

Chapter 51

Innovation, Innovativeness, and Gender: Approaching Innovative Gender

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ABSTRACT

The chapter deals with the search for the sources of broadly understood creativity in solving various problems: social, political, practical (related to everyday life), family, economic, culture, religious, etc. wherever traditional approaches proved ineffective. These creative solutions - unconventional and having their practical application - became innovations. How multi-dimensional one's predispositions to solve problems are affects the person's capabilities to develop innovations. In view of the growing importance of gender studies, the already mentioned elements should be supplemented with one more - gender. Hence, the concept of Innovative Gender is introduced where men and women are granted equality of measures, opportunities, and situations encompassed by the innovation genome model. The starting point for Innovative Gender research is the establishment of four dedicated matrixes containing information (variables) that describes a given area, taking into account gender issuer, with collaboration playing a major role here.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the diagnosis that the European Union is experiencing a triple crisis: of substance, of trust, and of power, resulting in institutional weakening of its position of an innovator on the global stage, growing predominance of procedure-based thinking, expansion of all-encompassing controls limiting the freedom of choice, Member States keep creating subsequent offensive programmes and strategies for intensification of research and innovation development. Blamed for the failure to achieve the goals of Lisbon Strategy is the lack of political will; the conviction of policy-makers that the goals set were too ambitious and that there had been no single coherent strategy for the whole European Union compatible with the strategies of individual Member States; and - on the top of all that - the poor condition of

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public finance in many EU countries and the crisis of 2008. An “extension” of the Lisbon Strategy is Europe 2020 programme, in particular the Union of Innovation, and the shifting of trust and support for innovation activities towards the regions. Will this another programme release innovation in the EU? Entrepreneurs say that the EU regulations hamper innovation, while universities claim that although EU support facilitated the development of infrastructure, in a long-term perspective it will cause their economic collapse as they take extensive loans to cover own contribution share in project financing and maintain the infrastructure, which leaves them with no money to finance the research.

The chapter deals with the search for the sources of broadly understood creativity in solving various problems, wherever traditional approaches proved ineffective. These creative solutions - unconventional and having their practical application - became innovations. The ability to develop innovation depends on the multi-dimensional predispositions to solve problems - those found in people, inspired by the market, organised or spontaneous, as well as facilitated or hampered by the state policy in individual countries or regions. Yet, it might be expected - particularly in the light of the growing importance of gender studies - that already mentioned factors should be supplemented with one more - gender.

The present chapter is a contribution to the research project currently being conducted in the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. It is a presentation of the research fields where the role of gender in the process of innovation can be captured. This will serve as the basis for the development of research methods enabling the assessment of the strength of this interdependence symbolically named *InnoGend* in the project.

INNOVATION, INNOVATIVENESS: THE DRIVING FORCE OF DEVELOPMENT

Although the literature on the subject offers many varied definitions of innovation as well as a large number of models developed over the last 30 years of the 20th century, it is impossible to avoid references to them; yet, the focus is on the search for changes in the economy and society constituting innovation, where gender can be of particular importance.

Apparently following the Latin origins of the term - *innovare* - meaning “creating something new”, the definitions of innovation postulated by many researchers emphasise that “*innovation is a process consisting in the transformation of existing possibilities into new ideas and finding practical applications for them*”. It is - to put it succinctly - “*the introduction into general use of new products, processes, and ways of doing things*”(Allen, 1996, p.7). According to this group of definitions, “*Industrial innovation includes the technical design, manufacturing, management and commercial activities involved in the marketing of a new (or improved) product or process*”(Freeman, 1982) or “*Innovation is the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or service*”(Drucker, 1985). “*Companies achieve competitive advantage through acts of innovation. They approach innovation in its broadest sense, including both new technologies and new ways of doing things*”(Porter, 1990). “*Innovation is carrying new ideas out into practice*”(Fagerberg, 2006); it is “*conversion of an idea into an outcome*” (Satchell, 1998, pp.33-34). And there is indication that “*... innovation does not necessarily imply the commercialization of only a major advance in the technological state of the art (a radical innovation) but it includes also the utilization of even small scale changes in technological know-how (an improvement or incremental innovation)...*” (Rothwell & Gardiner, 1985, p.168), since, in practice, not all innovations are based on inventions. For others, “*innovation is about creating value out of ideas, concepts*”(Freeman & Soete, 1997). The value is generated if the ideas are

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