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Elżbieta Sobczak  
Beata Bal-Domańska  
Andrzej Raszkowski



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## Contents

<b>Preface</b> .....	9
<b>Dariusz Gluszczyk:</b> Regional e-Platform of Proinnovative Online Loans – A model approach.....	11
<b>Lech Jańczuk:</b> The perennial financial forecasting as a tool for predicting performance-based budgeting.....	18
<b>Małgorzata Karczewska:</b> The gross expenditures on R&D and the economic growth level in the EU countries.....	27
<b>Bożena Kuchmacz:</b> Man as a source of local social capital.....	36
<b>Alina Kulczyk-Dynowska:</b> The spatial and financial aspects of a protected area as exemplified by the Roztocze National Park.....	45
<b>Liliia Lavriv:</b> Strategic approaches to the management of regional development in Ukraine: Current state and conceptual areas of improvement.....	54
<b>Joanna Ligenzowska:</b> The impact of innovation on the development of the Małopolska Region.....	64
<b>Magdalena Łyszkiewicz:</b> The regional differentiation of financial autonomy of Polish communes.....	72
<b>Grygorii Monastyrskiy, Yaroslav Fedenchuk:</b> Modernization of regional policy of Ukraine in European integration conditions.....	81
<b>Artur Lipieta, Barbara Pawelek:</b> Comparative analysis of Polish NUTS 2 level regions in terms of their use of EU grants in 2007–2013.....	91
<b>Dariusz Perło:</b> Clusters and smart specializations.....	100
<b>Dorota Perło:</b> The soft model of the regional labor market situation of the youth.....	109
<b>Katarzyna Peter-Bombik, Agnieszka Szczudlińska-Kanoś:</b> Young people on the labor market as a challenge for social policy in selected Polish voivodeships.....	118
<b>Jan Polski:</b> Gordian knots of the regional development in Eastern Poland.....	127
<b>Andrzej Raszkowski:</b> The strategy of local development as a component of creative human capital development process.....	135
<b>Elżbieta Sobczak:</b> Specialization and competitiveness of workforce changes in the sectors grouped according to R&D activities intensity in European Union countries.....	144
<b>Jacek Sołtys:</b> Typology of low developed non-metropolitan sub-regions in the European Union.....	153
<b>Edward Stawasz:</b> Determinants of knowledge transfer processes in a region.....	166

<b>Andrzej Sztando:</b> Workshops as a method of social consultations in the process of local strategic planning.....	175
<b>Maciej Turała:</b> Equalization of territorial units' incomes – A case study of Poland .....	187
<b>Alla Vasina:</b> Development of infrastructure as an important factor of regions' economy structuring .....	196

## Streszczenia

<b>Dariusz Głuszczyk:</b> Regionalna e-Platforma Proinnowacyjnych Pożyczek Internetowych – ujęcie modelowe .....	11
<b>Lech Jańczuk:</b> Wieloletnie planowanie finansowe jako narzędzie predykcji budżetu zadaniowego.....	18
<b>Małgorzata Karczewska:</b> Nakłady na badania i rozwój a poziom rozwoju gospodarczego w Unii Europejskiej.....	27
<b>Bożena Kuchmacz:</b> Człowiek jako źródło lokalnego kapitału społecznego... ..	36
<b>Alina Kulczyk-Dynowska:</b> Przestrzenne i finansowe aspekty funkcjonowania obszaru chronionego na przykładzie Roztoczańskiego Parku Narodowego .....	45
<b>Liliia Lavriv:</b> Podejścia strategiczne w zarządzaniu rozwojem regionalnym na Ukrainie: Stan obecny i koncepcja doskonalenia .....	54
<b>Joanna Ligenzowska:</b> Wpływ innowacji na rozwój regionu Małopolski.....	64
<b>Magdalena Łyszkiewicz:</b> Regionalne zróżnicowanie samodzielności finansowej polskich gmin .....	72
<b>Grygorii Monastyrskiy, Yaroslav Fedenchuk:</b> Modernizacja polityki regionalnej Ukrainy w warunkach integracji europejskiej .....	81
<b>Artur Lipieta, Barbara Pawelek:</b> Analiza porównawcza polskich regionów szczebla NUTS 2 ze względu na wykorzystanie funduszy unijnych w latach 2007–2013.....	91
<b>Dariusz Perło:</b> Klastry a inteligentne specjalizacje .....	100
<b>Dorota Perło:</b> Model miękkiej sytuacji osób młodych na regionalnym rynku pracy .....	109
<b>Katarzyna Peter-Bombik, Agnieszka Szczudlińska-Kanoń:</b> Młodzi ludzie na rynku pracy jako wyzwanie dla polityki społecznej wybranych polskich województw .....	118
<b>Jan Polski:</b> Węzły gordyjskie rozwoju regionalnego w Polsce Wschodniej... ..	127
<b>Andrzej Raszkowski:</b> Strategia rozwoju lokalnego jako element procesu kształtowania kreatywnego kapitału ludzkiego .....	135
<b>Elżbieta Sobczak:</b> Specjalizacja i konkurencyjność zmian zatrudnienia w sektorach wyodrębnionych według intensywności nakładów na B+R w państwach Unii Europejskiej .....	144

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<b>Jacek Soltys:</b> Typologia nisko rozwiniętych niemetropolitalnych podregionów Unii Europejskiej .....	153
<b>Edward Stawasz:</b> Determinanty procesów transferu wiedzy w regionie .....	166
<b>Andrzej Sztando:</b> Warsztaty jako metoda konsultacji społecznych w procesie lokalnego planowania strategicznego .....	175
<b>Maciej Turała:</b> Równoważenie dochodów jednostek terytorialnych – studium przypadku Polski .....	187
<b>Alla Vasina:</b> Rozwój infrastruktury jako ważny czynnik strukturyzacji gospodarek regionalnych .....	196

**Bożena Kuchmacz**

Wrocław University of Economics

e-mail: bkuchmacz@interia.pl

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## MAN AS A SOURCE OF LOCAL SOCIAL CAPITAL

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### CZŁOWIEK JAKO ŹRÓDŁO LOKALNEGO KAPITAŁU SPOŁECZNEGO

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**Summary:** The article identifies sources of social capital. People's social resources are examined in the area, where The Association Local Action Group "Wrzosowa Kraina" is active. The research was conducted to strengthen social capital in this area. The author carried out identification of the research object theoretically and practically. Theoretic identification considered man as human capital, a family member, a neighbor, a social group member, local community member, civil society member, nation member. The author reflected on social order, namely a social capital framework. She conducted research in the eastern part of the Bory Dolnośląskie (the part of the Silesian Lowlands) using a direct, survey method. Survey questions emphasized to a greater degree human factor values in collective actions, that is self-trust, reliability, social activity, helpfulness, confidence in other people. The survey shows that people themselves possess great reserves of social capital. The author concludes that people should be managed in line with social standards and values and perceived in a local community as a source of social capital.

**Keywords:** man, trust, social capital.

**Streszczenie:** W artykule zidentyfikowano źródła kapitału społecznego. Na obszarze aktywności Stowarzyszenia Lokalna Grupa Działania „Wrzosowa Kraina” zbadano zasoby społeczne człowieka. Badania przeprowadzono w celu wzmocnienia kapitału społecznego na tym obszarze. Przeprowadzono identyfikację obiektu badań w sposób teoretyczny i praktyczny. Teoretycznie rozpatrzono człowieka jako kapitał ludzki, członka rodziny, sąsiada, członka grupy społecznej, społeczności lokalnej, społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, państwa. Podjęto rozważania nad ładem społecznym, czyli ramą kapitału społecznego. Przeprowadzono badania we wschodniej części Borów Dolnośląskich metodą bezpośrednią, ankietową. W pytaniach ankietowych zostały mocno podkreślone wartości czynnika ludzkiego w działaniach zbiorowych, tj. zaufanie do siebie, wiarygodność, aktywność społeczna, pomocność, zaufanie do innych ludzi. Z ankiety wynika, że człowiek sam w sobie nosi ogromne zasoby kapitału społecznego. Autorka wnioskuje, że należy zagospodarować człowieka zgodnie z normami społecznymi i wartościami, i postrzegać go we wspólnocie lokalnej jako źródło kapitału społecznego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** człowiek, zaufanie, kapitał społeczny.

## 1. Introduction

Individuals, structures, bonds and social standards interpenetrating the territorial social system are the source of social capital. These are: man as a human capital, family, neighborhood, social groups, local community (civic society), country, social order – as an organizational framework of social capital. Among them, social capital plays a role of “an invisible hand” of social, economic and political interactions.

Varied, multidimensional quali-quantitative character of social capital, its repeatedly abstract form creates interactions occurring between the aforementioned individuals and structures. However, a creative resident of a local, territorial system having suitable abilities, skills and possibilities should voluntarily and spontaneously work with other actors guided by reliability and confidence. Actively operating, he or she improves his or her productive capabilities as well as contributes to the development of the whole local system.

## 2. Social capital sources

Man as human capital requires specific investments in themselves, improvement of their competences, development of skills. It is relatively easy to evaluate the level of this external, intangible human capital based on the length of education [Zamorska 2012]. Education is a highly profitable investment as it shapes the general organization’s intelligence. “My capital? Goes up and down the elevator” – used to say one of the great investors [Šmid 2010]. However, the strength of human capital lies in individuals and social capital in relations among them. As U. Beck claims “school graduation is only the first step on a long road, but graduation itself is a non inclusion criteria” [Beck 2004]. Social exclusion involves poverty, whereas social capital involves individuals’ common action [Młokosiewicz 2006].

For man, regardless of his or her background, family is the basic unit, in which direct, interhuman relations take place [Gajowiak 2010]. A family lives at home. According to Aristotle’s terminology *oikos* meant home, a place where private interests are created and executed [Bauman 2012]. A firm foundation of a family is a relation between a man and a woman exceeding the sphere of personal matters always of public nature, regulated by constant customary, legal and moral or religious standards [Adamski 2002]. A family that is “a social group consisting of spouses and their children” [Szymczak (ed.) 1981] creates limited structure of emotional relations. Vertical interlocking network between a child and its parents arise from subordination, respect and mom’s and dad’s authority. Children trust their parents completely. These relations are based on the highest level of confidence, which can be treated as a model of an exemplary conduct, developed in society [Gajowiak 2010]. A family is a transmitter of cultural heritage of a wider community, teaches a child how to communicate with others, social coexistence, shapes his or her personality. Model values and skills modeled in a family reconstructing social capital are as follows: generalized trust,

altruism, activity, universalism, ability to create horizontal interlocking networks, orientation “us = them,” openness to others [Barczykowska 2011]. Bonds and networks within a family may correspond to social network of local territorial system. School, peers and mass media start to exert an external, extra-familial influence (sometimes opposed to standards and values taught at home) [Adamski 2002].

Lack of bonds between particular members of families caused by gradual value socialization has a considerable impact on the functioning of the neighborhood and in a wider context – also on local community [Barczykowska 2011].

Neighborhood location, residing near someone, next house, next-door flat [Szymczak (ed.) 1981] according to E. Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska [after Barczykowska 2011] can be divided into following categories: neighborhood based on mutual direct and familiar relations, social and friendly one, organized, restricted, conventional (spatial one), distance-based and reluctant and conflicted one. The one which is closest to the idea of reproduction of social capital by a man is a neighborhood based on mutual direct and familiar relations, thanks to which neighbors can count on persons residing nearby and social and friendly ones. The latter builds positive relations between neighbors of support nature. Organized neighborhood gathers social capital during occasional activity satisfying needs of a particular person or community hoping that when it comes to the next activity, it will act as a catalyst. Restricted neighborhood contains elements of sense of obligation towards distance-based community, without exceeding the limits of necessary actions. A sense of loneliness is accompanied by conventional neighborhood (called also a neighborhood based on ceremonious politeness) limited to an exchange of normal courtesies. Distance-based neighborhood involves avoiding a neighbor on the basis of possessed knowledge. The most destructive impact on the size of social capital has a distance-based and conflicted neighborhood, which deeply affects the social capital of neighboring local community as well as capital resources in the area of the whole local system.

The basic form of a man’s social life is a group comprising minimum 3 persons. Members of the group are connected respectively by high social bond [Podgórski 2008]. They interact each other, share a common goal, set of standards, roles, which set the direction and define the boundaries of their activities. Social groups are basic factor of local community uninterrupted existence [Rybicki 2008 after Szmataka 2008, p. 39]. Social bonds in the group have two levels – group’s common background (common territory, background, the same language, culture) and these ones, which exist in human psyche such as a sense of belonging to a particular community, being proud of group’s achievements. In local networks, social bonds are either strong or weak. Strong bonds (contrary to weak ones) are constant, characterized by emotions, certain obligations during frequent, direct contacts between actors [Podgórski 2008]. According to another division criterion, networks can be structured vertically or horizontally. Horizontal networks involve “agents of equivalent status and power,” whereas vertical networks link “unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence” [Putnam 1995].



Functional theory does not involve concepts of a social group but a concept of a social system. It is social community which is the most important structure between a family and a broadly defined civil society. R. König defines civil community as “a group of people related to a particular land, who collectively lead a social, economic and cultural life and who recognize specific bonds and values” [after Barczykowska 2011]. Creating local social capital is a process involving people representing local community, local institutions, self-government authorities and local business entities and relations between them.

Social communities are the part of civil society. According to a definition used by World Bank, civil society promotes various social interests by formal and informal groups and organizations, which act independently of a state and market/economy [Broda-Wysocki 2005]. Civil society will work with democratic political institutions (legislative power, executive power, political parties), provided that it can place confidence in them. According to R. Putnam [Jamka 2011], social capital as a component of civil society construction and democracy is related with something that some people call “civic virtue.” It has the biggest impact “when it is set in a considerable system of mutual, social relations. Society of many righteous ones, but isolated individuals is not necessarily affluent in social capital.”

People, families, neighborhood, other social groups, social communities, civic society as well as the state, function in a determined social order. Social order is an answer to a question how and why societies maintain integrity [Marshall (ed.) 2005]. An order of collective representations is relevant to sources of local social capital based on common traditions and routine behaviors and polycentric order, typical for democratic system [Sztompka 2003, pp. 28–29 after Barczykowska 2011].

### 3. Research results

Opinion research concerning the source of social capital was conducted by direct method among local community in the eastern part of Bory Dolnośląskie<sup>1</sup> consisting of six communes: two urban and rural communes (Przemków, Chocianów) and four rural ones (Bolesławiec, Chojnów, Gromadka, Lubin). The Association Local Action Group “Wrzosowa Kraina,” which carried out Leader Program in 2007–2013, has been active on this territory. In 2014–2020, the Association is to carry out an EU program entitled “Community-led Local Development.” The area subject to research is characterized by low social activity, ageing and impoverishment of its community, social pathologies. The aim of the research is to strengthen social capital in this area by stimulation and integration of the local community.

The basic tool of research was a survey questionnaire, which included an arranged list of questions. Survey questionnaire was filled in by respondents on a current

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<sup>1</sup> Bory Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesian Wilderness) is a physical and geographical mesoregion made up of the biggest compact forest complex in Poland.

basis and submitted in a designated place. Questionnaire was distributed among 297 respondents. They were members of local folk bands, councilors, commune heads, managers and directors of self-government organizational units, leaders of the project Act local, microentrepreneurs, employees of territorial self-government.

Survey questions placed great emphasis on human factor value in collective actions, such as: self-confidence, reliability, social activity, mutual help.

What does self-confidence mean? Self-confidence means thinking and acting according to the following principle: I am an honest and enterprising person, responsible and just one, I follow certain moral standards. I effectively and competently involve myself in social life. Social capital of such a person is “being trustworthy” [Theiss 2012].

**Table 1.** Percentage of persons who trust each other

Commune/Feature concentration (%)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bolesławiec	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	8.4	14.6	14.6	43.8
Chocianów	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	3.0	3.0	9.1	33.3	36.4
Chojnów	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	28.6	28.6	33.3
Gromadka	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	5.9	2.0	3.9	15.7	3.9	43.1
Lubin	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	3.3	6.7	6.7	16.7	53.3
Przemków	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	11.8	0.0	5.9	5.9	70.6

Source: own survey.

It is reassuring to find that people trust each other. They declare it at the top end of the scale. In percentage terms, we have the biggest number of persons who gave 10 points. The residents of Przemków commune trust each other the most (70.6%), the lowest level of trust was recorded in Chojnów (33.3%).

**Table 2.** Percentage of people who are consider themselves as reliable

Commune/Trait intensity (%)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bolesławiec	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	6.3	22.9	20.8	35.4
Chocianów	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	27.3	51.5
Chojnów	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	9.5	0.0	14.3	23.8	47.6
Gromadka	0.0	2.0	0.0	5.9	7.8	2.0	0.0	7.8	9.8	33.3
Lubin	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	6.7	10	10	50.0
Przemków	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	5.1	17.6	5.1	47.1

Source: own survey.

Reliability is necessary in many aspects. A reliable man according to Polish language dictionary is a man who is “trustworthy, who deserves confidence, who is confident, reliable” [Szymczak (ed.) 1981]. An important role in reliability is played by an ability to communicate with people.

Residents declare very high level of reliability. Minimum 33.4% of the residents of Bolesławiec gave themselves 10 points and maximum 51.5% of Chojnów commune residents.

Social activity is born of “passion” or “urge to act” [Kotarbiński 1968]. Conscious participation of individuals in the life of local community is connected with stimulation for action. Individuals who pursue their particular goals should be active as much as possible as they are responsible for specific results, which have an impact on the solution of various, local problems.

**Table 3.** Percentage of persons demonstrating social activity

Commune/Trait intensity (%)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bolesławiec	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	8.3	6.3	6.3	18.8	18.8	27.1
Chocianów	0.0	0.0	6.1	12.2	18.2	12.1	15.2	9.1	3.0	15.2
Chojnów	4.8	4.8	4.8	0.0	9.5	4.8	23.8	9.5	4.8	33.3
Gromadka	0.0	2.0	0.0	5.9	19.6	7.8	5.9	7.8	0.0	23.5
Lubin	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	6.7	10.0	10.0	20.0	40.0
Przemków	0.0	5.1	0.0	11.8	23.5	0.0	23.5	17.6	5.1	5.1

Source: own survey.

**Table 4.** Percentage of persons demonstrating helpfulness

Commune/Trait intensity (%)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bolesławiec	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	2.1	2.1	10.4	12.5	27.1	31.3
Chocianów	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	18.2	24.2	18.2
Chojnów	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5	9.5	4.8	19.0	19.0	42.9
Gromadka	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	5.9	7.8	9.8	15.7	0.0	23.5
Lubin	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	3.3	6.7	20	10.0	50.0
Przemków	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.6	11.8	29.4	35.3

Source: own survey.

As many as 40% of the respondents from prosperous Lubin commune identified themselves with social activity and they gave the highest marks, that is 10 points. The lowest level of activity was recorded in Przemków commune, namely 5.1%. According to Polish language dictionary, a helpful person is the one who disinterestedly “helps

someone in doing something providing help, he is helpful, facilitates something” [Szymczak (ed.) 1982].

Residents are helpful. Minimum, that is 18.2%, of Chocianów residents give themselves 10 points, whereas the maximum (50.0%) is given by the residents of Lubin to themselves.

Residents were asked to define the level of trust they have towards other people using a scale from 1 to 10 and if they think that “most people cannot be trusted,” “you can’t be too careful,” “it’s hard to say” [Czapiński 2013].

One of the aspect of public welfare is trust, a valuable asset in human relations. If people trust each other, they will work together. Human trust, called interpersonal one or social one, is usually considered as one of the basic sources of social capital.

**Table 5.** Degree of trust demonstrated by local community

Commune/Trait intensity (%)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bolesławiec	2.1	0.0	4.2	0.0	6.3	20.1	29.2	20.1	10.4	6.3
Chocianów	0.0	6.2	9.1	21.2	15.2	12.2	15.2	15.2	3.0	3.0
Chojnów	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.8	19.0	0.0	23.8	42.9	0.0	9.5
Gromadka	0.0	2.0	2.0	14.3	22.4	12.2	16.3	20.4	0.0	14.3
Lubin	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	33.3	13.3	6.7	26.7	6.7	6.7
Przemków	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.4	23.5	23.5	11.8	0.0	11.8

Source: own survey.

**Table 6.** How trust is demonstrated by local community

Commune/Trait intensity (%)	Most people can be trusted (%)	You can’t be too careful (%)	Hard to say (%)
Bolesławiec	35.4	52.1	12.5
Chocianów	3.0	66.7	30.3
Chojnów	19.0	66.7	19.0
Gromadka	6.1	79.6	18.4
Lubin	20.0	73.3	6.7
Przemków	17.6	70.6	11.8

Source: own survey.

As far as a degree of trust is concerned, the respondents responded in the scale from 5 to 10 points. The author thinks that the lack of clear position regarding trust, is caused by ambiguity of this concept. What does a question about trust measure? The author thinks that it is difficult to determine precisely what the respondents understand when they deal with the concept of trust. Various respondents have different views

concerning the aforementioned concept. In general terms – “whatever trust is, it is something desirable and its lack is a distressing signal” [Haman 2012] affecting the local development of the eastern part of Bory Dolnośląskie.

Analyzing survey results, author points out that maximum 34.5% of respondents from Bolesławiec commune feel that most people can be trusted, minimum level of trust was recorded in Chocianów commune (3.0%) and in Gromadka commune (6.1%). The biggest level of trust is demonstrated by persons who are the most active ones. Approximately 13% of all the persons who trust most people are active citizens of local, eastern part of Bory Dolnośląskie who take part in the project “Act local.” Much larger percentage of local community of the eastern part of Lower Silesia Forests think that “you can’t be too careful.” They make up maximum 79.6% of the respondents in Gromadka commune, minimum 52.1% of the respondents in Bolesławiec commune. “Hard to say” is declared by maximum 30.3% of the respondents in Chocianów commune and minimum 6.7% in Lubin commune.

#### **4. Conclusion**

People themselves possess enormous resources of social capital, that is trust, reliability, standards and values, loyalty, solidarity, participation [Skawińska, Zalewski, Brzęczek 2011]. A person trusts himself or herself, therefore one may conclude that he or she will be predictable and competent in his or her actions. He or she declares reliability. Such a social capital resource will be determined by experience, prestige, reputation, reliability, efficiency and effectiveness in action. He or she is socially active. One may predict that he or she will willingly involve himself or herself in informal groups and associations, he or she will fulfill his or her obligations under any agreement, he or she will keep his or her word, he or she will have communication skills. A person is helpful. He or she declares his or her support, kindness, acceptability and understanding towards other persons. Knowledge is gathered, exchanged and developed through relations, networks of interpersonal contacts, between structures and standards of public, private and social sector in the particular territory. Social capital releases human capital [Antczak 2009]. J. Czapiński points out rightly that “we are living in a country more and more effective individuals and immensely ineffective community” [Czapiński 2009]. In the new period of EU programming in years 2014–2020, activities aimed at developing areas through quality improvement and strengthening of social capital (selecting leaders and socially active groups, bringing together) in line with principles of helpfulness and partnership will be still supported. The conclusion is obvious – people should develop in accordance with social standards and values and shall be perceived in a local community as a source of social capital yielding benefits.

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