life – based on flexibility and multifunctionality of work – guaranteeing both freedom and autonomy to the individual.

In highly developed economies, the changes taking place – which are decisively determined by technological innovations and the strengthening of their effectiveness with social innovations – are focused on selected economic and social areas (Regionalna Strategia, 2012). They shape and express through the mentioned process of convergence between nano-biological, information and cognitive technologies – further referred to as NBIC technologies (Nauki kognitywne, 2014). As it has been noted earlier, NBIC technologies are developing extremely dynamically, creating progress in the sphere of health, energy, environmental protection and production, leading to the transformation of other even non-technical areas beyond the area of their impact. It seems that in this context, the future of local communities

will be determined by two trends. Firstly, a local community will be in the margins of the changes taking place as a result of exclusion from the process of participation in the mentioned convergence. If the approach succeeds, the local community will be included in the above-mentioned process based on its development potential– and it will enjoy the resulting benefits in relation to other participants.

It seems that the breaking of mental barriers to innovation in order to strengthen their acceptance will play a decisive role in the development of the local community through technological and social innovations. Their support serves not only to improve the economic status of the state, the local community and the individual, but also – and perhaps above all – contributes to social inclusion, thereby enhancing people's sense of the meaning of life (Wronka-Pośpiech, 2012: p. 133).

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