

LIMITATIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF SENIOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN UPPER SILESIA. ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Dorota DOLIŃSKA-WERYŃSKA

Politechnika Śląska, Wydział Organizacji i Zarządzania; dorota.dolinska-werynska@polsl.pl,
ORCID: 0000-0001-8466-5867

Purpose: The article will address the issue of structural, cultural and agency barriers limiting the development of social innovations in selected Silesian senior non-governmental organizations (NGOs). One of the main barriers to the implementation of social innovations is the barrier of agency.

Design/methodology/approach: The theoretical basis of the research presented in the article is Margaret Archer's morphogenetic theory of structure and agency (Archer, 2013, 2016, 2019). On their basis and using the qualitative analysis of data obtained during group interviews (FGI), a diagnosis of developmental limitations and barriers will be made. A qualitative research method (FGI) was used to obtain empirical data. This method allows for the analysis of structural elements, cultural features of a given organization, as well as the capabilities of individual social and organizational entities. Based on the theoretical assumptions and the author's observations, four research questions were posed: (1) What structurally conditioned agency barriers have been observed by the examined seniors while undertaking innovative activities? (2) What awareness agency barriers have been observed by the examined seniors?

Findings: If we use the language of the morphogenetic theory and refer to its causal analysis scheme (Archer, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2015, 2019) then: (1) the surveyed members of non-governmental organizations in the processes of implementing innovations constantly diagnose structural and cultural conditions and (2) determine the objective incompatibilities between them (indicated deficits and barriers). (3) They then collectively analyze, emotionally and reflectively, the external conditions to give feedback. (4) They interact socially and culturally with the environment. (5) The resources of objectified and conscious agency that the surveyed seniors have at their disposal make it possible to overcome specific barriers and take action in accordance with the morphogenetic scenario related to collective autonomous reflexivity.

Originality/value: The added value of the presented research in the theoretical dimension is the operational clarification of the morphogenetic scheme of the Margaret Archer causal analysis. Theoretically, an important novelty is the conceptualization of the concept of structurally conditioned (objectified) agency and agency of consciousness, which allowed for a precise operationalization of the main research questions regarding barriers to agency. In the empirical dimension, barriers appearing in the implementation of social innovations in selected Silesian non-governmental organizations were diagnosed. In the future, the application-based research results will allow for the implementation of educational and implementation projects (action research), adequate to the needs of the surveyed social groups.

Keywords: social innovation; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); agency; digital competences; qualitative analysis FGI.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

The deepening change in the demographic structure of Polish society towards an increase in the share of people aged 60+ in the population is conducive to increasing the agency of seniors in social life, e.g. by increasing their participation in civil society or educational institutions. The challenges resulting from the aging of the society require taking multi-directional actions, the main objectives of which are: ensuring dignified aging by improving the quality and standard of living and creating conditions for professional and social activity of people aged 60+. According to the forecast of the Central Statistical Office, in 2035 people aged 60 and more will constitute almost 1/3 of the Polish population. In 2050, already 40% of the population. Observing the dynamics of demographic changes in recent years, a systematic increase in the 60+ age group can be observed (Rudnicka, 2021; GUS, 2022).

The aging of the society is clearly visible in Upper Silesia, where depopulation as a result of economic emigration is accompanied by an intensive economic transformation, as a result of which entire professional categories, such as miners, steelworkers, railway workers or employees of the defense industry, retire early. These processes generate an overrepresentation of people at retirement age in most cities in the region. The social group of seniors who in the most active and effective way is trying to find themselves in the new reality of the region are the leaders and members of senior non-governmental organizations. Therefore, the study covered all leaders and members of non-governmental organizations participating in the project, in particular from the Universities of the Third Age from the vast majority of cities and communes of Upper Silesia. Members of Silesian Universities of the Third Age and senior non-governmental organizations are prosumers of social innovations created by and for seniors. They are prosumers of social innovations they make, because they take over the role of initiators, testers, users and recipients of innovations (Weryński, Dolińska-Weryńska, 2021).

The subject of the research were leaders and members of the UTW and senior non-governmental organizations from 21 Silesian communes. The huge popularity of this type of facilities both in Poland and in the world gives grounds for considering the direction of their further development, especially in the context of new technologies¹. Universities of the Third

¹ The research was carried out as part of the project *Social innovations as the third mission of the university* (NCBiR), which was carried out under the direction of dr. Piotr Weryński from December 1, 2018 to February 28, 2021. The aim of the project was to improve the competences (enabling the expansion of knowledge and skills in the field of creating social innovations, digital competences, social communication) of 252 leaders and members of senior organizations (177 women and 75 men) aged 60+ from 21 local communities (cities and

Age, whose aim is to educate and integrate senior citizens, operate in various forms, of which over 56% are in the form of associations (Grzanka-Tykwińska, 2015).

Currently, among the elderly, there is an increasing interest in lifelong learning and care for maintaining activity in late adulthood. Such a situation is a challenge for institutions such as UTW, especially in the era of turbulent changes in the field of e-technology or e-media of modern societies (Zielińska-Więczkowska, 2010).

The key factor influencing the quality of life is intellectual activity and a sense of belonging to a community. Quality of life is not only physical existence, but also the possibility of enriching the spirit and mind, the possibility of education, as well as creation and creativity (Grzanka-Tykwińska, Chudzińska, Podhorecka, Kędziora-Korantowska, 2015; Wolniak, 2020). The development of Universities of the Third Age, the growing number of people involved in their activities, as well as the increasing diversity of the offer do not allow you to pass by this phenomenon indifferently. Universities allow for continuous expansion of knowledge, stimulate activity, facilitate establishing interpersonal relationships, mobilize and give the opportunity to take care of one's physical condition (Borczyk, 2012).

Poland was the third country, after France and Belgium, where the movement of Universities of the Third Age was adopted and developed (Williamson, 2000; OECD, 2011). Currently, the UTW movement in Poland consists of over half a thousand organizations operating throughout the country. The Universities of the Third Age operating in Upper Silesia aim to improve the quality of life of broadly understood seniors over 60, as well as to use the potential of older people on the labor market - knowledge, skills and life experience, for and social development of the country (Borczyk, 2012; Borczyk, Nalepa, Knapik, 2012). The research and observations of the author of the article show that the Silesian UTW model is similar to the so-called the British model, which is based on self-education and self-help of seniors, without support from the university (Hrapkiewicz, 2009). This means that Silesian senior organizations have a strong driving force and are prosumers of social innovations created by themselves and for themselves (Borczyk, Nalepa, Knapik, 2012).

2. Theoretical assumptions of research on development barriers for senior NGOs

Non-governmental organizations operating in Upper Silesia and UTW are at the same time the creators and recipients of social innovations. The social implications of innovation were already noticed by Josef Schumpeter as a precursor of scientific reflection on innovations (Schumpeter, 1960; McCraw 2007; Mendes, Batista, Fernandes, 2012). The social sciences

communes) of the Silesian Voivodeship. The effect of the project is to increase the level of their social and civic involvement, to increase the representativeness of their interests in local and regional politics.

systematically undertook research on the social effects of innovation in the early 21st century (Mulgan, 2007; Bukowiecki, 2012; Herrera 2016; Fougère, 2017; Weryński, 2014). The increased interest in these issues was related in the economic dimension to the effects of the financial and economic crisis that occurred after 2009 (Wronka-Pośpiech, 2015). Its effect is to draw even stronger attention to the role of creativity, innovation, including social innovation, in supporting economic growth, creating safe jobs and increasing the competitiveness of societies in Western countries struggling with, among others (Klimczuk, 2015).

At the basis of the author's operational definition of the concept of social innovation lies a pragmatic approach to truth (Weryński, Dolińska-Weryńska, 2021; Weryński; 2022). A pragmatically approached theory of truth accepts as true what is confirmed by its consequences, mainly practical ones (James, 2001). The above understanding of the truth is close to identifying it with effectiveness, efficiency, and indirectly with the adequacy of meeting human needs in a specific situational context. Pragmatists look for the criterion of truth in experience, everyday life and the consequences of actions taken. Truth is not an unchanging category, it becomes and verifies in the effects of social activities. Pragmatically understood social innovation emphasizes the importance of the effects of social activities, the importance of activities focused on research in action, i.e. research, action and cooperation (Greenwood, Levin, 1998; Chrostowski, 2008). The above approach to social innovation includes diagnosis of reality, identification of the problem, initiation, testing, implementation and possibly validation of the final product of innovation (i.e. product, service, model), which in turn leads to a permanent and largely anticipated change in a specific environment, social group, organization. It is implemented through cooperation and mutual inspiration of innovators, users and recipients.

The innovation process in an NGO is determined by complex factors, both external and internal (Human Smart City, 2020). Some of them are barriers defined as forces hindering the initiation and development of innovations. The authors of the work *Barriers to Social Innovation* pointed to two groups of barriers in innovation processes: structural and agency barriers (Mendes, Batista, Fernandes, 2018).

Structural barriers are related to the complexity, uncertainty of social processes, political, cultural and economic contexts. They are determined by:

1. Social context: complexity of the problem, unpredictability of side effects, a strong component of binding but not bridging social capital, information gaps and uncertainty about the impact of innovation in the future, lack of strictly ex post data and the possibility of validating innovative products;
2. The political and cultural context is created by: monopoly of political power, barriers to free communication, freedom of speech and media, top-down approach in formulating and implementing policies and strategies, lack of legal and cultural recognition, inadequate public order system, culture oriented towards the functioning of state institutions, but no social, weak knowledge transfer policy;

3. The economic context is: limited opportunities for self-financing of initiatives, too high costs of innovation, no mechanism for scaling innovation, a potentially large number of entities, activities and technologies that will be negatively affected by innovation, the nature of the public good resulting from innovation.

On the other hand, the barriers of intermediation (as defined above) related to the activities occurring in the process of implementing innovations are manifested by: reluctance to innovation, insufficient usefulness of innovation, a small number of alternative solutions for innovation, low efficiency of innovation, various groups and individual interests, human state of mind, personal relationships between people (jealousy), mistrust towards innovators, lack of consent of the environment for mutual approach to changes caused by innovations, lack of intermediary partners in the social life of the network, lack of networks in communities, lack of competence in many social areas, including the ability to develop institutional entrepreneurship, protectionism and risk aversion, problems with supervision and coordination (Mendes, Batista, Fernandes, 2018; Weryński, Dolińska-Weryńska, 2021).

In order to complete the conceptualization of key concepts, it is necessary to define one more category - agencies. Margaret Archer's morphogenetic theory assumes, on the one hand, that agency results from an internal dialogue, an internal conversation of the subject, its specific reflexivity (Archer, 2013, 2015, 2019). On the other hand, it expresses his ability, more or less conscious, to influence his social environment (Archer, 2015). According to the assumptions of Roy Bhaskar's critical realism, mentioned by Archer, the causal forces of social forms are influenced by social agency (Bhaskar, 1989). They are conditioned by the emergent (non-reductive) properties of the subjects of individual and collective action. In other words, the agency of executive subjects has subjective and intentional features that should be associated with their reflexivity. At the same time, it conditions and is conditioned by the environment, its structural and cultural properties (Archer 2010, 2013, 2014).

A constitutive feature of agency understood in this way is not only the ability of the subject (subjects) to act, but it is expressed in the very existence of this subject (Archer, 2003, 2005, 2015). In the study area, the very existence of organized senior communities, as entities of collective action, proves their causative capacity. The problem remains to determine the scale of their ability to act and the barriers determining their effectiveness. The author distinguishes two original types of causative barriers - structurally conditioned (objectified) barriers and awareness barriers. The first type of barriers are determined by the contexts resulting from the infrastructural, economic, intellectual, communication and digital potential of the members of the surveyed NGOs. The second type of barriers concerns the mental state of the respondents, attitudes towards social innovations (pro- and anti-innovation), attitudes towards innovation participants (e.g. trust and normative community or distance and envy), attitudes towards the need to build social bonds in the micro-, meso- and macro-environment (bridging or bonding social capital).

The conceptualization of both types of agency requires reference to theoretical concepts that, in addition to emphasizing the reflexivity and intentionality of the subject, also take into account its causative capacity in the existing structural and cultural contexts. Within this framework, the individual has the ability to change certain social conditions within a certain time frame, transforming or preserving various social forms. Archer's morphogenetic theory assumes, on the one hand, that individual agency results from the internal dialogue and specific reflexivity of the subject (a component of agency related to consciousness). On the other hand, it indicates the subject's ability (material resources, knowledge, skills, experience) to influence its social environment (and thus a component of structurally conditioned, objectified agency).

The analytical separation of the two types of subjectivity was of key importance for the description and explanation of social changes (morphogenesis) in the studied organizations and their social environment. Broadly understood agency creates conditions for innovation, leads to innovation, meeting the appropriate structural and cultural conditions. This is a necessary but not sufficient condition for innovation to occur. It is therefore necessary to define in what structural and cultural conditions and with what kind of reflexivity innovations can be implemented (Weryński, Dolińska-Weryńska, 2021).

3. Methodological assumptions of research on development barriers for senior NGOs

The final analysis and interpretation of the results was carried out in relation to the following research questions in the following order: organizing raw data - collecting facts (data descriptions) - interpretation. It was important to analyze the behavior of the interviewees, their doubts and questions, their motivations and objections to the researched topic. The order of research within the main qualitative technique used - focus group interviews (FGI) - defined the focus scenario in which the main research questions were operationalized. The interviews were in the form of discussions led by a moderator and focused on the main thematic threads outlined by the above-mentioned research questions.

The method of analyzing data obtained through focus group interviews was determined by the assumptions of grounded theory (Konecki, Chomczyński, 2012; Hensel, Glinka 2012). An inductive method of analysis of the collected research material was used. Therefore, no initial assumptions were made as to the nature of the relationship between the variables, no hypotheses were made that would be subject to verification during focus groups. Potentially not entirely accurate initial assumptions regarding new research topics, e.g. the attitude of specific groups of respondents to the subject of research could determine the method of interpretation of the results obtained.

The selection of people for the research groups was intentional. This means that obtaining fully representative distributions of socio-demographic characteristics in the composition of individual focus groups was not as important as saturation with people with maximally diverse and well-established attitudes, knowledge, judgments and opinions on the image, online communication and building relationships with the environment. It was also assumed, in accordance with the principles of grounded theory, that the data collected in individual groups will be compared with each other on an ongoing basis in order to extract codes from the focus groups that organize and interpret the research material. More generalized categories were then constructed (by grounding in similar cases) to show associations between categories (Konecki, Chomczyński, 2012; Hensel, Glinka, 2012).

In the FGI qualitative study took part 168 people, 84 leaders (board members) and 84 senior members of non-governmental organizations. The study covered 21 senior communities (non-governmental organizations and UTW) from all centers participating in the Social Innovation project as the third mission of the university. Respectively, rural areas were represented by organizations from the Nędza and Bobrowniki communes, communities from small towns were represented by organizations from Poręba, Łazów, Wojkowice, Lubliniec and Mikołów, from medium-sized cities by organizations from Tarnowskie Góry, Mysłówice, Zawiercie, Czechowice-Dziedzice, Jaworzno, Piekary Śląskie and as representatives of metropolitan environments The respondents are seniors from Katowice, Sosnowiec, Gliwice, Bytom, Chorzów, Tychy, Dąbrowa Górnicza and Rybnik. The focus group interview was conducted with each of the environments separately. The focus groups included equal percentages of representatives of the local University of the Third Age and the local Municipal Council of Senior Citizens competent for a given territory.

4. Results

The conducted focus research aimed, among other things, at examining the barriers limiting the introduction of social innovations. More precisely, the scope of occurrence of barriers concerning several components of objectified and conscious agency of leaders and members of Silesian senior non-governmental organizations and UTW was analyzed. In this subchapter, the author will first refer to the components of the structurally conditioned, i.e. objectified agency of the respondents. Secondly, the components of conscious agency will be analyzed, which are mainly a derivative of the reflectiveness of the leaders and members of the surveyed NGOs. An attempt will be made to answer the question: what structurally conditioned (objectified) agency barriers are perceived by the surveyed seniors in their innovative activity and what barriers of awareness agency limit their innovative activity, according to the respondents.

All types of barriers suggested by the participants of the analyzed group interviews and the connections between them have been synthetically presented on the perception map below, generated in the Atlas.ti program. The Atlas.ti tool enabled the generation of codes and their families, presenting the main categories of respondents' answers received from group interviews, as well as emerging terms that allowed for a clear presentation of research results. For example, one of the most significant codes is called "envy" and consists of two elements: the first is the grounding degree (21), which is the association of one code with other codes. This code has been classified as a family of codes (CF): barriers to innovation. The presented list of codes and code families was created on the basis of the analysis of 12 focus group interviews representing four organizations from large, medium and small cities, respectively.

The surveyed members of senior non-governmental organizations see several key groups of barriers in their social, economic and political environment as well as in interpersonal relations in organizations (jealousy, reluctance to implement innovations), limiting the implementation of social innovations. However, the lack of computer knowledge and skills, i.e. digital and communication competences stereotypically attributed to people aged 60+, is not one of these barriers and, according to the respondents, it is not a significant barrier conditioning their social agency. A telling proof of this is the low frequency of indicating difficulties resulting from digital competence deficits and lack of communication between barriers to innovation implementation, which is shown in Figure 1 (code: communication barriers - indicated by 4 FGI participants {4-0} and code: lack of specialist knowledge - indicated by 5 FGI participants {5-0}).

Both structurally conditioned barriers and awareness barriers of action, negatively conditioning the initiation, testing and implementation of innovations, were diagnosed. When it comes to objectified barriers, and more specifically the economic context, the participants of the group interviews emphasized the importance of financial constraints (code: finance {14-0}). In terms of significant barriers objectified in the political and cultural context, the following were selected: top-down approach to formulating and implementing policies and strategies (code: policy-related barriers {10-0}), lack of legal recognition (code: lack of access to information {4-1}); culture oriented towards state institutions instead of social institutions (code: no local government assistance {9-0} and code: bureaucratic barriers {6-0}).

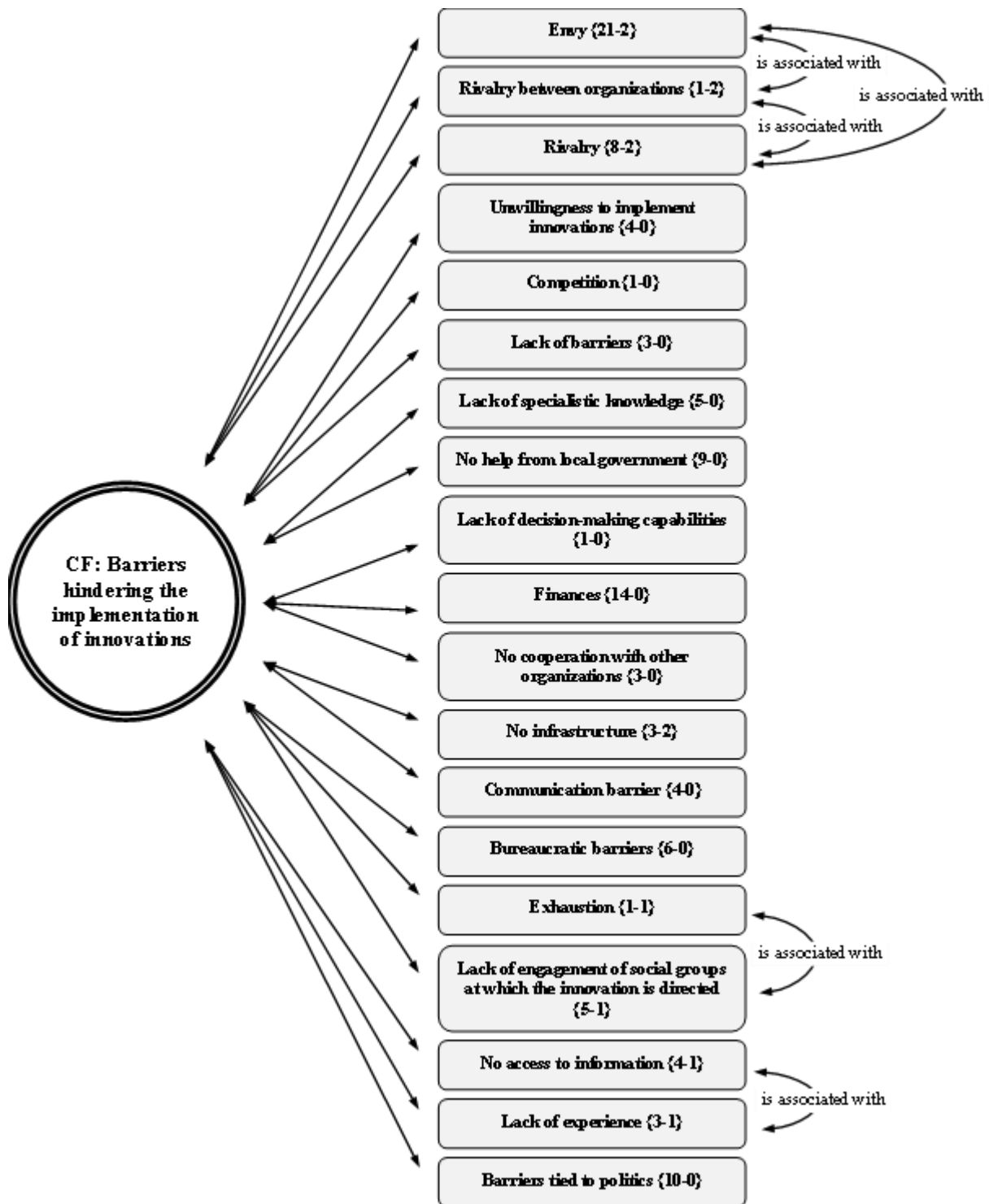


Figure 1. Code family perception map: barriers to innovation in senior NGOs.

Source: own work.

Barriers limiting social innovation in this area of agency, according to the respondents, additionally concern interpersonal relations, their complexity and intensity, tensions and conflicts within the organization, which determine the degree of their innovativeness. Among the barriers related to the agency of consciousness, the role of negative group emotions was strongly emphasized - jealousy and resentment (code: jealousy {21-2}), then the lack of consent of the environment for a joint approach to changes caused by innovation (code: lack of

involvement of the social group to which the address was addressed). there is innovation) {5-1}), a network of trust and cooperation in their communities that exists only to a limited extent or does not exist at all (code: rivalry {8-2} and code: rivalry between organizations {1-2}). In addition, the respondents pointed to agency limitations conditioned by the state of mind of both those implementing innovations and users (conservative), distrust towards other innovators (code: lack of cooperation with other organizations {3-0}).

These types of agency barriers result from everyday, unavoidable contact of all organization participants, regardless of their functions, often within organizational structures that are not fully defined in the functional context. They operate through personal and group competition, factionalism in perceiving and articulating group interests, initiating and implementing innovations, often being in opposition to specific group or environmental interests.

In the analyzed context, the phenomenon of jealousy deserves attention. The respondents pointed out that negative emotions, mainly envy and resentment, are a particularly important factor limiting the building of an innovative community. Its sources in the Polish political and cultural context can be seen in the ideological polarization of society (anti-European Catholic conservatism versus pro-European left-liberal secularism). Hence, rivalry (e.g. for funds) between circles and organizations is often burdened with ideological envy. There is also a more universal way of explaining this phenomenon. Helmut Schoeck has shown that envy is a universal negative social emotion (Schoeck, 1966). It is a certain anthropological constant that cannot be completely eliminated from social relations. It can only be reduced through conscious and consistent socialization to freedom, not to equality.

The results presented above prove the existence of deficits in the field of bridging social capital and the lack of interpersonal and group trust in the surveyed groups and organizations. A low level of bridging social capital and generalized trust in social interaction partners is a feature of Polish society historically perpetuated during the communist rule (1945-1989), which structurally inhibits the development of civil society and grassroots social innovations. This also applies to the surveyed environments and organizations.

What types of reflexivity dominate among respondents undertaking social innovations? According to Archer, the feature of agency is not only the ability of the subject to act, but it is also expressed in the very existence of this subject (Archer, 2007). Therefore, the very existence of organized seniors' communities as entities of collective action is proof of seniors' abilities. The dominance of morphogenetic activities and autonomous reflexivity of members is related to the essence and goals of these NGOs and the UTW. Because it is based on free and bottom-up participation, largely self-financing and prosumer orientation of its members and supporters.

Despite the presented deficits in the objective and awareness dimension, most of the respondents take organizational actions in accordance with the morphogenetic scenario, which is accompanied by a kind of autonomous reflexivity. Respondents are characterized by a critical and active approach to individual aspects of the organization's life and the local environment, which leads to social innovations in their environment. They are able to take advantage of the

opportunities offered by the structural and cultural context, avoiding the associated barriers. Has the knowledge and competence to actively participate in social networks, including social media. He is prepared to cooperate with the institutional and social environment of the organization.

In the paper presented, two research questions were raised. The two research questions were related to the following issues: (1) what structurally conditioned barriers of agency are perceived by the surveyed seniors in their innovative activities and (2) what agency awareness barriers are noticed by the surveyed seniors? As a result of the analysis of qualitative data from focus group interviews (FGIs), the types of agency barriers that negatively condition the initiation, testing and implementation of social innovation in the analyzed environments and non- governmental organizations were determined. In the area of structurally conditioned barriers, more precisely in the economic context, above all, the FGI participants emphasized the weight of financial restrictions. Bureaucratic barriers in local, regional, and central institutions, policies culture- oriented towards the actions of state institutions as opposed to social ones, and limited help from the local government were deemed to be the most significant barriers in political and cultural contexts.

Among the awareness barriers, the existing components of binding, non- bridging social capital, the lack of a strong social network in the communities, as well as rivalry between organizations, interpersonal and group envy, and other negative group emotions such as resentment were described as being the most serious. Furthermore, those examined pointed out the restrictions of agency conditioned by divergent group interests, states of minds of innovation implementers and users, a lack of trust toward the innovators, and a lack of agreement from the environment regarding a joint approach to changes created by innovations. When relating the types of agency barriers connected to the implementation of social innovation described above to the six stages of the innovation process provided in the “Open book of Social Innovation”—inspiration, proposition, prototype, maintenance, scaling, and system change—it should be stated that those examined most often are change inspirers themselves. They are the creators of the propositions of change, simulation, and prototypes executed on a small scale, e.g., in residential areas. Later, they gradually extend the scale of operations until actions move outside the city, region, and country.

The added value of the presented studies in the theoretical dimension is the operational specification of the morphogenetic scheme of causal analysis presented by Margaret Archer. In addition, the notion of structurally conditioned and awareness agency was conceptualized, which allowed the precise operationalization of the main research questions about agency barriers. Agency barriers that occur when implementing social innovations in the selected Silesian senior NGOs were identified. In terms of application, the obtained research results will allow for the implementation of educational and implementation projects (action research) that are adequate for the needs of a particular social group.

5. Discussion

The research results obtained prove that the respondents have a relatively high level of social agency. To a large extent, this was influenced by the social roles of those examined leaders and members of senior NGOs. These are mostly people with higher levels of education, who are leaders of local communities and organizations, who are relatively financially independent, and who have security in the form of a pension and savings, despite their age. They are professionally and socially active, possessing significant social capital at their disposal: bridging and binding. The attitudes of the respondents showed signs of autonomic reflexivity, which is conducive to innovation. A dysfunctional element of their generally pro-innovative reflexivity is the negative group emotions (envy) revealed by the FGI respondents. However, one has to introduce a stipulation concerning the specificity of the examined group, which is not representative of the larger population of retirees, and this changes the rather optimistic view of the results achieved. The author is aware of the fact that, for example, the digital and communicative competences of those examined may differ from the level of digital knowledge and skills of the majority of Poles of senior age. This opinion comes from knowledge regarding the level of education of those examined and from the managerial professional, social, and organizational roles and functions held by them, both in the past and currently. The extension of the research scope to include other Silesian senior environments, Universities of the Third Age, and non-governmental organizations and to undertake transregional and multinational comparative research remain tasks for the future. However, the fact that the vast majority of respondents belong to the so-called *intelligentsia*, which is historically a privileged part of society (about 15% of the population), makes them different from the wider Polish structural and cultural contexts. This context makes it difficult to construct comparative studies of social agency on an international scale, but does not exclude their construction.

6. Conclusion

As a result of the analysis of qualitative data from focus group interviews, identified by the leaders and members of senior NGOs, not only the previously existing types of structurally conditioned agency barriers, agency awareness barriers, but also specific barriers - agency barrier resentment, negatively conditioning initiation, testing and implementation social innovations in the analyzed environments and non-governmental organizations. Within the framework of structurally conditioned barriers, and more specifically the economic context, FGI participants emphasized the importance of financial constraints. Among the social barriers, the existing components of binding, not bridging social capital, as well as interpersonal and

group jealousy were considered the most serious. The most important barriers resulting from the political and cultural context were considered to be the existence of a top-down approach to the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies, the lack of legal and cultural recognition, a weak knowledge transfer policy, and a cultural orientation towards state rather than social institutions. In addition, the respondents pointed to the limitations of agency conditioned by divergent group interests, states of mind of those implementing and users of innovations, distrust towards innovators, including negative emotions - jealousy, lack of consent of the environment for a common approach to changes caused by innovations, lack of knowledge and skills in many areas of social life, limited existence or no network in their communities.

The task for the future is to extend the scope of research to other Silesian senior communities, Universities of the Third Age and non-governmental organizations, and in the long term to undertake supra-regional and supra-national comparative research. However, the fact that the vast majority of respondents belong to the intelligentsia, i.e. to a historically, culturally and largely economically privileged social class, significantly distinguishes the Polish structural and cultural context (15% of the population). This specific, Eastern European ethos context related to the overrepresentation of people with higher education among members of the UTW and senior non-governmental organizations may make it difficult to construct comparative studies on social agency on an international scale, but it does not exclude them.

References

1. Archer, M. (2003). *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 342-361.
2. Archer, M. (2005). Structure, Culture and Agency. In: M. Jacobs, N. Hanrahan (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture* (pp. 17-34). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
3. Archer, M. (2012). *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
4. Archer, M. (2013). *Człowieczeństwo. Problem Sprawstwa*. Cracow, Poland: Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS, pp. 22-25.
5. Archer, M. (2013). Jak porządek społeczny wpływa na ludzkie sprawstwo? Refleksyjność jako mechanizm pośredniczący między strukturą a sprawstwem. In: I. Szlachcicowa, O. Nowaczyk, A. Mrozowicki (Eds.), *Sprawstwo. Teorie, Metody, Badania Empiryczne w Naukach Społecznych* (pp. 19-35). Cracow, Poland: Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS.

6. Archer, M. (2014). Structural Conditioning and Personal Reflexivity. In: D. Finn (Ed.), *Distant Markets, Distant Harms: Economic Complicity and Christian Ethics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
7. Archer, M. (2015). How Agency is Transformed in the course of Social Transformation: Don't Forget the Double Morphogenesis. In: M.S. Archer (Ed.), *Generative Mechanisms Transforming the Social Order*. New York, NY, USA: Springer.
8. Archer, M. (2015). Morfogeneza: Ramy wyjaśniające realizmu. *Uniwersyteckie Czasopismo Socjologiczne UKSW*, 10, pp. 16-46.
9. Archer, M. (2019). Critical Realism and Concrete Utopias. *J. Crit. Realism*, 18, pp. 239-257.
10. Archer, M. (2019). The Morphogenetic Approach; Critical Realism's Explanatory Approach. In: P. Róna, L. Zsolnai (Eds.), *Agency and Causal Explanations in Economics; series Virtues and Economics*. Berlin-Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.
11. BDL GUS prognoza demograficzna (2022).
12. Bhaskar, R. (1989). *The Possibility of Naturalism*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
13. Borczyk, W. (2012). *Sytuacja osób starszych w kontekście doświadczeń Uniwersytetów Trzeciego Wieku*. http://www.wrzos.org.pl/download/Ekspertyza_2_ASOS.pdf.
14. Borczyk, W., Nalepa, W., Knapik, B., Knapik, W. (2012). *Standardy działania uniwersytetów trzeciego wieku*. Nowy Sącz: Ogólnopolska Federacja Stowarzyszeń UTW.
15. Bukowiecki, A., Rudnicki, S., Strycharz, J. (2012). Społeczny wymiar innowacji. *Zarządzanie Publiczne*, 2(20), pp. 13-23.
16. Chrostowski, A., Jemielniak, D. (2008). Action research w teorii organizacji i zarządzania. *Organizacja i Kierowanie*, nr 1(131).
17. Dolińska-Weryńska, D., Weryński, P. (2019). Innovation as a remedy to group resentiments inside an organization. Report from focus group interview. *Silesian University of Technology. Sci. Pap. Organ. Manag.*, 140, pp. 49-61.
18. Fougère, M., Segercrantz, B., Seeck, H. (2017). A critical reading of the European Union's social innovation policy discourse: (Re)legitimizing neoliberalism. *Organization*, 24(6), pp. 819-843.
19. Greenwood, D.J., Levin, M. (1998). *Introduction to Action Research*. London: Sage.
20. Grzanka-Tykwińska, A., Chudzińska, M., Podhorecka, M., Kędziora-Korantowska, K. (2015). Uniwersytety Trzeciego wieku wczoraj, dziś i jutro. *Gerontologia Polska*, 4, p. 165.

21. Hensel, P., Glinka, B. (2012). Teoria ugruntowana. In: D. Jemielniak (ed.), *Badania jakościowe. Podejścia i teoria*. Warszawa: PWN.
22. Herrera, M.E.B. (2016). Social innovation for bridging societal divides: Process or leader? A qualitative comparative analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), pp. 5241-5247.
23. Hrapkiewicz, H. (2009). Uniwersytety Trzeciego Wieku jako jedna z form kształcenia osób starszych. *Chowanna*, 33, pp. 115-127.
24. *Human Smart City – przewodnik dla samorządów*, <https://www.popt.gov.pl/strony/wiadomosci/human-smart-city-przewodnik-dla-samorzadow/>, 22.06. 2020.
25. James, W. (2001). *Pojęcia filozoficzne a praktyczne wyniki*. H. Buczyńska-Garewicz, James (eds.). Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, pp. 200-217.
26. Klimczuk, A.(2015). *Social Innovation in Poland*. Warsaw: Szkoła Główna Handlowa.
27. Konecki, K., Chomczyński, P. (2012). *Słownik socjologii jakościowej*. Warszawa: Difin.
28. McCraw, T. (2007). *Prophet of Innovation. Joseph Schumpeter and Creative Destruction*. Harvard University Press.
29. Mendes, A., Batista, A., Fernandes, L., Macedo, P., Pinto, F., Rebelo, L., Ribeiro, M., Ribeiro, R., Sottomayor, M., Tavares, M., Verdelho, V. (2012). *Barriers to Social Innovation*, <http://www.tepsie.eu/images/documents/tepsie.d3.1barrierstosocialinnovation.pdf>, 19.09.2020.
30. Mulgan, G., Tucker, S., Ali, R., Sanders, B. (2007). *Social Innovation – What it is, why it Matters, How it Can be Accelerated*. Oxford, England: The Young Foundation, pp. 22-23.
31. OECD (2011). *How's Life? Measuring Well-Being*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
32. Rudnicka, M. (2021). *Reprezentacja interesów społecznych a rynek towarów i usług*. "Osoby starsze - samostanowienie i samoorganizacja" - publikacja. Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, ur.edu.pl, p. 35.
33. Schoeck, H. (1966). *Der Neid. Eine Theorie der Gesellschaft*. Freiburg-München: Verlag Karl Alber.
34. Schumpeter, J.A. (1960). *Teoria rozwoju gospodarczego*. Warsaw, Poland: PWN.
35. Weryński, P. (2022). Resentment barriers to innovation development of small and medium enterprises in Upper Silesia. *Sustainability*, 14(23), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142315687>.
36. Weryński, P., Dolińska-Weryńska, D. (2021). Agency Barriers of the Members of Silesian Senior NGOs in the Implementation of Social Innovation (Poland). *Sustainability*, 13, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13073734>.
37. Weryński, P., Dolińska-Weryńska, D., Tokar, J. (2014). *Zarządzanie innowacjami w sektorze MŚP*. Warszawa: Difin, p. 16.

38. Weryński, P., Dolińska-Weryńska, D. (2021). *Innowacje społeczne w senioralnych organizacjach pozarządowych na Górnym Śląsku. Dobre praktyki i analiza barier rozwojowych*. Warszawa-Gliwice: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa.
39. Williamson, A. (2000). Gender issues in older adults' participation in learning: Viewpoints and experiences of learners in the University of the Third Age (UTW). *Educ. Gerontol.*, 26, pp. 9-66.
40. Wolniak, R. (2020). Social welfare organization in Poland. *Sil. Univ. Technol. Sci. Pap. Organ. Manag.*, 143, pp. 307-331.
41. Wronka-Pośpiech, M. (2015). Innowacje społeczne – pojęcie i znaczenie. *Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach*, 212, pp. 124-136.
42. Zielińska-Więczkowska, H. (2010). Lifelong education as an important factor for life satisfaction in late adulthood. *Med. Biol. Sci.*, 24, pp. 5-11.