

SOCIAL INNOVATIONS BETWEEN POLITICS AND POLICY

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Abstract

The Social innovations are a trendy approach for presenting modern ideas in management and policy plans especially at the local and regional levels. It is also a well-adopted concept on the national level mainly in the social policy, and partly in some economic development measures. The understanding of their role, place, and capacity in the contemporary and future governance mix of instruments is an area open to debate. Where do social innovations stand between politics for social change and the policy for social problem-solving? What is their specific implementation in the social sector and policy? These are the main questions that this piece of research addresses. The results expose two different understandings and approaches to the development and implementation of social innovations. The presented conclusions are useful in reconsidering the social or societal variety of innovations at the policy level.

Key words: social innovation, societal change, social transformation, social entrepreneurship, societal innovations

JEL: O35, O18

Introduction

There is an astonishing abundance of interpretations of the term "social innovations" in the contemporary research on this topic. Among these are social innovations between politics and policy use or on the level of social policy and social economy. Also, social innovations have been studied as a tool of or a condition for social entrepreneurship (Bozhikin et al., 2019) and the development of social services. Furthermore, social innovations have been explored within different political visions of the social state or as part of social change or as an instrument of the latter. It is this mix of terms and concepts for social innovations that has prompted the title of this paper. Most authors conclude in some way or another that "social innovation is used to describe a very broad range of activity. This includes the development of new products, services and programs; social entrepreneurship and the activity of social enterprises; the reconfiguration of social relations and power structures; workplace innovation; new models of local

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economic development; societal transformation and system change; non-profit management; and enterprise-led sustainable development" (TEPCIE Project, 2014, p. 10).

The author's interest in the topic started from the role of social innovation in social entrepreneurship as part of the social care policy and in favor of social inclusion. In such context, "social" in social innovation is seen as a nonpolitical concept, mainly holistically explained, as a more positive way of dealing with existing social problems in the welfare system (Evers, Ewert, Brandsen, 2014). We find in this approach the mix of conceptual levels: public-private, politics, and policy, etc. This is one of the mainstream ways that social innovation has been implemented in real life. In brief, such a mixture of meanings and areas and their use is often manifested in research and projects as a catch-all explanation of social innovations' application. A non-expert observer can conclude that this phenomenon can readily be used everywhere. From this perspective social innovations pertain to "the many ways in which people are creating new and more effective answers to the biggest challenges of our times"; they are "being used across the world and different sectors – the public and private sectors, civil society and the household – in the overlapping fields of social economy, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise" (Murray, Caulier-Grice, Mulgan, 2010, p. 2). From a political science perspective, this multidimensional use is questionable without the adequate identification of the role and place of all socially important subjects, target groups, and the environment involved.

Afterwards, the author expanded their research into cities and regions (Nikolov, Botseva, 2018), where social innovations are perceived yet another tool for sustainable local development (Repo, Matschoss, 2019), which is the most vibrant place for use, development, and implementation of innovations (Nikolov, 2020).

Both approaches are mainly implemented in theory and practice from an economic perspective and methodology. Meanwhile another concept for social innovations and their use in/for society in social sciences has been gaining an ever growing attention on the part of researchers in social sciences. Social innovations are interpreted as an instrument for societal changes and for the upgrade of the stakeholders' dialogue at various levels of governance. "Many contemporary discourses understand social change as driven by processes of innovation" (Wittmayer et al, 2019).

The observation which provoked this piece of research is that there are two main concepts for social innovations: a narrow one – as a social policy instrument, and a broader one – as a phenomenon for societal transformation where "social change is a necessary outcome of social innovation" (Pue, Vandergeest, Breznitz, 2016, p. 13). So, the focus in both concepts is on the political and policy-related meanings of the term and its implementations.

The scope of this article does not include the corporate approach to social innovations and their role and place in corporate social responsibility (World Economic Forum, 2016). In this meaning, social innovation policy as business strategy and practice is far from the topic of the conducted analysis. Market and technological innovations and their relations to social innovations have not been given consideration either. Neither have the detailed relation between social and technological innovations or discussions about good practices in that field been examined.

Concepts, use, place, and purpose of social innovations

Most of the research on social innovations involves attempts to define all facets of the phenomenon. The authors study social innovations from the political and policy-related perspective and they afterwards choose the more relevant one to meet their research or project needs. Traditionally the European research and projects are focused on the place and role of social innovations in the field of social policy (mostly as an instrument or bases for social entrepreneurship) and political transformation and governance functioning (primarily with their role for societal change). The US research in the area includes the business perception of social innovations and integrates the policy and politics as a single area. This differentiation is worth making, even though this paper makes no attempt to compare the US and the European theoretical and conceptual approaches.

There is another suggested use of the concept in-between the aforementioned ones – within the field of urban and regional development (Adams, Koutsomarkou, Moulin, 2015). A mix of political and policy approaches can lead to wrong or less functional exploitation of social innovations in regions and cities by policy actors (e.g. policymakers and politicians). It is essential that policymakers and local stakeholders should have a proper understanding of social innovations and a consensus on which level they are examined. Even in some theoretical research and policy papers, the two levels of social innovations are mixed up rather than specified and distinguished from one another.

Also, on the EU level policymakers and experts are working with both main concepts – the political and the policy ones. Structural funding is available for member states for social innovations on the policy level (as instruments in social care and social entrepreneurship), but also a variety of projects are funded by the European Commission for research on the political value of social innovations and their capacity for social transformation, social change, development of social dialogue and even their role for future governance. Yet the "due 2012 on EU level systematic policy metrics, instruments for support, programs for social innovations were not developed" (TEPCIE, 2014, p. 9).

This is the reason why the relevance should be highlighted of comparing the political and policy discourse in the understanding, development, and use of social innovations.

We argue that only by launching the convenient explanation of the nature and the scope of social innovations (as an umbrella term), covering a variety of initiatives and practices, it cannot be explained what exactly is being planned and brought to implementation. For instance, what is the difference between an innovation in service for local community and innovation for civil participation? Is this an innovation meant to be of help to the specific social group, or is it focused on changing a social paradigm?

In this context, this paper aims to draw a distinction between the various approaches to social innovation use. On the methodological level this has been achieved with an instrument constructed for the separation of the different concepts and implementations of social innovations.

A more structured and systematic approach to the social innovations phenomenon helps to clarify what action is promoted and launched with the implementation of social innovation – whether it is a new social support for a specific group or a new societal transformation. Or else, whether the task is less ambitious – to reveal a new trend in societal behavior, or more complex – for example, to offer a new conceptualization of social policy or even social state.

Methodology and research

The aim of this paper is to look into social innovations from a political science perspective, which allows us to question the mixture of approaches to the concept and to outline the weakness of such obscurity and the risk that it practically involves.

Most of the existing analyses in the field are interdisciplinary but with the leading role of economic research methods and direction of the results. Research in the field is most often conducted under projects, many funded with EU money. The research in the area of social innovations is mainly conceptual and theoretical in nature, where attempts are made to combine their political and policy characteristics. Another research perspective is based on case studies, which are systematized so that social innovations are studied as a process, or as enhancement of technological innovation, or as new strength of the third sector in economy and governance. "The status of the social innovation activities differs in the different world regions, regarding the existence of a (shared) understanding of social innovation, the dissemination of the initiatives, the societal challenges addressed, the actors involved, and more" (Domanski, Kaletka, 2018, pp. 210 – 211).

The assumption is held that the mix of political and policy elements of social innovations results in a misunderstanding of the possible results of the latter's development and implementation.

The following sections of this paper are focused on the distinction of the concepts related to social innovations according to their political and policy meaning. The major policy-related aspects are combined under *social innovation* as an umbrella term, while the key political aspects of the issue at stake are summarized under the heading of *societal innovation*. Such a two-faceted look into the theory presumably sets off a discussion about points of intersection between the two dimensions. The discussion is based on the content analysis of a Manifesto as a primary source. Furthermore, it aims to illustrate and enhance the theoretical observations and results. On that basis conclusions are made about the political and policy opportunities for social innovations.

Social vs societal innovations

These theoretical concepts are given in a dichotomy, in line with the major distinction made in this paper. Social innovation is examined within the context of policy implementation, whereas societal innovations are outlined in connection with the political use of issue under scrutiny.

One of the popular distinctions is that social innovation as a political instrument and later on as a policy instrument is an Anglo-Saxon and more neo-liberal line of its understanding. "Activities, policies, and practices generated by neo-liberal governments driven by the market ideology that have social effects and as such qualify for the term social innovation could include a massive reduction in state expenditure assisting those who are the most vulnerable in society" (Anderson, Curtis, Wittig, 2014, p. 16). Societal innovations, on the other hand, are related to systematic social change performed in core collaboration with social state and its role for societies. "Social innovation is not a new phenomenon, but it has grown in prominence over the last decade both as a term and as an important driver of social change" (Kennisland; Nesta, 2018, p. 5).

Based on the above conclusion, all other concepts are controversially interpreted. From the perspective of the more liberal views of state and society, social innovations have an important (or essential) place, but only as part of social policy. Yet from the perspective of more solidarity-driven and social views of the state, the social economy has a structural role and is not limited only to social policy. Some of the misunderstandings of social innovations start on that ideological level. "The difficulty with a broad and contingent definition of social innovation, where the effect does not necessarily have to, or might not universally be good for society, is that the term can be appropriated by any interest group,

including conceivably those who may intentionally want a ‘bad’ outcome for society. The term can be appropriated by any government, corporation, or individual who has a novel idea the social effects of which may increase injustice, be unfair and create more need" (Anderson, Curtis, Wittig, 2014, p. 16).

Most of the practical guides for the development of social innovations fail to take into consideration the above-mentioned philosophical issues and directly begin with a random mix of the elements related to social innovations. In most of these cases only the nationality of the authors or the foundations making the instruction guide, are an orientation vector for the assumption of what is meant by political philosophy as the basis for the conducted analysis. "The term social innovation has become popular as an umbrella concept describing an array of social programs and initiatives deserving attention. Unfortunately, this flurry of social innovation activity has, as of yet, not led to the development of a comprehensive theory of social innovation" (Pue, Vandergeest, Breznitz, 2016).

It is argued in this paper that social innovations have three levels of possible use – the macro level or the political level, which is used in relation to societal change, social transformation, and governance; a meso level – as a social policy instrument used in the EU and the national social policy programs; and a micro level – as grassroots initiatives in different areas known as "grassroots social innovations" (Martin, Upham, 2016). The last variety finally takes one of the two main possible directions – the political or policy one. On the micro level, social innovations are working either on ideas and instruments for social participation, which is the direction of societal change and transformation whether on a local or national level, or in the field of social entrepreneurship, social care and services and collaboration with the social policy actors and institutions, again either on a national or local level or on both.

What follows is a summary of the three main dimensions for the role and place of social innovations on policy (meso-) level and political (macro-level).

The core idea behind social innovations

First, social innovation is seen as an environment and prerequisite for social entrepreneurship. From this point of view, "social entrepreneurship is social innovation in itself; therefore, it is innovating the concept of entrepreneurship adding social value but social entrepreneurship organizations, including social enterprises, are outcomes of SE and, in the same time, they are social innovations" (Lisetchi, Brancu, 2014, p. 91).

Second, social innovation is adopted as an instrument for social entrepreneurship and innovating social services (Vickers at all, 2017; Gramescu, 2016). Depending on the national policy tradition, both varieties can be developed as corporate

social responsibility (US case) or included and supported by the national social care policy measures, programs, and funding. The mainstream EU understanding of social innovations' place is also part of national social policy plans, funded through the European Social Fund.

Third, social innovation is treated as an enhancement of technological innovation which impacts socially responsive issues (in other words, there is a need for more innovations). Such issues and areas of concern include climate change or access to education, to mention but a few.

Fourth, social innovation is interpreted as a social initiative for the sustainable and smart development of cities (Wagner, Wilhelmer, 2017).

Social innovations on that level are used and seen as an instrument for social inclusion; corporate social responsibility in the partnership between public-funded and business innovations; and as a way to address corporate smart city decisions with social and sustainable investments, measures, local governance results.

Social innovations have no place on a political level because the changing mechanism of participation in governance for different social groups brings about change that is not social but societal in nature. Social innovations are policy instruments, and they have a maximum meso level in terms of the participation in society, governance, city, etc. They are used mainly as a tool to implement better service, process, approach with social impact for a specific social group, community, etc.

The core idea behind societal innovations

Most of the authors tend to use "social" innovations instead of "societal", though they still apply to political issues – societal transformation and change, governance process improvement, etc. Societal innovation is the rarest term used. Mainly connected with the political debate, innovations are seen as new instruments employed by the neoliberal state. They are described as a new way whereby the weakening social state can possibly meet the increasingly underfunded social needs (Combe, Mendez-Navia, 2014, p. 15). But societal innovations have also a positive image of a possible brand new instrument for strengthening the social state. "In the future, managing social projects at the national and regional levels will require efforts by public authorities who should clearly define the legal framework and should form a favorable environment for the development of social innovation" (Il'in, Kuzmin, Popov, Soloveva, Terebova, 2018, pp. 126 – 127). In this paper the understanding is embraced that social innovations are nearer to the public-private model of policy management and suitable for a liberal governing state. And societal innovation is an approach with a possible

impact on societal transformation. New waves of behavior in society, new ideas for participation in governance which can change the way of how politics is made with the achievements of such innovations. Social innovations on a political level which can be combined in the idea of societal innovations are mainly possible as upgraded instruments for social behavior and civil participation in governance.

The constant mixing up of social/societal and the trendy connection with innovations have to be interpreted from various perspectives, otherwise interested stakeholders can use them in a conceptually wrong way and not achieve the planned results or the interested groups can be misled.

Why this matters? Methodological answer

For more clarity, the two dimensions are systematized in the sentence in table 1. This sentence represents the core of the constructed methodological tool and the main result of the analysis made.

The elements related to social innovations on political and policy level are separated from one another. For each level of development of social innovations (political or policy), the role of social innovations, the topic of their development, the scope of their use, the goal of the implementation, the affected areas of the social environment, the social groups (end users) are outlined.

Table 1: Content of a tool for clarifying the difference between the political and policy nature of social innovations

Identifying the nature of social innovations (tool's content)		
Indicators	Political level*	Policy level
Role	To provide for a type of behavior and a set of instruments for an upgrade of governance process participation; societal empowerment.	To create and implement a new product, service, process, which can serve different social groups and the local communities.
The agents of use and development	Civil society, citizens, local communities, political parties	Public institutions, local authorities, business, third sector
Object of use	Local and national governance; society	Social sector and different social and community groups; National and local social care sphere or other sectors which are struggling for a more social impact

Identifying the nature of social innovations (tool's content)		
Indicators	Political level*	Policy level
Goal of implementation	To work for societal change and transformation	Filling the gap between mainstream social policy and unsolved issues in the area. Also relevant for other public sectors.
Affected areas of the social environment	The political process and way of making politics	Conducted, developed, and planned policy – when social innovation on this level is transforming from good practice to a standard for quality – social innovations can also find a place on a policy level.
Social groups (affected by the result)	Society as an empowered participant and as an end-user of the changes made	Concrete social groups with particular needs; concrete communities with a specific local problem;

Source: Author's construction and idea

* *Note:* The paper supports the understanding that on a political level there are more appropriate ways of reviewing and using social innovation as a term.

Each variety of social innovations on a policy level and societal innovation on a political level can be seen and used independently as an instrument of control used to check the nature and functionality of an idea, seen as a social or societal innovation or seen as a proposition on a policy or political level. Of course, a single tool for testing and giving answers about suggested innovation is not enough but is necessary, given the importance of clarifying the concept for policymakers and interested stakeholders. Different other instruments can be added at a later stage to help analyze the characteristics of the specific innovation. For example, some authors use even PEST analysis with its upgrade with environmental factors (Repo, Matschoss, 2019, p. 5) for outlining the place of such innovations. But when the social-policy and societal-political arena for analyzing social innovations is not clear before the application of a PEST method, then it remains unclear what has to be seen as "political" and what as "social" as empirical examples collected for the PEST performance.

To illustrate the difference between the social – policy and societal – political nature of the innovations examined here, two diverse social innovations will be compared. The comparison supports also the idea of this paper that it is better to perceive social innovation on the political level as societal innovations.

The first example is the women's right to vote. In the book "100 Social Innovations from Finland" (Тайпале, 2017, с. 56 – 58) the women's right to vote is given as an example of social innovation. When we use the tool from table 1 to check the fulfillment of all indicators on political level concerning the innovation "the women's' right to vote", the following conclusions are arrived at:

- 1) Innovations' major role is to grant societal empowerment to a specific group and their participation in politics and in the governance process;
- 2) Innovations' major groups of agents are citizens and political parties;
- 3) The level of implementation of innovations is national politics and the whole of society;
- 4) Innovations' major goal is to bring about societal transformation;
- 5) The successful innovation impacts how politics is made (policy making?);
- 6) Innovations' ultimate result is an empowered society, which is also the end-user of the achieved change.

Shortly this is a summary of the existence of societal innovation – and because this is a successful one, nowadays it is a part of the traditional political participation. When a successful innovation is implemented and works well, it is no longer regarded as an innovation.

The controversial part here is whether we can agree with Taipale (2017) that such a change has anything to do with the logic of innovation.

The existing literature of social innovations does not clarify how technology has to be a social innovation. With the increasing body of research on how to transform civil society communication in governance for better impact this issue is getting even more complexity. In fact, social innovations are far from being characterized merely in terms of technology. When considering innovations in society, capable of taking part in societal changes, then there is no reason to rule out "the right to vote" with the argument that voting rights cannot possibly be regarded as an innovation. They used to an innovation for the time of its implementation.

In this book (Taipale, 2017), societal innovation and/or social innovation on a political level are given as administrative social innovations. The examples provided are constitutional law commission, commission for the future, municipality self-government, the transparency principle, even coalitional governments, and the three party social partnership.

The social innovations on a policy level are given simply as innovations in social policy, and include social housing, students' housing, round-the-clock social-care services, housing cooperation, pension security system, paternity leave for fathers, free warm meal for students in schools, among other benefits.

But at the same time, free public schools and health care are also defined as social innovations disregarding their structural role in the public sector or the fact that they are firstly political issues and then policy-related issues.

On a policy level, social innovations are one of the new instruments in social support measures. This is the case at least in the European context where the welfare state has a traditional role in social policy. In another national context, this dimension of social innovations is mostly in the field of corporate social responsibility, yet this variety is not analyzed here. In brief, in the EU what is understood as social innovations on a policy level is mainly services, products, processes made for or by social entrepreneurs to support a specific social group.

The second example for illustrating the capacity of the tool from table 1 is a social innovation on a policy level. Accessible tourist services for disabled people can be considered as social innovation on a policy level, when they are developed as a systematic plan for changing the sector in a city, on a regional or even national level. A concrete service – a guide for a particular tourist destination only for blind tourists, for instance – is social innovation. Both examples (accessible tourism services as a process or policy or even governance innovation and tourist guide for the blind) are fulfilling the indicators:

1) As innovations on a policy level their role is connected to process, services and products serving the needs of particular social groups and local community problems (see table 1).

2) The agents of the development and the implementation of the policy for accessible tourism are the governing authorities in partnership with local business. Usually, the guides for blind tourists are developed by the local administration or the third sector.

3) The scope of the two innovations is in the tourist sector. Where tourism is benefiting from more social impact.

4) The goal of implementation is also fulfilled – to overcome the gap between mainstream tourism policy and unsolved issues in accessible tourism services.

5) The whole tourist sector can be positively affected – not only on the level of implementation but also as a best practice for other cities and communities.

6) There are beneficiary social groups with specific needs addressed by the policy idea and the achieved policy results.

The chosen examples serve as an illustration of the distinction between social innovations in politics and policy. Furthermore, they serve as evidence in support of the held assumption that this finer distinction pertains to the examined topic and also relates to the distinction between *societal* and *social*.

Discussion: Policy and political level mixed in practice

Example from the sociopolitical scene

How problematic the mixing up of political/policy or societal/social innovations can possibly be exposed with the content analysis of a document for the implementation of social innovations on a systemic level.

As of October 2017, a document titled "Manifesto for Transformative Social Innovation" has been developed as the result of a project carried out by a wide group of researchers, involved in the same project [1]. Their vision is that societal change is impossible without deeper community involvement, which is seen as the process of bottom-up social innovational behavior. The quotation "For social innovation to be transformative, it has no choice but to engage in politics and to do so honestly and firmly" (Manifesto..., 2017, p. 2) describes the dominant logic of its content. We argue that this is a confusion of the phenomenon of social innovations with transformative social change and that the document implies the use of political instruments but without a political subject. This idea is developed in 13 principles, which could be adopted, and partly are, by different political parties from the whole political spectrum. Efforts like this manifesto have to be heard by political actors, so that their topics are included in the intra-party ideological debate and the discussion among the international political families. If an idea like this or parts of one finds a place for political implication and transition to society, then the mission of this societal participation is fulfilled. In the above-mentioned manifesto, a lot of political ideologies can find food for thought, that is at the same time of interest to societal groups and possible directions of development of societal areas.

By itself, they do not have power for change or even for sufficient interaction in societal processes. Yet it is important that parties should collaborate with such new readings of some societal needs, intellectual visions, and possible social winds.

The Manifesto is used in this paper as an example of the mixing-up of the presented concepts. In this document social innovations are seen as a process and ways of societal behavior to participate in the transformation of politics, policymaking, main political issues, etc. The text of the document fails to take into consideration the unpleasant reality facing those parts of society that presumably cannot ride the crest of socially innovative society.

Table 2: Transformative social innovative society, according to the Manifesto principles

Summarized Manifesto's principles	Main ideas – content and comment
1/ New ways of learning – different from the traditional schools	The goal is not to replace traditional schools but to make more space for alternative ways of learning (which is a sectoral <i>policy</i> area).
2/ "Alternative economies – inclusive, social, sharing, circular" (Manifesto..., 2017, p. 6)	Their idea is more radical – the traditional economy to be replaced from a new way of economic activity – in the scope of a new economic mainstream (<i>political</i> idea)
3/ Basic income and re-use of resources	The sustainability-related visions are clearly stated, but this is a <i>political</i> issue rather than a policy one.
4/ Alternative social relations between consumers and producers and between employers and employees	This is seen by the initiators as part of the trendy concept related to new ways of work and workplace transformation. Issues related to work organization are usually seen as a traditional to politics (or devoted to <i>political</i> in general).
5/ Collaboration between social and technological innovation for sustainable societal results (sustainability in goods and services)	The vision given in the Manifesto involves smart city decisions, climate, and environment-friendly products and way of living – which can be policy issues. <i>Yet this complex of areas requires first and foremost a political approach.</i>
6/ Collaboration between society, state, and market (but not explained what will be new)	A new wave of governance functioning and collaboration with stakeholders is the essence of this point. Governance changes are <i>political</i> responsibility.
7/ Social innovations as a process, approach, and product not to be used for replacing public provisions.	The presented idea is that social innovation is serving the greater good as part of society. In that regard the social innovation is going also hand in hand with the typical (traditional) public services. Regrettably, this <i>policy</i> point renders worthless most of the already given principles, because it reduces to a minimum the scope of the same social innovations that are meant to change governance.

<p>8/ "Translocal empowerment" – Connection between local and global communities to "respond to current political debates on globalization, immigration and nationalism" (Manifesto..., 2017, p. 6)</p>	<p>We see this as new words for partnership, of members organization on a local, national, and international level, especially in the civil sector. But this is an existing mechanism for collaboration and a new idea is missing either on the political or policy level.</p>
<p>9/ Manifest a society which is community-involved, responsible, and sharing so as to overcome the isolation and counteract the marginalization risks.</p>	<p>There are ideological answers to this problem especially in the left spectrum with the traditional solidarity ideas. Or with charity and other supportive initiatives in the right ideological spectrum. The new point here is that such a solidarity should not be part only of nationally-presented <i>political</i> ideologies and values, but more civil society and community based social support, developed in collaboration with local authorities.</p>
<p>10/ "Inclusive decision making – liquid, deep and deliberate democracy or ‘do-ocracy’" (Manifesto..., 2017, p. 6)</p>	<p>Governance innovation on a <i>political</i> level</p>
<p>11/ New leading political narratives</p>	<p>More related to topics, with no clear stated political and ideological answers but still on a <i>political</i> level</p>
<p>12/ New international movements and initiatives with national cells of action and collaboration</p>	<p>Not particularly new and innovative, but still more related to <i>politics</i>, than policy issues</p>
<p>13/ Exists and co-work with mainstream values and societal groups.</p>	<p>Co-existence with other political and policy trends – <i>political</i> principle typical of new movements</p>

Source: Author's systematization, based on the used Manifesto [1]

Note: The first column follows the manifesto text and the second one is based on the explained idea from the document but the political – policy-relevant perusal from the paper's author.

Political/policy transcription of the document

Why is so much attention given to the manifested principles on the part of groups of researchers, activists, entrepreneurs, policymakers, among others? After all the assumption we hold is that such initiatives should be monitored by political parties so that the pulse of societal ideas can be regularly checked.

This is a way of embracing a trend in politics and of its reconsideration through ideologies, and possibly mainstreamed in society.

At the same time, this manifesto contains two paradoxes – first, the picture of a political-policy mix of ideas and its implementation in an unusable way. Second, the depoliticized societal vision of change, based on the concept of social innovations and innovators, which are neither political leaders nor political innovators. But the theoretical clarity of the term social innovations explains its inability to drive such a macro process of change. At first glance, the ideas in the manifesto look more mixed up, but the content analysis summarized in table 2 shows that most of the points have been made on a policy level. Furthermore, these points are societal in nature and in terms of area of impact. In the first place, this exposes the potential for societal innovations on the political level. At the same time, however, some policy-related ideas are given alongside the political ones, which supports the assumption pertaining to the mixed use of the implementation levels and the mixed conceptualizations.

Either way, the analysis of the manifesto helps to compare the practical political-policy vision of social innovation use and the place of the societal as part of this innovation, following the tool from table 1.

Politics/policy possible use of manifested ideas

The author’s assumption, during the first read of this manifesto was that the document about the implementation and structural role of social innovations in our society combines political and policy propositions without a clear distinction between them. After summarizing the manifesto propositions in table 2, we organized the third column where the presented 13 points of the manifesto are put into context (Political, policy, or other). The results in that part of our research show some differences from the initial expectations. Indeed, political and policy ideas are mixed in this manifesto, but still, nine out of 13 are on a political level, two are on a policy level and two are indifferent to both.

Table 3: Results from the content analysis of the Manifesto

Level/area	Total	Number in the document (refer to table 2)
Political	9	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13
Policy	2	1, 7
Other	2	8, 12

Source: Author’s systematization

The results indicate that despite the first assumption pertaining to a mixture of political and policy propositions, the main document states that its goals are to highlight the issues of political relevance and the direction for their development. This allows for drawing the conclusion that social innovations, or their societal variety as we above insist, definitely have a place not only in policy but in political debate. Yet it has now become clear why it is of crucial relevance to make a clear distinction in the used terms).

Conclusion

There is a place for more research on societal innovations and their clear separation from social innovations on a policy level. It is the responsibility of political parties to identify, test and implement in political concepts such "societal vibrations" and to collect policy ideas, which have no scope for a politically new direction but can contribute to a particular policy. Such policy ideas need complex understanding and adoption by policymakers, regarding the political reconcilability between ideology and political neutrality of the issue.

Different indexes are used to measure social innovation, with the business or even the digital focus of their measurement [2]. But still, the very opportunity for choosing what to be defined as social innovation dominate. This in turn leads to speculations on the urban and regional level or generates other misleading cases for society. Are policymakers and authorities on the city or regional level promoting and planning to support products, services, and processes which strengthen social support and inclusion or increase other social benefits for the communities? Are they working on a framework for support of social innovations related to environmental or other important issues in urban development and city governing?

The positive answers to these questions is characterizing their approach to social innovations as policy-driven. But if they are working and supporting ideas such as the ones explicated in the manifesto quoted in this paper, then we can talk of political engagements with paradigm changes, or more realistically – new air in some societal issues and their political answers. For further research it is important to analyze the difference between the traditional social change/transformation process and the one driven by societal and social innovations. Some authors have already launched such a debate (Edwards-Schachter, Alcántara, Matti, 2012, p. 10), but this, even more, exposes the need for a more detailed comparative and in-depth analysis of the different factors and structure of the societal transformation process and this specific variety of innovations.

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Notes

- [1] Manifesto for Transformative Social Innovation, (2017). Available at: <https://tsimanifesto.org/manifesto/>, accessed at 20.7.2020
- [2] The European Digital Social Innovation Index, <https://www.nesta.org.uk/feature/european-digital-social-innovation-index/>; The Social Innovation Index, <https://eiuperspectives.economist.com/technology-innovation/old-problems-new-solutions-measuring-capacity-social-innovation-across-world-0>; The Regional Social Innovation Index, http://www.simpact-project.eu/publications/indicators/2014_RESINDEX_eng.pdf

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