



The Impact of Social Innovation Interventions

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved son

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Abstract

Social innovation is an approach or development model that is used across different sectors to develop innovative solutions to a wide range of social phenomena including public policy, empowerment, environmental sustainability, and food security. Substantial resources are allocated by governments, the private sector, philanthropic actors and institutions to promote social innovation, but the heterogeneity of the practices and the complexity of social interventions makes it difficult to generalise the concept and theorise about how it operates.

This doctoral research investigates the impact of social innovation interventions at the level of policy and programme interventions and employs a Realist Synthesis, an interpretive approach to evidence-based research. This method is derived from traditional review techniques to evaluate complex social interventions using secondary data, but the approach focuses specifically on causal mechanisms. The realist approach starts with developing programme theories that are guided by the formal theories and suggests propositions about ideal scenarios or how programmes are expected to work. These theories are structured in context-mechanism-outcome configurations to include assumptions about each of these. The method next involves searches for empirical evidence to test and improve these theories; and thus, aims to contribute to the foundational knowledge of the research topic and the improvement of practices, in this case, social innovation (SI).

Data was collected through an extensive web search, including academic articles and publicly available evidence on social innovation policies and programmes, without any time or country limitations. A set of inclusion criteria were applied to the initial database resulting in a final set of 269 documents. Coding was supported using NVivo software. Coded documents were scrutinized over a relatively long period of time and the knowledge was synthesised to reveal the hidden mechanisms underlying SI processes. Initial programme theories are refined through a combined discussion and interpretation of the interrelated dimensions, and a final set of theories as well as an illustrative model are presented.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations Full Words

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CMO	Context-Mechanism-Outcome
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EU	European Union
EBP	Evidence-Based Policy
IO	International Organisation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPP	Indigenous Procurement Policy
MRT	Middle-Range Theory
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RCT	Randomized Control Trials
RS	Realist Synthesis
SE	Social Entrepreneurship
SEE	Social Entrepreneurship Education
SI	Social Innovation
SIE	Social Innovation Education
TSI	Transformative Social Innovation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The political agenda of governments has long been driven by economic growth, which assumes that *'more is better'*, and that wealth typically results in improved wellbeing in society (Martin, 2013, p. 175). In these traditional perspectives, innovation is associated with technology, industry and management based on its potential to create economic value (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, Franz et al., 2012); as such, historically, the main driving force of innovation is interpreted as *'profitability and commercial success'* (Dawson and Daniel, 2010, p. 11). However, recognizing the inability of current innovation systems to address social and environmental challenges (Schot and Steinmueller, 2018), a paradigm shift (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010) has been seen over the past two decades after the emergence of different concepts of innovation and the increasing recognition of its potential impact.

Social problems or societal challenges can be understood as the 'grand challenges' of our century including poverty, mass urbanisation, climate change, and social exclusion. Innovation scholars have become more concerned with these issues (e.g., Fagerberg, 2006, Christensen et al., 2006, Ahlstrom, 2010, Fagerberg et al., 2010, Owen et al., 2013) probably because of the problem-solving nature of innovation, which makes it a potential force for addressing economic and societal challenges (Edler and Fagerberg, 2017). Thus, new forms of innovation have emerged such as user innovation (Von Hippel, 2009, Morrison et al., 2000), grassroots innovation (Smith et al., 2014, Seyfang and Smith, 2007), open innovation (West and Bogers, 2014, Chesbrough, 2006) and social innovation (Phills et al., 2008, Mulgan et al., 2007). Social innovation (hereafter SI) has emerged as an impactful development model to meet growing social needs on a global level (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014). SI addresses both economic and social value (Emerson, 2003, Deffuant et al., 2005, Elkington et al., 2006), and is increasingly recognised by scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and philanthropic actors as a powerful driver of economic and social change (Gök et al., 2022, Foroudi et al., 2021, Maclean et al., 2013, Moulaert et al., 2013a, Adams and Hess, 2010).

The concept, is however, not new. Instead, it is referred to as '*a common dynamic of human history*' (McGowan and Westley, 2015, p. 54) and has been evolving since the 19th century. For example, the economist Schumpeter (1942) explicitly mentioned the social nature of innovation and emphasised the need for SI to ensure the economic success of technological innovations (Moulaert et al., 2005). Technological and business innovations can indeed create social value (Majumdar et al., 2014, Pol and Ville, 2009) by engaging in activities such as social entrepreneurship, business ethics, organisational sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (Dawson and Daniel, 2010). However, the value that SIs pursue is not for the benefit of private individuals or organisations, but for society (Phills et al., 2008). Therefore, the impact of SIs is broader than technological improvements as they also create social value (Rana et al., 2014, Jessop et al., 2013, Howaldt and Kopp, 2012, Moulaert, 2000).

The concept has gained popularity especially in policy circles, given its promise of addressing social issues that traditional public policy tools or current markets cannot solve (Choi and Majumdar, 2015, Murray et al., 2008). Moreover, although the mainstream innovation literature has long overlooked the concept, the research field has expanded to include relevant topics such as sustainability (Leach et al., 2012, Seebode et al., 2012), social change (Christensen et al., 2006) and transformative innovation (Grin et al., 2010, Geels, 2010, Garud et al., 2013, Fagerberg, 2018).

The term social innovation is difficult to conceptualise as it is discussed by different schools of thought, resulting in it being "*a term that almost everyone likes, but nobody is quite sure of what it means*" (Pol and Ville, 2009, p. 881). Despite efforts to clarify the concept (e.g., Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, Ayob et al., 2016, Phillips et al., 2015), definitions are now overdetermined and in some cases still ignored (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b), leaving the borders of the concept open-ended (Evers et al., 2014). What SI is and how it can be interpreted depends on the multiple disciplines and perspectives from which it is explored (Choi and Majumdar, 2015). For example, from a sociological approach, scholars (Moulaert, 2009, Ziegler, 2017) have discussed the concept in socio-cultural and political contexts related to the unequal distribution of resources and power relations. Others have introduced business and profit-oriented innovations to the concept (e.g., Pol and Ville, 2009) or discussed it within the scope of social entrepreneurship (e.g., Phillips et al., 2015). The role of SI is also highlighted in terms of addressing poverty and social exclusion through the participation of citizens and civil society actors (e.g., Voorberg et al., 2015, Gerometta et al., 2005, Novy and Leubolt, 2005). Considering all these different conceptualisations, in the broadest sense, social

innovation can be defined as “*new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations*” (Murray et al., 2010, p. 3, European Commission, 2011).

This research investigates the impact of SI policies and programmes considering context-dependency and to reveal the mechanisms underlying SI processes. It highlights the significance of context based on the highly localised nature of SIs and their context-specificity (Moulaert et al., 2005, Moulaert et al., 2013a), and thus starts with the assumption that nothing works everywhere or for everyone. The author employs a *realist synthesis* to systematically explore SI interventions and better understand how and under what conditions interventions work. *Intervention* mentioned here refers to actions taken by any relevant actor or institution, particularly in the public and third sector which, for the purposes of this research, focus on encouraging social innovation through policy instruments and programmes; and policy instruments refer to actions used by governments and public authorities to promote policies developed to achieve predefined goals (Hettiarachchi and Kshourad, 2019), including social innovation.

Realist synthesis, also known as realist review, is derived from traditional review (synthesis) approaches but adopts realist philosophy and has been increasingly used in the health sector over the past two decades. It is used to evaluate complex policy interventions and to identify mechanisms that determine whether these interventions succeed or fail in specific contexts (Pawson et al., 2005, Pawson et al., 2004). As the method seeks to explain how people respond to programme offers and why they react in the ways that they do, this research takes human interactions as the unit of analysis and goes beyond economic indicators to measure social value or human well-being while considering cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors.

Following the philosophy and the available guidelines of the realist perspective, middle-range theories (MRTs) were developed and tested using secondary data from 269 evaluation studies worldwide, including academic papers and public/private programme reports to evaluate the impact of SI interventions. The hidden mechanisms underlying SI are explored simultaneously to understand why programmes resulted in a specific way. By doing this, the research responds to calls to develop strong foundational knowledge on how SI operates (Pel et al., 2020, Neumeier, 2017a, Pue et al., 2015, Borzaga and Bodini, 2014) by considering a significant number of different contexts (Martins et al., 2022, Westley and McGowan, 2017, Tracey and Stott, 2017b, Wittmayer et al., 2017).

1.2 Research Motivation

Scientific and technological innovations can address social challenges, however historical evidence shows that they often do not contribute to social life, but instead lead to frustrations and insufficient impact on social issues (Borrás and Edler, 2020, Vergragt and Brown, 2007). In fact, traditional ways of innovating can be destructive in terms of social and environmental impact, serving the emergence of societal challenges such as inequality, pollution, and mass consumption (Schot and Steinmueller, 2018, Soete, 2013). Thus, SI has become a new strategy, approach and a policy instrument for the public sector (Voorberg et al., 2015, Grimm et al., 2013) given the moral virtues it represents and the complex challenges it addresses, including hyper-individualism, environmental security, and the reduction of energy, food and water resources (Jessop et al., 2013).

Significant efforts have been made so far by leading governments including the UK (United Kingdom), USA (United States of America), Canada, and European countries. For example, the Europe 2020 strategy for sustainable and inclusive growth, the 2030 Climate Target Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Lund Declaration (2015) to invest in research on grand challenges, the Paris Agreement (2015) for zero net carbon emissions, the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the G8 Social Impact Investment Forum to address entrenched social issues provide evidence of governmental support to address society's grand challenges. However, the term SI is used for an extremely heterogeneous examples including public policy initiatives, third sector activities, and for some actions of commercial organisations (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014).

Governments are expected to be key actors driving social interventions, especially in areas such as education and health, but as they are also criticised for bureaucratic approaches that are not conducive to innovation, it is recognised that social interventions require the participation of other actors (Dees, 2007). Indeed, universities in many countries have developed new master's and doctoral programmes on SI and have initiated centres or hubs for SI (e.g., Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation and Stanford Centre for Social Innovation). Additionally, private foundations, and non-profits (e.g., Ashoka, Skoll, the Schwab Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Aspen Institute) have started to implement programmes and fund social entrepreneurs all around the world to promote market-driven SI (Jessop et al., 2013, Elkington and Hartigan, 2008).

The concept concerns a wide range of topics (Foroudi et al., 2021) making it complex, multifaceted, and subject to different understandings (Nicholls et al., 2015b). Its borders become even more vague by intersecting two other social domain concepts, Social Entrepreneurship (hereafter SE) and social enterprise, adding more discussion on the topic (e.g., Phillips et al., 2015, Shaw and de Bruin, 2013, Maclean et al., 2013). Moreover, there is still ambiguity about its definition, theories, and impacts (Howaldt et al., 2016), leaving doubts to whether the concept is just a buzzword (Bock, 2016, Osburg and Schmidpeter, 2013) or an enduring term (Pol and Ville, 2009). While its evolving and multi-dimensional status is one of the reasons behind this blurriness, the overly simplistic use of the concept in policy practices may be another one (Moulaert et al., 2013a, Neumeier, 2012) that gives room for scholars to address.

1.3 Research Gap

The concept of SI is theoretically underdeveloped (Mulgan et al., 2013) and holds a variety of connotations with no common understanding on its precise meaning (Pue et al., 2015). Consequently, this can undermine the impact and effectiveness of policy given that there is *“little examination of the mechanisms underlying social innovation”* and *“knowledge of how it operates”* (Pue et al., 2015, p. 7). The disintegrated state of the field also makes it difficult for academics to present generalisable knowledge about what antecedents and consequences SI have and under what conditions SI can thrive and have positive impacts (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). Indeed, academic research on SI is limited, as most of the relevant work relies on reports, practical guidelines, and magazine articles (e.g., Stanford Social Innovation Review) (Choi and Majumdar, 2015).

Despite the lack of theoretical knowledge about the concept, governments, foundations, philanthropists, and other relevant actors allocate substantial resources and fund SI globally convinced of its potential to address societal challenges. However, allocating various resources, including funds, people, and expertise, to specific activities risks exceeding the cost of investment (Hughes et al., 2019). Furthermore, *“funding alone will not produce system change”* (Antadze and Westley, 2010, p. 343), suggests that evaluation practices are critical to the development of the field (Milley et al., 2018), as are the effective use of resources and policy making (Nicholls et al., 2015b). Evaluation is defined as *“the process of determining the merit, worth, and value of things”* (Scriven, 1991b, p. 1), and is ideally expected to provide

accounts, information and evidence to assist with legitimacy issues and to improve decision making (Hanberger, 2001).

Principally, learning through evaluation is important for any kind of action for the development and refinement of strategies, but it becomes even more significant and indispensable for social change efforts in decision making and effective implementation (Preskill and Beer, 2012). Nevertheless, SI practices are diverse, social issues are complex, outcomes are often intangible, and evaluation theorists argue for different approaches (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). Although some models for social enterprises or social entrepreneurs have been introduced, there remains no standard for impact and performance measures of SI (Mulgan, 2010). This creates a need to develop better tools to evaluate the multidimensional effects of SIs, for improving transparency and accountability, and contributing to decision-making on resource allocation (Antadze and Westley, 2012). Because the dynamics and processes of successful SIs need to be explored to understand how they cause a wide adoption and an impact on broader social systems (Antadze and Westley, 2010), using only established methods to measure their impact may limit the ability of social actors to produce effective SIs (Antadze and Westley, 2012).

While simple and unambiguous metrics such as profit and scale can be used in the market, evaluation is always problematic in the social economy and measures of success and tools are often open to question (Murray et al., 2010). Besides, there has been a shift from a relaxed attitude in philanthropic motivations to a more informed choice that aims to make a difference with their donations (Arvidson et al., 2010). This creates an obstacle for social sector organisations to reach investors and gain access to capital (Kaplan and Grossman, 2010). Therefore, social enterprises, social entrepreneurs, not-for-profits and other organisations operate in the social sector, need better measurements and to demonstrate their impact to access finance (i.e., social finance) (Antadze and Westley, 2012). However, it is challenging to determine what to measure and how to measure in the third sector because social sector organisations use a variety of resources (i.e., inputs) that result in distinctive and incomparable outputs (Nicholls, 2009). For example, social and environmental solutions often result in non-financial outcomes such as improved air quality (Geobey et al., 2012, Antadze and Westley, 2012).

Since SI outcomes have non-market dimensions, impact assessments need to go beyond the monetary valuation approaches and output measurements alone (Marée and Mertens, 2012).

Although there is clearly an economic dimension of SI, stressing this particular aspect too strongly may also cause a reductionist interpretation of the potential of the concept (Jessop et al., 2013). Furthermore, while the subject-in-process of SI are people, emotions and reflections, and their effects on SI processes are often ignored; creating an opportunity to understand how actors engage and commit to SI, and how this can be fostered and maintained (Van Wijk et al., 2019).

Traditional evaluations focus on outcomes rather than the processes, but complex interventions are comprised of different components, such that their sum is more than the whole (Oakley et al., 2006). In addition, SI is not only about an outcome (i.e., social value creation) but also a process (i.e., new social relationships) (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014), and researchers have been calling for clarification of how this process works. For example, Phillips et al. (2015), conducting a systematic review of SI studies, pointed out the process of SI as a significant research gap. Their comprehensive review has found that the positive outcomes of SIs are the result of the activities of entrepreneurs operating in the social system, which include institutions, and interactions with key actors that provide support and resources. Emphasizing the critical role of institutions, they reflected the need to have a clear understanding of how they affect SI processes. In fact, there is no clear theory or rigorous evidence on how SI can be promoted by institutions, including public sector organisations, legal provisions, social norms, and the market (Grimm et al., 2013). Apart from institutions, Borzaga and Bodini (2014) indicated that actors and mechanisms are two critical factors in SI and that the lack of work on these dimensions undermines the effectiveness of practices. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the process of SI and the social value created is required, so that those elements that have the greatest impact on outcomes can be uncovered (Foroudi et al., 2021).

Interventions provide resources in a particular context that can lead to change in reasoning and eventually affect outcomes (Dalkin et al., 2015). As such, innovations need an environment in which creativity takes place and a *context* in which new ideas are considered as social (Pol and Ville, 2009). However, Ziegler (2010) remarked that the term *social* usually refers to standard values which are open to discussion based on the variety of meanings in different environments. It can be represented by referring to “*reduction of poverty, improvement of the educational system [...] everybody’s right to economic progress, proper health care*” (Swedberg, 2009, p. 98), all of which are subjective and complex. Indeed, the goal of innovations can be diverse, and interpretations of a particular innovation may vary depending

on the broader political and institutional context in which they are embedded (Evers et al., 2014). This underlines the critical role of *context* in innovation processes. In fact, SI is much more comprehensive than mainstream innovation and is highly context dependent (Moulaert et al., 2005). The intertwined relationship between SI and the social context in which it occurs is decisive for both the process and the outcome, making contextual circumstances critical for understanding “*why things happened in a determined way*” (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, p. 49).

Previous research (Tracey and Stott, 2017b) highlights the importance of geography and the institutional context, pointing to the need to develop theories that explain how SI practices differ between contexts. Likewise, Ayob et al. (2016) call for the circumstances that produce different outcomes in different countries to be explored, without focusing solely on Western countries, and including emerging contexts that may have authoritarian governments. Moreover, other researchers have called for the need for systematic analyses of SI, including its theories and impacts (Howaldt et al., 2016), that go beyond fragmented and context-dependent empirical evidence (Westley and McGowan, 2017, Wittmayer et al., 2017) by developing “*generic insights on mechanisms and processes underlying SI dynamics and agency*” (Pel et al., 2020, p. 2). Addressing this gap can contribute to the theoretical knowledge of the field, the development of new policies or improving the existing ones, and at the same time can inform improving the effectiveness of implementation processes. Thus, SI activities can become more effective and make good on the promises attributed to them.

1.4 Research Question

The ambiguity of the field (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, Dawson and Daniel, 2010) creates a challenge for developing and formulating theories and hypotheses about the outcomes of SIs and the circumstances under which they take place (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). In addition, most of the knowledge on SI is “*historically and spatially contextual, specific, and liable to decay*” (Mulgan, 2012, p. 35), mainly because the broader impact that SI aims to create depends on the complex interplay between the social, cultural, political and economic factors (Westley and Antadze, 2010), leading to different outcomes for the same policy instruments depending on the country and time (Edler et al., 2016a).

Building on the research gap articulated in this chapter and considering studies that have identified a need to understand the *mechanisms underlying SIs* given that SI dynamics and processes have not yet been clarified (Pel et al., 2020, Neumeier, 2017a, Pue et al., 2015,

Borzaga and Bodini, 2014), the *overriding aim of this research is to investigate the impact of SI interventions (policies and programmes) considering context-dependency and to reveal the mechanisms underlying SI processes*. The research adopts a realist synthesis approach to better understand which SIs work, for whom, under what conditions and with what impact to specifically address the following questions:

What kind of SI interventions work (i.e., achieve their intended outcomes)?

For whom do SI interventions work and which communities do these interventions benefit?

Under what conditions do SI interventions work?

How do SI interventions work?

Why do SI interventions work the way they do?

This inquiry requires attention because the context in which SI are designed and implemented are important in informing evaluations of the impact of SI and therefore should be understood (Martins et al., 2022). Accepting this, the research seeks to understand the impact of SI interventions in different contexts and to clarify why specific outcomes are created in certain conditions. While evaluations can only be considered within the context of government interventions (i.e., public policies and programmes) (e.g., Vedung, 2017), as stated, this thesis uses the term *intervention*¹ to refer to any kind of action taken individually or collaboratively by different actors (state and non-state actors) to improve a situation and bring about an intended change. To ensure a feasible study and useful findings, the focus of the study is at the level of policy interventions and programmes. Furthermore, throughout this thesis, “actions” and “activities” are used interchangeably to refer to relevant policies (or policy instruments) and programmes. Thus, the term intervention is used to refer to different activities including laws, regulations, incentives, dedicated funds, programmes, formal networks and so on.

Although the methodology adopted is explained in detail in Chapter 3, it is important to note here that realist synthesis uses deductive and inductive approaches to implement a proposed process (Jagosh et al., 2022). This requires the steps to be iterative to enable change through testing and learning. Since the scope of this research is broad and there is no sector or intervention type limitation, the research questions were constructed considering this diversity and the principles of realist synthesis. Thus, the questions were finalized in a broad sense,

¹ Intervention is defined as an “action taken to improve or help a situation” in the Oxford dictionary (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>).

reflecting the research objectives and allowing different dimensions of impact and mechanisms to be captured.

The research questions are explored by synthesising available evaluations to overcome the context-dependency and to draw a ‘big picture’ of the concept. Using a *realist synthesis*, the research aims to develop new insights and enhance learning about SI processes by bringing a relatively new methodology to the field through a focus on available empirical data. The reasons for choosing this method are elaborated in Chapter 3 (methodology).

1.5 Contributions

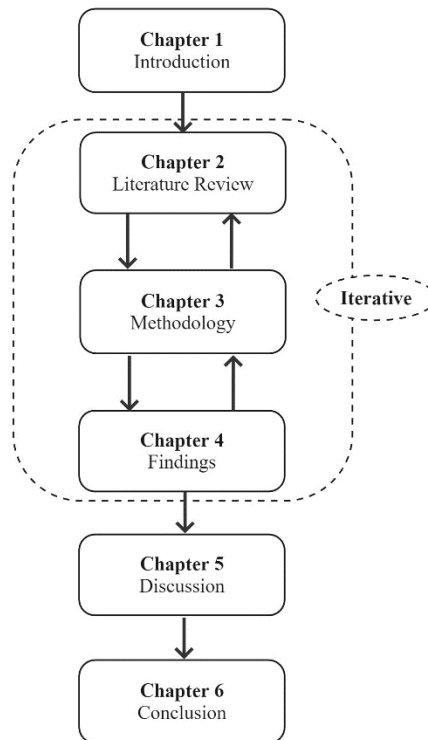
This research provides several theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. Regarding theoretical developments, this research contributes to the field of SI by developing a theory set and an illustrative model than can be applied to different contexts. The research seeks to provide a novel conceptualisation and theorisation that is tested by empirical evidence and incorporates in-depth analysis of key dimensions. The proposed theoretical framework highlights the interplay between different components, contextual differences, and the role of human responses shaped by institutional norms.

From a methodological perspective, the research contributes in two different ways, by introducing a new approach to evaluation practices in the field of SI and by providing a comprehensive implementation of the chosen method. This includes a reinterpretation of impact evaluation with a particular focus on latent mechanisms and how these affect SI processes. Evaluation of social value and social change requires new methods because results often have multiple causes and context plays a critical role, preventing generalisation of findings. This research employs a realist synthesis and reports the process meticulously to guide future researchers. Finally, the research contributes to empirical knowledge through a significant number of secondary data, which can be particularly helpful to policymakers and practitioners by providing deeper causal explanations from different contexts. These contributions are elaborated in Chapter 6 (conclusion).

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is formed of six chapters, all of which are briefly summarised in this section. The chapter concludes with the research structure shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Structure of the thesis



Chapter 1 provides a background to introduce the concept and the motivation behind the research. Following calls from previous researchers, the research gap has been identified, before detailing the research questions and the methodology used. The chapter concludes by indicating how the potential contributions of the study addressing the research gap identified.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature in SI. First, the concept is described using existing scientific knowledge. As the chosen method requires the identification of the main theories and assumptions on the subject, this extensive literature concludes with the identification of four main theory areas presented as the main dimensions of SI. The chapter next presents a separate section for each of these areas to examine these dimensions and discuss their importance within the SI field. These areas are analysed by categorising them into sub-areas and thus the conceptual framework of the research is

developed. Each section is concluded by developing multiple propositions (theories) required by the method.

Chapter 3 describes the method adopted in detail. The chapter starts with a discussion of evaluation practices, before introducing the philosophical approach on which the method used is grounded. Following this, the method is discussed extensively and its appropriateness for the research questions is explained. The implementation process is described in detail, followed by the explanations of data collection and data analysis. Finally, limitations of the method are outlined, and the chapter is summarised.

The results of the analyses are presented in Chapter 4, in order of theory areas and sub-areas. Findings are presented in an interpretive approach and supported with examples that provide detailed context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations. In this chapter, special attention is given to contextual characteristics and mechanisms as required by the research questions. Conflicting findings in different contexts are included and a basis for the discussion section is built by offering possible explanations with the support of the literature.

In Chapter 5, the results of the synthesis are summarised with a combined discussion and reflection. Research findings introduced in different theory areas are interpreted together using literature from different disciplines to explain the links between them and to draw a full picture of SI. The chapter concludes by presenting the refined theories as a research output and developing an SI model that illustrates the learnings from the research.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents a summary of the thesis and provides theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. Then, the implications for future research and innovation policies are described and the limitations of the research are outlined. This chapter concludes the thesis with a short epilogue.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the theoretical foundations of the research topic and use these to develop propositions for exploration through data collection and analysis. The chapter provides a critical review of relevant literature on social innovation (SI), focusing on current conceptualisations and formal theories. Given the multi-layered and complex nature of social innovation conceptualisations, it is useful to develop a theoretical framework that identifies its main components (dimensions) and provides a theoretically robust framework for the study. To achieve this, the chapter opens with a discussion of SI theory to define the concept and build a perspective of extant research. A summary of this review is provided in the next section which identifies the four main components of the concept. In the section that follows (Section 2.3), each of these dimensions is critically considered using subsections (Section 2.3.1, Section 2.3.2, Section 2.3.3, Section 2.3.4). In these subsections, separate literature reviews on these dimensions are provided, relevant key concepts are identified, and each section concludes with the development of propositions to be tested in the research.

The research employs a realist synthesis to systematically explore the impact of SI interventions and reveal the mechanisms underlying SI processes. Given the nature of the methodology discussed extensively in Chapter 3, the research process was conducted iteratively, particularly between literature review, research methodology, data collection and analysis (see also Figure 1). Therefore, the structure of the literature review and the conceptualisation of the main subject area were shaped by the principles of realist synthesis.

The realist synthesis suggests developing programme theories and then testing these theories with the available data. These theories are propositions that provide assumptions about how programmes (i.e., interventions) work. Therefore, propositions that are called middle-range theories (MRTs) are developed in this chapter following the relevant literature on each dimension. However, as the realist synthesis informs, theories proposed should not be too abstract or too detailed, allowing for the inclusion of different interventions for testing. Since

the research questions are about “what works”, “why” and “how”, programme outcomes are simply described as “positive” in these propositions to indicate whether the programme is working or not with the proposed scenario.

2.2 The Conceptualisation of Social Innovation

Development has long been seen from the perspective of economic growth after the World War II era, however in recent decades, socio-environmental development concerns have begun to emerge in policy circles due to enduring social problems including poverty, inequality, health, and climate change. Thus, the role of technological innovation shaped by the industrial society has begun to lose its function, and a new paradigm, characterised by the participation of society in the innovation process, has brought SI to the fore as many economies have transitioned to service and knowledge-based sectors (Franz et al., 2012, Howaldt and Kopp, 2012). As researchers have sought to explore SI in different contexts, this has led to different interpretations and debates, especially as SI is a hybrid concept bridging social and innovation perspectives. Likewise, the evolving status of the concept and its overly simplistic, and sometimes careless handling in policy discourses have fed its ambiguity (Moulaert et al., 2013a, Neumeier, 2012). Indeed, the concept has been used interchangeably with many other relevant terms including: social invention (Weber, 2001 [1930], Coleman, 1970); social change and transformation (Howaldt et al., 2016, Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, Moulaert et al., 2013a); or societal change and transformation (Wittmayer et al., 2019, Avelino et al., 2019, Feola, 2015, Alvord et al., 2004); socio-technical transitions (Geels, 2010, 2019, Smith et al., 2005); open innovation (Chesbrough, 2006, Chesbrough and Di Minin, 2014), and co-creation or customer integration (Voorberg et al., 2015, Franz et al., 2012).

Although it is difficult to identify the theoretical foundations of SI, its first mention extends back to 18th-century philosophers such as Benjamin Franklin who proposed minor changes in community organisations (Mumford, 2002), and Emile Durkheim (2000 [1893]), whose highly controversial work drew attention to social regulations for the division of labour. Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic* (1904), which investigates the complex relationship between the economic structures and living conditions of German agricultural workers (Giddens, 1984) similarly provides an early mention of social innovation. Schumpeter (1934) discussed innovation in terms of economic change that occurs through entrepreneurial activities and market power. In his renowned theory of creative destruction, he implied the SI is a tool for economic growth (Phills et al., 2008, Fuglsang, 2008): although he focused on technological and marketing

innovations, Schumpeter's discussion can be interpreted to suggest that, in his understanding, SIs were a new form of cooperative entrepreneurial activities (Neumeier, 2012). The first clear and theoretical distinction of SI arising technical innovation was made by Ogburn (1937), who identified both mechanical and social inventions. According to Ogburn, non-material inventions are defined as social inventions and are also shown as the main drivers of social change (Howaldt et al., 2015, Neumeier, 2012).

Drucker (1987), who dealt with the concept within the management discipline, interpreted the 19th century as a great SI period because of many public interventions such as health insurance, unemployment compensation and pension, all of which were implemented by Prussian Chancellor Bismarck in Germany, and would later be called *social security*. He argued that governments later lost this ability and that at the end of the 20th century SI was then taken over by private and civil actors, citing mass movements, the emergence of management as an activity and academic discipline, and the farm agent as some examples of organisational and public SIs. In fact, in the 1990s, in the mainstream social science literature, the notion of SI was understood as a business strategy to restructure and transform organisations through improved efficiency (Moulaert et al., 2005) and it is not until the 2000s that the concept became the focus of academic and political circles (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Ayob et al., 2016).

As a result of increased interest on the subject, there have been attempts to build a common understanding of the concept through systematic reviews (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Phillips et al., 2015) and bibliometric analyses (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, Ayob et al., 2016, Bataglin and Kruglianskas, 2022) using available literature, and to contribute to theory by classifying different approaches. However, the concept includes two highly contested terms, both of which have different uses and led to disagreements over definitions (Nicholls and Murdock, 2011). Although this combination makes the concept controversial in terms of the values, processes, and outcomes of SI, on one hand, the term *social* within the concept is often used to refer to *positive* or '*good things*' (Evers et al., 2014, p. 10) and on the other hand, innovation can simply be defined as the '*application of new ideas*' that can be extracted to a value (Rogers and Rogers, 1998, p. 5). However, an innovation is "*social to the extent that it varies social action and is socially accepted and diffused in society*" (Howaldt et al., 2015, p. 30). So, the meaning of the concept that emerges with the combination of these terms is much deeper. Ayob et al. (2016) suggest that most of the theoretical conceptualisations of SI agree on the role of new forms of social relationships in

creating new solutions, that are often collaborative, and presume to have a positive societal impact through restructuring power relations. Therefore, it can be asserted that the concept of innovation in the scope of SI does not only refer to new ideas but also new relationships.

SI is defined as “*a complex process of introducing new products, processes or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs*” (Westley and Antadze, 2010, p. 2). The sense of change implied by this definition and many others (e.g., Avelino et al., 2019, Schot and Steinmueller, 2018, Moore and Westley, 2011) is profound and transformative, and indeed coincides with the concept of social change. Put simply, SI is “*about social change*” (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, p. 44), meaning that new social practices introduced by SIs have the potential to transform and create new routines, which may eventually become institutionalised as regular practices (Howaldt et al., 2015). However, from a sociological perspective, the social change does not merely mean a positive change such as improved well-being and life-quality, but also refers to far-reaching change that may not be desired (Choi and Majumdar, 2015). Therefore, *intentionality* has been shown as the distinguishing feature of SI from any social change (Franz et al., 2012, Grimm et al., 2013) because, such change in SI is understood as positive and desirable (Choi and Majumdar, 2015). Furthermore, the innovations introduced are governed by specific social actors or constellation of actors (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010, Howaldt et al., 2015) and are “*social both in their ends and in their means*” (Mulgan, 2012, p. 35). Thus, it is a collective process (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Howaldt et al., 2015, Phillips et al., 2015, Dawson and Daniel, 2010) that addresses larger societal problems such as exclusion, deprivation, lack of well-being, and aims to overcome them by changing social relations and empowering social actors (Moulaert et al., 2013a). Social relations here, represent micro-level relationships between individuals and groups, as well as macro-level relations such as those between classes and other social actors (Moulaert et al., 2013a). Table 1 below provides an overview which summarises the various definitions of SI discussed above.

Table 1: Overview of social innovation definitions

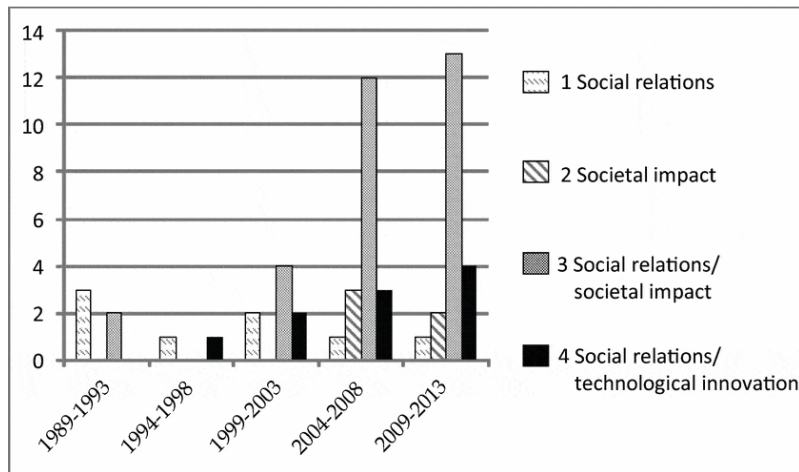
Author(s)	Definition
Van Wijk et al. (2019, p. 889)	<i>“The agentic, relational, situated, and multilevel process to develop, promote, and implement novel solutions to social problems in ways that are directed toward producing profound change in institutional contexts.”</i>
Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016, p. 1930)	<i>“[...] change in social relationships, -systems, or -structures, [...] such changes serve a shared human need/goal or solve a socially relevant problem.”</i>
Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017b, p. 73)	<i>“A collective process of learning involving the distinctive participation of civil society actors aimed to solve a societal need through change in social practices that produce change in social relationships, systems and structures, contributing to large socio-technical change.”</i>
Voorberg et al. (2015, p. 3)	<i>“The creation of long-lasting outcomes that aim to address societal needs by fundamentally changing the relationships, positions and rules between the involved stakeholders, through an open process of participation, exchange and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including end-users, thereby crossing organisational boundaries and jurisdictions.”</i>
Neumeier (2012, p. 55)	<i>“[...] changes of attitudes, behaviour or perceptions of a group of people joined in a network of aligned interests that, in relation to the group’s horizon of experiences, lead to new and improved ways of collaborative action within the group and beyond.”</i>
Westley and Antadze (2010, p. 2)	<i>“A complex process of introducing new products, processes or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs.”</i>
Howaldt and Schwarz (2010, p. 54)	<i>“New combination or configuration of practices in areas of social action, prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors with the ultimate goal of coping better with needs and problems than is possible by using existing practices.”</i>
Phills et al. (2008, p. 39)	<i>“A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.”</i>
Franz et al. (2012, p. 6)	<i>“New, more effective and/or more efficient social practices with social ends and social means.”</i>
Moulaert et al. (2013b, p. 2)	<i>“[...] innovation in social relations [...] not just particular actions but also [...] outcome of actions which lead to improvements in social relations, structures of governance, greater collective empowerment, and so on.”</i>
Moulaert et al. (2013a, p. 16)	<i>“[...] finding acceptable progressive solutions for a whole range of problems of exclusion, deprivation, alienation, lack of wellbeing, and also to those actions that contribute positively to significant human progress and development. SI means fostering inclusion and wellbeing through improving social relations and empowerment processes.”</i>
Dawson and Daniel (2010, p. 16)	<i>“[...] the process of collective idea generation, selection and implementation by people who participate collaboratively to meet social challenges.” (p16). “Social innovation can be broadly described as the development of new concepts, strategies and tools that support groups in achieving the objective of improved well-being.”</i>
Murray et al. (2010, p. 3)	<i>“[...] innovations that are social both in their ends and in their means. [...] new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act.”</i>
Pol and Ville (2009, p. 881)	<i>“[...] new idea that has the potential to improve either the quality or the quantity of life.”</i>
Mumford (2002, p. 253)	<i>“[...] the generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal activities, or social interactions, to meet one or more common goals.”</i>

Source: Author’s own elaboration

While the focus of these definitions is either on the process (Van Wijk et al., 2019, Neumeier, 2012) or the outcomes (Voorberg et al., 2015, Pol and Ville, 2009) of SI, most define the concept as including both (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Westley and Antadze, 2010, Moulaert et al., 2013a). Thus, SI refers to change in social relations (process) the creation of societal impact (outcome). Indeed, in a bibliometric study (Ayob et al., 2016) of 55 publications between 1989 and 2013, the three main themes of SI emerged as *social relations*, *societal impact*, and *technological innovation*. However, considering the interrelatedness between these, the authors classified the papers into four categories based on their focus to observe the evolution of the concept over time (Figure 2). On the one hand, the category of social relations, adopted from Howaldt and Schwarz (2010) assumes that new social relationships can trigger innovation that can turn into societal impact. On the other hand, the societal impact category is understood by Pol and Ville's (2009) definition that suggests improvements in quality or quantity of life. The third category is defined as the combination of these two, while the fourth is defined as '*technological innovation and social relations*', which focuses on technological innovations and the social relations that lead to this innovation.

This supports other researchers (Gardner et al., 2007, Maruyama et al., 2007) that proposed new social relationships as the drivers of technological innovation. Although there are few conceptualisation studies under this theme, findings indicate that technological innovations need change in social relations to succeed. The study (Ayob et al., 2016) also considered the combination of '*technological innovation and societal impact*', but a separate category was not created as there was only one study found on it. Findings show that interest in the concept began to increase significantly in the early 21st century and the majority of publications fall into the category of 'social relations and societal impact'. Therefore, the study shows that the two fundamental and intertwined dimensions of SI are *social relations* and *societal impact*.

Figure 2: Evolution of the social innovation concept over time



Source: Ayob et al. (2016)

Another bibliometric analysis of SI conducted by Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016), which included publications from 1986 to 2013, identified four main clusters of the concept as *community psychology* (C1), *creativity research* (C2), *social and societal challenges* (C3), and *local development* (C4). Accordingly, community psychology, which focuses on the SI process, refers to social and behavioural changes; in creativity research, SI is understood as new ideas or social relations to achieve a common goal, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and intrapreneurship are given as the main themes in this cluster. However, these two clusters (C1 and C2) seemed to be distant from the other clusters, whereas cluster 3 (social challenges) emerged as the widest view. Also, the strongest inter-cluster connection was found between C3 and C4 (local development). The cluster of social and societal challenges (C3), which can be understood as the fundamental point of SI, refers to finding innovative solutions to social problems, and the main themes here are shown as social entrepreneurship (SE), environmental sustainability, health, and cross-sectoral partnerships. Indeed, a clear link has been found between C3 and SE, but the SE here is noted for its innovative but non-technological aspect. In the context of local development (C4), SI is understood as meeting human needs through the inclusion and empowerment of citizens and changing social relations between communities and local government bodies. Thus, the role of governance, institutions, and empowerment are shown as central themes in this cluster. The study also contributes to the literature by revealing the understanding of SI that these four clusters agree on. According to this, “*social innovation encompasses change in social relationships, -systems, or -structures, [...] such changes serve a shared human need/goal or solve a socially relevant problem*” (2016, p. 1930).

The BEPA (2011) report took the hybrid nature of social innovation into account and classified SIs into three levels: *social*, *societal*, and *system*. Social deals with the social demands of vulnerable groups whose needs are not met by the market. Societal considers society as a whole and addresses societal challenges where social and economic boundaries are not clear, and system refers to fundamental changes at the systemic level (e.g., changes in attitudes, values, policies); it aims to reshape society with participatory and empowering approaches where learning is central.

In another attempt to clarify the concept, Phillips et al. (2015), through a systematic review, examined studies from 1987 to 2012 and focused on social entrepreneurship (SE) together with SI. Through thematic analysis, the study revealed the four main themes of SI as *entrepreneur*, *networks and systems*, *cross-sector partnerships*, and *institutions*. According to this, the concept of SE is understood as a subset of SI. In fact, the authors state that social entrepreneurs and social enterprises operate within the SI system. In relation to that, the most important features of the social entrepreneur, who adopts business approaches to achieve social outcomes for specific groups, are shown as social mission and opportunity recognition. Also, it is seen that empirical studies mostly appear in this theme (i.e., the role of the entrepreneur) while the conceptual studies fell under the theme of networks systems; both theoretical and empirical studies, however, considered the role of institutions and networks. The role of social and business networks is highlighted in terms of access to finance and other resources such as volunteers and professional support. The other theme, cross-sector partnerships, highlights the interactions and connections that social entrepreneurs need to mobilise resources, but the authors mention potential barriers to managing these partnerships due to differences between cultures and goals. Special attention is paid to interactions as they enable the generation of new knowledge and the development of the capabilities of social enterprises. Therefore, the authors propose the system of innovation approach, which they define as a set of independent but interrelated subsystems that shape innovation through collective and interactive learning among actors, because the review revealed that SIs need a variety of resources that lie beyond their own surroundings. They suggest that it may be an appropriate framework for understanding SI and the interdependence between institutions and social entrepreneurs. Indeed, the collective and dynamic interaction between organisations and institutions has been highlighted in the literature on SI and SE (Dawson and Daniel, 2010, McElroy, 2002).

Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017b) performed a comprehensive review of SI definitions in order to identify some common principles of the concept, referring the debates that describe it as a 'buzzword' or 'quasi-concept'. The review revealed three main interrelated clusters that underpin the definitions as: *social change* -refers to the processes of change and social practices that SI is grounded on, includes themes such as community, society, need and action; *sustainable development* -linked to development and innovation policies, includes themes such as government, actors, product and technological innovation; and *services sector* -refers to innovation that addresses social needs, includes themes such as market, service, social need and quality. Considering innovation as a learning-based process, the authors developed a new analytical approach by emphasizing the importance of *social interactions* between various actors. Accordingly, the institutionalisation potentials of social practices, which include the different stages of any innovation from its emergence to its diffusion and impact, are also emphasised. With this broad perspective, they have sought to better delineate the lines between SI and other forms of innovation. As a result, SI has been distinguished from other innovations, primarily by the *type of actors involved* (participation of citizens and communities) and the *cross-sectoral partnerships* developed between the public, private and third sectors. Additionally, the change in social practices and the interaction of these practices with technology over the three clusters are shown as another distinguishing feature. In fact, this review reveals that the early definitions of SI perceived the concept as a process specific to third sector and does not include research and development (R&D) and technological knowledge, but with later advances the boundaries of the field has expanded, defining SI as "*the development of products, processes and services mediated by technologies or closely linked to technological innovations with social purposes*" (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, p. 73).

Choi and Majumdar (2015), with similar goals, provided an overview of the literature, to propose a conceptual understanding of the subject and identified seven streams of literature that represent different perspectives on SI. The first, the *sociological perspective*, deals with social change, thus investigating change in social practices and structures, including the work of Howaldt and Schwarz (2010) and Heiskala and Hämäläinen (2007). Second, the *creativity domain* is explained mostly by Mumford's work, which focuses on factors such as social settings and strategies that influence the generation, acceptance, and subsequent diffusion of the new idea. The third domain, *social entrepreneurship* views entrepreneurs as innovators, based on Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship. In this perspective, SIs are intentionally planned actions taken by entrepreneurs and explicitly aim at social goals such as the well-

being of society, thus contradicting sociological and creative perspectives that view SIs as desirable and may also have economic goals. Fourth, the *welfare economics* perspective includes not only pure SIs (which address social needs not provided by the market and have no interest in profits), but also business innovations that increase the set of valuable options (Pol and Ville, 2009). The fifth domain, the *practice-based* perspective, does not deal with the theoretical context but instead attempts to offer strategies for SI and understands the concept more broadly (e.g., Mulgan et al., 2007). According to this, SIs can take various forms such as product, process, legislation, movement, new technology or a combination of these (Phills et al., 2008). The sixth perspective, *community psychology*, targets communities and aims to improve the quality of life for them rather than focusing solely on change in social practices. Finally, *territorial development* perspective refers to local SIs that aim to include marginalised groups in different spheres of society, including social, economic, and political life. As both understand SI as an intentionally planned action to address a social problem, it overlaps with the perspective of community psychology, and clearly demonstrates an ethical stance on equality and social values (e.g., Moulaert et al., 2005).

Based on this comprehensive classification, Choi and Majumdar (2015) propose three major dimensions of SI aimed at creating social value; these dimensions are not mutually exclusive but focus on different aspects of the concept. The first dimension is *formalisation*, which captures different forms of SI and suggests that each SI has specific characteristics that allow them to be formalised from high to low. On the one hand, SIs that are highly specific in terms of design, materials etc., such as product or technological innovations, can be highly formalized, on the other hand, those heavily dependent on context or target group - for example an empowerment programme - remain at the other end of the continuum and imply low level of formalisation. This recognises the importance of context in formalisation, in other words, highly formalised SIs are less dependent on the specific context whereas less formalised ones are highly context dependent. It is also noted that it affects the diffusion of SI as SIs can only diffuse if well formalised. The second dimension is the *change processes* that concerns '*processes of social change and social transformation of society as a whole*' (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012, p. 6). Thus, it includes change in social relations, social practices, social structures, and power relations. The third dimension is *social outcomes*, it refers to the improvement of human and environmental well-being, and this dimension explains the purpose and goals of SI.

Institutions identified by Phillips et al. (2015) as one of the four themes of SI have been used by researchers in their conceptualisation efforts (e.g., Van Wijk et al., 2019, Turker and Vural, 2017). For instance, Cajaiba-Santana (2014) has used institutional theory together with structuration theory, combining the mindsets of agent-centred (concerned with specific individuals) and structuralist (concerned with the role of external structural context) perspectives. In his work, he opposes the approaches that focus only on product outcomes of SI, instead he emphasises the process that leads to changes in the social context. He defines SI as the collective, intended, and legitimate actions of social agents aiming at social change. Agents have the ability to change institutions in this approach, but they are also constrained by the existing institutions of the social systems in which they operate. Therefore, the author suggests considering the historical and cultural context to understand the underlying institutions and thus the processes of SI. The study also emphasises the importance of communicative actions between actors, as communication has been shown as a way of enabling mutual understanding and collective interpretation of the issue concerned, thereby gaining legitimacy for actions.

Moulaert et al. (2005) extended the discussion and referred to the four main SI approaches in the literature as *management science* (referring to organisational restructuring through improvements and more effective strategies that ultimately producing positive outcomes for SI); *relationships between economy, society and environment* (combining business agendas and social and ecological objectives); *arts and creativity* (links innovation to leadership and individually created initiatives); and finally *territorial development* (representing the authors' own understanding, focusing on the community and its social agents). In addition to these four main streams, a fifth strand, which is said to be largely excluded, has been defined as *political governance*, which focuses on the potentials for social change (new institutions or governance structures) to support the sustainable development of communities. Participatory democracy is targeted here through collective mobilisation. The study, taking this theoretical background with a regional development focus, and expressed the three main dimensions of SI as follows: *Satisfaction of human needs* refers to the product dimension, related to unmet human needs such as housing and education, the importance of which is overlooked by the state or the market and may vary depending on the context; the process dimension refers to *changes in social relations* and relates to governance, aiming to ensure the first dimension (satisfaction of human needs) while also increasing the participation of all, particularly deprived communities in society; and the *empowerment* dimension refers to increasing socio-political

capabilities and access to resources, which is required to enhance rights to meet human needs and participation.

In relation to the concept of participation, Voorberg et al. (2015) discussed *citizen involvement* in public sector innovation based on the proposition that “*social innovation mobilises each citizen to become an active part of the innovation process*” (European Commission, 2011, p. 30). The focus of this study is on *co-creation* and *co-production*, they conclude that the concepts are mostly understood in the same way. While its relationship with other similar concepts such as public participation and community involvement is acknowledged, co-creation is understood as a more active process rather than passive involvement which could be a case in the concept of participation. The study reveals that the process of citizen involvement is interpreted as a virtue in itself in terms of democracy and transparency. However, the willingness of citizens to participate is stated as an important factor. In this regard, internal values (e.g., civic duty and sense of responsibility), education level and social capital that affect willingness are discussed.

Regional development perspectives are used in SI with relevant terms such as rural development, local development, or territorial development (Moulaert, 2009, MacCallum, 2009, Neumeier, 2017a, 2012, Bock, 2016, 2012). Adopting a rural development perspective, Neumeier (2012) identified the central aspects of the theoretical concept in different disciplines and then compiled some of its main factors. Foremost among these, is *collectivism*, according to which SI takes place through the collective actions of a group of members who share common interests in a network. Therefore, it is asserted that *social networks* and *social capital* strongly influence SI potentials. Second, as with technological innovation, SI is triggered by internal or external factors (a need or incentive) or, in other words, an *initial impetus*. It is noted, however, that the level of innovation or innovativeness of the SI is relative, as it depends on the perceptions of the actors involved. Moreover, referring to social change, it is said that the main focus of the concept is on changing the behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of society. Finally, the author concluded that SIs are “*non-material: their material outcomes are solely a supplementary result, and they focus not on needs but on asset building*” (Neumeier, 2012, p. 55). Building on these points, the study outlines the three stages of SI as problematisation (emergence of an initial impetus), expression of interest (actors in the network are inspired or imitated as a result of seeing an advantage in behaviour change from other actors), and coordination (negotiation on new behaviours within the actor network and

then the formation of new forms of action). As a result, the study proposes an actor-oriented network approach to address SIs in rural development.

Another form of classification described by Nicholls et al. (2015b) identified the three levels of SI as *'incremental'*, which refers to new goods or services to address a social need (e.g., activities of not-for-profits); *'institutional'*, which refers to restructuring economic and social institutions to create social value (e.g., fair trade); and *'disruptive'*, which refers to fundamental changes in power relations or social hierarchies that ultimately benefit disadvantaged groups. Building on this, they define SI research into three clusters: The first is the *'innovation to address social market failures'*, which can be understood as incremental-level and outcome-driven SIs, intended to provide products and services to underserved groups. The second is the *'changes in social relations'*, it aims to address key social problems and encompasses a variety of actions, including innovative responses to social exclusion, changes in social structures (e.g., cultural, or regulatory), and workplace innovation. The third cluster, *'resiliency theory'* relates to the diffusion and overall sustainability of SI models, and thus represents the resilience of the ecosystem in which SIs occur.

The lack of clarity on the concept hinders strong theoretical foundations and makes it difficult to understand the relationship between social innovation and *transformative social change*, in particular (Howaldt et al., 2015). As a matter of fact, the most pressing societal challenges require fundamental and systemic transformations, making it important to understand the interactions between SI and systemic or transformative changes (Haxeltine et al., 2016). The notion of change at the systemic level is also conceptualised by the transformative social innovation (TSI) theory, mostly adopted in Europe, with contributions from publications derived from the EU-funded project called TRANSIT². The term transformation refers to *"irreversible, persistent adjustment in societal values, outlooks and behaviours"* (Avelino et al., 2019, p. 196) and this approach coincides with Moulaert et al. (2013a) understanding of SI that tackles social exclusion through empowerment and aims to rebalance power relations in a society. Indeed, TSI is defined as a process in a social context that *"challenge, alter and/or replace established (and/or dominant) institutions"* (Haxeltine et al., 2016, p. 19). TSI theory, however, is sceptical of the empowering potentials of SI, instead considers the shadow sides or disempowering potential of it (Swyngedouw, 2005, Pel et al., 2020), and therefore sees empowerment as a separate entity, not as a requirement or facilitator for SI (Avelino et al., 2019). There is no doubt that this line of work has its roots in previous work such as

² <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/home>

transformative change (Schot and Steinmueller, 2018, Grin et al., 2010), societal transformations (Feola, 2015, Alvord et al., 2004) and socio-technical transitions (Geels, 2019, 2010, Raven et al., 2012, Smith et al., 2005). Researchers (Avelino et al., 2019) suggest approaching TSI as a process of SI that contributes to transformative change rather than interpreting it as a subset of SI. The concept of transformative social change does not mean uncontrolled outcomes, but rather change shaped by actors within a society, and thus SIs require interaction between many different actors (Howaldt et al., 2015).

One of the difficulties behind the conceptualisation of SI might be that the concept is not clearly differentiated from the mainstream innovation. Social purpose or profit orientation may first be presented as differences, but there are arguments that innovations will naturally produce social consequences, as seen in the cases of the internet and mobile phones (Franz et al., 2012). Moreover, emerging concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Mellahi et al., 2023, e.g., Tai and Chuang, 2014, Smith, 2003) and Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) (e.g., Herrera, 2015, Mirvis et al., 2016) make SI conceptualisations more challenging. Some researchers (Porter and Kramer, 2019, 2006) advocate that profit-oriented private corporations should consider shared value approaches in terms of social responsibility. In fact, firms can employ strategies and practices that will create shareholder value as well as value for a sustainable world (Hart and Milstein, 2003). However, there are strong criticisms of the motivation of the companies to participate in CSR, such as greenwashing (Delmas and Burbano, 2011). As a matter of fact, all innovations can be viewed as a social phenomenon and there is a strong relationship between the two (innovation vs SI) but there is still a need for analytical distinction (Howaldt et al., 2015) as the difference of SI from organisational innovation has not been fully considered (Neumeier, 2012).

In relation to this, people's participation (citizens and communities) can be shown as a critical difference between SI and other forms of innovation (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b). Furthermore, comparing SI with business innovations, Pol and Ville (2009) state that a new idea is SI when it "*has the potential to improve either the quality or the quantity of life*" (p. 881). They underline the term *potential* in the definition based on the unpredictability of the long-term effects of the SI. Additionally, they understand the quality of life outlined here at a macro level by referring to valuable options such as political freedom, gender equality, health care, better quality of the environment, increased life expectancy and job security. They indicate that business innovation, which is a for-profit activity consisting of technological or organisational innovations, can also be viewed as an SI and similarly an SI can be a business

innovation, noting the overlap between the two and calling this intersection a *'bifocal innovation'*. While they interpret most SIs as business innovations, the study acknowledges that there are other SIs that are non-profit, such as a free pedagogical programme aimed at teaching math to young children. They define innovations in this category that are subject to market failure and therefore need government support as pure SIs.

Dawson and Daniel (2010), addressing the same debate, opposed the approaches that divide SI sharply from technical or commercial innovations and presented an alternative view that integrates the social dimension and business innovation. The study emphasises the main idea of SI as providing social benefits rather than economic wealth through a collective and dynamic process implemented within the organisation, community, or society. They define innovation simply as *"new ideas that work"* (p. 14), which may or may not be technological. Recognising the complexity of social systems, they identify the four key dimensions of SI as *people, the challenge, the process, and the goal*. The challenge here may be a social issue or an opportunity to create social good. The process by which people collaboratively negotiate on the challenge, create ideas, and then implement, may be spontaneous or immediate, but it is necessarily unique. As the authors consider technology as optional in this process, the goal is not to introduce breakthrough technologies or scientific advances, but to increase well-being by solving the social challenge. Yet, the scope of the SI concept has increasingly begun to include technology-based or technology-mediated innovations (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Ayob et al., 2016).

Kahler (2011) asserts that *"networks have become the intellectual centrepiece for our era [...] has emerged as the dominant social and economic metaphor for subsequent decades"* (p. 2). Indeed, previous studies discussed earlier in this chapter (Phillips et al. 2015, Neumeier 2012) have also pointed to the importance of networks for SI. Based on social network and resilience theories, Moore and Westley (2011) discussed the strategic role of agency in social networks and how networks contribute to SI and the overall resilience of society. The main assumption in this study is that networks have the capacity to organise collectively, innovate socially, and shape change across scales, by mobilising resources and enabling the diffusion of innovation. However, the authors argue that networks require agents with some complex skills, such as relationship building and network recharging, to initiate cross-scale interactions that ultimately affect change. These agents, called institutional entrepreneurs, are portrayed as critical catalysts within networks, refer to *"actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing"*

ones” (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657). The study of Moore and Westley (2011) defines social networks as a form of social organisation consisting of vertical and horizontal relationships based on strong or weak ties, which the authors see as a way for SIs to emerge and scale-up. They state that the presence of both links in networks is important, because on the one hand, weak links can enable the generation of new ideas when there is heterogeneity in knowledge and skills, on the other hand, strong links based on trust and cooperation rather than competitive relationships are necessary for the adoption of SI. The social network theory and its impact on diffusion has also been discussed in mainstream innovation (e.g., Valente, 1996, Abrahamson and Rosenkopf, 1997).

The agency is mostly explained by the capability approach (Sen, 1990, 1993, 2005), which is defined as “*one’s ability to choose*”, often referring to a specific type of capability (Frediani, 2010, p. 180). Despite the agency’s strategic role in SI, change in complex social systems cannot be brought about by the agency alone, as Westley and Antadze (2010) point out, the agency must encounter an opportunity that can be generated by market demand, policy demand or cultural demand. Therefore, the interplay between economic, social, political, and cultural factors influences the emergence and diffusion of SI. Cross-scale interactions are shown to be critical of the resilience of social systems. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of engaging to vulnerable populations and calls for active participation of these groups into the SI processes. Thus, it is stated that SI can both serve and be served by groups that are excluded from the main economic and ecological services; this re-engagement can also lead to resilience (Westley and Antadze, 2010).

Another related concept brought to the forefront by previous review studies (Choi and Majumdar, 2015, Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, Phillips et al., 2015) is social entrepreneurship (SE). SI is often associated with SE and social enterprise (e.g., Dawson and Daniel, 2010, Westley and Antadze, 2010, Shaw and Carter, 2007) and although the terms SI and SE are sometimes used interchangeably, their distinguishing features are also discussed by researchers; still, there is a common understanding of their overlapping nature (Phills et al., 2008, Defourny and Nyssens, 2010, Phillips et al., 2015). The increased interest in SI and SE over the last few decades is attributed to the failure of the public sector and the weaknesses of the traditional for-profit enterprise model (Phillips et al., 2015). In general, discussions have led to an approach to SI as a broader concept than SE (Westley and Antadze, 2010, Huybrechts and Nicholls, 2012) based on its collective nature, which requires collective and dynamic interplay between different actors (Dawson and Daniel, 2010) and results in collective learning

(Phillips et al., 2015, Neumeier, 2012), while the traditional concept of SE is discussed with personal characteristics as social entrepreneurs perceived as visionary individuals aiming for social change (Novkovic, 2008, Phillips et al., 2008). However, there is also literature that considers collective and interactive actions in SE processes (e.g., Cunha et al., 2015, Van Ham, 2011). In addition, SE plays an important role in terms of empowerment (Haugh and Talwar, 2016, Mair et al., 2012, Santos, 2012, Datta and Gailey, 2012) and regional development (Seelos et al., 2011, Perrini et al., 2010, Mair and Marti, 2006, Haugh, 2005), which are two critical themes that arise in SI conceptualisations and are also covered in this section. Yet, entrepreneurs operate in specific settings in pursuit of social change (Choi and Majumdar, 2015), but SIs search for change by transcending sectors and places (Bock, 2016, Westley and Antadze, 2010, Phillips et al., 2008). In fact, there are no boundaries for socially innovative actions, *“it happens in all sectors, public, non-profit and private. Indeed, much of the most creative action is happening at the boundaries between sectors”* (Murray et al., 2010, p. 3).

Given the complexity and wide range of the subject area, a summary of these different conceptualisations, together with the interpretation of the concepts and parent theories on which they focus, can contribute to identifying the main theoretical approaches. Table 2 below may also assist readers by providing a summary of the literature given in this section. The chapter will then continue with Section 2.3, where the main dimensions of the subject area are defined based on this literature, and these dimensions will form the conceptual framework which will be introduced at the end of this chapter.

Table 2: Summary of literature review with interpretation of main concepts and parent theories

Author(s)	Key Points	Main Concepts and/or Parent Theories
Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016)	<p>Bibliometric analysis of papers between 1986 and 2013, <u>4 main clusters identified</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Community psychology</i> (C1) (focuses on process, social and behavioural changes). 2. <i>Creativity research</i> (C2) (corporate social responsibility and intrapreneurship). 3. <i>Social and societal challenges</i> (C3) (widest view, includes topics such as SE, environmental sustainability, health, and cross-sectoral partnerships). 4. <i>Local development</i> (C4) (meeting human needs through the inclusion, empowerment and change in social relations) <p>C1 and C2 are found distant from other clusters; and the strongest inter-cluster connection is found between C3 and C4. The aspect of SE in C3 is <i>non-technological</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social change -Social entrepreneurship -Regional development -Sustainable development -Empowerment -Corporate social responsibility
Phillips et al. (2015)	<p>Systematic review from 1987 to 2012, focuses both on SE and SI. SE and social enterprise are understood as a <i>subset of SI</i>. <u>4 themes of SI identified</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Entrepreneur</i> (focus is on social mission and opportunity recognition) 2. <i>Networks and systems</i> (social and business networks to access the finance and other resources such as volunteers and professional support). 3. <i>Cross-sector partnerships</i> (interactions and connections that need to mobilise resources). 4. <i>Institutions</i> (interdependence between institutions and social entrepreneurs). <p>proposes the system of innovation approach as a framework for SI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Institutional theory -System of innovation -Social entrepreneurship -Social networks -Social relations
Ayob et al. (2016)	<p>Bibliometric analysis of papers between 1989 and 2013, <u>4 main themes identified</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Social relations</i> (new forms of relationships that lead to innovation). - <i>Societal impact</i> (improve well-being and living conditions). - <i>Social relations and societal impact</i> (intertwined dimensions of SI, the widest category) - <i>Technological innovation and social relations</i> (new relations can lead to technical innovations and vice versa but this theme holds the minority of the studies). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social impact -Social relations
Choi and Majumdar (2015)	<p><u>Define 7 different perspectives of SI</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Sociological perspective</i> (social change, investigates change in social practices and structures, intentionality (desired change) differs SI from any social change). 2. <i>Creativity domain</i> (focus is on social settings that influence the generation and diffusion). 3. <i>Social entrepreneurship</i> (entrepreneurs are innovators). 4. <i>Welfare economics</i> (includes business innovations that have social outcomes). 5. <i>Practice-based perspective</i> (offers strategies for SI practices). 6. <i>Community psychology</i> (targets communities and aims to improve the quality of life for them). 7. <i>Territorial development</i> (refers to local SIs that aim to include marginalised group, demonstrates an ethical stance on equality and social values). <p><u>3 dimensions of SI defined</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Formalisation</i> (each SI has specific characteristics that allow them to be formalized; product or technological innovations can be highly formalized while social programmes can be less formalised). - <i>Change processes</i> (change in social relations, social practices, social structures, and power relations). - <i>Social outcomes</i> (improvement of human and environmental well-being). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social change -Social entrepreneurship -Regional development -Corporate/business innovation

Cajaiba-Santana (2014)	<p>Combines the <i>agent-centred</i> and <i>structuralist</i> perspectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defines SI as a collective, intended, and legitimate actions of social agents aiming at <i>social change</i>. - Agents have ability to change <i>institutions</i> and are also constrained by them. - Emphasises the role of historical and cultural context. - <i>Communicative</i> actions between actors bring legitimacy to SI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Institutional theory -Structuration theory -Social change -Social relations -Social change agents
Neumeier (2012)	<p>Adopts a rural development perspective, compiles central aspects, and identifies main factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Collectivism</i> (collective actions of a group of members who share common interests in a network; social networks and social capital strongly influence SI potentials) -<i>Social change</i> (focus on changing the behaviour, attitudes, and perceptions). -<i>Initial impetus</i> (a need or incentive is required to trigger SI). -<i>The level of innovation</i> is relative (depends on the interpretations of the actors). -Focus is not on needs but on <i>asset building</i>. <p><u>3 stages of SI defined:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Problematization</i> (emergence of an initial impetus). - <i>Expression of interest</i> (actors inspire from or imitating other actors in the network). - <i>Coordination</i> (negotiation within the actor network and then the formation of new forms of action). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regional development -Social network -Social change -Collectivism -Actor interactions
Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017b)	<p>Review of SI definitions, identify <u>3 interrelated clusters</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Social change</i> (processes of change, includes themes such as community, society, need and action). 2. <i>Sustainable development</i> (linked to development and innovation policies, includes themes such as government, actors, product, and technological innovation). 3. <i>Services sector</i> (addresses social needs, includes themes such as market, service, social need, and quality). <p><u>SI differs from other forms of innovations through:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Type of actors</i> involved (participation of citizens and communities) and cross-sectoral partnerships - actor interactions) - <i>The change in social practices</i> and the interaction of these practices with <i>technology</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social change -Sustainable development -Social relations -Empowerment
Dawson and Daniel (2010)	<p>Integrates the social dimension and business innovation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Innovation may or may not be technological. <p><u>4 dimensions of SI defined:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>People</i> (within the organisation, community, or society). - <i>Challenge</i> (social issue or opportunity to create a social good). - <i>Process</i> (unique and might be spontaneous, people collaboratively negotiate, create ideas, and implement them). - <i>Goal</i> (to increase well-being by solving the social challenge). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business/corporate innovation
Moulaert et al. (2005)	<p>Adopts a regional development perspective. Identify <u>4 main approaches of SI</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Management science</i> (organisational restructuring). 2. <i>Relationships between economy, society, and environment</i> (combines business agendas and social and ecological objectives). 3. <i>Arts and creativity</i> (leadership and individually created initiatives). 4. <i>Territorial development</i> (focusing on the community and its social agents) <p>A fifth strand -said to be largely excluded- is defined as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>Political governance</i> (focuses on new institutions or governance structures, targeting participatory democracy). <p><u>3 main dimensions of SI defined:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Satisfaction of human needs (product)</i> (satisfaction of unmet human needs that may vary depending on the context). - <i>Changes in social relations (process)</i> (governance, aiming to ensure the first dimension while also increasing the participation of all). - <i>Empowerment</i> (increasing socio-political capabilities and access to resources). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social change -Regional development -Social entrepreneurship -Empowerment

Westley and Antadze (2010)	<p>Highlight the <i>role of agency</i> and the interplay between economic, social, political, and cultural factors in the <i>emergence and diffusion of SI</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agency needs an <i>opportunity</i> that can be generated by market demand, policy demand or cultural demand. - <i>Cross-scale interactions</i> and <i>active participation</i> of vulnerable groups are shown to be critical to the resilience of social systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Resilience theory -Capability approach -Empowerment -Social relations
Moore and Westley (2011)	<p>Focus on <i>social networks</i> and social organisations in which SIs emerge and scale-up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of <i>agency</i> (institutional entrepreneurs) in social networks is critical. - Networks have the capacity to organize collectively and create innovation by mobilising resources and enabling the <i>diffusion</i> of innovation. - Agents need complex <i>skills</i> (e.g., relationship building and initiate cross-scale interactions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social networks -Diffusion theory -Social change agents
Avelino et al. (2019)	<p>Social change is conceptualised by the transformative social innovation (TSI) theory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sceptical about empowerment, considers potential for <i>disempowerment</i>. - sees empowerment as a separate entity, not a requirement or facilitator. - TSI is not understood as a form of SI but a process that contributes to <i>transformative change</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Transformative social innovation (TSI) -Social change
Pol and Ville (2009)	<p>Consider the overlap between business innovations (technological or organisational) and SI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calls this intersection a '<i>bifocal innovation</i>'. - SIs that are non-profit called as 'pure SIs' (non-profit practices). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Technological and corporate/business innovation
Voorberg et al. (2015)	<p>Advocate <i>citizen involvement</i> (mobilisation of citizens to become active participant in SI processes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Co-creation</i> and <i>co-production</i> (active process rather than passive involvement seen in participation). - Co-creation is critical for democracy and transparency. - <i>Willingness of citizens</i> to participate, depends on education, social capital, motivation etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Co-creation and co-production -Empowerment
Nicholls et al. (2015b)	<p><u>3 levels of SI defined:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Incremental</i> - new goods or services to address a social need. 2. <i>Institutional</i> (restructuring economic and social institutions to create social value, e.g., fair trade) 3. <i>Disruptive</i> (fundamental changes in power relations or social hierarchies). <p><u>3 clusters of SI defined:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Innovation to address social market failures</i> (incremental-level and outcome-driven SIs, intended to provide products and services to underserved groups). 2. <i>Changes in social relations</i> (addresses key social problems such as social exclusion; changes in social structures, e.g., cultural, or regulatory). 3. <i>Resilience of the ecosystem</i> (the diffusion and overall sustainability of SI models). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Institutional theory -Social change -Social relations -Resilience theory -Diffusion theory
BEPA (2011)	<p><u>3 categories of SI defined:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Social</i> (social demands of vulnerable groups, not met by the market). 2. <i>Societal</i> (considers society as a whole and addresses societal challenges where social and economic boundaries are not clear). 3. <i>Systemic</i> (fundamental changes at the systemic level (e.g., changes in attitudes, values, policies), aiming to reshape society with participatory and empowering approaches). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social change -Institutional theory -Empowerment

Source: Author's own elaboration

2.3 Main Theoretical Approaches to SI

In this section, the author aims to define the main theoretical approaches based on the literature given in Section 2.2. As given in Table 2, the main concepts and parent theories used in the literature have already been interpreted, but these interpretations are now reflected here to identify the main concepts on which this research will focus.

The concept of SI is characterised by the collective actions of various actors to create profound changes in social systems. SIs can take many forms, including ideas, services, collaborations, business models, and regulations, and are conceptualised in two interrelated groups depending on their focus: social processes or social outcomes (Nicholls et al., 2015). The first refers to change in social relations through collective actions and empowering approaches to address socioeconomic inequalities and power disparities (Moulaert et al., 2013a, Moulaert et al., 2005). The second one, social outcomes refer to products or services that address unmet social needs (or provide better alternatives for existing solutions) and improve life conditions and wellbeing (Murray et al., 2010, Pol and Ville, 2009).

Starting from this point, previous research provides different aspects and conceptualisations of SI such as sociological perspective (Howaldt et al., 2015, Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010, Heiskala and Hämäläinen, 2007), creativity research (Mumford and Moertl, 2003, Mumford, 2002), social entrepreneurship (Dees, 2007, 1998, Martin and Osberg, 2007, Ziegler, 2010) and regional development (Moulaert et al., 2013a, 2013b, 2005, MacCallum, 2009). However, these approaches are not mutually exclusive and converge with each other in some fundamental points as well as divergent ones. Above all, SI aims to create profound changes in a social system. This change can be at the social, societal, and systemic level (BEPA, 2011); the systemic level change is transformative in nature and therefore, conceptualised as *transformative social innovation* (Pel et al., 2020, Avelino et al., 2019, Haxeltine et al., 2016). The social system mentioned in these approaches refer to “*any organised assembly of human resources, beliefs, and procedures united and regulated by interaction or interdependence so as to accomplish a set of specific functions*” (Westley and Antadze, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, SI is closely associated with other structures, including *institutions* within the social system, as institutions have the capacity to regulate social activities and influence social behaviours (which SI aims to change). As a matter of fact, *institutions* have emerged as one of the main themes or levels of SI (Phillips et al., 2015, Nicholls et al., 2015b) and researchers emphasise

the role of institutional conditions for any SI as they represent the cultural, historical, and social context (Van Wijk et al., 2019, Cajasanta, 2014).

While SI aims to create changes in social relations (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010) it requires set of diverse actors, including governments, foundations, entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, private businesses, universities and research institutes, and networks, all of which differ in their motivations, cultures, and capabilities (Mulgan, 2012, Franz et al., 2012). Additionally, participation of citizens in innovation processes is one of the distinguishing features of SI (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Voorberg et al., 2015). As the process requires collective and communicative actions (Cajasanta, 2014, Dawson and Daniel, 2010), the interaction of these various actors and cross-sector collaborations are of great importance in SI (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Howaldt et al., 2015, Phillips et al., 2015); because it is presumed that actor interactions lead to generation and diffusion of innovations and thus, contribute to the sustainability of SI through collective learning (Moore and Westley, 2011, Phillips et al., 2015). These interactions that often happen between sectors (Murray et al., 2010) can also contribute to social cohesion by changing the relationships between communities and their governing bodies (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). In this regard, social networks and social capital are critical to enable these interactions (Neumeier, 2012, Westley and Antadze, 2010). This emphasis on actor diversity and *actor interactions* is also recognised in recent research (Gök et al., 2022) and is cited as one of the main dimensions of the concept.

The social problems addressed by the SI, such as poverty and exclusion, are based on the unequal distribution of resources and the deprivation of a part of the society. This makes the mobilisation of resources a key activity in SI to balance power and resource disparity (Moulaert et al., 2013a, 2005, Moore and Westley, 2011, Westley and Antadze, 2010, Westley, 2008b). Thus, SIs require a different set of *resources* including human, economic, social and political ones (Phillips et al., 2015, Moulaert et al., 2005). Besides, the methodology of this study proposes to understand how people respond to the resources provided by interventions, making it essential to identify available resources and investigate how they are used in interventions. In relation to this, *social entrepreneurs* seem to be critical actors to leverage existing resources and build new ones (Dacin et al., 2010, Montgomery et al., 2012). As a matter of fact, the literature informs that *social entrepreneurship* is another major topic under SI (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, Phillips et al., 2015, Cajasanta, 2014), as the concepts overlap in addressing social issues and pursuing social change. Social entrepreneurs,

in this perspective, are innovators (Choi and Majumdar, 2015) with some specific skills such opportunity recognition and resource mobilisation (Peredo and McLean, 2006, Bacq and Janssen, 2011). These entrepreneurs address grand social challenges and aim to bring about social change (Nicholls, 2008a, Mair and Marti, 2006, Alvord et al., 2004). At the same time, SE is defined as the activities of social enterprises that seek new ways of funding while aiming to create social value (Austin et al., 2006, Certo and Miller, 2008, Nicholls, 2010b).

Haxeltine et al. (2016) suggest that “*a practically useful theory should adequately explain the different dimensions of social innovation and their inter-relations*” (p. 3). To capture these different dimensions, this study defines the main components of SI as ***institutions, capital (resources), actors/actor interactions and social entrepreneurship***. While institutions, actor interactions (social relations) and SE have emerged as key concepts which previous researchers have agreed (see also Table 2), resources are also of particular importance when considering the research aim. This is because the research explores *the impact of SI interventions* that provide, require, or aim to produce different forms of resources, and this makes it important to explore how these resources are used, produced, or needed. Therefore, resources (different forms of capital) are among the key concepts identified for this research.

This section will now continue with an in-depth exploration of these four dimensions. Each section on these dimensions will end with the development of propositions that are called middle-range theories (MRTs) according to the methodology adopted.

2.3.1 Institutional Approach to Social Innovation

Institutions are the “*rules of the game*” that govern relationships in society (North, 1990, p. 3) and the role of institutions in innovation processes is widely acknowledged (Lundvall et al., 2009, Lynn et al., 1996). *Institutional theory*, a predominant approach in organisational studies, defines how organisations and their employees exist in an environment based on rules, values, beliefs and assumptions that they have partially or fully constructed (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). This macro-level perspective that focuses on and aims to understand the relations of interdependent actors in their institutional context (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) is also well suited in the field of SI (Shaw and de Bruin, 2013) mainly because geography and the broader institutional context, have the potential to significantly influence SI practices (Tracey and Stott, 2017a).

SIs aim to challenge the dominant institutions that play a significant role in the emergence of social problems (Purtik and Arenas, 2019). The goal is to create a broader social impact and drive social change (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016). This change at the system level (Westley et al., 2014) requires profound changes in the social system (Westley, 2008a), thus evoking an understanding of institutional change. Institutional change can happen gradually, where the change is hardly noticed by observers, or suddenly and unexpectedly, such as when a dramatic change in existing patterns occurs in a relatively short period (Dacin et al., 2002). Thus, institutionalisation occurs by producing rules that become a social pattern (Jepperson, 1991). The institutional approach, therefore, has been used by many researchers to understand and improve the theory of SI (e.g., Guerrero et al., 2020, Van Wijk et al., 2019, Logue, 2019, Purtik and Arenas, 2019, Howaldt et al., 2015, Tracey and Stott, 2017b).

Social systems' three central dimensions are regulative, normative, and cognitive (Scott, 2013). According to this, regulative refers to concrete institutions and formal structures such as laws and regulations, while the normative dimension involves the norms and habits of a society. Finally, cognitive institutions consider actors' shared values and beliefs in their social life. This dimension focuses on the culture of a society and is a critical factor in examining the established rules (Scott, 1995). Distinctly, Williamson (2000) grouped institutions into four levels: culture is the highest level, that refers to informal institutions embedded in norms and traditions. He argues that change at this level is slow and can be understood by investigating the mechanisms in which informal institutions emerge or are sustained. The second level is regulative institutions that consider property rights and other types of bureaucracy and jurisdictions. The third one is governance, defined as the "play of the game" (Williamson, 2000, p. 597) that creates an order to reduce conflict and focus on mutual benefits. The last level is defined as resource allocation and employment, and he discussed this level regarding incentive alignment.

Following North (1990), this thesis groups institutions as *formal* and *informal*; the former consists of economic and political institutions so that refer to formal rules, laws, regulations, constitutions, and property rights, while the latter refers to cultural characteristics such as traditions, social norms, sanctions, and taboos. Both institutions are critical because they define which actions will be incentivised and which will be penalised in society (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008, 2006). On the one hand, formal institutions use laws and regulations to decide how political power and economic resources are distributed (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008, 2000). On the other hand, informal institutions bring stability and meaning to daily life

(Scott, 2008) by identifying cognitive positions and sets of meanings to guide actors to interpret the behaviour of others (Fligstein, 2001), thus, minimising the potential uncertainty caused by individual decisions (North, 2005).

2.3.1.1 Formal Institutions

Formal institutions are the de jure rules that state incentivise or enforce using their political power (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). Systemic dysfunctions such as economic crisis and unemployment, and external pressures such as climate change can destabilise the system, leading to new opportunities for institutionalising new social practices (Howaldt et al., 2015). Indeed, Western governments have experienced significant shifts in regulatory policies to adopt new development theories, but new institutional arrangements can produce different results as they interact with existing institutional forms (Dacin et al., 2002).

In other respects, institutional weaknesses arise when governments do not address or only partially address the societal challenges (Stephan et al., 2015, Dacin et al., 2010, Zahra et al., 2008) result in *institutional voids* (or institutional gaps). These institutional voids derive from interactions between legal structures, power dynamics and existing institutional practices (Mair and Marti, 2009). Although they create opportunities for SI, attempts targeting social and institutional change will eventually face difficulties arising from established practices and some groups' resistance (Mair and Marti, 2009). This is because societies in which power and resources are not equally distributed, consist of elites and citizens, and the former has much to lose in the abolition of institutions (Robinson, 2006). This explains why the same interventions (or policy instruments) result in different outcomes depending on the country and the institutional context (Edler et al., 2016a, Flanagan et al., 2011). Indeed, some regulatory rules can only be effective in specific contexts, depending on institutional factors such as culture (Aparicio et al., 2022).

This interplay between institutions is discussed by the *systems of innovation* approach (Edquist and Johnson, 1996) that considers innovation processes as a social activity embedded in the institutional context (Fischer, 2001) and is shown as a practical framework for identifying institutional weaknesses in the system (Mazzucato, 2016). It suggests that organisations cannot innovate in isolation and need interactions with other structures (Edquist, 2010). Organisations, in this perspective, are conceived as formal structures with a clear goal; they are *players* embedded in institutions, while institutions are *rules* embedded in organisations.

This sense of mutual embeddedness makes institutional support essential for innovation activities (Edquist and Johnson, 1996) because the *system is a coherent whole* constituted by its components and the relations between those (Edquist, 2010). The approach, therefore, addresses institutional settings in case of system failures and calls for complementary policies (Soete et al., 2010).

Consequently, institutions are closely related as they can support or constrain each other (Aparicio et al., 2022) and thus they cannot be disconnected (North, 1990). This requires institutional conditions to be optimal for socially innovative actions, particularly in emerging economies (Guerrero and Urbano, 2020) where institutional challenges vary. Therefore, the first proposition (middle-range theory or MRT) of this research emerges as follows:

MRT.1: *“If interventions occur in contexts where formal and informal institutions are optimal and integrated, then these interventions are more likely to produce positive results because institutional components can significantly influence each other due to their mutual embeddedness, and SI processes are highly dependent on their institutional environment.”*

2.3.1.2 Informal Institutions

Informal institutions often refer to social norms, values and habits that result from contextual factors such as culture and geography. *Culture* shaped by different experiences such as religion and ethnic group is the critical determinant of established values and beliefs in a society (Scott, 1995). It is shown as one of the fundamental factors explaining the differences in economic performances (Acemoglu et al., 2005). Likewise, geographical variables such as climate and agricultural productivity play a role in opportunities and the development of countries or regions (McArthur and Sachs, 2001). Although SIs are highly localised, meaning that they have strong geographical connections (Moulaert, 2009), the role of place as part of the institutional context has tended to be overlooked in the literature (Tracey and Stott, 2017b) despite their potential to understand informal institutions that shape human behaviours.

Cajaiba-Santana (2014) unified institutional and structuration perspectives to conceptualise SI. Structuration theory focuses on the relationship between human agency and society (Jones

and Karsten, 2008), and it argues that social structures constrain the opportunities perceived by the agents and have the potential to create specific types of behaviour (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). Thus, the institutional theory is applied in his study to interpret SI as a collective action pursuing social change through legitimisation activities, while structuration theory is used to explain the role of agency and the notion of reflexivity in institutional practices. He suggested that SI processes are influenced not only by social structures but also by agents and their actions. Therefore, he called for the need to understand *why humans act in a determined way in different institutional environments*.

Emotions, viewed as part of culture (Goodwin et al., 2004) are mentioned as the heart of institutions (Voronov & Weber, 2015) and used to explain the causes of human actions in behavioural approaches (Barrett et al., 2007). Simply put, they are human reactions in our social life. It is emotion and rationality that distinguish humans (Massey, 2002). However, emotions cannot be reduced to activities related to the brain and biology; they are also shaped by cultural norms and identities (Goodwin et al., 2004) because they link individuals or groups to institutional structures (Zietsma and Toubiana, 2018) and “*accompany all social actions, providing both motivation and goals*” (Jasper, 1998, p. 397). Thus, they are not only individual reactions but also social and collective experiences of human relations (Goodwin and Pfaff, 2001). The concept is explicitly discussed in the field of SI (Van Wijk et al., 2019, Zietsma and Toubiana, 2019) to understand how actors’ emotions affect processes.

Van Wijk et al. (2019) highlighted the institutional nature of SI and introduced a model of three interconnected cycles at the micro, meso and macro levels. They focused on *embedded individuals* at the micro-level, emphasising *emotions* and interactions with others. The meso level is enabled by the micro-level, and interactive spaces that allow diverse actors to share their perspectives are addressed at this level. They emphasise the role of *reflexivity* and *emotions* in actors’ relations. Finally, at the macro level, they recognise the influence of institutional contexts on actors’ actions and present a focus on the broader context, allowing attention to focus on broader topics such as democracy, social class, and inclusion. Similar to Cajaiba-Santana (2014)’s work, Van Wijk et al. (2019) included both agentic and structural perspectives to provide a model for explaining institutional effect in SI processes.

Zietsma and Toubiana (2018) claim that the experience of emotions is influenced by institutional elements such as norms, beliefs, and social values, and therefore, *institutions are formed by emotions*. They suggest emotions as a critical way of exploring the transversal effect

between institutions, individuals, and social groups. They use three different metaphors to explain the role of emotions in SI processes:

1. Emotions are the *social glue* that connects humans to each other and the institutional structures.
2. Emotions are the *fuel* that provides energy and motivation to act.
3. Emotions are *rust* that can cause humans to feel threatened and may lead people to become defensive of their institutions.

Therefore, when emotions can act as rust, they have the potential to hinder or paralyse SI actions. At this point, *causal mechanisms* of emotions are suggested to be included in the search (Jasper, 2011) because “*the social and relational context of emotion*” (Fineman, 2000, p. 3) influence reactions and behavioural outcomes (Gooty et al., 2009). As a result, the institutional context in which emotions and, accordingly, SI occur can nourish or hinder SIs (Van Wijk et al., 2019). Thus, the second proposition of this research emerges as follows:

MRT.2: “*If interventions consider the cultural characteristics of the context and human emotions, then these interventions are more likely to produce positive results because cultural characteristics and human emotions influence people’s reactions to interventions.*”

2.3.2 The Theory of Capital and Social Innovation

SI challenges social systems by introducing new practices that create profound changes in the distribution of power and allocation of resources (Westley and Antadze, 2010, Westley, 2008b). A resource has multiple functions that lead to it being used differently, and the combination of resources can create new resources and opportunities (Penrose and Penrose, 2009). This study employs the *capital theory* (Bourdieu, 1986, Bourdieu, 1977) to theoretically understand how resources are used in SI processes and how they influence the outcomes of interventions. Capital is considered an input and an outcome contributing to community resources (Lumpkin et al., 2018). The theory of capital was first mentioned long ago, but the concept became popular with Karl Marx’s well-known “Das Kapital” in the last quarter of the 1800s and has been used by economists ever since. Despite this, social scientists popularised

the concept, influenced by the more recent work of Pierre Bourdieu, in which he identified four forms of capital that individuals can access and possess, economic, social, cultural and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1986). According to this perspective, capital refers to “*all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation*” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 178). Bourdieu argued that all forms of capital are convertible and that the social world is a constitution of objective and subjective structures which are connected and intertwined (Shaw et al., 2009). In fact, capital, in a social context, includes concrete assets such as finance (economic) as well as other intangible resources such as reputation (symbolic), skills and educational credentials (cultural), and connection (social) (Bourdieu, 1986, Macmillan, 2013).

2.3.2.1 Economic Capital

Bourdieu (1986) defined *economic capital* as financial resources and other forms of assets that can be directly converted into monetary value. The emphasis on financial capital in innovation (Bradley et al., 2012, O'brien, 2003) and entrepreneurship studies (Ho and Wong, 2007, Cooper et al., 1994) is based on an economic perspective that interprets the availability of financial capital as a necessity for purchasing raw materials and ensuring sustainability (Frese and Gielnik, 2014). Social initiatives, similarly, need capital for the start-up phase and growth and scale-up (Bloom and Chatterji, 2009). SI funding flows are often in the form of grants or subsidies for socially innovative ideas.

Murray et al. (2008) identified funding opportunities as one of the key facilitators of SI, along with background conditions and institutions. The critical role of government and philanthropic foundations in shaping the grant economy is acknowledged in their perspective. However, traditional financing mechanisms are sometimes claimed to be ineffective for SIs, bringing the concept of social investment to the fore (Nicholls, 2010a). Evidence shows that the success of social initiatives has been associated with the social investment sector, which is nourished by philanthropic individuals or institutions and uses microfinance to a large extent (Cull et al., 2009). Social finance is defined as “*the deployment of financial resources primarily for social and environmental returns, as well as in some cases, a financial return*” that can be delivered through various tools, including microfinance, innovation funds, competitions and challenge grants (Moore et al., 2012a, p. 116).

Microfinance is also used to promote entrepreneurship and fight poverty by providing financial capital to those who cannot access traditional financial resources. While a significant number of studies have confirmed its effectiveness for entrepreneurs or those facing poverty (Bruton et al., 2015, Chliova et al., 2015, Olu, 2009), it has been agreed that it offers individual solutions to societal-level problems (Bateman, 2010) and that it has potential to cause a converse effect (Field et al., 2013). Prior research suggests that the role of financial interventions on poor households cannot guarantee entrepreneurial performance (Karlan and Morduch, 2010) as its effect depends on other factors, such as education and business skills, including human capital (Berge et al., 2015). In this regard, Ansari et al. (2012) propose to develop human and social capital to empower the Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) communities. They expanded the definition of poverty and considered it not only as a lack of earnings but also as a lack of human capital.

Accordingly, whilst the importance of income generation is acknowledged for capability building, it is not the ultimate measure for assessing the development and wellbeing of communities. This is because poverty alleviation is not only an economic concern but also a social and political issue. They suggest enhancing social capital to transfer human capabilities and enable communities' access to resource-rich environments. While social and human capital are proposed as a requirement to make financial resources effective, the opposite is also discussed in the literature. According to Antohi (2016), microfinance reshapes financial, human and social capital dynamics. From this perspective, microfinance uses financial capital to access to new spaces, which can only be done by (re)producing social capital. Microfinance also acts on human capital to increase inclusion; it performs a transaction between different forms of capital.

Bourdieu (1986) identified this interaction between different forms of capital and suggested that any form of capital can be transformed into another. However, this transformation requires different levels of time and effort (or expense) depending on the situation. In fact, the idea that entrepreneurs can make a profit by using and combining other forms of capital is well-established in the entrepreneurship literature (Jonsson and Lindbergh, 2013, Chandler and Hanks, 1998), but converting financial capital into other forms of capital requires more time as the process is more complex (Pret et al., 2016, Jayawarna et al., 2014, Greve and Salaff, 2003). This explains why the impact of financial interventions can only be seen in the long run, since SI actions aim to create intangible forms of capital, such as new social relations (i.e., social capital) and empowerment (i.e., human capital), require a relatively long time.

This research acknowledges the role of economic capital and perceives financial resources as a critical asset for SI actions. Even though Bourdieu (1986) referred to this form of capital as the root of all other forms, he warned against the dominance of economic capital, whose social acceptance is institutionalised by the economic system. Indeed, “*funding alone will not produce system change*” (Antadze and Westley, 2010, p. 343) in terms of SI interventions and focusing solely on financial capital may lead to neglecting the importance of other forms of capital and hinder exploration of the complex nature of their conversions (Pret et al., 2016). Therefore, the first proposition regarding capital emerges as follows:

MRT.3: “*If interventions that provide economic capital are combined with different forms of capital (human, symbolic and social), then they are more likely to produce positive results because social change requires different forms of resources, all of which have the potential to support or hinder the effectiveness of one another.*”

2.3.2.2 Cultural Capital in the Form of Human Capital

Cultural capital refers to the educational qualifications of a human that can be converted into financial capital under specific circumstances (Bourdieu, 1986). Theoretical assumptions about the unequal academic achievement of children from different social classes with different resource opportunities led Bourdieu to consider cultural capital and to conceive three different forms as personal dispositions (thoughts, behaviours or habits of the mind and body), academic qualifications (e.g., diplomas and certificates that represents certain types of knowledge) and cultural goods (e.g., books, dictionaries, instruments). Even though Bourdieu’s understanding of cultural capital goes far beyond the potential economic returns of educational investments, cultural capital is widely discussed with the theory of human capital (Becker, 1964), which suggests that highly educated people earn more than others, and that improving skills and education can improve human productivity. Many researchers (Rauch and Rijdsdijk, 2013, Crook et al., 2011, Marimuthu et al., 2009, Shrader and Siegel, 2007, Bontis et al., 2000) have discussed human capital by focusing on its effects on business performance. The concept has also been argued explicitly within the scope of innovation (Diebolt and Hippe, 2022, Munjal and Kundu, 2017, Dakhli and De Clercq, 2004) and

entrepreneurship studies (Jayawarna et al., 2014, Leitch et al., 2013, Van Praag et al., 2013, Santarelli and Tran, 2013, Davidsson and Honig, 2003, Anderson and Miller, 2003).

Human capital is defined as “*the stock of education, skills, culture and knowledge stored in human beings themselves*” (Costanza and Daly, 1992, p.38). Education and training are often referred to as significant investments in human capital (Becker, 2009), however, the concept does not focus on formal qualifications only, but encompasses all the skills that enable individuals to be economically beneficial in their societies (Firkin, 2003).

Becker (1975) discussed investing in human capital regarding *general* and *specific* training. Brüderl et al. (1992) used this classification and applied *general human capital* to an individual’s academic background. On the other hand, they adapted the *specific human capital* into the entrepreneurial context to differentiate industry-specific (knowledge or abilities on a particular sector) and entrepreneur-specific (prior self-employment) experience. However, Firkin (2003) suggested that the entrepreneur-specific human capital form should be expanded to include the personal characteristics of the self-employed. This aligns with the entrepreneurship literature that emphasises personality and portrays the entrepreneur as a ‘hero’. Similarly, social innovators are often described as heroic personalities in the social innovation literature (Dacin et al., 2011) despite the collective nature of SI actions.

Estrin et al. (2016) have followed Becker’s approach and interpreted forms of human capital (general vs specific) as a distinctive feature between commercial and social entrepreneurship. According to this approach, general human capital is understood as an asset gained through formal education that can be employed in different sectors and occupations. Accordingly, specific human capital refers to an individual’s knowledge and skills acquired through experience that can be used in a particular occupational context. Based on differences in objectives and activities between commercial and social entrepreneurs, they proposed that the need for general and specific human capital differs between these. Their results confirmed that general human capital associated with various industries and professions is of greater importance to social entrepreneurs than their commercial counterparts. In fact, cross-sector interactions, collaboration and participation from different sectors and dynamics of these relationships have been cited as critical aspects of SI (Howaldt et al., 2016, Nicholls et al., 2015b, Phillips et al., 2015, Edwards-Schachter et al., 2012, Nicholls and Murdock, 2012) so, these actions naturally require general human capital skills as described.

Human capital theory is based on its convertibility into economic capital (Becker, 1964) and has strong relationships with social and symbolic capital. First, Anderson and Miller (2003) found that entrepreneurs from higher socioeconomic classes have higher human capital, increasing their social and ultimately their economic capital (profits). Also, previous entrepreneurial experience (in the form of specific human capital) is effective in accessing social networks and developing new social bonds (Mosey and Wright, 2007). More importantly, higher education levels have been linked with volunteering and political activism through reinforcing values that drive individuals to participate in social actions (Estrin et al., 2016, Schwartz, 2010, Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). Indeed, it is well documented that higher levels of human capital positively influence willingness to participate in volunteering (Tang, 2006, Cutler and Hendricks, 2000, Wilson, 2000, Fischer and Schaffer, 1993), which is mentioned as a precious resource for SI when managed well (Eisner et al., 2009). In this way, human capital transforms into social capital through human interactions and collective actions.

Regarding symbolic capital, it has been suggested that an individual's industrial experience (specific human capital) can lead to building a reputation (Pret et al., 2016, Bitektine, 2011, Beverland, 2005). Additionally, in an entrepreneurial context, the ability of the entrepreneur to create a story that evokes interest can facilitate the legitimacy of a new venture identity (O'Connor, 2002, Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). Prior experience may also support the new venture-related stories, thus, a direct relationship can be suggested between entrepreneur's human and symbolic capital (perceived as legitimate) (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009b).

To conclude, human capital theory refers to a human's knowledge, abilities, and expertise. It suggests that one's capabilities can be improved through formal education and training, so it has been seen as an essential resource providing a competitive advantage at individual, organisational and societal levels (Dakhli and De Clercq, 2004, Marvel et al., 2016). SIs need human capital that involves various skills (social, political, cultural), including knowledge management, lobbying, networking, and the ability to mobilise resources (Westley and Antadze, 2010). However, human capital is not only an input for SI, but also an outcome, as SIs often aim to improve human capabilities and empower individuals and groups (Moulaert et al., 2013a, Moulaert et al., 2005, Lumpkin et al., 2018). Thus, the next proposition of the research emerges as follows:

MRT.4: “If interventions concern the development of human capital in addition to their activities, then they are more likely to produce positive results because SIs require social change agents that have a different set of skills (financial, political, technical, social).”

2.3.2.3 Symbolic Capital

Moore and Westley (2011) argued that SIs need different forms of resources in addition to financial and social capital and that many innovations fail due to a lack of awareness, legitimacy, and desire of others; therefore, investment in different resources such as political advocacy, public support, and positive energy is essential. Bourdieu (1986) defined this type of capital as symbolic, which is formed by the recognition of other forms of capital; in other words, economic, cultural, and social capital have the potential to transform into symbolic capital. While economic and human capital can be embodied (for example, land, money, certificates, diplomas), symbolic capital can only exist when other forms of capital are legitimate and give distinction to its owner (Siisiäinen, 2003).

SI ideas inherently contain ‘value’ because of their intentions, but others must recognise this value to receive necessary support throughout the process. Mumford and Moertl (2003) suggested that SI requires persuasion to gain support from powerful actors and to access financial resources, in other words, to attract people who will adopt, sustain, and disseminate their ideas. Likewise, De Clercq and Honig (2011) interpreted symbolic capital as a power that enables actors to realise their visions. They have illustrated this in the case of Terry Fox, the one-legged athlete and the founder of Marathon of Hope, who earned his symbolic capital (in the form of attention from different actors, such as investors and the media) through his disability and the heroism behind his entrepreneurial idea, rather than his business model. Indeed, the media has significant power to advertise SI ideas and to raise awareness (between citizens and potential funders such as governments and foundations) (Antadze and Westley, 2010). Governments can also intervene directly to create public attention to societal problems and solutions through social marketing campaigns on topics such as drug addiction and physical exercise (Westley and Antadze, 2010). These efforts to create symbolic capital are essential for advocating existing SI ideas as well as triggering new ones because, as Nicolopoulou et al. (2017, p. 380) state *“the creation of a common repertoire of knowledge and understanding of the underlying social issues could, in turn, facilitate an*

entrepreneurial response to those associated social issues which can present themselves as key drivers for social innovation”.

Other ways to create symbolic capital for SI and SE are awards or inducement prizes. Empirical findings confirm that prize mechanisms significantly affect technological innovations (Brunt et al., 2012). They are supportive measures for innovation policies that can create intense competition, enable the interaction of different actors and distribute innovation risks, but only if they are well-designed and well-managed (Gök, 2016). Similarly, rewards conditional on delivering an SI idea have also been shown to effectively promote the SI (Pol and Ville, 2009). Indeed, many awards, such as the European Social Innovation Competition, the Cambridge Social Innovation Prize and the Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurship, aim to support innovative ideas that address social challenges and have the potential to create change for the better through practical solutions. These awards bring recognition and honour to the awardees so that the benefits may go beyond financial gains. For example, many social entrepreneurs are unaware of their unique personal traits unless they are recognised (awarded) by prestigious organisations such as Ashoka or the Schwab Foundation (Seelos and Mair, 2005). From this point, a positive relationship can be claimed between symbolic capital and human capital.

Symbolic capital is vital in SI because the distinctive feature of SI lies in its genuine aim of creating social value, and economic capital is only an instrument to achieve its goals. Accordingly, for Bourdieu, the highest value of symbolic capital can be seen only when individuals, through their explicit and credible actions, gain trust that their interests are not in economic profits (BliegeBird and Smith, 2005). Bourdieu (1986) specifically emphasised the strong interplay between social and symbolic capital, suggesting that the symbolic capital of the individual increases proportionally with the social capital possessed. Siisiäinen (2003) describes this strong relation based on two points. First, trust can be used as symbolic power and is, therefore, an important component of symbolic capital and social capital. Second, the effective use of symbolic capital depends on communicative actions that require mutual cognition. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1986) underlined the intertwined relationship between economic and symbolic capital, where one produces the other. For example, he proposed that symbolic power gained through a prestigious spouse is more likely to bring economic capital (Bourdieu, 1990).

As discussed, focusing on the role of symbolic capital in entrepreneurship and innovation studies is based on the understanding that entrepreneurs need to convince others that their ideas will be successful. De Clercq and Voronov (2009a) argued that the legitimacy of an entrepreneur depends on their possession of cultural and symbolic capital. They understood symbolic capital as an entrepreneurial ability to control others and influence their interpretations. Fuller and Tian (2006) investigated this relationship (between social and symbolic capital) based on understanding the convertibility potential of symbolic capital (it can convert into any form of capital, including economic capital). They proposed that small enterprises can increase their symbolic capital through responsible actions and ethical behaviours. They suggested that firms gain prestige and reputation through social actions such as sponsoring local activities or charitable giving. They particularly linked socially responsible acts to symbolic capital as these actions are valued by stakeholders and thus leverage power for the business.

Nicolopoulou (2014) specifically touched on the critical role of social and symbolic capital in identifying and responding to opportunities for social entrepreneurs, following the Bourdieu-based logic of capital and adopting the transformation between different forms of capital. The importance of these types of capital (social and symbolic) is not limited to the recognition of opportunities; rather, the author underlined the need for legitimacy both for the market and for the social entrepreneur's self-confidence and integration into society. The study highlighted symbolic capital based on its intermediary role in functioning other forms of capital (i.e., economic, cultural, and social) through legitimation of their existence. In her later work, Nicolopoulou et al. (2017) spoke of symbolic capital as a worth built by social entrepreneurs participating in SI activities. They particularly underlined the significance of the interaction between different forms of capital, referring to a 'catalytic effect' to reproduce economic and social capital (Nicolopoulou et al., 2017, p. 380). Thus, the proposition regarding symbolic capital emerges as follows:

*MRT.5: "If interventions consider developing symbolic capital in addition to their activities, **then** they are more likely to produce positive results **because** symbolic capital has the potential to be converted into other forms of capital (economic, human, social), which can support the effectiveness of interventions."*

2.3.2.4 Social Capital

Social capital theory has received significant attention from across the social sciences, including sociology (Portes, 1998, Lin, 2002), political science (Putnam, 1993), management (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, Lee, 2009, Felício et al., 2014), and development studies (Woolcock, 1998, Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, Fukuyama, 2002). According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital refers to the networks of social connections available to economic actors based on mutual acquaintance and recognition; it can provide access to other resources (forms of capital) contained within these networks. Bourdieu conceives social capital as convertible into economic capital under certain circumstances, and he has emphasised its convertibility into symbolic capital (in the form of reputation) (Shaw et al., 2008, Siisiäinen, 2003). Additionally, the strong relationship between human capital and social capital is also discussed (Coleman, 1988, Woolcock, 2001) in the literature.

Social capital is a vital component of actor relations in the SI context because, as Putnam stated, it represents “*features of social organisation, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit*” (Putnam, 1993, pp. 1-2). Previous research provides empirical evidence on how social capital positively affects SI through knowledge transfer and being a partial mediator (Weber et al., 2013). Social capital can also be considered an output of SI actions as SI necessarily generates or enhances social capital (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b). Furthermore, SI is seen as a means of producing and maintaining social capital according to development strategies (Moulaert, 2009). As such, there is a strong relationship between social capital and SI, and social capital is an undeniable dimension of SI.

Social capital is embedded within social networks and is comprised of trusting relationships, social links, and norms and values within that society that can benefit individuals even when direct links are not always present between actors (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). Management scholars (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, Inkpen and Tsang, 2005) identify three interrelated dimensions of social capital structural, relational, and cognitive:

1. *Structural* dimension refers to impersonal relationships between actors (i.e., people).
2. *Relational* dimension refers to personal relationships between people that are developed over time with respect or friendship.
3. *Cognitive* dimension represents resources created by shared values among actors.

Others, such as Putnam (2000) and Westlund and Gawell (2012), conceptualised the concept using the *bridging*, *bonding* and *linking* typology, whereas bonding social capital is explained by referring to homogenous groups (networks) such as family and friends, and it is stated that these groups tend to provide exclusive identities. Bridging social capital is defined as open networks encompassing people from different social groups, often connected by ‘bridging’ contacts providing third-party introductions. Shared values and norms are required within bonding social capital, which keeps group members together. However, shared values also allow for the emergence and maintenance of links between different groups under the notion of bridging social capital (Westlund and Gawell, 2012). Lastly, linking social capital describes hierarchical links between actors at different power levels. These approaches to classifying social capital are similar in their main ideas and point to different types of relations between actors.

Trust can take horizontal or vertical forms; the former refers to trust between peers, while the latter refers to trust in superiors (Hughes et al., 2018). Dakhli and De Clercq (2004) define these dimensions as generalised and institutional: generalised trust, both rational and emotional, refers to the interpersonal aspect of people’s trust in others, and institutional trust represents the trust people have in institutions and organisations that is, how effective institutions are in supporting and protecting individuals through established mechanisms such as laws and regulations. Both forms of trust increase interaction between people and organisations, and lead to sharing knowledge and other resources (Dakhli and De Clercq, 2004). Furthermore, trust between parties increases the willingness to cooperate, which might lead to the generation of further trust (Mair and Marti, 2006). In fact, the interplay between actor interactions and trust is critical to understanding social capital dynamics. While social interactions represent the structural dimension, trust is shown as the relational dimension of social capital, and both have a significant impact on resource exchange and innovation (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998).

Although there are many approaches to conceptualising social capital, there is a consensus based on empirical studies that understand social capital as the “*norms and networks that facilitate collective action*” (Woolcock, 2001, p. 70). For example, in the organisational literature, it is conceptualised in terms of network structures that enable access to social resources embedded in networks (Seibert et al., 2001). A network here is defined as “*the pattern of ties linking a defined set of persons or social actors*” (Seibert et al., 2001, p. 220).

Similarly, Putnam (2001) spoke of networks and reciprocity as the main logic of social capital. Such networks can be highly formal such as labour unions, governed by a chairman and a membership principal, or informal, such as an ordinary group of people who meet regularly; both can develop reciprocity and create gains for their members. Knowledge sharing is the most frequently mentioned benefit of these networks (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, Adler and Kwon, 2002), but trust (i.e., social capital) between actors is again critical for actors' willingness to share knowledge (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005). Previous research (Cowan and Jonard, 2004) has also shown how the structure of networks influences the diffusion of innovations; for example, weak ties within networks can facilitate global diffusion, while strong ties enable small groups of agents to transmit their information fully. There is also substantial research in the entrepreneurship literature discussing access to other resources through social networks (Anderson et al., 2007, Casson and Giusta, 2007, Kim and Aldrich, 2005). Therefore, social networks have become an important dimension of social capital because of their intertwined relationships.

SIs are based on the collective actions of actors within a network of shared interests; therefore, social capital in the form of social networks is essential for realising SIs (Neumeier, 2017a, Phillips et al., 2015). Formal and informal social networks facilitate SI processes by enabling cross-sector interactions and rapid dissemination of practices (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b, Howaldt and Schwarz, 2011). Furthermore, actors become more agentic through emotional connections formed when communicating with others (Van Wijk et al., 2019) and coordinate by collectively interpreting the relevant social context (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). In this way, reciprocity occurs between social capital and social networks.

Moore and Westley (2011) investigated whether social networks effectively address complex social problems and create systemic change. Considering the time and effort required for networks to be functional, they emphasised the role of agency, which requires specific skills such as relationship building and network recharging. Concerning that, community groups and local social networks are considered facilitators in SI processes. These support external intervention efforts, particularly in resource-poor environments, through the social capital they contain. However, the importance of their role must be formally recognised by funders, policymakers and practitioners, considering that groups have different effects, especially regarding gender (Campbell et al., 2013). These organisations can disseminate knowledge and play a key role in community involvement in rural areas (Liu and Besser, 2003). For example, Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) examined interactive processes in the local networks in a rural

community and found that such interactions depend on and contribute to social capital. While these micro-level communications have also been associated with broader social, civic, and economic outcomes, this study emphasised the existence of trust as a requirement for meaningful communication.

Social networks are the primary source of social capital, but the outcomes can be positive in the form of trust, tolerance and cooperation or negative depending on the circumstances (Woolcock, 2001). Although social capital is mostly understood as goodwill and good feelings, such as trust and sympathy among people (Adler and Kwon, 2002), it is not necessarily used for good purposes or to generate good consequences; inequalities or discrimination may be embedded in social networks in a way that prevents others from taking advantage of it (Putnam, 1993, 2001). There is also a risk of destroying existing social networks with some government interventions such as urban transformation and public housing projects (Putnam, 1993). Thus, the proposition about social capital emerges as follows:

*MRT.6: “If interventions aim to develop and nurture social capital in addition to their activities, **then** they are more likely to produce positive results **because** social capital has the potential to significantly facilitate or conversely hinder SI processes depending on trust and networks between actors.”*

2.3.3 The Role of Actors and Actor Interactions

Innovation is considered as a learning-based process with a particular emphasis on social interactions that refer to the relationship between different actors and social practices (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017a). The mission-oriented approach to innovation policies that have become popular over the past decade has addressed major challenges that are complex in nature and require different actors to work together in new ways (Mazzucato, 2018). Actor interactions thus play an important role in innovation ecosystems, defined as multisectoral collaborative arrangements in which organisations merge their offerings to achieve co-created value that they cannot create alone (Adner and Kapoor, 2010, Adner, 2006). Despite the availability of different definitions, they agree that engaging in collaborative activities towards a common goal and value co-creation is typical within such ecosystems (Hakala et al., 2020, Jütting, 2020). Likewise, most of the work within the field of

SI interprets the concept as restructuring social relations and creating new social practices through new forms of collaboration between actors (e.g., Mumford, 2002, Howaldt and Schwarz, 2011, Murray et al., 2010, Moulaert et al., 2013a, Klievink and Janssen, 2014, Horgan and Dimitrijević, 2020) (see also Table 3).

SI refers to “*new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships and collaborations*” (Murray et al., 2010, p. 3), and “*might involve in the creation of new processes and procedures for structuring collaborative work, the introduction of new social practices in a group, or the development of new business practices*” (Mumford, 2002, p. 253). Indeed, an innovative strategy focused on creating social value must aim to reconfigure social relations in order to create a social innovation activity, in other words, changing, to some extent, how people interact with each other on a particular issue (Pue et al., 2015). This indicates that SI processes require transforming traditional practices and building new relationships with different stakeholders (Mulgan et al., 2007, Phillips et al., 2008). This change in social relations (Nicholls and Murdock, 2012) which can be understood as a process dimension of SI, involves interactions between actors and mobilising resources through these relationships. Similarly, outcome dimensions refer to profound changes (Westley and Antadze, 2010), such as new governance structures or collaborations (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017a, Moulaert and Van Dyck, 2013, Neumeier, 2017b). As the distinction between these dimensions is vague, with actors playing important roles in both, SI can be understood to be an interactive process, with the SI system consisting of a community of social enterprises, social entrepreneurs, practitioners, and other institutions working collaboratively to address social needs and to re-shape society more positively (Phillips et al., 2015).

Cross-sector partnerships, also known as intersectoral partnerships, strategic partnerships, and social alliances (Yaziji and Doh, 2009), refer to inter-organisational relationships in which parties combine their resources and competencies to address both social and economic goals (Murphy et al., 2012, Austin, 2000, King, 2007). However, collaborating with others also can generate disempowering situations such as mission drift and decreased autonomy (Pel et al., 2020). Fundamental differences in missions (Kanter, 1999, Rondinelli and London, 2003), goals, and governance structures between cross-sector organisations can create difficulties in building alliances (Rivera-Santos and Rufin, 2010). Moreover, the contrast between the institutional logic of the private and the third sectors can make relationships more vulnerable in any conflict situation (Le Ber and Branzei, 2010). This issue has the risk to limit knowledge

acquisition between partners but can be overcome by improving relationships (Murphy et al., 2012). Conflicts of interest can also lead to a decreased commitment in partners, which can negatively affect the relationship over time (Doz, 1996). These fundamental differences can create barriers to coordination, which is an integral part of cooperation, but coordination can still be an issue even when actors have common interests. For this reason, coordination requires a division of labour and good communication skills (Gulati et al., 2012). Therefore, it is helpful if actors can acknowledge differences in working processes to minimize disruptions in these cross-sectoral partnerships (Lind et al., 2022). Such partnerships, between different sectors, also require complex governance arrangements in terms of sharing costs, risks, responsibilities and accountability (Klievink and Janssen, 2014).

Kolk and Lenfant (2015) explored the role of cross-sectoral collaborations in SI in a conflict-affected context (i.e., the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Their study found tangible positive results, including access to markets, increased incomes, and improved functioning in cooperatives. Although none of the partners tended to improve the legal system, new governance models did emerge due to institutional vulnerabilities. Partnerships also led to feelings of togetherness, reducing tensions between formerly hostile groups. However, it should be noted that both success and failure in cross-sector partnerships can be temporary (Beckman and Haunschild, 2002), as the path to progress is often non-linear and requires constant adjustments (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994).

Despite the potential benefits of collaboration, when actors in different roles engage through mutual social-value-oriented goals, power problems can arise regarding the balance of power between the parties (Lind et al., 2022, Selsky and Parker, 2010). For example, trust can diminish when one partner perceives the other to have significantly more power and the potential to influence their processes (Moore et al., 2012a). Chen et al. (2020) discuss this power inequality in dialogues between organisations and suggest creating shared values to improve relationships and achieve mutual satisfaction from all involved parties. Austin (2000) described three types or stages of collaborations as *philanthropic*, *transactional*, and *integrative*, all of which differ in their functions. Philanthropic refers to the ordinary relationships between charitable donors and fund recipients; transactional refers to specific activities that occur with explicit exchange of resources (e.g., contracting for the provision of services); and integrative occurs when the relationship becomes well established with both parties merging their activities and missions. This integrative form represents the highest level

of collaboration approximating a joint venture and strategic partnership (Austin, 2000), and may be the least likely to experience power issues.

Table 3: Reference points of SI literature about actor interactions

Author(s)	Emphasis on Actor Interactions and Collaborations
Mumford (2002, p. 253)	<i>“[...] the generation and implementation of new ideas about people and their interactions within a social system.”</i> <i>“[...] social innovation might involve in the creation of new processes and procedures for structuring collaborative work, the introduction of new social practices in a group, or the development of new business practices.”</i>
Howaldt and Schwarz (2011, p. 210)	<i>“[...] new combination and/or new configuration of social practices in certain areas of action of social contexts prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors in an intentionally targeted manner with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices.”</i>
Murray et al. (2010, p. 3)	<i>“[...] new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships and collaborations.”</i>
Moulaert et al. (2013a, p. 17-18)	<i>“SI is very strongly a matter of process innovation of changes and the dynamics of social relations including power relations.”</i> <i>“SI also concerns collaboratively imagining, mapping, designing, constructing views of the future and strategies to achieve those views.”</i>
Klievink and Janssen (2014, p. 243)	<i>“[...] social innovations can be seen as processes that restructure the relationships between actors and introduce new social practices, specifically new modes of collaborations. ”</i>
Horgan and Dimitrijević (2020, p. 2)	<i>“Social innovation is something that is collaborative meaning that it requires input from a number of (often isolated) actors, sectors, domains or knowledge areas working together towards a common goal.”</i>

Source: Author’s own elaboration

The intention of collaborating actors may not always be common, even when they come together for the purpose of SI. On the one hand, the motivation of social actors (NGOs and social enterprises) is mainly to acquire credibility and legitimacy, and to access to other resources, especially financial ones (Sanzo-Pérez et al., 2022). On the other hand, companies’ motivation is mostly for increasing reputation and image making, along with other benefits such as improving corporate values, skills development, technology testing and investor appreciation (Austin, 2000). Indeed, private actors can sometimes be reputation driven as collaboration can provide them with a competitive advantage, especially when they seek to expand their operations in new environments, such as developing relationships with local

actors to understand the cultural context to strengthen marketing strategies (Hess et al., 2002). For example, Danone, a multinational food company, leveraged local resources while collaborating with the Grameen Group in Bangladesh to diminish malnutrition by providing affordable and nutritious yoghurt (Murphy et al., 2012). More recent studies (Riandita, 2022, Lind et al., 2022) suggest that the primary motivation of corporate firms to involve in relevant interventions is based on learning and competence-building.

‘Matching’ is another critical element in actor interactions and collaborations. Tsoi (2010) explored the cooperation of NGOs and multinational (private) companies within China and revealed problems, including not being equal partners in knowledge and experience; this study also highlighted the lack of trust in companies, suggesting that NGOs do not trust private organisations. As diversity in people’s knowledge and experience can support innovation processes, interactions and communication can be hindered by high inequality with respect to these resources (Lundvall, 1992). Indeed, different capability bases have the potential to create difficulties and push partners further apart (Le Ber and Branzei, 2010).

The development of trust-based relationships and the creation of a trust-based environment are shown to be important in the organisational context (Hughes et al., 2018), making trust critical in interactions between organisational actors. Rondinelli and London (2003) mentioned the tension between NGOs and private firms, explaining this is mainly due to differences in goals, expectations, and governance. They also linked this mutual mistrust to inherited bias and lack of experience working with each other. Borrowing from Long and Arnold (1995), they identified three psychological barriers to potential alliances: *“mistrust, fear of loss of control, and misunderstandings of the motivations and intent of each of the partners”* (Rondinelli and London, 2003, p. 63). However, they added that some degree of initial distrust can be tolerated when there is less need for knowledge transfer. As expected, social capital in the form of trust is a key component of successful collaborations. Lyon (2012) noted that collaborations involve an element of risk, as they require the parties to be transparent in sharing information (in some cases, weaknesses may need to be admitted). Therefore, trust exists when there is confidence that other parties are not acting opportunistically. He also stressed the importance of informal relationships and face-to-face interactions to build trust. Table 4 interprets the dynamics in actor interactions discussed so far.

Table 4: The interpretation of actor dynamics, challenges, and solutions

Main Challenge(s)	References	Potential Solutions	References
<p><i>Differences</i> in missions, motivations, capabilities, institutional logics, and governance structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limit the knowledge acquisition between partners. • reduce the commitment of partners. • lead to cooperation problems. 	Rivera-Santos and Rufin (2010), (Kanter, 1999), Rondinelli and London (2003), Le Ber and Branzei (2010), Murphy et al. (2012), Doz (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improving relationships. -Acknowledge the differences. -Governance arrangements. -Division of labour. -Good communication skills. 	Murphy et al. (2012), Lind et al. (2022), Klievink and Janssen (2014), Gulati et al. (2012)
<p><i>Power inequality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduces trust. 	Lind et al. (2022), Selsky and Parker (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creation of shared values together. -Integrative forms of relationships (merge in activities and missions). 	Chen et al. (2020), Austin (2000)
<p><i>Lack of trust</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to lack of experience in working with each other, or • psychological barriers (<i>mistrust, fear of loss of control, and misunderstandings</i>). • hinders transparency. 	Moore et al. (2012a), Rondinelli and London (2003), Lyon (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promote informal relationships and face-to-face interactions. -Promote interactions between previously disconnected actors and increase social capital. 	Lyon (2012), Moore et al. (2012b)

Source: Author's own elaboration

Another point relevant to actor interactions is citizen participation, as “*SI also mobilises each citizen to become an active part of the innovation process*” (European Commission, 2010). Indeed, design processes need to be dynamic and include different groups of citizens to identify and design innovative solutions (Manzini, 2014). Voorberg et al. (2015) discussed the active involvement of citizens in different stages of public innovation and identified their main types of participation as co-implementer, co-designer, and initiator. They also stressed the role of social capital and trust in developing commitment in citizens. Interaction between previously disconnected actors and increasing social capital within these groups can support SI by creating new insights, new partnerships, and better understanding of complex social issues (Moore et al., 2012b). Thus, the next proposition emerges as follows:

MRT.7: “*If interventions promote interactions between previously disconnected actors at community, organisational or sectoral levels, by focusing on building social capital simultaneously, then they are likely to produce positive results because interactions can lead to new partnerships, exchange of knowledge, a better understanding of social issues, and an increase in social capital.*”

The actors involved in SI processes are mostly mentioned under specific categories, including public and private organisations, the third-sector, and non-state actors (e.g., Antadze and Westley, 2012, Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017a, Mazzucato, 2018). Although these categories capture all relevant actors at some level, there are, however, other roles that may require special attention due to their active participation in SI interventions. First, international organisations (IOs) with different governance structures (e.g., NGOs, development banks, and private foundations) play a significant role in SI as they provide substantial resources and implement different interventions globally (Ravazzoli and Valero, 2020, Antadze and Westley, 2010). Second, higher education institutions have the potential to contribute to the SI system; however, relatively little attention is paid to their participation (Bayuo et al., 2020, Benneworth et al., 2020) even though the number of SI units and academic programmes is increasing (e.g., Stanford University, the University of Oxford, London School of Economics and Political Science). As a result, the actors mentioned in this research are considered as public, private and third-sector actors. However, as IOs and higher education institutions have also been assessed as relevant actors, the section will continue by discussing the literature on these institutional actors.

2.3.3.1 The Role of International Organisations

International organisations (IOs) mentioned here primarily refer to large non-governmental organisations, such as Oxfam, BRAC, CARE, Save the Children and Action Aid, but also refer to non-profits, private foundations, intergovernmental and developmental organisations, such as the European Union, World Economic Forum, USAID, the United Nations' agencies (e.g., UNDP, UNICEF, ILO), Ashoka, Skoll and Gates Foundations. They carry out programmes and provide support in multiple countries to eradicate poverty and/or to drive social and economic growth. Many programmes launched by international organisations and the United Nations fund and promote different forms of SI (Ravazzoli and Valero, 2020). The prominent roles of international NGOs are delivering essential services to communities in need, organising policy advocacy activities and public campaigns for supporting change, but they are also active in other roles like emergency response, environmental activism, conflict resolution, human rights and democracy-building (Lewis et al., 2020).

IOs are at the centre of global governance debates as they can provide mechanisms to manage complex interactions between countries, and they support public and private actors in their collective action to improve individual and community well-being (Barnett and Finnemore, 2005). In the globalising world, governments are delegating their powers to IOs that differ from their design and structure (Zweifel, 2006). However, the international system is semi-structured with different levels of cooperation and competition, shaped by power distribution, and lacks robust enforcement mechanisms (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, 2006). IOs are also critical actors in SI interventions (Rana et al., 2014) and SI initiatives can overcome political, social, and economic instabilities and scale-up their initiatives if they are able to mobilise international actors (Oeij et al., 2019). Private actors, mainly in the form of foundations, conduct international programmes and/or fund SI activities mainly for philanthropic purposes. The proactive actions of foundations and venture philanthropists advance the relationship between innovations and system awareness (Antadze and Westley, 2010), thus contribute to the improvement of the SI field. Yet, international actors need legitimacy among both elites and citizens to have the government support they need to develop new rules and policy goals (Tallberg and Zürn, 2019, Sommerer and Agné, 2018) that can ultimately lead to social change. Although the power of foundations might be controversial as it is relatively unregulated and unaccountable, they gain power from their semi-official status, informal links, and collaboration with governments and non-profits (Roelofs, 2007).

Despite the critical roles attributed to them, the views and evidence for the impact of these organisations are controversial. For example, Tallberg et al. (2018) have found some evidence that the involvement of NGOs in international organisations helps to increase their impact because linkages and collaborations can have a greater impact by pooling resources, thereby achieving greater effectiveness than they could achieve on their own. Likewise, Gaetz et al. (2021) have demonstrated the effectiveness of international engagement in innovation processes by showing how collaborations and good relationships enhance SI by learning from others and adapting that learning to the local context. However, others (Bhatt and Ahmad, 2017, De Wit and Berner, 2009) argued that international development programmes are inefficient based on their motivations, which can represent the logic of patronage, and that can hinder progress rather than promote empowerment and change. Moreover, the literature provides evidence that international NGOs damage relationships and create distrust in partners, regarding highly bureaucratic official monitoring procedures and strictness in performance indicators (Mawdsley* et al., 2005). About this Lyon (2012) suggested that international NGOs need to build trust through face-to-face relationships where they operate.

Hulme (2016) interprets today's large international NGOs as elite-focused, disconnected from their societies and rarely successful in creating change in the public. Others (Lewis et al., 2020, Collier, 2008) similarly discussed their credibility and are sceptical about their practical solutions to complex social problems.

Greenwood et al. (2011) discussed the institutional complexities that cause conflicting demands and requirements. They argued that some organisations can be isolated from institutional pressures due to certain characteristics, such as governance, identity, and structure. It can be interpreted that IOs may be able to act more flexibly and efficiently than local actors, particularly in environments with complex institutions. They create funding channels for deprived areas and raise awareness of social issues using their reputation and networks, and thus they can put pressure on governments and relevant institutions. Indeed, the involvement of international actors in conflict-affected areas can be influential, especially where governments are failing in their responsibilities due to their active role in the conflict situation (Harvey, 2013). However, such fragile contexts are characterised by institutional gaps that cause a lack of social capital and good governance (Kolk and Lenfant, 2015). Yet, IOs have also shown to be influential in creating social capital in extreme operating environments (i.e., resource-scarce and uncertain) by connecting different actors (Barin Cruz et al., 2016). Thus, another proposition emerges as follows:

MRT.8: “If large international organisations, including non-governmental, intergovernmental, and developmental organisations, and private foundations, participate in SI interventions, then these interventions are more likely to produce positive results because these organisations have different identities and governance structures that enable them to overcome institutional barriers in challenging contexts.”

2.3.3.2 The Role of Higher Education Institutions

Traditionally, universities are associated with teaching and research. However, a structural change has occurred in recent decades, meaning their dominant ideologies have shifted, giving them an organisational identity with new hierarchies and rationalities (De Boer et al., 2007). Following this transformation, a third mission has emerged, calling universities to create wider social benefits and engage social and economic actors (Cunha and Benneworth, 2013). This

third mission of the universities is interpreted differently between countries in terms of scope and meaning (Göransson and Brundenius, 2010). Overall, cooperation with other institutions and collective actions are emphasised, but in some contexts, technology transfer is the main activity carried out under the third mission (Arocena and Sutz, 2011).

Universities could indeed play a key role in tackling social problems, challenging the traditional role of the public sector with a new learning system and innovative approach that can help potential change-makers pursue new solutions (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013). Universities are rich in human capital with their academic staff and students that can be mobilised to contribute to SI activities, and they can act as intermediaries transmitting knowledge between sectors (Matheson, 2008). They can also take an active role in SI by conducting their activities with strong social commitment and building connections with different actor levels (Arocena and Sutz, 2011). For example, social innovation centres established within many universities (e.g., Stanford University and Cambridge University) implement various projects, create new platforms for actors to interact, and advocate SI for institutional-level change. Moreover, more than forty universities were joined in the ‘Ashoka Changemaker Campus’, a network that promotes SI across universities and recognises higher education institutions as change-makers.

Benneworth and Cunha (2015) identify *knowledge generation* as the main contribution universities make to SI, based on their ability to provide existing knowledge, and create new knowledge that can help social actors develop solutions. They discussed how universities support SI for urban development, and they suggested three contributions made by universities: tacit knowledge, material resources, and symbolic legitimacy. Indeed, they highlight the bridging role of universities as they can persuade third parties and cooperate with social partners to create new knowledge. Additionally, they can provide support through facilities such as libraries and laboratories. It is also suggested that while universities’ involvement in urban development activities supports their research and teaching positively, their interests as institutions may limit their actions and hinder their capacity to challenge power relations.

Education, the main activity of universities, is tackled by social innovation education (SIE) and social entrepreneurship education (SEE). Although the literature discusses this mainly in terms of SEE, there are few attempts to articulate SIE, which has been defined as “*the complex process of developing graduates who aspire to change the world for the better, regardless of*

career path. These individuals are knowledgeable, socially, and ethically responsible, as well as emotionally intelligent innovators, leaders and communicators” (Rivers et al., 2015, p. 3). While the university sector became more involved in SEE and SIE in the early 2000s, the first course was delivered at Harvard University in the mid-1990s, followed by others at Stanford, Columbia, Berkeley, Geneva, and Oxford (Brock and Steiner, 2009). Similar to SIE, the main purpose of SEE is to train students with specific skills and mindsets to develop innovative and sustainable business models and to work in partnership with public and private sector actors to create social benefit (Kim et al., 2020, Jensen, 2014). Although establishing social enterprises might not necessarily be the main concern in SEE (Tracey and Phillips, 2007), it improves the students’ understanding on social issues and increases their intentions to start social enterprises through empirical learning processes (Hockerts, 2018).

Even though the solution to some social problems necessarily requires advanced technologies and/or scientific methods, many can still be addressed with new methods of cooperation, organisation, and management (Murray et al., 2010). As such, business schools play a critical role in promoting social innovation and social entrepreneurship with their academic programmes, but these programmes must be tailored to social entrepreneurs’ specific needs and challenges (Lawrence et al., 2012). There are also other challenges in SEE about balancing social and commercial mindsets (Tracey and Phillips, 2007). Still, the literature suggests that SEE is essential for sustainable social innovations and has positive impacts not only at the organisational and environmental levels but also at the individual level through personal development (Dobele, 2016, Hockerts, 2018, Jensen, 2014).

SI is on the higher education policy agendas, with the potential to contribute to democracy in some specific contexts, as in Latin America (Blass and Hayward, 2014). Jover et al. (2017) discussed the concept in this context and demonstrated the potential for universities to play a role in social inclusion and sustainable development. They identified several barriers, such as narrow understandings, lack of explicit strategies and commitment at the policy level. This suggests that despite universities’ potential to be influential actors in the SI ecosystem, this requires some prerequisites, including the commitment of senior academic staff, effective networking, and collaboration with government, businesses, and other higher education institutions (Jover et al., 2017). Based on the existing knowledge shared so far about the role of higher education institutions, another proposition emerges as follows:

MRT.9: “*If higher education institutions participate in SI interventions through their academic programmes, then these interventions are more likely to produce positive results because these organisations are key actors in knowledge generation and dissemination as well as developing the human capital that SI needs.*”

2.3.4 Social Entrepreneurship vs Social Innovation

Entrepreneurship has long been central to economic growth debates (Carree and Thurik, 2010, Baumol, 2011, Audretsch et al., 2006, Wennekers and Thurik, 1999). However, innovation and venture creation are no longer sufficient to meet today’s societal challenges (Zahra and Wright, 2016). Therefore, mission-oriented (Mazzucato, 2018, Edquist and Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2012) and challenge-oriented (Boon and Edler, 2018) innovation policies for addressing societal problems have started to be discussed. Regarding this, social entrepreneurship (SE) is a promising global phenomenon that has been on the rise over the past few decades, taking its roots from 18th-century reformists, such as Robert Owen, a Welsh manufacturer and leader of the cooperative movement who worked to improve conditions for factory workers, among other social objectives. Although its roots can be traced back over a hundred years (Dart, 2004), researchers started to discuss the concept more comprehensively in the 1990s (e.g., Dees, 1998, Leadbeater, 1997), there is still no unified understanding of the subject (Smith and Stevens, 2010), instead debates involve ideological conflicts (Mair, 2020) and result in the ambiguity of the subject matter (Chliova et al., 2020, Cunha et al., 2015, Bacq and Janssen, 2011, Short et al., 2009). As a result of variations in conceptualisations, the relevant literature provides an extensive review of the definitions (Dacin et al., 2010, Zahra et al., 2009) that are often addressed by the two main concepts: entrepreneurship and social mission (Santos, 2012).

The concept combines its roots, namely ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘social’, and is defined as an “*entrepreneurial activity with an embedded social purpose*” (Austin et al., 2006, p. 1). Despite the diversity of approaches, a common focus within definitions is *social value creation* (e.g., Bacq and Janssen, 2011, Di Domenico et al., 2010, Certo and Miller, 2008, Peredo and McLean, 2006). Social value is often about fulfilling of basic human needs such as food, clean water, housing, education and health services (Certo and Miller, 2008). It can also be defined as creating benefits or reducing costs for society that go beyond the private interests, and general market gains through deliberate efforts (Phills et al., 2008). Furthermore, the term

social usually refers to standard values, but it is important to note that standard values have different meanings in different settings, making them controversial (Ziegler, 2010). Still, the mission of creating social value can be considered a prerequisite for SE, but Choi and Majumdar (2014) suggest that there are some other features required to qualify an activity as SE, such as the (social) entrepreneur, the organisation (social enterprise), commercial activities (market orientation), and social innovation.

The traditional literature describes SE as visionary individuals who have little resources and aim for social change (e.g., Yunus, 2010, Novkovic, 2008). However, the process also includes different types of actors (Cunha et al., 2015) and collaborations between public institutions, private investors and citizens (Van Ham, 2011). Therefore, these individualist approaches contrast with the idea that emphasises on collective and interactive actions (Phillips et al., 2015, Dawson and Daniel, 2010). From this point of view, the term social entrepreneur refers to individuals who start enterprises to pursue social goals rather than personal profit; but the concept also includes work carried out by community, voluntary, public, and private organisations, that are similarly driven by social purposes rather than for-profit objectives (Shaw and Carter, 2007). SE can be seen “*within or can span the non-profit, business, or governmental sectors*” (Austin et al., 2006, p. 2). As a result, many researchers conceptualise SE as referring to non-profits (i.e. social enterprises) seeking new ways of funding through business activities and management strategies to create social value (Certo and Miller, 2008, Austin et al., 2006, Nicholls, 2010b, Boschee and McClurg, 2003, Lasprogata and Cotten, 2003), others interpret it as an attempt to address major social issues and bring about social change (Nicholls, 2008b, Mair and Marti, 2006, Alvord et al., 2004) regardless of commercial activities and earned income are involved or not (Dees, 1998, Martin and Osberg, 2007); or as organisations serving people experiencing poverty (Seelos and Mair, 2005). Furthermore, some define socially responsible activities by for-profit enterprises (Baron, 2007) through cross-sector partnerships as SE (Sagawa and Segal, 2000). As seen, the literature covers many approaches which have fundamental differences. Dacin et al. (2011) summarise the main focuses of these approaches in four key dimensions: individual characteristics, the mission of the social entrepreneur, the field of activity, and resources and processes.

Previous research provides a variety of definitions for SE that focus on the combination of different dimensions such as innovation, social value creation, opportunity recognition, social change, characteristics of the social entrepreneur, mobilisation of resources, and operational boundaries of the activities (e.g., Zahra et al., 2009, Certo and Miller, 2008, Austin et al., 2006,

Alvord et al., 2004). While this study acknowledges these definitions (see Table 5 below), the concept can be defined for this thesis as “*the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyse social change and/or address social needs*” (Mair and Marti, 2006, p. 37). However, it is important to note that there is no single type of social entrepreneur (Certo and Miller, 2008); instead, a social entrepreneur can be an organisation (non-profit or for-profit, new or existing), alliance of organisations, community group or network (Light, 2006).

Zahra et al. (2009) provide a useful classification that groups social entrepreneurs into three categories: *social bricoleur*, *social constructionist*, and *social engineer*. According to this approach, social bricoleurs address small-scale social issues focusing on local needs and allowing for rapid response. They have local knowledge, but this locality can constrain expanding geographically. Social constructionists seek to fill the gaps created by market failures for underserved communities. However, they need significant human and financial resources to fulfil their mission, and they must be institutionalised to provide a sustainable solution to an ongoing social problem. Finally, social engineers identify systemic problems that cause failures to meet important social needs and seek to replace them with new, more effective systems. This group, which can be seen as social change agents, can be considered as illegitimate by the established actors, which may limit their ability to access traditional resources. They emphasise how these different types of entrepreneurs differ in recognising opportunities and combining resources.

Another conceptual point about SE is that social entrepreneurs are often compared to their commercial counterparts (e.g., Bacq et al., 2013, Williams and Nadin, 2012, Austin et al., 2006). Although there is an argument that SE is no different from traditional entrepreneurship, based on the understanding that any successful entrepreneurial activity creates social value directly or indirectly (Mair, 2006) and they have some strong similarities, such as both types of entrepreneurs need a context that includes opportunity, and some personal skills to identify and pursue that opportunity (Martin and Osberg, 2007). *Mission* is the main difference between them (Leadbeater, 1997) as social entrepreneurs focus on unmet social needs and aim to create social value (Peredo and McLean, 2006). Additionally, social entrepreneurs can be characterised by strong ethical values, which cannot be claimed for their business counterparts (Shaw and Carter, 2007). Apart from their motivation, they also differ in terms of performance measures and resource mobilisation (Austin et al., 2006). For instance, the typical metrics used to measure the financial gain of business ventures are not suitable for the social counterparts.

Indeed, performance measures in SE are “*less standardised and more organisation specific*” (Certo and Miller, 2008, p. 268). SE initiatives also have difficulty paying employees, and therefore, often have substantial nonpecuniary human resources (Austin et al., 2006). Likewise, their potential investors are generally different because commercial entrepreneurs attract venture capitalists with the allure of potential returns, but social enterprises require financial resources primarily concerned with social value (Certo and Miller, 2008). As a result, public funds for social impact and philanthropic organisations (Ashoka, Skoll Foundation, Acumen Fund etc.) become primary funding sources for social entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, they need trading activities for financial sufficiency rather than relying solely on charitable donations (Shaw and Carter, 2007).

Financial sustainability brings the issue of economic resources of SE to the fore. Social entrepreneurs are seen to be in an advantageous for some (Dees, 2007) based on their freedom to act and potential to access private resources. However, more pragmatic approaches (e.g., Boschee, 2001) emphasise generating *earned income* to create social outcomes. The dichotomy between social and economic outcomes needs attention because economic value inherently brings social value through better allocation of resources and thus improves the welfare of society (Santos, 2012). As a matter of fact, the economic value of social entrepreneurship initiatives should not be underestimated because financial outcomes are critical for achieving the intended outcomes, the viability of activities over time and the sustainability of SE, especially in resource-constrained environments (Dacin et al., 2011, Dwivedi and Weerawardena, 2018). At this point, it would be sensible to move the discussion to the concept of social enterprise based on earned income strategies and economic outcomes.

Table 5: Overview of social entrepreneurship definitions and their focused concepts

Author(s)	Definition	Focus
Zahra et al. (2009, p. 519)	<i>"[...] the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organisations in an innovative manner."</i>	Innovativeness, opportunity recognition, operational boundaries.
Yunus (2010, p. 4)	<i>"Social entrepreneurship relates to a person. It describes an initiative of social consequences created by an entrepreneur with a social vision. This initiative may be a non-economic initiative, a charity initiative, or a business initiative with or without personal profit."</i>	Individualistic skills, operational boundaries.
Austin et al. (2006, pp. 1-2)	<i>"[...] entrepreneurial activity with an embedded social purpose." "[...] innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business, or government sectors."</i>	Innovativeness, social value creation, operational boundaries.
Certo and Miller (2008, p. 267)	<i>"Social entrepreneurship involves the recognition, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities that result in social value — the basic and long-standing needs of society."</i>	Opportunity recognition, social value creation.
Mair and Marti (2006, p. 37)	<i>"[...] a process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyse social change and/or address social needs."</i>	Innovativeness, opportunity recognition, social change, mobilisation of resources.
Martin and Osberg (2007, p. 39)	<i>"The social entrepreneur [...] targets an unfortunate but stable equilibrium that causes the neglect, marginalisation, or suffering of a segment of humanity; [...] and aims for and ultimately affects the establishment of a new stable equilibrium that secures permanent benefit for the targeted group and society at large".</i>	Individualistic skills, social change.
Bacq and Janssen (2011, p. 374)	<i>"[...] the process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities aiming at social value creation by means of commercial, market-based activities and of the use of a wide range of resources."</i>	Opportunity recognition, social value creation, resource mobilisation, income generation.
Peredo and McLean (2006, p. 64)	<i>"Social entrepreneurship is exercised where some person or persons (1) aim either exclusively or in some prominent way to create social value of some kind and pursue that goal through some combination of (2) recognizing and exploiting opportunities to create this value, (3) employing innovation, (4) tolerating risk and (5) declining to accept limitations in available resources."</i>	Innovativeness, opportunity recognition, social value creation, resource mobilisation.

Alvord et al. (2004, p. 262)	<i>"[...] social entrepreneurship as a catalyst for social transformation [...] that creates innovative solutions to immediate social problems and mobilises the ideas, capacities, resources, and social arrangements required for sustainable social transformations."</i>	Innovativeness, sustainable social change, resource mobilisation.
Murphy and Coombes (2009, p. 326)	<i>"[...] the creation and undertaking of a venture intended to promote a specific social purpose or cause in a context of mobilisation."</i>	New venture creation, social value creation, mobilisation of resources.
Light (2006, p. 50)	<i>"A social entrepreneur is an individual, group, network, organisation, or alliance of organisations that seeks sustainable, large-scale change through pattern-breaking ideas in what or how governments, non-profits, and businesses do to address significant social problems."</i>	Innovativeness, sustainable social change, operational boundaries.

Source: Author's own elaboration

The UK Government defined social enterprise as *"a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders"* (DTI, 2002, p. 7). Defourny and Nyssens (2006) similarly mention the material interest of founders and investors, but in their approach, the high level of autonomy in democratic decision-making is also emphasised. Social enterprises are often hybrid and vary in their business models, ownership, and financing structures, but the primacy of social over other goals differentiates their activities (Zahra and Wright, 2016). Despite the fact that not all social enterprises are innovative (de Souza João-Roland and Granados, 2023) or socially entrepreneurial (Solis-Navarrete et al., 2021), it is widely assumed that a social enterprise is mainly created by a social entrepreneur (Leadbeater, 2007) because the concept of social enterprise combines an entrepreneurial mindset (such as business discipline, innovation, and determination) with social activism and a social mission (Cunha et al., 2015, Dees, 1998). Even though its borders have been expanded by including profit-oriented organisations that combine business ideas with social purposes (Westley and Antadze, 2010, Dees and Anderson, 2003) and tend to reduce their profits significantly while pursuing social goals (Peredo and McLean, 2006); the main characteristic that distinguishes social enterprises from other mainstream organisations lies in how they use their surpluses (Shaw and de Bruin, 2013). They earn profit by operating in the social economy with an innovative and entrepreneurial approach and then use their profit not for their owners but to achieve their goals and create social impact (European Commission, 2015). Social economy (sometimes used synonymously with the terms third sector, voluntary sector, solidarity economy, and non-profit sector) refers to the mobilisation of financial resources and different forms of activities to meet social needs, carried out neither by for-profit

businesses nor by state actors (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005). The boundaries of the social economy include not only social enterprises but also the activities of other forms of organisations, such as cooperatives, associations and foundations, that aim to benefit their members or the wider community rather than generate profits for capital investors (Defourny and Nyssens, 2006).

The rise of social enterprises due to driving forces has been observed in different contexts. In Europe, for example, new forms of enterprises for work integration were established without any legal scheme first, and then laws were introduced to promote those enterprises; and in the US, the activities of foundations that provide funding and visibility to social entrepreneurs have significantly influenced the development of the field (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010). Likewise, in the United Kingdom, a new collective term, the third sector, emerged in the 1990s to include the activities of non-profit organisations, charities, communities and volunteer groups, and these organisations have received substantial government support since then (Haugh and Kitson, 2007) which has helped them legitimise their activities. Indeed, social enterprises need organisational legitimacy, that is, their mission and activities to be perceived as appropriate by the relevant stakeholders to gain credibility and access to resources (Luke and Chu, 2013). However, it should be noted that legitimacy can cause pressure for an expected behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and, therefore, have the potential to limit their activities.

It is also important to mention that the terms social enterprise, social entrepreneurship and social innovation are sometimes used interchangeably (e.g., Leadbeater, 1997, Lisetchi and Brancu, 2014). Despite their indisputable relevance, there are also concrete differences that have already been partially discussed. First, as discussed, social enterprise is the organisational form of SE, implementing activities to earn income for social missions. Following Haugh and Kitson (2007), separating social activities from social objectives might be helpful. Any actor can undertake social activities, including private organisations (with various motivations such as corporate social responsibility), but the primary goal of such organisations is to generate profits. However, independent third-sector actors are driven by social and environmental objectives (social value creation), and the distribution of their profits is shaped by law, where they have a legal identity. Second, the human-centred approaches of SE that focus on individual skills can be shown as a difference; for instance, Dawson and Daniel stated that SI extends beyond the concept of SE “*in the engagement and ownership of the collective process of developing and steering strategies for social change by the groups involved*” (Dawson and

Daniel, 2010, p. 19), a group sharedness in SI is emphasised in this approach. However, as stated earlier, the social entrepreneur may not be an individual and the term encompasses collective actions as well. Nevertheless, as Westley and Antadze (2010) have mentioned, the *profitability* can be a difference, as SI does not necessarily have a commercial interest. Additionally, they highlight the intention to search for a systemic change in SI, but the primary concern of SE is creating social value. From the SE perspective in the literature, SIs are understood as intentionally planned actions taken by entrepreneurs, but these entrepreneurs only operate in a specific setting while aiming to bring about social change (Choi and Majumdar, 2015). As a result, it is indisputable that SE is part of the SI, and it can be summarised that the boundaries of the SI are much broader as it “*transcends sectors, levels of analysis, and methods to discover the processes – the strategies, tactics, and theories of change – that produce lasting impact*” (Phills et al., 2008, p. 37). Thus, the first proposition of SE emerges as follows:

MRT.10: “*If interventions promote SE and provide legal recognition to their organisations (social enterprises), then these interventions are likely to contribute to SI and social change because social entrepreneurs are driven by the motivation to meet social needs and create social change by mobilising resources and operating within the social economy.*”

SE has also been involved in *regional development* and *empowerment discussions*, and both claimed to be outcomes of SE activities (e.g., Datta and Gailey, 2012, Bacq and Janssen, 2011, Friedman and Desivilya, 2010). Since these two concepts are significant parts of SI conceptualisations (see also Section 2.2 and Table 2), they will be discussed in the context of SE in this section.

2.3.4.1 Social Entrepreneurship for Regional Development

The inequality of living conditions and welfare between regions has increased dissatisfaction with traditional development models. Therefore contemporary approaches seek inclusive and sustainable models for particular social groups and regions (Pike et al., 2016). Indeed, classical regional development theory relies on top-down approaches where the government is the leading decision maker, focusing on urban and industrial capital-intensive development, and

assumes that development can spread to other sectors and geographies once it starts in specific sectors or areas (Ateljevic, 2009). However, these traditional approaches have become less effective due to their dependence on local conditions, and a shift from top-down approaches to bottom-up approaches has begun to emerge (Ateljevic, 2009). As a result, local and regional development definitions have been broadened, emphasising issues such as social inequality, environmental sustainability, inclusive governance, and diversity (Pike et al., 2007, Counsell and Haughton, 2004). Although local and regional development is traditionally discussed in terms of measures such as an increase in jobs, income and productivity, all of which are integral parts of economic development (Storper, 1997), these new approaches require new measures that focus not only on employment and incomes but also on the quality of life in areas of subject (Pike et al., 2016, Morgan, 2004, Nussbaum and Sen, 1993).

The concept of regional development is discussed using similar terms, such as local development, territorial development, community development and rural development. However, this study understands regional development as an umbrella term for developmental strategies that aim to improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of specific geographies. For example, researchers emphasise the role of SI in rural development (Neumeier, 2012) and local development in SI studies by interpreting the concept of “local” as *“communities or neighbourhoods, cities and regions, and both urban and rural settings”* (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, p. 1928). *“Geography matters as a causal factor in local and regional development”* because values differ geographically, and there are specific localities in terms of circumstances, aspirations, and constraints depending on geography (Pike et al., 2007, p. 1265).

Employment is a crucial indicator of economic growth, and is therefore placed at the centre of the regional economy, which is mainly focused on wealth creation (Fischer and Nijkamp, 2009). Regarding this, entrepreneurship, and particularly entrepreneurial capital, is referred to as a prerequisite and competitive advantage for regional economic change due to its ability to create jobs (Baptista et al., 2008, Fritsch, 2008, Audretsch and Keilbach, 2004, Fritsch and Mueller, 2004). As a result, the role of entrepreneurial activity in regional development through job creation and employment growth (Acs and Armington, 2004, Fritsch and Mueller, 2004, Audretsch and Fritsch, 2002, Acs and Mueller, 2008, Baptista et al., 2008, Andersson and Noseleit, 2011, Dejardin and Fritsch, 2011) is well established in the literature, despite few studies (e.g., Mueller et al., 2008) found a weaker or even negative job creation impact depending on several factors such as low- vs high-entrepreneurship areas.

Entrepreneurship is characterised as a regional concept and therefore regions and entrepreneurs are defined as intertwined; on the one hand, regional resources offer opportunities for entrepreneurs, and on the other hand, entrepreneurs change the local context with their actions (Feldman, 2001, Audretsch et al., 2012). Similarly, Müller (2016) argues that the structural conditions of the local context have an impact on entrepreneurship in the region, and that entrepreneurial activities also affect local structures and thus regional development. Other researchers have also discussed this reciprocity, and the positive impact of entrepreneurship on regional development is well documented (Urbano et al., 2019, Baumgartner et al., 2013, Dejardin and Fritsch, 2011, Audretsch and Lehmann, 2005, Audretsch and Keilbach, 2004, Audretsch and Fritsch, 2002). However, entrepreneurship is considered not only an economic phenomenon but also a social one because it can “*appear in all scenes of life, and deeply affect societal processes*” (Steyaert and Katz, 2004, p. 193). Moreover, there is a strong connection between local development and societal challenges (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), bringing more importance to SE in this regard.

Macke et al. (2018) suggest that the social aspect of entrepreneurship is associated with the concept of development, which should be understood with other concepts such as *local*, *sustainable*, and *integrated*. According to this, development perspectives are divided into two, based on competition or on cooperation. Local development falls into the latter by focusing on participation and solidarity to address poverty and exclusion (Macke et al., 2018). Furthermore, some researchers have highlighted the local form of social entrepreneurship that specifically targets people with low income and focuses on poverty-related social needs (e.g., Seelos et al., 2011, Mair and Marti, 2006, Seelos and Mair, 2005) and therefore, SE is gaining particular attention in developing contexts (e.g., Rivera-Santos et al., 2015, Lundvall et al., 2011, Zahra et al., 2008). Similarly, political interest in social enterprises has increased, as social entrepreneurs and their organisations operate mainly at the local level and are assumed to positively impact on local development through job creation, integration, and income growth (Perrini et al., 2010, Haugh, 2005).

Regional development is also interpreted as the social change and transformation of regions, with the involvement of local members who have the ability to transform their community (Berglund and Johansson, 2007). At the same time, social entrepreneurs search for sustainable social change at the community level rather than focusing on individual-level changes (El Ebrashi, 2013), making the localities central in SE (Aquino et al., 2018). Previous research

(Shaw and Carter, 2007) revealed that the needs or social issues addressed by social entrepreneurs are local, and the desire to meet a local social need is the main motivation for these entrepreneurs. They engage local communities, and their actions are highly inclusive when dealing with social issues (Aquino et al., 2018). Furthermore, neighbourhood and community development approaches have been put forward (e.g., Ledwith, 2020, Sharifi, 2016, Luederitz et al., 2013, Phillips and Pittman, 2008, Summers, 1986) to support local development. However, at this point, Moulaert (2016) stresses the need for social capital embedded in territorial and communal specificity, which can be used to mobilise and organise the excluded or disfavoured communities and territories.

Local community refers to *“the populations, organisations, and markets located in a geographic territory and sharing, as a result of their common location, elements of local culture, norms, identity, and laws”* (Marquis and Battilana, 2009, p. 286). However, as Zeyen et al. (2013) put it, a SE opportunity can only arise when all relevant stakeholders within and out of the community are aware of a specific need, have shared values about it, and can mobilise resources to do something about it. According to this approach, a social entrepreneur (or his/her social enterprise) catalyses coordinated action for a particular social purpose. Following the same idea, Kim and Lim (2017) emphasise the importance of relational assets such as institutional capabilities, community networks, and regional collaborations; and propose that *“social enterprises can be catalysts for sustainable local and regional development by including relational assets which embody social capital in social innovation processes”* (Kim and Lim, 2017, p. 1). Westlund and Bolton (2003, p. 79) argue the concept of *local social capital* that refers to *“spatially-defined norms, values, knowledge, preferences, and other social attributes or qualities that are reflected in human relations”*, and they emphasise the role of this form of social capital in local and regional entrepreneurship, due to the high level of social capital in local communities. Johannisson and Olaison (2007) use this local approach in emergency entrepreneurship and indicate that this form of social capital cannot be imported, but it significantly facilitates spontaneous collective action.

The social context is the driving force of SE, particularly in some regions -such as developing countries, and in some specific areas -such as women empowerment, improved living conditions and health care, and SE activities seek new and sustainable ways to combat poverty and inequality in these contexts (Macke et al., 2018). Sen (2014) has seen poverty as an important cause of the deprivation of basic needs such as health care and functional education and stated that it is not an issue only in developing countries, but also in wealthier societies

despite their social security measures. This is because poverty is “*not merely a deficiency of income*”, but also has an impact on individual freedom and skills (Sen, 2014, p. 528). Concerning this, the concepts of territorial development (MacCallum, 2009, Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2005, Moulaert and Sekia, 2003) and integrated area development (Nussbaumer and Moulaert, 2004, Moulaert, 2000), which are different forms of regional development approaches, should be mentioned. The main idea of these development approaches is based on the satisfaction of basic needs in territories that have long been economically and socially disintegrated, but this satisfaction must reflect not only current deprivations but also aspirations of new futures (Moulaert, 2016). Therefore, improving social relations and empowering individuals and communities is required while pursuing socially inclusive and innovative change in deprived territories (Moulaert et al., 2013a).

SE has been found to be effective in poor rural areas of developing countries where agriculture is the main livelihood, and empowerment in these contexts has been mentioned as an important outcome of relevant activities (e.g., Ansari et al., 2012, Haugh and Talwar, 2016, Sati and Juyal, 2008). Rural communities are shown as ideal and conducive environments for SE, as they have high levels of social capital and traditionally have the skills and habits to solve their problems collectively (Lang and Fink, 2019, Munoz et al., 2015, Jack and Anderson, 2002). Therefore, SE is proposed as an effective model against social exclusion and economic difficulties in rural areas and is shown as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable socio-economic development in these territories (Bencheva et al., 2017). However, these rural contexts contain institutional constraints that may affect the abilities of social entrepreneurs (Kibler et al., 2014). Thus, a new proposition emerges as follows:

MRT.11: “*If interventions promote SE, particularly in rural and deprived regions, then they are likely to create positive outcomes and contribute to the socio-economic development of regions because these regions have a high level of social capital enabling collective actions that can lead to the social and economic empowerment of these communities.*”

2.3.4.2 *Social Entrepreneurship and Empowering Marginalised*

Empowerment has been particularly emphasised and is considered to be a critical part of SI (Moulaert et al., 2013a, 2007, 2005, Neumeier, 2017a, Edwards-Schachter et al., 2012, MacCallum, 2009, Novy and Leubolt, 2005), that is mainly understood as community empowerment with their socio-political participation through capacity building and collaborative activities between different actors (Edwards-Schachter et al., 2012). According to this, bottom-up participation acts as an innovation in social relations, and thus, empowerment becomes embedded in the SI (MacCallum, 2009). Similarly, the critical role of empowerment in SE processes has been discussed and acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Haugh and Talwar, 2016, Mair et al., 2012, Santos, 2012, Datta and Gailey, 2012).

Empowerment is a multi-level concept that refers to “*individuals, families, organisations, and communities gaining control and mastery, within the social, economic, and political contexts of their lives, in order to improve equity and quality of life*” (Jennings et al., 2006, p. 32). It is understood as the capacity of an individual or group to make rational choices, then take action as a result of those choices, and achieve desired outcomes (Alsop et al., 2005). Mosedale (2005) talked about different approaches to empowerment and discussed four generally accepted aspects:

1. There must be a disempowered individual or group for empowerment to occur.
2. Since the empowerment cannot be performed by third parties, one must demand it. This means that people can be empowered with the help of external support and favourable conditions, but only by their own efforts.
3. The empowerment process involves reflection, analysis, and action, which can be achieved through collective or individual efforts.
4. Empowerment is not a product but a process, and there is no final stage of being empowered.

Traditionally speaking, economic strength brings power to the owner, and therefore economic metrics such as the financial autonomy of individuals have been discussed to measure empowerment (Kabeer, 1999, Rowlands, 1995). Although it can and may influence, financial resources do not automatically lead to empowerment (Haugh and Talwar, 2016, Mansuri and Rao, 2004, Leach and Sitaram, 2002, Narayan-Parker, 2002), but rather have the potential to cause disempowerment (Kantor, 2005) due to several conditions, including social norms such

as culture, class or caste (Rowlands, 1995). Nevertheless, evidence from less developed contexts provides some positive results from microfinance (e.g., Goetz and Gupta, 1996, Kabeer, 2001, Mayoux, 2002) and entrepreneurship programmes (e.g., Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013, Leach and Sitaram, 2002) that have also succeeded in creating wider outcomes, and thus form a basis for SE to empower communities through sustainable and collective action (Rahdari et al., 2016, Jones et al., 2012, Handy et al., 2011, Mansuri and Rao, 2004). However, Datta and Gailey (2012) acknowledge the difficulty in measuring the empowerment outcomes based on the relative and evolving nature of empowerment in different contexts and point out the value of qualitative data, which can be rich and informative.

SE plays a crucial role in discussions about social exclusion and disadvantage (Haugh and Talwar, 2016, Mair et al., 2012, Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006), partly because the logic of empowering others is central in SE (Santos, 2012). The underlying rationale behind SE is to include people who benefit from the entrepreneurial idea and empower those people by making them active in the intended social change (Cunha et al., 2015). The mediating role of empowerment and its relationship with SE has been discussed by previous researchers (Haugh and Talwar, 2016), and positive results have been reported, particularly from impoverished communities (e.g., Azmat et al., 2015, Hayhurst, 2014, Datta and Gailey, 2012). It is also considered a critical outcome of SE because SE promotes social values such as collectivism and a sense of duty for others in societies, thus leading to the empowerment of communities (Macke et al., 2018). Indeed, social entrepreneurs often use the logic of empowerment in their business ideas, such as in the case of Barefoot College, which was started in India in the early 1970s by a social entrepreneur named Bunker Roy (Elkington and Hartigan, 2008). Following Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and embracing an empowerment approach, the organisation started to train poor rural communities and develop their capacities; some of whom were almost illiterate but, over time, transformed into experts in fields such as solar-power systems, water and irrigation, medicine, and health (Santos, 2012, Roy and Hartigan, 2008).

Contextual characteristics such as poverty level and ethnic group identity have an influence on activity choices for SE; they also affect the characteristics of social ventures (Rivera-Santos et al., 2015). For instance, the role of social entrepreneurs is argued to be more influential in poor countries based on their ability to find innovative ways to reach more people with far less resources (Bornstein, 2007). Furthermore, Uphoff (2005) argued that the empowerment process provides its beneficiaries with access to resources and enables them to achieve more power by using those resources. However, the power gained is not to dominate those around

them but to move with others to affect change (Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1988). Based on the approach that understands social entrepreneurs are social change agents (Ziegler, 2010), the agency cannot be detached from the structure (Mair and Marti, 2006) as it is surrounded and restricted by the structural context, including rules and norms. Therefore, the agency needs to encounter the opportunity that is part of the social and institutional context (Westley and Antadze, 2010). Thus, developing countries where supportive institutions are absent or weak provide opportunities for social entrepreneurs (Mair and Marti, 2009).

The concept of empowerment has been specifically addressed to both women and youth because of the institutionalised disadvantaged status of these populations as well as their potential contribution to economic and social development (e.g., Doepke and Tertilt, 2019, Cornwall, 2016, Duflo, 2012, Zimmerman et al., 2011, Wilson et al., 2007, Jennings et al., 2006). The boundaries of these two groups are not mutually exclusive as youth programmes can be specifically focused on young girls (e.g., Clonan-Roy et al., 2016, Nkhoma et al., 2020), and women programmes can consider or pay particular attention to adolescents (Bandiera et al., 2020, Klugman et al., 2014).

Women are often constrained by the social norms, values, beliefs, traditions and values in many societies that discriminate in favour of men (Kabeer, 2002). Social norms prevent them from participating in education, which leads to the need for more specific skills in female populations (Datta and Gailey, 2012). Established social norms such as male dependence and dominance limit their ability to pursue economic opportunities (Sen, 1999). Therefore, their access to resources and representation in the formal economy is limited in many contexts, mainly because of the cultural conditions (Brahme, 1984). As a result, empowering women is *“one of the central issues in the process of development”* (Sen, 1999, p. 202). Mayoux (2000) discussed women’s empowerment in terms of economic, social, and political dimensions. According to this, economic empowerment refers to income generation, but it can increase women’s self-confidence, physical health, and well-being. Social empowerment refers to their increased status within the family and in their community, and political empowerment refers to the participation of women in public. Indeed, entrepreneurial activities (self-employment) constitute a large part of women's participation in the economy in developing countries and contribute significantly to their empowerment (De Mel et al., 2014).

Haugh and Talwar (2016) discussed women’s entrepreneurial activity and suggested empowerment to conceptualise emancipatory social entrepreneurship. Indeed, previous

research has shown how women can participate and succeed in collective SE in resource-constrained environments, leading to economic and social empowerment (e.g., Mair and Marti, 2006, Datta and Gailey, 2012). While empowerment is also defined as an individual's intrinsic motivation to participate in an activity (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990), it can be argued that women have an intrinsic motivation to participate in social activities and create social value, based on Nicolás and Rubio (2016) who mentioned women as essential players of social activities because of their roles traditionally attributed to them, such as altruism, care and protecting others. Empowering women also has significant positive outcomes for those around them, such as the rest of the households and their peers in the community (Kandpal et al., 2012).

Regarding young people, empowerment is discussed in the context of positive youth development aimed at community change (e.g., Zimmerman et al., 2011, Russell et al., 2009, Jennings et al., 2006) or tackling youth unemployment (e.g., Maigida et al., 2013, Emeh, 2012, Dike, 2009). Chandra and Liang (2017) classified youth empowerment into social-capacity empowerment and entrepreneurial-capacity empowerment. Social awareness, participation, social connections, entrepreneurial skills and power distribution between youths and adults are discussed under these categories. Researchers (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010) have suggested that there is a strong link between economic growth and youth unemployment and that the development of entrepreneurship is an effective intervention mechanism in this regard. This rise in entrepreneurship development is reflected in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and Botswana, where youth unemployment rates are high (Afolabi, 2015, Chigunta, 2017, Steenekamp et al., 2011). As a result, youth entrepreneurship has been discussed in different social contexts, such as sustainable development (Ogamba, 2019), poverty alleviation (Ogundele et al., 2012) and national integration (Egbefo and Abe, 2017). Furthermore, targeting young talent is suggested to promote social entrepreneurship culture (Noya, 2015) based on its potential for integrating youth into the labour market, and youth development (United Nations, 2020).

Kruse (2018) blends aspects of positive youth development, community development, and SE and then demonstrates the concept of *youth social entrepreneurship* as the intersection of these spaces. According to this, positive youth development refers to the development of social-emotional skills, whereas SE is understood as the creation of economic enterprises by individuals or groups with an aim to create social value. Additionally, community development is defined as the collective action of community members towards a common

issue. She also highlights the gap in opportunities that prevent youth from reaching their potential, suggesting the need for youth development approaches, particularly for young members of impoverished communities. Regarding this, empowerment approaches have often positively affected youth from marginalised communities (e.g., Wilson et al., 2007, Mohajer and Earnest, 2009, Diemer, 2012). Accordingly, Delgado (2004) proposed that SE might be more promising for youth from low-income contexts. Thus, the final proposition of this research emerges as follows:

MRT.12: *“If interventions promote SE targeting marginalised communities, particularly women and youth, then they are likely to produce positive outcomes because social entrepreneurs often address the empowerment of their communities and women and youth have the greater potential to contribute to economic and social empowerment through SE activities.”*

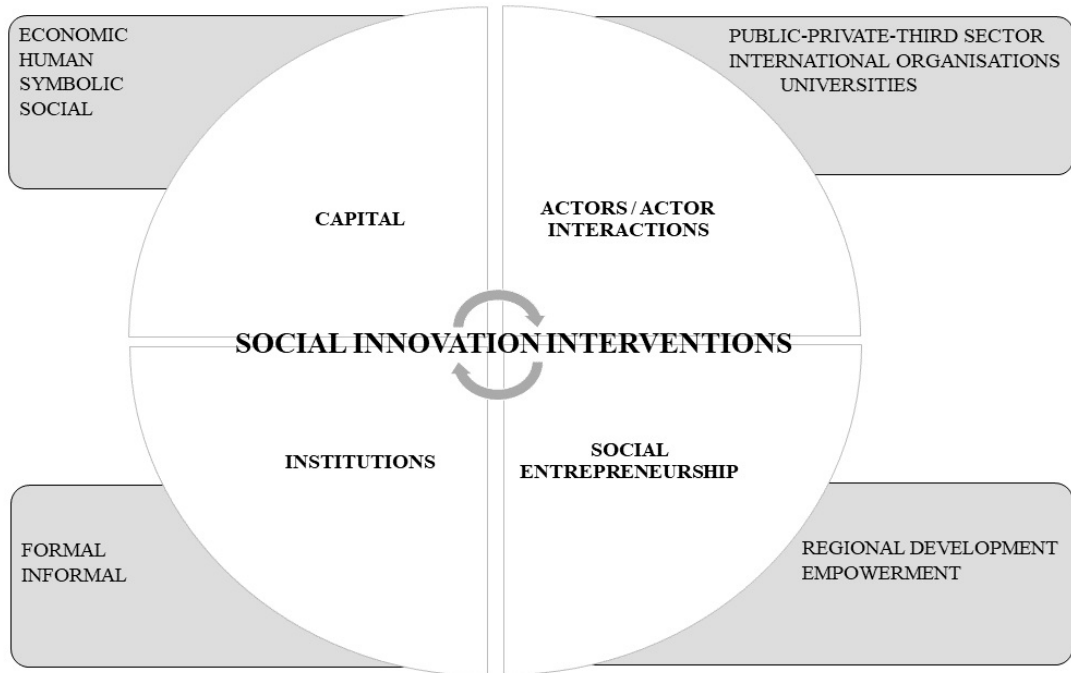
2.4 Conceptual Framework

This thesis has identified the key dimensions of SI into four: *institutions, capital (resources), actors and actor interactions, and social entrepreneurship*, all of which have been scrutinised in this chapter and new concepts under these dimensions have emerged.

Based on the literature given earlier (Section 2.3.1) in this chapter, institutions are considered either formal and informal; the former refers to laws and regulations, while the latter refers to social norms, rules, and cultural characteristics. Resources are conceived using capital theory (Section 2.3.2) and thus are classified into four forms of capital – economic, human, social and symbolic, each of which are convertible. Actors (Section 2.3.3) are understood as all relevant stakeholders that participate in SI interventions; therefore, actors are naturally interpreted as public, private, and third-sector actors. However, literature informs that IOs, including non-governmental, intergovernmental, developmental organisations, and private foundations, play an influential role in the SI system. Furthermore, higher-education institutions take part with their academic programmes and response to the human resource needs of the social sector. Thus, they are additionally considered as relevant actors.

Finally, SE (Section 2.3.4) is discussed with the concepts of regional development and empowerment, both considered as outcomes of socially entrepreneurial actions. As a result, the conceptual framework of this research, illustrated in Figure 3, has emerged.

Figure 3: Conceptual framework of the research



Source: Author's own illustration

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation and justification of the research methodology designed and undertaken for this study. The chapter opens with a discussion of evaluation practices, before detailing the philosophical approach of the research. Next, the method is comprehensively discussed, and the reasons for choosing this methodological approach are explained. The implementation process is described in detail, followed by explanations of the data collection and data analysis activities. Finally, the limitations of the method are outlined, and the chapter is summarised.

3.2 Evaluation of Policy and Programmes

Evaluation of social programmes, policies and interventions have long been of interest to many institutions and actors, including governments, community groups, academic researchers, and NGOs. Governments are interested in public sector evaluations to assess the outputs and outcomes of policy interventions and to gain a deeper understanding of these so to inform ongoing well-grounded decision making (Vedung, 2017, Chen and Rossi, 1980). However, conventional approaches to social interventions focus on narrowly defined indicators without developing strong distributional assumptions (Heckman et al., 2001). This may be because social programmes are by their very nature challenging environments to research (Weiss, 1972) as they act on complex social systems and are highly context- and practice-dependent (Pawson et al., 2005). Furthermore, the evaluation of SI policies cannot be restricted to economic measures and must also include social and environmental impacts (Fougère et al., 2017). Indeed, social impact is a theoretically rich concept with multiple dimensions (e.g., social, political, and environmental) and has been conceptualised in various ways including social value and social performance (Rawhouser et al., 2019); as such, evaluation practices in SI are challenging. Policies routinely interact given the wider context in which they are introduced and this too can complicate and limit the evaluation of individual policy instruments (Magro and Wilson, 2013).

Alkin (1970) defined evaluation as “*a process of gathering information [...] and collecting and analysing information in order to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting among alternatives*” (p. 16). Evaluation research is a social science activity used to inform program practitioners, policy makers, funders, beneficiaries, and taxpayers to distinguish effective social programmes, design new ones, and revise existing programmes to achieve targeted results (Rossi et al., 2018). Scriven (1991a) defines two types of evaluation: *formative* and *summative*. Accordingly, formative evaluations aim to contribute to the improvement process, while summative evaluations intend to have evaluative conclusions for different reasons such as accountability, funding decisions, and research. While summative evaluations are more commonly used than formative ones to provide an overall judgement on the past performance of a completed process (policy, programme, project, service etc.), this can hinder progress and lead to inaccurate conclusions (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014). Chelimsky (1997) called them “*evaluation for accountability*” and “*evaluation for development*”, and additionally identified a third purpose as an “*evaluation for knowledge*” (p. 100) – a perspective is explained as gaining a deeper understanding in a particular field or policy area.

Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) argue that the most common definitions understand evaluation as “*determining whether the objectives have been achieved*” but are critical of this objective-based approach as it has limited abilities and can even produce counterproductive results, especially when evaluations aim to contribute to programme improvements (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014, p. 6-7). Their argument in this regard is that the objectives may be dysfunctional, not in line with the expectations of beneficiaries, and there may be other motives or conflicts of interest. Additionally, considering only objectives may cause important points of the processes or unintended results to be overlooked. This is significant as intended outcomes may differ from observed outcomes suggesting that evaluations benefit from understanding whether outcomes are a consequence of a programme or as a result of something else (McDavid et al., 2018). As impact refers to “*the portion of the total outcome that happened as a result of the activity, above and beyond what would have happened anyway*” (Clark and Rosenzweig, 2004, p. 7), social scientists need counterfactual explanations when evaluating impact to discern all other factors that might have caused the observed change.

Evaluation activities require defining the performance of the unit intended to be evaluated and the criteria for making judgments on that performance (Rossi et al., 2018). However,

performance represents only a single dimension of accountability (Curristine, 2005) and evaluation should also be understood as a learning strategy for advancing knowledge of a particular policy or programme (Mark et al., 2000). As such it is suggested that evaluation should aim at improving the programme rather than focusing solely on results for accountability purposes (Newcomer et al., 2015). For example, the main approach of the OECD is to examine and explain interesting programmes in different countries and policy areas, rather than using identified measures for formal evaluation (Lundström and Stevenson, 2005).

Some researchers (Duflo et al., 2007, Snyder et al., 2009) have used randomized controlled trials (RCTs) for measuring social impact through quantifying outcomes in areas including poverty alleviation, healthcare access and school-level achievement (Rawhouser et al., 2019). The randomized control methodology provides explicit results using treatment and control groups to measure changes and requires data collected before and after the intervention (Rawhouser et al., 2019), but typical experimental analyses do not provide any information on why programmes fail (Heckman and Smith, 1995) or how they actually work. However, interventions implemented in complex settings require consideration of the interactions between different components, thus implying contextual effects in the evaluation of these interventions (Shiell et al., 2008). Indeed, there is now a growing interest in understanding context and how it influences the process and outcomes of interventions (Edler et al., 2012, Nielsen and Miraglia, 2017). For instance, a school feeding programme can be implemented in different socio-economic-political contexts and education systems, as well as by people of different skills, motivations, and cultures, meaning that even if the intervention has the potential to make a significant difference to the growth and cognitive performance of children, it may not benefit some children, for example, those who are severely malnourished at home (Greenhalgh et al., 2007). For this reason, qualitative methods can provide rich detail in understanding the underlying causes of outcomes (Blomquist, 2003). Although qualitative and quantitative approaches can be complementary one another (Choy, 2014), qualitative methods should not be understood as an additional measure to support quantitative evaluations, but rather offer an alternative approach by exploring significant points that are not addressed by quantitative approaches even though they are equally or indeed more critical to understanding whether policies achieve their objectives (Curran and Storey, 2002).

Social interventions are difficult to evaluate, and traditional review methods often provide mixed or conflicting evidence without providing any information about why interventions did

or did not work (Pawson et al., 2005). In relation to this, Chen and Rossi (1987) who introduced the concept of *causal mechanisms* (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010) suggested that theory-driven approaches can provide “*better understanding of the causal mechanisms underlying the relationship between treatment and effects*” (Chen and Rossi, 1987, p. 102). Following these researchers and considering the background in the evaluation literature shared so far, it was decided that it would be appropriate to adopt a qualitative and theory-driven approach to investigate the substantive research topic. As stated previously, while interventions can include any kind of action, the focus of this research is specifically on social innovation policy and programmes. A *programme* is a group of resources and activities designed to achieve one or more designated goals and is typically implemented by a public, private or non-profit actors, or a group thereof (Newcomer et al., 2015). *Policies* are the formal statements of the intended objectives and the process of achieving those outcomes undertaken by governments and their agencies (McDavid et al., 2018). As a matter of fact, policy analysis and programme evaluations are often discussed together, and the terms are often used interchangeably by some evaluators (McDavid et al., 2018).

Before going into the details of the method adopted, the next section will address the philosophical stance on which this method, and therefore this research, is grounded.

3.3 The Philosophical Approach of the Study: Critical Realism

In the social sciences, it is important to identify the research philosophy because the philosophical stance adopted in the research, will guide decisions relating to ontological questions about the social world and what it must be like (Yeung, 1997). Given the nature of the substantive topic, the aim of the research and the research question, *Critical Realism* was identified as an appropriate research philosophy for planning and conducting this study. Simply put, critical realism is a philosophical approach that aims to understand the nature of reality beyond our perceptions and experiences of it. Although the first emergence of this philosophical stance dates back more than 40 years, and is generally associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (1975, 1978), the approach has been further elaborated and significant contributions have been made by other social science theorists (e.g., Collier, 1994, Sayer, 1999) to explain the underlying social structures and processes that shape society (Hunt, 2003, Jessop, 2005). There are numerous examples of this research philosophy across the social sciences including in psychology (Greenwood, 1994), sociology (Sayer, 1999, Layder, 1998),

management science (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000), economics (Lawson, 1997), law (Hanson and Yosifon, 2004, Norrie, 2013), and evaluation studies (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, Julnes et al., 1998, Mark et al., 2000).

Wong et al. (2012) define realism as a philosophy of science that stands between positivism and constructivism, according to which, there is a world that we can perceive by direct observation (positivism) on the one hand, but on the other hand, it recognises that as our perceptions will be limited to human senses, intelligence, culture, and language, we can never (fully) understand the nature of reality. However, the promise of realism is that our understanding of reality can be improved, even though the real world can limit our reasonable interpretations (Wong et al., 2012). Building on these realist foundations, critical realism, at its core, holds that there is an objective reality that exists independent of our perception of it (Sayer, 1992). This reality is made up of different levels, each with their own properties and mechanisms that operate according to specific laws, principles, and social structures. However, our understanding of this reality is always limited and partial, as we can only observe and interact with certain aspects of it. Bhaskar (1978) identifies three levels of reality as the *real* (causal mechanisms or generative structures), the *actual* (events or non-events triggered by or resulted from the mechanisms), and the *empirical* (events that are observed, experienced, or measured). In his later work (Bhaskar and Danermark, 2006) these levels and the interactions between them have been called '*laminated systems*', referring to different and embedded levels or systems of reality other than what we experience.

Putnam (1975, 1977) argued that realism is an empirical theory that contrasts with idealism (in other words positivism). Bhaskar (2013) agrees and suggests that a key limitation of positivism is its inadequacy to experience as it cannot explain why or under what conditions the phenomena is experienced (Bhaskar, 2013). Although we tend to create explanations using causal language both in our daily life and social science (Sayer, 1999), this is often intuitive without thinking, critical realism suggests adopting this causal language consciously (Easton, 2010). However, an important point in this way of thinking is that knowledge becomes a constantly changing and subjective social construct (Vincent and O'Mahoney, 2018). This is because social objects such as nationality and war are constituted by the practices of subjects, which can take various forms depending on the ideas, beliefs, and relations of the relevant social system (Patomäki and Wight, 2000).

Critical realism does not imply common-sense realism, but instead argues that social structures, even though they are intentionally constructed, often produce unintended effects that are not apparent or directly observable even to the social actors themselves (Gorski, 2013). The real world is different from our actual and empirical experiences (Bhaskar, 1975) and therefore, realists search to define the possibilities (what could happen) as well as the necessities (what must go together) in our world (Sayer, 1999). Critical realists recognise the influence of social structures on agents' actions because *“every action requires the pre-existence of independently existing, and irreducible structures which agents draw upon in order to initiate that action”* (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 212). Therefore, the task in a realist approach is to go beyond the “what” question, which can be resolved with the simplistic certainty of regression analyses showing that X causes Y. Instead, it involves asking the “why” question to provide reliable explanations for causal patterns (Vincent and O'Mahoney, 2018) and the fundamental of causal laws here is based on the generative mechanisms of nature, defined as the ways of how things are acting (Bhaskar, 2013).

3.4 The Realist Synthesis (Review) Approach

This research employs a realist synthesis that is grounded on the realist philosophy. Realist synthesis, also known as ‘realist review’, is derived from realist evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), both of which are forms of realist approach, and are widely used in the health sector (e.g., Wong et al., 2011, Greenhalgh et al., 2015, 2007). Realist evaluation is an approach to evaluation that shifts the question from ‘what works’ or ‘does this work’ to ‘what might cause change’ (Westhorp et al., 2011, p. 1), thus it uses primary data to find out how interactions with relevant context and mechanisms enable, constrain, and shape outcomes (Greenhalgh et al., 2009). Realist review, on the other hand, is a theory-driven approach that synthesizes existing evidence to evaluate complex social interventions (policy, programme, service etc.), and it is concerned with understanding causal mechanisms (Pawson, 2002, 2006, Pawson et al., 2004, 2005, Wong et al., 2010, 2012, 2013b). It brings the realist philosophy to evaluation studies and implements secondary analysis to examine the research question. It is a well-established logic of inquiry that has been particularly used in the field of health policy and practice (e.g., Husk et al., 2020, McCormack et al., 2013) to evaluate interventions and theories, as well as to develop new theories (Vassilev et al., 2011). The approach provides *“an explanatory analysis aimed at discerning what works for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects and how”* (Pawson et al., 2005, p. 21).

The logic of comprehensive secondary analysis methods in terms of innovation policy has previously been discussed by Edler et al. (2016b) and classified into *meta-analysis* and *evaluation synthesis*. Meta-analysis is defined as the statistical synthesis of primary data from similar studies “*leading to a quantitative summary of the pooled results*” (Boruch et al., 2015, p. 673). As it is difficult to use this method in innovation policy based on the idiosyncrasies of interventions, evaluation synthesis “*which systematically compiles, qualitatively analyses and interprets the findings of existing studies, taking into account differences in contexts and methods, thus allowing in-depth, yet contextualised, learning*” (Edler et al., 2016b, p. 2) is recommended instead. Building on Edler et al. (2012) who suggest that evaluations must be innovative and experimental, this research adopts a *realist synthesis*, which can be understood as a form of evaluation synthesis and a new approach in the field of SI.

When Pawson (2002) introduced the realist synthesis as a new approach to evidence-based policy (EBP), building on his previous work (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), the approach had a long history in social sciences (Keat, 1979, Keat and Urry, 1975) and philosophy (Bhaskar, 1978, Putnam, 1977, 1981, Collier, 1994), although it was relatively new to the evaluation literature at the time. He conceives of the EBP process as comprising of three key elements, according to which *causation* includes the logic of causal forces and seeks to understand how interventions achieve their effects; *ontology* which represents how a programme actually works; and finally, *generalisation* refers to knowledge transfer and aims to generalise what has been learned from the evidence base to inform policy and practice. Adopting realist principles, the approach suggests that “*causal explanations are achievable; social reality is mainly an interpretative reality of social actors; and social actors evaluate their social reality*” (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012, p. 2). According to Pawson (2002), it is not the programmes but the resources they offer that work, therefore, the realist approach offers the policy community not best-case scenarios but transferable theories that explain the nature of the subjects, the circumstances of the programme and its outcomes.

The fundamental claim of the realist approach is that “*interventions are theories*” and therefore it starts by being explicit about the “*underlying assumptions about how an intervention is supposed to work*” (Pawson et al., 2004, p. 3-4). Theory is critical to evaluators because theory-based propositions can inform practice, while experience from practice can also help theories mutually by confirming or reinforcing them (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014). However, the traditional practice of systematic reviews informs neither about contexts and mechanisms, nor the theories that underpin these (Greenhalgh et al., 2007). Indeed, traditional

review methods, such as systematic reviews (meta-analysis), are criticised for focusing only on outcomes and are therefore, lacking sophistication (Wong et al., 2012).

The main logic underpinning realist enquiry is that in order to understand the causal relationship between successive X and Y, the mechanism linking these two events and the context to which they belong must be understood (Pawson et al., 2005). *Context* is more than geographical location, and also refers to pre-existing structures that affect (enable or disable) mechanisms of change, such as rules, social norms, values, and relationships within the environment (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Definitions of mechanisms are varied and not universally agreed upon (Wong et al., 2013b). For example, Astbury and Leeuw (2010, p. 368) define the notion of mechanisms as the “*underlying entities, processes, or structures which operate in particular contexts to generate outcomes of interest*” (p. 368). The three main features emphasised by this definition are that mechanisms are 1) often hidden, 2) produce outcomes, and 3) are sensitive to differences in context. Later work on the concept (Pawson et al., 2005, Pawson, 2006, Wong et al., 2010, 2012, 2013b) expanded the meaning of mechanism, placing human at the centre of the term, and defining it as processes operating within an intervention that describes how the ‘*human components*’ use the resources available to them (Wong et al., 2010, p. 2).

The outcomes of complex interventions depend on multiple human components (practitioners, beneficiaries, other stakeholders) whose interactions are context specific. This can make it difficult to take decisions which can be predicted to result in pre-defined or expected ways and to choose which resources to allocate in what amounts to achieve the desired outcomes of interventions (Wong et al., 2010, Wong, 2012). As such, realist syntheses seek to determine how the cognitive and behavioural reactions of participants affect outcomes and what kind of contexts trigger these mechanisms (Nielsen and Miraglia, 2017). In this way, the second principle is that interventions are often influenced by the active input of participants and different stakeholders, and therefore that the explanations that reviews uncover will partially include the personal choices and reasons of these actors (Pawson et al., 2004). This again highlights the importance of context, not only because it influences people’s actions and choices, but also because it can help to explain why interactions do not happen in a deterministic way (Shepperd et al., 2009).

A realist approach recognises the layered nature of complex interventions (Jagosh, 2019) and does not seek to explore and explain all these layers; instead it “*concentrates on a subset of*

the lexicon” (Pawson et al., 2004, p. 27). It uses a series of primary studies and focuses on the demi-regularities that lead to specific behaviours and human actions (Pawson, 2006, Wong et al., 2010). With the results, the evaluator aims to reach a deeper understanding of the intervention by combining theoretical knowledge with empirical evidence and explaining the relationships between context-mechanism-outcomes (CMOs) (Pawson et al., 2005). That is, realist synthesis does not promise to provide simple answers to complex social interventions but seeks to create rich and detailed understanding that can be highly practical for both the policy and practice community (Pawson et al., 2005). Specifically, it is argued that realist synthesis provides *“illumination rather than generalisable truths and contextual fine-tuning rather than standardization”* (Pawson et al., 2005, p. 24).

This research adopts a realist synthesis to investigate the impact of SI interventions. There are several reasons for this decision. First, the empirical evaluation practices in SI rarely use multiple case studies (see Milley et al., 2018) and the interactions between different interventions make it difficult to understand the actual effects of individual policy instruments (Edler and Fagerberg, 2017). Indeed, previous researchers have questioned the evaluation of individual policy interventions based on the fact that they are always influenced by other interventions (Flanagan et al., 2011, Ringeling, 2005). This can be overcome by synthesis methods which are able to provide in-depth information on the conditions and potentials of different types of interventions while considering different context variables (Edler et al., 2008). Second, social outcomes are likely to have multiple causes and result from the interdependence of different circumstances, therefore measuring the impact of social purpose interventions requires integrated methods rather than standard approaches (White, 2018). Regarding this, more systematic evaluations and experimentations are suggested to improve existing tools and explore new methods (Mulgan, 2014). Third, researchers suggest collecting historical examples of SI *“to test multiple theories and look for overarching patterns and commonalities across cases”* (McGowan and Westley, 2015, p. 55). To do this, the theoretical synthesis of SI dynamics needs to be developed through consideration and integration of knowledge from different theories and disciplines (Moulaert et al., 2005). Furthermore, there are also calls from SE and SI researchers to develop large-scale empirical datasets in order to test claims regarding, for example, poverty alleviation and institutional change; and to understand social value creation process (for example how to create unique resources in most resource-scarce contexts) (Saebi et al., 2019, Shaw and de Bruin, 2013, Short et al., 2009). Last but not least, there is always a risk of positivity bias in evaluations (Peeters and Czapinski, 1990), which can be eliminated by combining a large number of evaluations. Considering all

these points together with the discussion given in section 3.2, this method is chosen as the best available one among the alternatives (e.g., RCTs, formative or summative evaluations, performance-based evaluations etc.).

3.5 The Process of Realist Synthesis

Pawson and his colleagues identified the key steps of RS and provided a template to guide researchers selecting to use this approach (Table 6). Although these steps were shown sequentially, Pawson et al. (2005) emphasise that they are iterative and often overlapping. According to their template the process begins by developing an explicit programme theory (or theories) that describes the assumptions underlying the intervention, namely how an intervention should work and what outcomes are expected at the end. A key principle in developing theories is that “*comprehensive reviews are impossible and that the task is to prioritize and agree on which programme theories are to be inspected*” (Pawson et al., 2005, p. 28). The next stage involves a search for empirical evidence that supports, contradicts, or helps improve the programme theories. The reviewer can use multiple search strategies to create purposive sampling, which provides the necessary material to test programme theories. An inclusion criterion is needed to determine whether studies are fit for purpose, and a decision has to be made about when to stop the data search. The dataset will then be used to test initial theories through a “*heuristic process*” of developing and progressively improving context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations (Jagosh et al., 2015, p. 2). The identification of initial theories requires an iterative process throughout the data coding and analysis phases to enable development of new theories and refinement of existing ones (Wong et al., 2010). This stage is critical because the reviewer need to develop a detailed understanding of the main topic, and discussions with the content experts, beneficiaries or other stakeholders can help gain an in-depth understanding of the research area (Wong et al., 2013b, Jagosh et al., 2014, Waldron et al., 2020). As a final step, as with any other systematic review, the intended outcome is to translate findings into recommendations with the expectation of influencing future design and decisions.

Table 6: Mapping the realist process.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Description</i>
1: Clarify scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Identify the research question</i> (nature of the concept, policy intentions and potential contexts for the interventions) - <i>Clarify the purpose of the review</i> (integrating the theory behind interventions) - <i>Find and articulate programme theories</i> (identifying and grouping relevant theories to be explored, using a theory-based design)
2: Search for evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Identify inclusion criteria</i> and refine when necessary. - <i>Collect a purposive sampling</i> that enable to test the theories, using ‘snowball’ sampling additionally and consider new theories as they emerge. - <i>Final search</i> for additional data before completing the review.
3: Appraise primary studies and extract data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Use of judgments</i> for the relevance (does it address the proposed theory) and rigour (does it provide conclusions drawn from the study) of the included studies. - <i>Develop data extraction tools</i>, forms, or devices. - <i>Extract data</i> from different studies to support the proposed theories with evidence.
4: Synthesize evidence and draw conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Synthesize data</i> to refine the programme theories. - <i>Consider purpose of research</i> to guide the synthesis process. - <i>Pay attention to not only confirmatory but also contradictory evidence</i> to develop deeper insights about the context. - <i>Refine theories and make conclusions with context-specific points</i> in a general if-then format.
5: Disseminate, implement, and evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Engage with key stakeholders</i>, practitioners, and policymakers to transfer recommendations and conclusions.

Source: Author’s own elaboration based on Pawson et al. (2005)

A programme theory is a logic model that describes “*how a programme is supposed to work*” (Bickman, 1987, p. 5). Programme theories are assisted by formal theories and previous research in assumption of what might cause change (Goodridge et al., 2015). Since realist review is a theory-driven approach, Wong et al. (2013c) explained identified the types or ‘levels’ of theories exist within realist research. They suggest that the *initial rough theory* is the first version of the theory which guides researchers through the next steps. *Refined theory* is the final version of the theory, which can also be understood as the product of the review. In addition, *middle-range theory (MRT)* has been mentioned as a detailed enough but also abstract enough theory that can be applied to other situations and tested with data. Thus, the realist process incorporates three different versions of the theories, namely, initial theories (version 1), MRTs (version 2), and refined theories (version 3 - finalised theories).

MRT is defined as an “*implicit or explicit explanatory theory that can be used to assess programs and interventions*” (Jagosh et al., 2012, p. 316). Developing MRTs is suggested when there is no clarity about the programme or where heterogeneous programmes are aimed to be included in the analysis (Jagosh et al., 2014). This makes MRTs highly suitable for SI programmes or policies. The most common format for these theories is using *if-then-because* statements based on the logic of “*if we do X, then Y will happen, because...*” (Westthorp, 2014).

Following this defined process together with realist synthesis training materials (Wong et al., 2013b, 2013c), the research is started with an extensive literature review (including grey literature) to identify the main theories or assumptions in the field of SI. It should be noted that these theories are different from formal theories that can be found in different disciplines, and which can be too abstract or fit poorly with the intervention (Wong et al., 2013c). In line with the suggestions of previous realist researchers (Waldron et al., 2020, Jagosh et al., 2014), ten stakeholders were interviewed during the construction of these theories. Interviewees were selected from academia, public and third sector organisations who were highly related to the subject area, to create a purposeful sample that represents the multiple facets and the range of experience on the concept (Lo Iacono et al., 2016). Participants were informed before the interviews with a document containing rough theories and a brief background of the research.

The interviews were conducted to verify and enrich programme theories, each of which was discussed with the interviewees followed by an informal conversation to understand their own experiences. The main observation from these interviews is that the participants have different perspectives and different focus areas depending on their sectors. While academics were more concerned with the definitions and borders of the concept, public sector actors shared concerns about budget constraints and adoption of the services provided. Additionally, these public sector actors referred the difficulty of coordination with other government units in implementation of interventions. Interviewees from third sector organisations emphasised the participation of citizens and communities but they were sceptical of public sector efforts in this regard. These social sector actors were found to be more empathetic towards social issues, probably because of their close engagement with communities. These interviews were very beneficial for developing and reflecting the learnings of the researcher; and the rough theories were later refined accordingly. Additional information on these interviews can be found in the [Appendix A](#).

It should be noted on here again that the developed theories were changed repeatedly during the process, and only three versions of them are shared in this thesis (initial rough theories, MRTs and refined (final) theories). A summary of the terms used in the realist approach and their definitions are given in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Definitions of terms used in the realist approach.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Realist methodology	A theory-oriented, interpretive approach, aims to uncover the underlying causalities of interventions by focusing on contextual factors and explaining how they influence processes and outcomes.
Context-mechanism-outcome (CMO)	A heuristic about the relevant intervention, used to develop causal explanations for outcomes; CMO configurations form the basis for theory development that will eventually become the final product of the research.
Context	Backdrop of the intervention; can take different forms, such as geographic location, types of funding, cultural norms, history of the place, and other external conditions (opportunities and constraints) that have potential to influence processes and outcomes.
Mechanism	The resources generated through the intervention + the responses of participants (targeted groups and other relevant actors) to these resources; can be on a cognitive, emotional, or motivational level, such as behavioural change. Differs from strategies and programme activities because they are intended plan of actions, while mechanisms can arise intentionally or unintentionally.
Outcomes or impact	The intended intermediate outcomes together with unintended outcomes or impacts.
Programme Theory	The main logic of an intervention and includes underlying assumptions about how it is supposed to work.
Intervention	Any kind of action or activity, including laws, regulations, incentives, dedicated funds, programmes, and formal networks, taken individually or collaboratively by different actors (state and non-state) to improve a situation and create an intended change.
Middle-range theories (MRTs)	A sufficiently detailed but sufficiently abstracted explanatory theory about an intervention that can be applied to other situations and tested with data.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Jagosh et al. (2015), Wong et al. (2013c) and Pawson et al. (2004)

While the RS approach can be used to evaluate a specific policy or programme as in health care (e.g., Rycroft-Malone et al., 2014, Greenhalgh et al., 2009, 2007) and social policy (Bennett et al., 2017, Nilsson et al., 2016), this study did not focus on a specific type of intervention, instead it understands the term 'intervention' as any type of action at the policy or programme level to promote or implement SIs. This is partly because the concept of SI is broad and complex, but mostly because of the main purpose of the research is to understand

SI processes in different contexts and the causalities underlying the outcomes of different types of interventions.

This study is the first attempt to evaluate SI interventions without using a realist synthesis without any country, sector and time limitations. To apply this method rigorously, the researcher participated in two training workshops across four days delivered by the Centre for Advancement in Realist Evaluation and Synthesis (CARES); a platform that aims to develop knowledge on realist methodology and support researchers using a realist approach. Additionally, resources provided by the [RAMASES](#) (Realist and Meta-narrative Evidence Syntheses: Evolving Standards) projects - aimed to develop quality and publication standards, training materials and methodological guidance for realist research approaches - were used to adapt the approach in line with the objectives of the research.

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection included a systematic search of all internationally published and publicly available evidence on SI policies and programmes. Similar to other review techniques, RS uses keyword searches, snowball methods, search engines and databases, but unlike others, RS does not rely solely on academic papers, and additionally uses grey literature and other sources to obtain a broader set of empirical studies (Pawson et al., 2005). The data collection process was carried out between June 2020 and January 2021, with additional searches also taking place at later stages. Initially, the three most common databases - SCOPUS, Web of Science and Google Scholar - are systematically searched for academic articles. After this, several evaluation databases for programme evaluations and policy documents, including Overton; International Initiative for Impact Evaluation; Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA); United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG); World Bank: Independent Evaluation Group were searched for evidence. It should be noted that to ensure data diversity, no single database was predominantly used, and to identify relevant data, a wide number of keyword combinations, including 'social innovation', 'social entrepreneur*', 'social enterprise', 'social organisation', 'social initiative' in combination with 'impact', 'evaluation', 'performance', 'assessment', 'effect(iveness)'; and 'policy', 'program/programme' were used. As this was an iterative process, additional keywords (e.g., 'empowerment', 'community initiative', and 'community program*') were also involved in the later stages based on their relevance. Other evidence such as evaluation and annual reports of social organisations were also searched using the snowball method. At this stage, the author read the titles and abstracts/summaries of the

documents for an initial assessment of the data, and made a quick review in case the document did not include a summary or abstract. As a result, the initial dataset was created (n = 594).

Once the long list was obtained, a number of inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the quality of the documents included into the initial dataset and their relevance to this research. Accordingly, each document was screened with this set of criteria to ensure the document (1) was written in English; (2) specifically addressed a SI or SE policy/programme; or provided an analysis of a specific service/programme of a social initiative; (3) provided some sort of empirical evidence (qualitative or quantitative) regarding the performance; (4) explicitly described the methodology used to evaluate the performance.

The set of inclusion criteria was developed considering several points. First, the language of the documents was limited to English based on the availability of data written in this language. Translating other potential documents through different applications was not considered because the social interventions are complex enough that changing the original language could create additional difficulty in understanding the points of focus (i.e., context and mechanisms).

The second criteria which sought to determine the relevance of the data, was challenging, mainly because the concept was used for an extremely heterogeneous examples including public policy initiatives, third sector activities, and for some certain actions of commercial organisations (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014). Since the research topic and research questions were broad, the researcher followed the definition of SI to decide whether the data was appropriate for inclusion.

As stated in Chapter 2, social innovation is defined as “*new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations*” (Murray et al., 2010, p. 3). This definition highlights three characteristics of SI: innovation, social value creation, and new social relationships. However, intentionality is a hallmark of SI (Franz et al., 2012, Grimm et al., 2013) and therefore, social objectives or social mission (Phillips et al., 2015, Shaw and de Bruin, 2013) can be added as the fourth feature of SI. Thus, the author questioned the programme or policy to assess whether it can be considered an SI intervention. As a matter of fact, realist synthesis uses judgements not as absolute criteria but as elements of fitness for purpose (Pawson et al., 2005). Indeed, programmes can differ significantly in scale and scope (McDavid et al., 2018) but the implementation of realist synthesis can be more impactful when there is heterogeneity among

the studies included and when the data provide conflicting evidence about the effectiveness of interventions (Paternotte et al., 2016).

Since the research aimed to synthesize existing evidence to investigate the impact of SI interventions, the third criteria asked whether the study provided empirical evidence of the programme's performance. According to Pawson et al. (2005), realist synthesis uses rigour to judge whether the original study is methodologically credible and has sufficient weight to test the intervention theory. Therefore, a final query was used to eliminate evaluations that were not transparent in their methodologies. This criterion was used to assess the credibility of evaluations other than academic papers, as some of the studies consisted of reports containing success stories or activities performed, without using a specific methodology. Thus, the author applied the highest possible standards that are practicable for the research questions and the prevailing circumstances (Rossi et al., 2018) to ensure the diversity and the quality of the dataset.

After closer examination of the long list using inclusion criteria, many documents were excluded as not being directly relevant to the focus of this research, or for not providing information to ensure construct validity and unbiased results. Thus, a final sample of 241 documents from all over the world providing evidence without any time constraints, was obtained. However, the dataset was updated again in the following steps as the process of RS is iterative (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012). Therefore, regular searches were made during the analysis, and 28 additional studies were found and included in the dataset, making the final set of 269 documents. This process is illustrated in Figure 4 and the shortlist of the dataset is given in [Appendix B](#).

3.7 Data Management, Analysis and Synthesis

The idea of evaluation research is based on collecting, analysing and interpreting evidence, and then informing the programme through systematically creating and applying knowledge (Rossi et al., 2018). Qualitative analysis requires inductive thinking and reasoning that makes the process dynamic and intuitive, and coding is an important step in this process to organize and interpret the data (Basit, 2003). Regarding data extraction in the realist approach, Pawson et al. (2005) suggest using a highlighter to mark relevant sentences and store them in a menu that would eventually contain different information from different sources. However, NVivo is a useful tool for highlighting relevant content and storing it in a predefined category called

a 'code'. Therefore, the coding was supported by using NVivo2020, a computer software used for qualitative data analysis, which helps researchers in organise unstructured data collected from interviews, journal articles, and open-ended surveys. First, the entire dataset was imported to NVivo, and then codes representing the main theories were created to link relevant sections of the text from the included papers or reports. The term *code* was called *node* (as in previous versions of the software) and helped to record related material into a single document which was later converted to word format. This also allowed the researcher to create subcategories and display/save codes in a tree view. These codes were created with keywords representing the initial theories (between rough theories and MRTs). For example, the first theory was about "institutional settings", and therefore the code for this was created with that name. Afterwards, each data was read (and re-read) and codes were created (through highlighting the text) and then iteratively revised to capture relevant information that could contribute to testing the initial theories (Wong et al., 2010). Although the fundamental of realist analysis is based on narratives and interpretations, the inclusion of descriptive statistics can support and enrich the analysis (Greenhalgh et al., 2007). Therefore, during the coding, an excel spreadsheet was also created to simultaneously collect information about the intervention characteristics, evaluation characteristics, and context characteristics of each data. Screenshots from NVivo and the final coding documents are given in the [Appendix C](#).

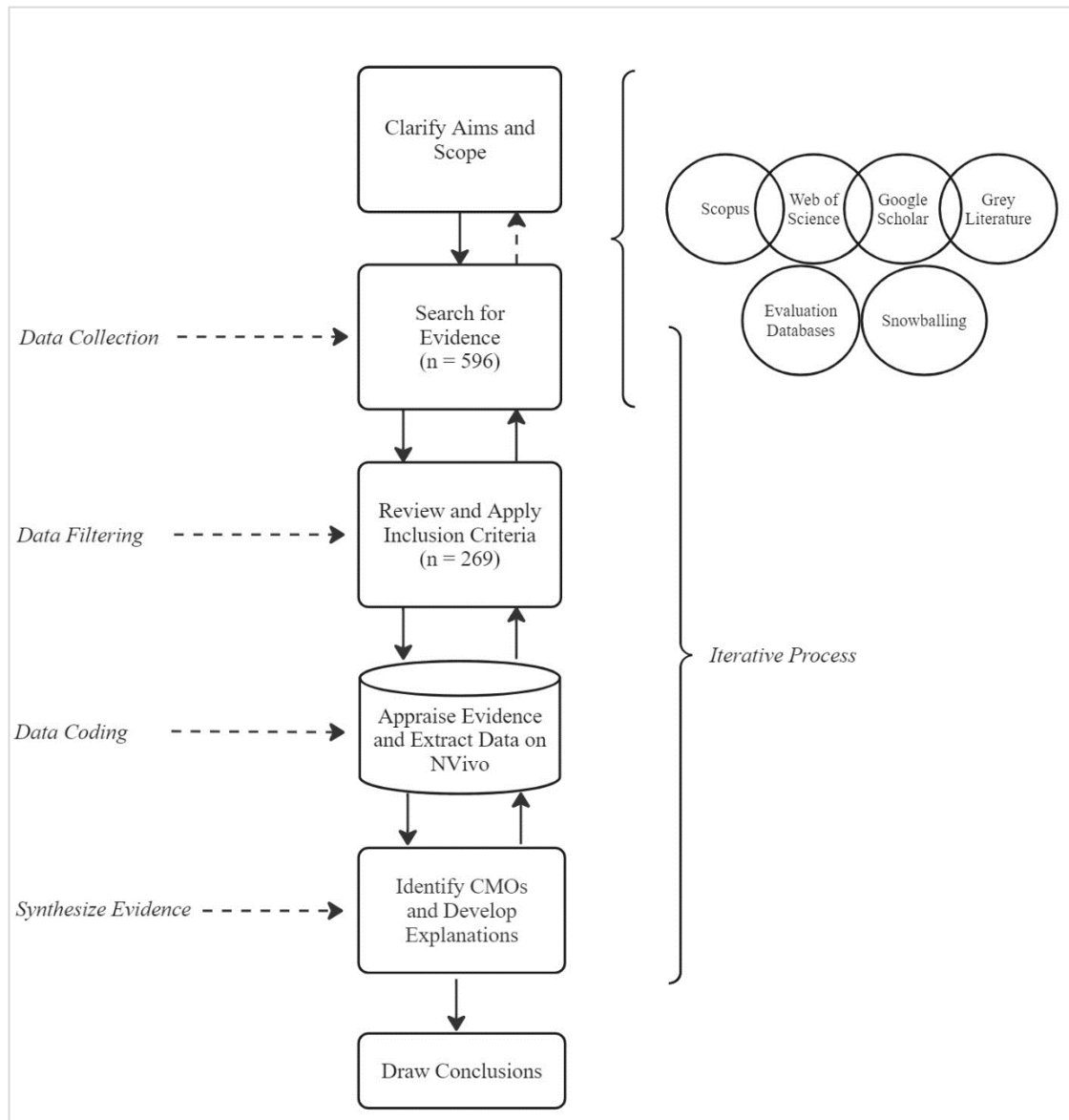
While the initial theories were refined constantly throughout the research, there were 7 main theories and 21 in total with their sub theories to emerge at that stage and the focus of the research was constantly strengthened in the light of emerging data and improved knowledge of the researcher; this progressive focusing approach is widely acknowledged and well established among qualitative researchers (e.g., Britten et al., 1995, Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012) and was employed in this study as well. Thus, the final version of the theories to be tested (i.e., MRTs) emerged as a total of 12 in 4 areas. These theories also represent the conceptual framework of the thesis which was introduced at the end of the literature review (Chapter 2).

After the coding was completed, all coding documents were downloaded in word format. Coding documents were carefully read, re-read, and the author returned to the original document when the coding sections were not sufficient to understand the relevant CMO. Since the main pursuit of the realist approach is to discover hidden (Pawson, 2008) or unobservable mechanisms, researchers cannot rely solely on explicit and repeated observations or surface-level explanations (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). In fact, "*synthesis refers to making progress*

in explanation” (Pawson et al., 2005, p. 31). Therefore, the aim is not to repeat the information already presented in the data (i.e., in the evaluation documents), but to interpret it by focusing on the context and mechanisms. In the social sciences, these mechanisms while not identical, are comparable, and so they differ from natural sciences, which can be explained by scientific facts such as the mechanism of gravity (Wong et al., 2013c). Thus, the analysis was undertaken considering the context and looking for comparative explanations, if any. Context can take many forms, but the main goal is not to list all the potential contexts of an intervention, but rather to develop an understanding of specific contexts, revealing how they may impact on mechanisms and ultimately influence outcomes (Wong et al., 2013c). This process is illustrated in Figure 4 and screenshots of NVivo project are provided in [Appendix C](#) to present the process regarding coding and analyses. It should be noted that nodes in NVivo were created based on the initial rough theories (in 7 categories) but were merged and/or changed over time as the process is iterative to become middle-range theories in 4 main categories.

The realist approach combines observations from its data with theories described in the literature to provide the most plausible explanations for those mechanisms that could cause the outcomes (Vincent and O'Mahoney, 2018). The aim is not to prove or disprove the constructed theories, but to improve them by making reasonable explanations on contingencies, exceptions, and observed patterns in the data (Wong et al., 2012). Considering these guidelines and the key points of the realist approach, analyses were made with a narrative and interpretive approach over a relatively long period of time, allowing improvements in understanding to develop and emerge. During this period, the researcher discussed her findings and comments with other academics and stakeholders during formal (conferences) and informal (social gatherings) events, and this process contributed to reflecting the learnings and finalising the findings of the study. Although the findings are presented under four dimensions in line with the MRTs, these dimensions are not mutually exclusive and should be evaluated by considering their interrelationships. For this reason, the findings are synthesized as a whole in the discussion section (Chapter 5).

Figure 4: Implementation process of realist synthesis

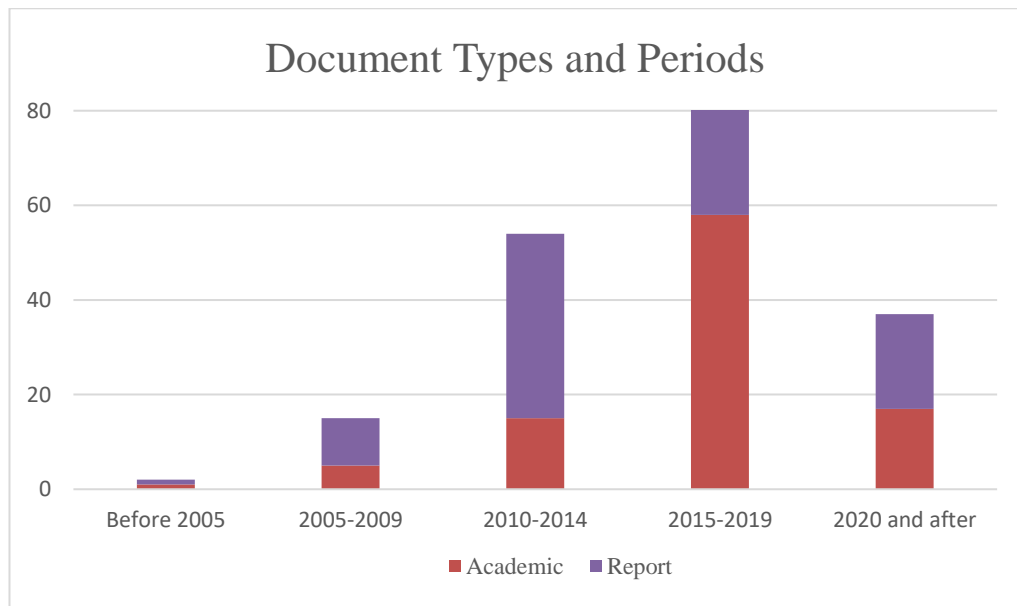


Source: Author's own illustration

2.6.1 Data Characteristics

The final dataset consisted of 269 documents. Slightly more than one-third of the data came from academic papers (n=98) and almost two-thirds (n=171) from publicly available evaluation reports. With only one exception, all these evaluations were conducted after 2000. It was observed that the number of evaluations increased significantly over time, with the highest number of documents falling within the range of 2015 and 2019 (Figure 5).

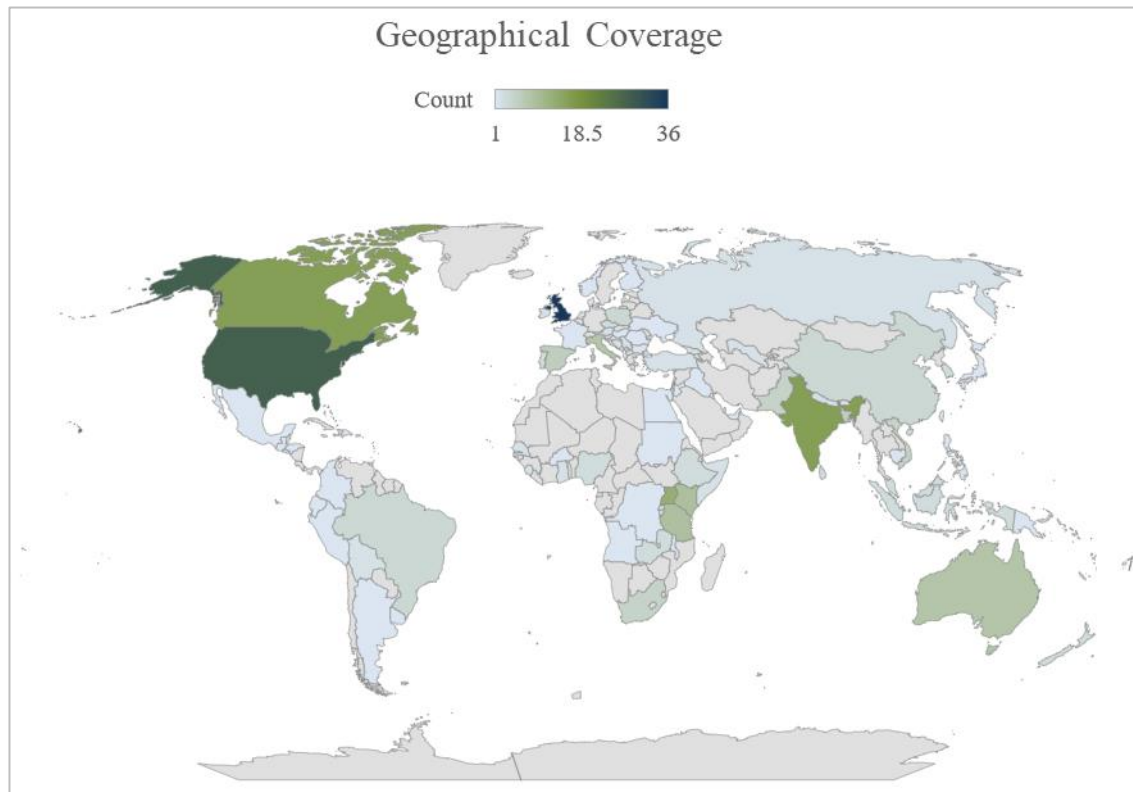
Figure 5: Document types and periods of the data



Source: Author's own elaboration based on data characteristics

While data across 87 countries (or regions) were analysed, data were collected without any country or region restrictions to enable different contexts to be explored. The largest number of documents is from Europe, representing less than one-third (n=80) of the total data, followed by data from the America (n=53). In terms of countries, the United Kingdom (n=36) data is the highest, while the USA (n=28) ranks second. However, it should be noted that there is a relatively significant number (n=45) of evaluations from intercontinental or international programmes. The aforementioned geographical coverage is given in Figure 6. According to this, there is no data from the grey countries.

Figure 6: Geographical coverage of the data



Source: Author's own elaboration based on data characteristics

3.8 Limitations of the Realist Synthesis

The realist synthesis provides an opportunity for qualitative researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of a programme, but there are some limitations to using this approach (Marchal et al., 2012, Pawson and Manzano-Santaella, 2012). First, the realist synthesis is interpretive; it aims to provide an explanation rather than being judgmental (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012), thus it shares the same limitation as other qualitative approaches, meaning that results are subjective to the reviewer. Various measures have been taken to minimize this limitation. As mentioned above, ten interviews with stakeholders were conducted during theory development to understand different perspectives and experiences. In addition, the findings were presented at conferences and discussed with other academics, followed by updates in the research. Thus, interpretation skills have been developed over time.

Second, despite the growing interest from scholars as well as a group of [researchers](#) who have developed training materials including publication and reporting standards (Wong et al., 2013a, Wong et al., 2013b), there is still no specific instruction to implement a realist inquiry,

and this creates not only an opportunity (adaptive and allows for decision making during the process) but also a challenge (lack of prescriptive guidance can risk the quality of analyses) for researchers (Jagosh, 2019, 2020). However, the author attended training workshops which were delivered by the [Centre for Advancement in Realist Evaluation and Synthesis](#).

Third, social interventions are complex and often have multiple stages that create endless possible variations that can be overwhelming for researchers. Indeed, conducting a realist synthesis requires a lot of time and significant resources (Jagosh, 2019). Related to this, Pawson and his colleagues (Pawson et al., 2005, 2006) suggest that researchers need to limit and prioritize theories to decide which aspects of the intervention to examine. The conceptual framework of this research is developed considering this suggestion, as it is not feasible to include all relevant dimensions.

Fourth, the realist reviewer needs a wide variety of primary data that provides information about different contextual conditions and interpersonal relationships, but empirical studies (in the dataset) often do not focus on these points and use easily measured outcomes (Pawson et al., 2005). Therefore, the reviewer needs alternative sources (e.g., theoretical literature, programme practitioners, primary study authors) to develop explanations for how the outcomes accrued (Jagosh, 2019). Following this, the author of this research has benefited from formal and informal discussions with other academics and practitioners, as well as using theoretical and grey literature to improve creativity in identifying CMOs and interpreting results.

A final limitation may be the outputs of the synthesis. Pawson et al (2015) state that the delivery of the reviewer is an illumination rather than hard and fast truths about mechanisms. This poses a challenge for reviewers, because if their stakeholders are not familiar with the approach, they may not be satisfied with the results and may put pressure on the reviewer (Jagosh, 2019). Despite these limitations, the results of the realist synthesis can be well-documented and delivered to provide a useful resource for future programme development (Jagosh, 2019). Indeed, this research provides comprehensive documentation and practical results that can illuminate future theory and practice.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This research employs a realist synthesis to investigate the research questions. The realist review is derived from traditional review approaches to evaluate complex social interventions with a particular focus on causal mechanisms. Its logic lies on realist philosophy and therefore suggests that our understanding about reality can be improved through interpretations. It uses secondary data and is well-established in the health sector to evaluate complex social programmes and policies.

The principle of realist review is that “*no individual-level intervention works for everyone and no institutional-level intervention works for everywhere*” (Pawson, 2006, p. 28) thus emphasizing the significance of context and how programmes (and their outcomes) differ depending on this. According to the realist approach, outcomes are a combination of contextual features and mechanisms. Context refers to pre-existing structures and external conditions, while mechanisms are understood as programme resources and how people respond or react to those resources (i.e., programme offers). Therefore, mechanisms are described as hidden and underlying entities that affect programme processes and hence outcomes. The method recognises the complexity and layered structure of social interventions and seeks to improve understandings of deeper layers. Since it is considered impossible to examine all these layers, it suggests prioritising the focus area.

The realist approach starts with developing programme theories that are guided by formal theories and suggests propositions about ideal scenarios or how programmes are expected to work. These theories are structured in CMO configurations to include assumptions about context, mechanism, and outcomes. It then searches for empirical evidence to test and improve these theories.

Data was collected through an extensive web search, including academic articles and publicly available evidence on SI policies and programmes. A set of inclusion criteria was applied to the initial database (n = 594) resulting in a final set of 269 documents. Coding was supported using NVivo software. Finally, coding documents were scrutinized over a relatively long period of time and the knowledge was synthesized to reveal the hidden mechanisms underlying SI processes.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings emerged from the analyses of the middle-range theories (MRTs) identified by the literature review. Findings have emerged based on the author's subjective assessments, which are carried out by following the principles of realist approach guidelines. Given the aims of the research and the nature of the understanding and contributions sought, the data was analysed in terms of four main dimensions (concepts) and MRTs derived from these concepts. The findings are therefore presented using the structure of the conceptual framework introduced at the end of Chapter 2. However, it is important to note that the aim here is not to confirm or contradict the MRTs but to improve them through analyses, which will be discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

Since the main quest of this research is to understand what works for whom, under what circumstances, and how, the author has synthesised the evidence considering different resources (data) with a particular focus on mechanisms. Mechanisms, as the method suggests, are understood as responses to programme resources, so in most cases, they are explained by human emotions or actions. The reader should expect the presentation of findings in generalisable patterns that are explained by using examples and detailed cases through CMO configurations. Several snippets are used to scrutinize specific cases to help the reader follow the analyses. In this way, the author aimed to reveal demi-regularities that can enable the explanation of programme results.

Programme results or outcomes are interpreted as “*mainly positive*” (meaning that the reported outcomes are in line with the programme objectives), “*limited*” (not all objectives are achieved and/or positive outcomes are assessed as weak), “*mixed*” (negative outcomes are reported as well as positive outcomes), and “*mainly negative*” (programmes are failed to achieve their intended objectives, and negative consequences such as disempowerment and negative environmental impact are reported). During the analyses, the focus is given to contextual characteristics and mechanisms as required by the method. The World Bank's country

classification³ (2021-2022) is used to generalise or summarise findings occasionally, even though the context does not simply refer to the country, and additional information about the context are also provided.

At the end of each section, a table is presented to summarize the findings with context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations. These tables are created by generalizing the findings and the relevant CMO associated with that finding. This is because realist synthesis aims to develop transferable theories that explain the nature of the subjects, the circumstances of the programme and its outcomes (Pawson, 2002). The reader should be aware that the highlight of the findings are the new mechanisms identified during the analyses.

4.2 Findings on Institutional Settings

The evidence confirms that the impact and outcomes of interventions are significantly influenced by the context and institutions in which they took place. Nearly two-thirds of the data (n=164) include statements in their results that explicitly point to institutional settings as a facilitator or barrier to SI interventions. These findings are presented here in two categories in line with the MRTs: formal institutions that refer to laws and regulations and informal institutions that refer to culture, social norms, and traditions. Macro-level institutions such as democracy and political ideologies are also discussed under formal institutions.

Overall, the findings highlight the embedded nature of SI interventions and how their effectiveness is constrained by different policy areas, calling for integration between formal institutions. Formal institutions in low- and mid-income contexts were found to be the main cause of the social problem addressed by SI interventions. Thus, institutional voids emerged as opportunities for SI interventions, but government involvement seemed necessary to scale and legitimise successful SIs. Governance was found problematic in authoritarian regimes with rigid top-down approaches and in developed contexts where established rules in government units cause them to fail as coordinating actors. Interventions were also negatively influenced by some political ideologies and socio-economic history, as they led to *distrust* in society.

³ The World Bank classifies the world's economies into four groups depending on their income level, this study simplified this classification into three groups: low, mid (including lower-middle and upper-middle) and high-income countries.

Informal institutions in the form of cultural characteristics and social norms were found to be influential in how people respond to programme resources. These characteristics were shown to affect programme results in several ways, such as citizen engagement (volunteering) and adoption of the relevant SI idea. Interventions aimed at addressing marginalisation were found risky as negative consequences were observed due to the embeddedness of the problem in social and economic exclusion. Since negative feelings were reported among targeted groups, *emotions* are considered as hidden mechanisms in this regard. In addition, *respect* emerged as a critical factor for overcoming negative experiences and creating positive emotions.

4.2.1 Findings on Formal Institutions

Formal institutions refer to the laws and legislative regulations in the settings where SI interventions occur. The data provide sufficient evidence that in low- and mid-income countries, the social problems addressed by SI interventions were created by institutions themselves. SI interventions in the form of formal institutions in these contexts were confronted and constrained by other institutions. For instance, women's equality was targeted in Burundi by national policies and laws (the National Gender Policy 2017-2021 and the Burundian Constitution); however, these efforts contradict other discriminatory legal provisions that were mentioned as the leading causes of women's inequality. Although the related policy aimed to represent women in decision-making and leadership positions to ensure equality, women's lack of inheritance and land ownership makes them dependent on men in the first place. As a result, the legal system in this context was reported as incomplete and restrictive due to its dependence on other legal regulations and traditional norms. Similarly, women's deprivation of property rights limited the effectiveness of programmes targeting women in other countries such as India and Bangladesh, and disempowerment among beneficiaries was reported.

The data show that the lack of integration between institutions also negatively affects interventions, even in the absence of contradiction between objectives. Concerning this, a case from Ecuador revealed the disconnection between inclusion policy and education policy, which were supposed to complement each other but failed to do so. Despite the Ecuadorian law declaring the inclusion of disabled children in schools, there was no reciprocity in education policy and no proposal on how to achieve this, thus leaving these institutions disintegrated.

Institutional voids (or institutional gaps) that refer to the absence or weakness of state support can sometimes act as opportunities for less powerful actors to promote self-regulation (Mair et al., 2007). The findings show that institutional gaps can potentially trigger SI interventions. However, these interventions need government support to gain legitimacy after a while, and this legitimacy is the key to bringing about social change. A case from Brazil would be helpful to elaborate on this. In developing contexts where legal regulations are restrictive, SI interventions may emerge to challenge formal institutions. In this case, the government launched an initiative to regulate the certification of organic products; but farmers and agricultural organisations opposed the model not only because of its high costs and the bureaucracy required in accreditation processes but also because it did not *respect* traditional (and organic) methods in the region. As a result, a group of non-governmental social actors initiated a network organisation called Ecovida to resist the government's action and create an alternative way of certification. The network has widened its scope beyond a product certification system over time through new agroecological production processes, collaborative working approaches and mutual learning between actors. Eventually, it became "*the main production and organic certification network*" in Brazil (Box 1). However, they still needed legal accreditation for international sales. Therefore, the initiative tried to build relations with public authorities to establish a legal structure. The government responded positively to these collaboration efforts and resulted in the legal recognition and institutionalisation of this certification scheme. The mechanisms, in this case, were identified as *collective action* to preserve traditional methods, a sense of exclusion (*emotions*) due to lack of *respect*, using existing *social capital*, and *cooperating* with the government (*actor interactions*).

Governance was found problematic in SI interventions, and the need for formal institutional identity was observed in different contexts to implement SIs fully. The data provide evidence of the lack of formal institutional arrangements and show that where government actors do not feel any ownership, the social issue being addressed cannot become a central focus at the political level. In an example from Italy, where public and community actors are involved; it is stated that the leading person was "imposed" by the government. However, he did not share the programme vision according to stakeholders, instead, mainly focused on bureaucratic prescriptions and challenged the relationships and the common mentality already in place (lack of *respect*). This led to the demotivation of the actors involved.

Title and Country: Ecovida Agroecology Network, Brazil

Context: Ecovida was initiated in November 1998 after the state government of Santa Catarina launched a programme to regulate and certify organic products in the state earlier that year. To resist this policy, a group of social organisations and farmers came together to create a non-governmental alternative. This network started working to benefit organic producers, namely family farmers and their organisations. Just a year later, in 1999, the network spread across the entire southern region of Brazil. Although issues such as bureaucracy and the cost of the process were also mentioned, the main problem with the central certification model was that the pioneer local farmers and the methods of producing organic products currently in place needed to be considered and respected by the intervention. Therefore, the network has developed a participatory certification scheme (Participatory Guarantee Systems) with its unique label and members are integrated into this model. However, the idea was more than a certification process, as the activities included new agroecological production methods, collaborative work, and mutual learning.

Participatory Guarantee Systems: The system is based on an inspection model among its members through cross-monitoring but also includes the exchange of knowledge that results in collaborative learning. Farmers from different groups (depending on their region) visit and monitor other members to confirm the certificate and check for any non-compliance.

Evaluation Method: A qualitative approach based on document analysis and observation.

Mechanisms: Collective action to challenge institutions (to preserve their traditional methods), a sense of exclusion (emotions), using existing social capital, cooperating with government (actor interactions).

There were already some groups of family farmers practising agroecological production, which later formed the organisational centre of the network initiative. The main reason for their opposition was that the new model did not respect existing organic practices. Therefore, they gathered with other social actors to preserve their traditional methods.

Although the idea was initially based on opposing a public intervention, Ecovida then sought to interact with the government to promote the initial idea. At this stage, the government's response was positive, and thus, they worked together to create and operate a legal participatory scheme.

Output, Outcomes, and Impact: Initially (1999), there were 343 family farmers, 35 farmer groups and 4 NGOs. By 2016 this had grown into a significantly larger network of 4500 family farmers, 300 farmer groups and 30 NGOs. However, due to the required legal accreditation, Ecovida-certified products were not eligible for international sales. At this stage, the network initiated a collaboration with the federal government and played a central role in shaping the new legal participatory system. Thus, building bridges between the state and non-governmental organisations consolidated the collective action.

Although its geographical operation is limited to the southern part of the country, Ecovida has become the largest network in Brazil, representing almost 70% of all certified Brazilian organic producers. Lower accreditation costs and less bureaucracy have also contributed to the success of this certification system.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on Rover et al. (2017)

Similarly, resistance from local authorities and a lack of commitment and advocacy by public authorities were repeatedly observed as obstacles at the operational level of interventions. In most cases, this was in the form of "slowness"; as traditionally, established protocols in governments are not agile. Even though several evaluations reported the willingness of

governments to innovate, they were still assessed as slow to react due to established rules and procedures. In addition, there is sufficient evidence about rigid top-down approaches, seen in traditionally paternalistic cultures such as Korea, China, or the Dominican Republic, and in developed countries such as the Netherlands, showing that the government imposes formal institutional restrictions. For example, a case from China reported the government approach as a controller by being the primary financial resource of NGOs and social sector activities. These unidirectional approaches, which refer to the lack of good governance, also resulted in negative experiences such as *distrust* in relationships.

The socio-economic history and political ideologies of countries have the potential to bring new contextual insights from SI practices (Shaw and de Bruin, 2013). Indeed, in post-socialist countries such as Serbia, individualistic behaviours were reported after fifty years of collective organisational culture. This is explained by the *loss of trust* that arose in post-conflict contexts based on historical experiences. Although collaborative efforts through third-sector actors remained to some extent in these contexts, they are constrained by the emergence of new dominant structures (nationalist or populist). The data informs that these new regimes do not *trust* collectivist groups that seek alternative ways to be active and depend on international funding. As a result, the position of civil society agencies in Serbia was reported as “weak” due to these informal institutional voids. The status of civil society actions was observed similar in Poland and Hungary, both former communist countries. In fact, social agents face *distrust* and suspicion from governments such as Russia and Indonesia, which limit their activities, especially when they work on sensitive social issues (Tracey and Stott, 2017b). On the contrary, in some Latin American countries such as Argentina and Brazil, the election of populist governments in the early 2000s positively changed the role of government and public policy for SI. Both governments began to support and shelter social movements and strategies. However, in these countries, the neoliberal era of the 1990s was used as a laboratory for social and collective actions. Thus, social and economic instabilities (in other words, institutional voids) fostered the SI in these two countries.

The analyses show that macro-level institutional concepts such as democracy and corruption constrain SI interventions in low- and mid-income contexts. Concerning this, it was argued that the poor performance of SI interventions in Pakistan is based on elite domination, ethnic division, and various forms of corruption. Despite the country’s relative economic growth, *resistance towards change* was reported in this context, which was linked to well-established rules and norms (informal institutions). For instance, it was stated that landlords and elites

seek to maintain low literacy rates to keep their privileged status and position of power. In fact, as stated in economic models, the elite and politically influential groups tend to increase their incomes by extracting revenues from others, thus impoverishing those groups (Acemoglu, 2006). At this point, governments have a critical role, in building a formal institutional environment and regulating property rights (Williamson, 2000).

4.2.2 Findings on Informal Institutions

Despite the visibility of regulative structures in the form of formal institutions, informal structures allow understanding “*the deeper foundations of institutional forms*” (Scott, 2007, p. 429) because regions differ in their needs, resources and community relationships (Moulaert and MacCallum, 2019) and can provide deeper understanding on causal mechanisms.

Informal institutions were observed in the form of *cultural, regional, and ethnic identity*, all of which were found to be decisive in people’s responses. Evidence showed that interventions can result in different outcomes based on the cultural characteristics of the context, as seen in an empowerment programme implemented in Kenya and Tanzania. The evaluation implied that differences in programme outcomes may have been due to cultural differences, even though there was some contextual similarity in terms of geographical conditions (resource-scarce rural areas) and target groups (particularly youth and girls). At the end of the programme, the participants were asked to what extent they perceived themselves as agents of change in their community, and according to the results, Tanzanian youth had demonstrated a higher degree of motivation than Kenyan participants. They also appeared to have significantly higher levels of positive self-awareness and confidence than their Kenyan counterparts. While the underlying causes were not clarified in the evaluation, the cultural norms in the traditional patriarchal societies of rural Africa, where the youth, especially girls, did not question authority figures, were mentioned. In addition, the evaluation team observed that Kenyans were more cynical and comfortable talking against their leaders, while Tanzanians were not accustomed to criticising authority figures. Therefore, participants more constrained by social norms were more responsive to empowerment approaches and showed more willing (a choice based on their emotions) to become a change agent in their environment.

Cultural and ethnic identity significantly influence SI interventions, particularly in contexts where there is social exclusion against certain groups, as seen in the Australian case (Box 2). In 2015, the Commonwealth of Australia launched the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) to support the growth of indigenous enterprises and entrepreneurship in Australia. Although the intervention was based on enterprise and entrepreneurship policies, the underlying rationale was to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by increasing their participation in the economy. While the evaluation noted the effectiveness of the policy over three years in terms of numbers, negative experiences such as prejudice and frustration were also reported by several indigenous representatives. For example, indigenous businesses were underestimated and offered only low-skilled jobs such as cleaning and catering, even by government agencies, leading to frustration (negative *emotions*) among targeted groups. Indeed, public interventions aiming to address marginalisation through SI are less likely to be effective due to institutional dominance; instead, these measures are more likely to create a converse effect (von Jacobi et al., 2019). Additionally, the evaluation highlighted the complex nature of Aboriginal English, which differs significantly from English, and it was stated that this could be the cause of failures in procurement applications due to misunderstandings in formal documents.

Respect for cultural and ethnic identity in the design and implementation processes emerged as a specific mechanism that supports programme effectiveness. A case from Nebraska (USA) that targeted four different refugee communities (Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East) demonstrated that not all refugee cultures are the same. Focus group discussions during the evaluation suggested that each community has distinctive cultural norms that affect the services provided. For example, the gender of the medical practitioner may be a concern for Arab women during an appointment. Besides, the findings demonstrated that refugees are more responsive to services when agency representatives respect their culture. This pattern was observed in other programmes targeting marginalised groups.

Title and Country: Indigenous Procurement Policy, Australia

Context: The Australian Commonwealth launched the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) in 2015 to support the growth of Indigenous businesses. The policy aimed to increase opportunities for Indigenous enterprises by leveraging the Commonwealth's procurements. Although the intervention was based on enterprise and entrepreneurship policies, the underlying rationale was to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by increasing their participation in the economy. Broader positive impacts such as health status, social inclusion and education were also targeted by strengthening the Indigenous enterprise sector due to their extremely high potential to employ Indigenous people (nearly 100 times more likely than non-Indigenous businesses).

Evaluation Method: Both quantitative (administrative data) and qualitative approaches (focus groups, surveys, and interviews).

Mechanisms: Frustration, prejudice, misinterpretation, black cladding.

Several indigenous companies agreed on the need for more useful advice from government agencies. When they sought opportunities for their companies under the IPP, they were offered contracts for low-skilled jobs such as cleaning or catering. So, a disconnection was observed between the policy and practice. Another issue is that Aboriginal English is a complex language that differs significantly from English with its own grammatical rules and conceptual distinctions. The evaluation suggested language could cause ambiguity and misunderstanding in formal documents as applications required technical words and explanations. It was claimed that these linguistic difficulties may have led to a misperception of local companies' capabilities and that some procurement opportunities applications failed for this reason. Some non-Aboriginal companies sought to take advantage of the policy offered and tended to create a partnership structure that technically and legally enabled them to be considered as an indigenous business, but in which the indigenous owner had little or even no power over corporate decisions.

Output, Outcomes, and Impact: The policy had an overall positive impact over the three years (2015-2018), as the number of contracts awarded to indigenous businesses increased significantly each year, with 9,380 business contracts representing 5.0% of the total contracts awarded to these businesses. However, the total value of indigenous contracts is \$1.4 billion, representing only 0.9% of the total value of procurement contracts. Indigenous businesses also approved this result, reporting an increase in the number of lower-value offers and a decline in higher-value long-term contracts.

Positive results were reported quantitatively (significant increase in indigenous businesses awarded). However, the risk of unintended results was mentioned in the long term due to external conditions such as black cladding (where non-Aboriginal businesses pretend as indigenous to take advantage of IPP contracts). Despite the initial objective to achieve a broader social impact on indigenous communities, the potential social value was not evaluated.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on the report from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australia (2019)

Respect can indeed create positive feelings at the cognitive and emotional levels (Goodwin et al., 2004) and thus influence people's reactions. Similar points regarding respect for cultural identity were indicated in another evaluation from Dubai. The mentioned programme was designed to provide innovative services to child victims, and it was developed by observing similar programmes in the USA but adapted to their context due to cultural differences. For instance, some topics such as alcohol, smoking and sexual abuse were mentioned as taboo in

this society, or physical punishment of a child can be seen as acceptable in the relevant context. While these characteristics could be considered deficiencies of the context, the collectivist nature of the same society was also mentioned and resulted in strong voluntary commitment during the implementation. Thus, all these unique features of cultural identity were acknowledged and respected in programme design, and positive outcomes were associated with this approach.

Another characteristic of cultural identity that was found to be influential in the effectiveness of interventions is the *intentionality* of society. Outcomes appeared to be more positive in contexts where individuals, groups or organisations are concerned and feel responsible for the social issues of their society and have a habit of *acting collectively*. For example, the support of 200 volunteers for a rural development programme in Munster (Germany) was explained by the city's *strong collectivistic culture* and it was highlighted for its significant contribution to the success.

Other programmes that needed community volunteers or spillover effects similarly achieved positive results in collectivist settings, such as the women empowerment programme in India or a child rehabilitation programme in the United Arab Emirates. Higher level of *social capital* (*trust* and *solidarity* between community members) was reported in these contexts. These cases confirm the importance of voluntary, self-organised groups in addressing social challenges (Harvey et al., 2011). Nevertheless, evidence suggests that tight bonds in collectivist cultures can also result in deliberate isolation for various reasons, including self-esteem generated by community support, distrust of programme offerings, and opposition based on social norms. These points are discussed in Section 4.3.4 under the findings on social capital.

4.2.3 Summary of the Findings on Institutions

The findings on institutions can be summarised in five major points (Table 8). First, many of the social problems addressed by SI interventions are created by institutions in the first place. Thus, interventions are confronted or constrained by other institutions, especially in low- and mid-income countries. Distrust of institutions is assessed as the main mechanism in this regard, and disempowerment between targeted groups is observed based on this distrust and negative experiences.

Second, institutional gaps create opportunities for SI interventions, but these interventions sooner or later need government support to gain legitimacy and institutionalise, which is critical to bringing about social change. Collective action using existing social capital is the first mechanism identified here and is triggered by negative emotions (the sense of exclusion) resulting from a lack of respect. Collaboration and cooperation with relevant stakeholders are other mechanisms that support positive outcomes.

Third, interventions need good governance, which requires formal institutional arrangements with two-way communication and respect for existing structures. Negative mechanisms, such as decreased motivation and commitment, resistance to changing established procedures, and distrust in relationships, were identified.

Fourth, SI interventions are influenced by the socio-economic history, political ideologies, and democratic approaches of the countries in which they take place. The mechanism is again distrust towards institutions and collective actions that result in individual behaviours.

Finally, the cultural, regional, and ethnic identity of the context significantly influences people's responses and, thus, SI interventions. The main mechanisms here are emotions (positive or negative), distrust, and intentionality to act collectively (using social capital).

Table 8: Summary of findings on institutional settings

Generalised Finding(s)	Context	Mechanism(s)	Outcomes
Most social problems addressed by SI interventions are created by institutions. Therefore, many SI interventions in the form of formal institutions are confronted and/or constrained by other institutions.	In low- and mid-income countries with restrictive policies and social norms (e.g., India, Bangladesh, Burundi, Ecuador).	- <i>Distrust</i> of institutions. - <i>Disempowerment</i> of groups and individuals.	<i>Mainly negative</i> – failure to achieve main objectives such as ensuring equality and inclusion.
Institutional gaps create opportunities for SI interventions, but these interventions eventually need government support to gain legitimacy, which is critical to bringing about social change.	In low- and mid-income countries where regulations constrain certain groups and actions, or where the needs and expectations of less powerful groups are not met (e.g., Brazil, India, Pakistan).	-Acting <i>collectively</i> to challenge the social issue (using <i>social capital</i>). -A sense of exclusion (<i>emotions</i>) due to lack of <i>respect</i> . - <i>Collaborate</i> and <i>cooperate</i> with relevant stakeholders.	<i>Mixed</i> –new relationships and change in legal structures (<i>positive</i>) when governments are involved, but <i>limited</i> impact where no change in institutional barriers (e.g., property rights).
Interventions need good governance, which requires formal institutional arrangements with bidirectional communication and respect for existing structures.	Mostly in traditionally authoritarian governments (e.g., South Korea and China) but also in developed contexts (e.g., the UK, Italy, Netherlands)	-Decreased motivation of relevant actors. -Resisting changing established procedures and mindsets. - <i>Distrust</i> in relationships due to lack of <i>respect</i> .	<i>Mainly negative</i> – operational challenges and negative experiences in relationships.
SI interventions are influenced by the socio-economic history, political ideologies, and democratic approaches of the countries in which they occur.	In post-conflict or post-communist countries (e.g., Serbia, Hungary, Poland, Russia), corrupted states and dictatorial regimes.	- <i>Distrust</i> and suspicion towards collective actions and institutions. -Emergence of <i>individualistic</i> behaviours.	<i>Limited</i> – poor performance of civil society and collective actions.
The cultural, regional, and ethnic identity of the context significantly influences people's responses and thus, SI, interventions.	Context-free but particularly in environments where society has restrictive social norms and/or certain groups are marginalised.	-Positive feelings (<i>emotions</i>) based on <i>respect</i> for cultural identity. -Negative <i>emotions</i> due to established <i>prejudice</i> and exclusion. - <i>Distrust</i> between different groups or actors. -Intentionality of <i>collectivism</i> .	<i>Mixed</i> –high level of participation and <i>positive</i> outcomes in terms of empowerment but also <i>negative</i> experiences in relationships.

Source: Author's own elaboration

4.3 Findings on Different Forms of Capital

Capital refers to resources offered by interventions or inherently embedded in context. Therefore, the analyses regarding capital were made by focusing on different forms of capital and how they influence the processes and/or outcomes of interventions. The findings are presented under four subsections depending on the form of capital and in accordance with the conceptual framework.

Overall, the analyses confirm the convertible nature of capital forms from one to another. Economic capital was found to be effective when they are combined with human and social capital. Human capital was analysed considering not only innovators but also other relevant actors at the individual level, revealing that a specific set of skills is required for leading roles. Mobilisation of human resources was found to be equally important as the development of human capital. Symbolic capital emerged as critical in creating awareness, empathy, acceptance, and advocacy. It also increases other forms of capital through bringing credibility and empowering outcomes. Social capital appears to be the vital ingredient in SI interventions that significantly affects the outcomes. Its role was found more critical in marginalised and underserved communities that inherently have higher levels of social capital. *Trust* (or *distrust*) emerged as the common mechanism in all forms of capital.

4.3.1 Findings on Economic Capital

The impact of economic capital was assessed for interventions that provide financial resources such as incentives, grants, microfinance, and innovation funds. Accordingly, more than a third of the data (n=109) provided explicit evidence regarding the role of financial capital in SI interventions. In general, evaluations reported that financial resources significantly affect programme results, especially by mobilising other resources. However, their effectiveness was found to be significantly influenced by the existence of *human and social capital*. In addition, the structure and implementation processes of the programmes were observed as influential factors in the efficiency of economic capital. The key mechanisms here are identified as *distrust* and *dependency* due to the instability of the funds and a lack of integration with other forms of resources. Also, *self-confidence and pride* emerged as positive mechanisms, particularly in SE grants.

First, government funds were found to be effective as they brought credibility to the beneficiary and contribute to long-term financing by being a motivating force for other public and private investors. This can be interpreted that public support increases symbolic capital, which, in turn, leverages other resources. The outcomes of incentives and tax exemptions were also reported as mainly positive in mid- and high-income countries such as the UK, South Korea, and the Czech Republic. For example, a wage subsidy was implemented in Canada to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities, and the intervention resulted in the extension of the employment periods after the subsidies were ended due to the high performance of disabled employees. However, these employers reported that they would not have hired those people if the programme was not introduced in the first place.

Economic capital was the main offering in most SE grants and microfinance programmes aimed at combating poverty. Evidence showed that the outcomes of these interventions were mixed, and human as well as social capital were decisive in these results. Positive outcomes were reported in low- and mid-income countries, such as Uganda, Bangladesh and Somalia, where cash transfers and microfinance programmes integrated human development activities (capacity building) that develop leadership skills and self-awareness. *Empowerment* outcomes such as *self-confidence* and *feeling proud*, which can be shown as positive mechanisms, were reported. In other cases, the outcomes were limited or negative, as dependence on external support and *distrust* and *frustration* among beneficiaries were observed.

The analyses reveal that the positive outcomes of grants mainly depend on the grantee's capacity, as results are mixed for those with limited skills, thus pointing to the role of *human capital*. In addition, the findings provide evidence from different contexts (e.g., the UK, China, South Africa, and Europe) that funding is the most significant concern for social entrepreneurs. However, they need additional sources, such as expert advice (*human capital*) as their venture scales. This expertise is also found to be critical for reaching funds and other resources in the early stages. For instance, the evaluation of a SI grant programme in central Asia reported that projects failed in applications where specific technical proposals were expected. Similar results (need for technical expertise during applications) were observed in the Aboriginal entrepreneurship programme providing financial support in Australia.

The data also shows that the efficiency of financial interventions for social entrepreneurs can be restricted if they are not supported by *social networks* (*social capital*). The findings suggest that social capital is essential for social entrepreneurs to reach relevant actors and build *trust*

in them regardless of context. However, it is found to be more critical in marginalised and deprived contexts as it can facilitate processes and lead to having voice and visibility. *Initial social capital* is important in this regard. For example, in a case from Sri Lanka, poor smallholders were targeted to cultivate tea and rubber as part of a government-funded entrepreneurship programme aimed at improving livelihoods in two separate regions. The programme ran for nine years, and farmers were supported by financial credit. The programme also aimed to foster partnerships and community development under one of its components, resulted in the formation of hundreds of enterprise groups but there was no evidence of the impact of these groups, as many of them were lost or ceased their activities after the programme ended. The lack of market linkages and the inactive position of these groups explained the reason for this ineffectiveness. Therefore, the evaluation suggested including or strengthening existing farmer groups or associations (existing social capital) rather than creating new ones. Other evaluations from similar programmes that provide financial support to smallholder agricultural producers in low- and mid-income countries (Malawi, Uganda, Colombia) also highlighted the role of *initial social capital* and reported it as a prerequisite for success.

While social networks are indeed found to be important in the success of financial interventions, the findings reveal that the effectiveness of these networks depends on several conditions, including *diversity* of members and the *trust* in place. A case from Canada (Box 3) provides insights regarding this. The relevant intervention was a multi-stage funding programme implemented by a non-profit. The programme aimed at creating favourable conditions for systems change and provided financial capital to enable SI projects to develop, test and scale. Within the programme, networking activities were also organized, and consultancy service was provided informally by the programme staff. While positive outcomes, such as the increase in the number of projects addressing the root causes of social challenges and the improvement of relationships between actors, were reported, some points pointing to the *lack of social and human capital* were also noted in the evaluation. First, the support of the programme staff to the grantees was appreciated, but the informants mentioned the need for external experts and a formal process to develop specific skills a system changer should possess (*human capital*).

Secondly, the networking efforts under the programme were considered ineffective or somewhat counterproductive, according to some respondents. In this regard, the participants suggested purposeful activities instead of just gathering. Negative responses (mechanisms)

such as *confusion* and *distrust* were reported based on the non-representation of minorities in the organisation. Indeed, social interactions do not necessarily produce positive results; but they can also have negative effects (Arrow, 2000), therefore, it was suggested that programme resources need to be improved regarding social and human capital.

Box 3: The CMO configuration of Vancouver Foundation's systems change grant

Title and Country: Vancouver Foundation's Systems Change Grantmaking, Canada

Context: In 2014, the Vancouver Foundation modified its field-of-interest grant programme to create favourable conditions for SI actions in British Columbia. The grants were redesigned to support SI projects that concern social, cultural, and environmental issues and aimed to address the root causes of these pressing problems by influencing systemic behaviours, resource allocations and policies. The programme's structure evolved over time, but the definition of SI, with its emphasis on systemic change, remained the same. In its latest form, the programme provided three types of financial support as follows: i) Develop (a grant of \$10,000 for initial ideas, up to one year), ii) Test (\$75,000 per year to test the initial ideas and learn from the results; up to three years) iii) Grow/Scale (\$50,000 per year for successful projects to scale up and increase impact). Applications were accepted based on calls for proposals, and technical support and coaching during the application were provided. It also held networking activities for knowledge exchange among grantees and building relationships with other key actors.

Evaluation Method: In-depth interpretation of data gathered in 2018 from programme reports, grantee and applicants survey, key informant interviews, focus groups and reflection sessions.

Mechanisms: Motivation (positive emotions), confusion and distrust (negative emotions). The grantees highly appreciated the flexibility to make changes in the project plans, and increased motivation to develop innovative ideas was reported. However, the language that the programme used to describe SI and systems change was reported as unfamiliar to organisations in small cities and rural areas, particularly indigenous communities. In addition, some respondents found the networking activities ineffective, and the need for skill development was also expressed. The challenges mentioned in these regards point to the lack of social capital and human resources. Social capital- Despite their interest in collaboration and learning opportunities, the benefit of the gatherings was not acknowledged by all respondents because the purpose of the gatherings was found unclear and a perception such as "convening for convening's sake" was reported.

Additionally, the programme aimed to include Indigenous organisations through networking events, but these activities led to negative experiences and created distrust among Indigenous stakeholders. Human capital- Capacity building activities were reported as ineffective because systems change initiatives need specific skills on topics such as design thinking, growth strategies and policy advocacy. Although the staff supported the applicants and grantees according to their time availability, the need for dedicated staff and external systems change experts was informed by the respondents.

Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact: Between 2015 and 2017, \$27.1 million was spent through 366 SI grants. The first-order outcomes refer to short-term easy-win achievements, and 81% of all projects made improvements in actors' awareness, knowledge, and capacity. On the other hand, 69% of all projects made advances in terms of collaborations and relationships. According to the second-order outcomes, which refer to significant changes in public/private policies and practices, 52% of projects made progress regarding improved practices, while 28% made progress on improved policies in the system. Finally, third-order outcomes were mentioned as population-level impacts and refer to profound and long-term achievements. Accordingly, 52% of projects made advances on new narratives and shifts in culture; improvements in population-level impacts and transformative changes were reported for 12% of projects.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on the report from Vancouver Foundation (2019)

4.3.2 Findings on Human Capital

Human capital refers to the people (and their capabilities) who develop, implement and benefit from SI interventions. Less than twenty per cent of the data (n=40) provided explicit evidence of the role of human resources in SI interventions. Not only innovators (or social entrepreneurs) generating ideas to address social challenges but also other individuals, such as passionate leaders, enthusiastic program staff, and responsible community members, were found to be instrumental to the outcomes of SI interventions. These findings can be divided into “development of human capital”, which refers to capacity building, and “mobilisation of human capital”, which refers to using and nurturing existing human resources. *Motivation, commitment, empathy, fulfilment, and synergy* were found to be the key mechanisms regarding human capital.

First, evidence reports that SI interventions require different actors equipped with different skills; therefore, developing skills and investing in human capital is essential. For example, the Chinese government launched a new model and contracted social work agencies to improve welfare services for the elderly. Although the intervention resulted in relatively positive outcomes, such as the expansion of provided services, the two main problems related to human capital were reported: a need for more social workers and qualifications of social workers. The interviewees reported that due to the difficulty of finding suitable candidates for their activities, the staff mainly consisted of inexperienced social work students. Furthermore, because of this shortfall, social work experts were invited from Hong Kong to train and supervise programme staff. However, external expertise was rated ineffective due to differences in context (Hong Kong was mentioned as a more liberal and progressive context). This implies that human capital is also context-dependent and echoes the role of regional identity discussed in Section 4.1.2.

Second, the analyses show that the mobilisation of human resources positively influences interventions by triggering the involvement of change agents in SI processes. These agents were observed in different roles, including policymakers, programme staff, social innovators, and citizens. Rigorous recruitment processes and selecting the “right” agents, especially for leading roles, were shown to be critical. Strong *motivation* and *commitment* were identified as positive mechanisms in this regard. Accordingly, interventions lacking these mechanisms reported limited or negative results, as seen in the Italian case. The evaluation of a government-funded programme, focused on renewable energy and aimed to develop sustainable

communities in rural and marginalised areas, reported that the objectives could not be achieved due to the change of the programme manager during the implementation. It was claimed that the leader's vision and capacity changed significantly after the replacement of the initial manager. Even though the new manager had the field expertise that the evaluators acknowledged, the need for specific competencies such as interdisciplinary attitudes and soft skills was mentioned. The importance of supporting and nurturing the agent was also highlighted.

The mobilisation of human resources was also found to be important in terms of enabling citizens' participation in SI. Indeed, government interventions require significant inputs from citizens, which can create synergetic outcomes and contribute to the effectiveness of these interventions (Ostrom, 1996). Citizen support is also critical for public legitimacy (Nicholls et al., 2015b). Their participation was observed in several roles, including social innovator, volunteer, advocator, and active user. Volunteering was mentioned as an influential factor in programme results in Section 4.1.2. in which human capital was understood as an input to programme resources. However, evaluations from European countries report that volunteering is also a tool for building human capital, especially among youth. The *synergy* between community members and increased *empathy* emerged from volunteering. Empowerment outcomes (e.g., *self-awareness*) among volunteers and increased *trust* (social capital) within the environment were also observed.

The data also provides sufficient evidence that citizens (i.e., individuals) are *motivated* to help others and show strong *commitment* with *altruistic* motives when encouraged and provided with the necessary resources. However, it is found that their willingness is shaped not only by external opportunities or incentives but also by demographic factors such as age, education level and experience, all of which can be shown as dimensions of human capital. For instance, the outcomes of EU-funded intervention, implemented in five European countries (England, France, Denmark, Spain, Bulgaria) and aimed to encourage older citizens to become agents of social change; were reported as mainly positive with a high number of beneficiaries and a diverse range of social needs addressed, such as social exclusion, integration of immigrants, food waste, and healthcare. Additionally, senior individuals involved in the programme reported high levels of motivation and fulfilment, both for altruistic (helping others) and self-expressive (being active during retirement) reasons. This is in line with the socio-structural resources theory that suggests that people of higher socioeconomic status have extra resources, including skills, education and health, which leads them to volunteer (Principi et al., 2013).

However, the data of this thesis shows that volunteering is not limited to these groups but rather is related to cultural identity and the existence of social capital (see Section 4.1.2.).

4.3.3 Findings on Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital refers to the reputation and recognition of other forms of capital, and relevant interventions are considered as awards, grants, public legitimacy, recognition through networks, and awareness campaigns. Almost one-third of the data (n=83) provide evidence regarding the role of symbolic capital in SI interventions. The findings suggest that symbolic capital can increase other forms of capital through credibility and empowering outcomes. Thus, the main mechanisms were identified as *trust, motivation, self-confidence, empathy*, and *persuasion*. Accordingly, negative mechanisms emerged as *distrust* and *disappointment*. These findings are discussed here under *reputation* (or recognition) and *awareness*.

First, reputation can be gained through inducement prizes, awards, international networks, and grants. The most common outcomes of these interventions were increased *motivation, self-confidence, credibility* to the winner (creating a good *reputation and trust* among stakeholders) and securing funding from other resources. Specific contextual factors were not detected as these awards were implemented in different countries, but empowering experiences for the winners were higher in award or grant programmes implemented by prestigious foundations and NGOs in low- and mid-income contexts.

Conflicting results were also observed in few cases. For example, an award programme implemented in South Africa, aimed at encouraging young people to become social entrepreneurs but *disappointment* and *decreased motivation* among the participants were reported, even for the winners. The causalities were not clarified but could be because of the potential disadvantages of the awards, such as possible mistakes in the assessment that could lead to inequality, a high risk of demotivation due to failures, and the lack of generosity of award givers (Pol and Ville, 2009, Gök, 2016).

Another programme, the Big Green Challenge, provided more insights to explain the negative outcomes of these interventions. The programme was launched by Nesta⁴ in 2007 in the UK, designed as a competition and aimed to promote community-led innovations to achieve measurable carbon reductions. Ten finalists were selected among 355 initial applications, and

⁴ Nesta is a UK registered charity that supports innovation.

£20,000 funding and in-kind support were provided to implement the projects within one year. At the end of the programme, four of the finalists were awarded to share the £1m prize based on their results in reducing CO2 levels. Overall, the outcomes were evaluated as mainly positive based on the innovations introduced by finalists. However, several points were shared about the negative facets of awards or prize interventions. First, all finalists were monitored during the implementation of the projects, and they were asked to report regularly, which was stated to cause pressure and stress on the finalists due to the relatively short project timeline. The finalists, therefore, rated the £20,000 support as insufficient, considering this administrative burden and the risk of coming up empty-handed at the end. Second, it was claimed that if the finalists did not have access to other financial and non-financial resources, they would not be able to reach their current results, showing that award competitions cannot replace grant programmes. In fact, prize systems can be ineffective if they are not well designed or there are no other funding opportunities (Gök, 2016).

Reputation can also be gained through different sources, such as media channels and national or international institutions, as seen in the Bolivian case (Box 4). After the government's measure to create a National Park in the Bolivian Amazon, the living conditions of the indigenous communities were restricted, and as a result, a community initiative started to protect and develop their area. The community got motivated to take action after observing external tourism agencies taking advantage of the community's resources without sharing the income with them or giving back to the community in different forms. Thus, community-led ecotourism was initiated, and their efforts were awarded by national and international actors, which resulted in attention from international media channels. This reputation was evaluated as supportive of positive outcomes such as increased profit, *feeling proud*, and skill development, indicating increased human capital.

Secondly, symbolic capital can be provided by interventions through awareness campaigns. The analyses show that awareness is extremely important for building *trust* and *empathy*, both identified as key mechanisms. For example, public promotions were evaluated as impactful regarding the number of youth-started social enterprises in Indonesia. It was claimed that the increased awareness of social issues motivated young people and other relevant actors. Thus, awareness builds *empathy* within the environment that triggers people to react to social issues.

Awareness also emerged as an influential factor for public acceptance of social problems and the advocacy of SI interventions. This was particularly critical in women-targeted programmes

in low-income contexts with low literacy rates. It is because high levels of social capital in these environments negatively affect community members to benefit from programme resources. It was revealed that messages from religious leaders contradicted the objectives of a programme in Burundi or that parents and husbands opposed another programme in Zambia, preventing girls from participating in the programme, due to misperceptions (they were concerned about topics such as termination of pregnancy, grooming, and satanism). Therefore, building trust (increase in social capital) and a good reputation (symbolic capital) emerged as necessary to persuade community members.

Awareness campaigns thus have the potential to educate the targeted groups by either providing knowledge or using emotive approaches, but the effectiveness can be improved by disseminating *clear information* (Fletcher et al., 2005). Indeed, in some cases, despite awareness, a lack of clear knowledge and understanding of what the programme offers was observed. For example, the Rockefeller Foundation launched an innovation fund in New York to support innovative activities in cultural areas and to advance the role of art in the lives of citizens. The main motive was to preserve the city's traditional role in creativity and diversity during ongoing economic and social transformations. The programme structure evolved over time, and additional topics such as equity and resilience were included in the objectives, making the scope complicated. As a result, despite awareness campaigns, interviews with key informants reported that more than half of the respondents (60%) did not clearly understand the objectives. They also seemed to know little about the targets, although some confirmed that they saw the advertisements and were aware of the programme.

Similar findings were reported in another study from Malaysia, informing that most participants either could not explain or misexplained the objectives of the government's social transformation programme, which was advocated through different media channels.

Title and Country: Indigenous Tourism and Social Entrepreneurship in Amazon, Bolivia

Context: San Miguel del Bala is a small village in the Bolivian Amazon rainforest that neighbours the Madidi National Park, famous for its remarkable biodiversity. It is home to an indigenous community living on the edge of the Beni River and is only an hour away from the main tourist destination, Rurrenabaque. The community has 235 members as of 2014, and its main livelihoods are agriculture, fishing, and hunting. However, with the National Park's creation in 1996, strict restrictions were placed on the community's access to areas for traditional living activities. At the same time, private agencies were using community resources with their tourism activities. Together with some other challenges, the community decided to initiate their own ecotourism business in the early 2000s. During the establishment, they were supported by local and international organisations such as UNDP and Conservation International Bolivia. Meanwhile, they also developed their own guidelines to reduce hunting and control the entry of visitors. They were awarded the title of "Honorary Rangers of Madidi National Park" in 2005 for their efforts to preserve the region's biodiversity. Their construction was completed in the same year, and they started operations in late 2005. A few years later, in 2011, the community won the international honour of the "Socially Responsible Tourism Award" and another award from their President for their contribution to conservation and local development.

Evaluation Method: Qualitative and quantitative methods, data were collected between 2005 and 2015 through field visits, survey results and focus group discussions.

Mechanisms: Increased motivation, pride, self-confidence and satisfaction.

The support of foreign organisations such as UNDP, the University of North Carolina and the German Development Service dramatically helped the community's international recognition. After having an international reputation and numerous prizes, the area got visits from prestigious media agencies such as the BBC and other European channels and invitations to international tourism fairs. Thus, almost 50% of the visitors were from European countries, followed by North American and local visitors. Witnessing this recognition and success created a sense of satisfaction and pride among the community members, "we have achieved what we never could have dreamed" said the leader of the initiative.

Output, Outcomes, and Impact: The community significantly increased its profits and the number of tourists for the first five years (starting from 2006), peaking in 2011. Despite a drastic decline in 2012, the community business has sustained and continued to bring employment and income to the community. Non-monetary benefits such as increased pride, skill development, conservation of culture, and increased housing and education were reported.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on Peredo and Wurzelmann (2015)

4.3.4 Findings on Social Capital

Social capital here refers to the networks and relationships between people that influence SI interventions. It significantly overlaps with all components of the conceptual framework because social relations are the fundamentals of SI. Thus, almost all documents in the dataset provided some information about it; however, about a third (n=85) of the data provides explicit evidence and informs about the role of social capital in SI interventions. In this section, these findings are discussed mainly at the micro (social capital between individuals) and meso-level (social capital between groups) and with some inclusion of formal social networks. This is

because the next section (Section 4.3) provides findings on actor interactions, mainly discussing macro-level relationships (between organisations).

Overall, the findings inform that social capital is vital for SI and significantly influences the outcomes of interventions. There is sufficient evidence about its facilitative role in informal and marginalised areas, where social capital is based on *shared values* (common in origin, neighbourhood, and deprivation). Outcomes were observed as mainly positive, such as disseminating knowledge, reaching other resources and generating more social capital. However, the lack of *shared values* and *trust* negatively affected the results, especially in formal networks. Likewise, *frustration* and negative social capital were reported in several other studies. *Trust* emerged as the key mechanism that leads to positive responses such as *motivation, willingness, persuasion, and psychological relief*.

First, the analyses highlight that social capital is embedded in communities and is higher in underserved areas where social issues are diverse. In these contexts, people *trust* (or intend to trust) each other based on commonalities (e.g., ethnic/religious origin, kinship, and neighbourhood) or shared deprivations. Therefore, community members were found to be influential in interventions by being an intermediary structure using their social capital. Regarding this, three specific roles of community members were detected: *individuals* trained and paid to serve their communities, *existing groups* mainly used to reach and communicate with beneficiaries, and *community leaders* influential in the community for disseminating messages.

A case from India would be helpful regarding the role of individual community members. An initiative called Saadhan (meaning “the way” in Hindi) was funded by USAID⁵ and aimed to improve maternal and child health by reducing infant mortality and morbidity rates. This is because the northern parts of India were recognised as the poorest slums and had incredibly high maternal mortality rates compared to other countries. The intervention was designed to educate local practitioners and female community members on key issues such as contraception, the use of iron-folic acid tablets, and the prevention/treatment of diarrhoea. These women worked for their community and disseminated the knowledge orally through woman-to-woman courtyard meetings and counselling.

⁵ The United States Agency for International Development is an independent organisation that focuses on the administration of civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

The results were reported as positive (significant decrease in mortality rates), and empowerment outcomes were observed. The key mechanisms were observed as *motivation* among community health workers and the *trust* they built in other women. This case also provides information about the role of social capital in sharing knowledge within community networks. However, such successful practices should not be considered as the replacement of public sector health services, as they cannot eradicate the social issue addressed. Indeed, it was reported that the development of physical public health centres for obstetric and paediatric emergencies was still needed. As stated before (Section 4.1.1), government involvement is therefore required to scale the impact of these practices.

In terms of community groups, links with *pre-existing groups* and *community-based organisations* were found to be influential in the effectiveness of interventions, as they can potentially build *trust* and overcome contextual barriers (social norms), so they were observed to be effective in empowerment programmes targeting women constrained by social norms. For example, the East African Grassroots Women's Empowerment Programme, developed by the Norwegian Women and Family Association, aimed to empower vulnerable women and girls through capacity building, networking, and awareness raising.

The programme was implemented in collaboration with local community organisations in Kenya and Uganda, and these organisations were found to be effective in facilitating processes based on their long history and experience with the relevant communities. They fostered interactions between community members, and as a result, new social networks emerged where women supported each other. *Trust* between these women was built as they started to share their challenges, such as domestic violence, and thus psychological relief between beneficiaries was reported. In fact, emotional support provided through social networks is of great importance for women's empowerment and well-being (Reisig et al., 2002, Kroenke et al., 2006). Similarly, in another programme in Vietnam, the implementing agency collaborated with a local women's union to reach target beneficiaries, resulting in positive outcomes.

Lastly, community leaders appeared to be influential in interventions as they hold *trust* and *respect* among community members. Thus, their role becomes critical to disseminate knowledge, especially in illiterate communities, as seen in a user-centred sanitation programme (funded by the Humanitarian Innovation Fund). It was reported that channelling information and key messages through these people is effective, along with in-person meetings. However, these leaders can also act as gatekeepers of their communities,

reinterpreting information and controlling its flow (Shepherd and van Vuuren, 2014). In fact, as mentioned in the previous section (Section 4.2.3), few cases reported negative consequences where community leaders opposed or misunderstood the interventions. In these cases, interventions need to build symbolic and social capital in targeted communities.

Secondly, social capital was found to be the basis for *collective actions*, particularly in marginalised areas where people are *connected through social ties* and support each other because of *trust-based* relationships. Thus, existing social capital facilitates interventions in these areas through interpersonal relationships and informal social networks. For example, a case from Rio de Janeiro (Box 5) provides evidence and insights about the role of social capital in these contexts.

A century-old energy company called Light started a collaborative initiative to support slum dwellers' legal access to energy. Unlike traditional methods, the service offered was a combination of distributing electricity and collecting recycling materials. Light was the main partner delivering electricity, while a partner organisation was responsible for collecting recyclables. However, the innovation here was the payment system based on the collected recyclable materials, which was reflected as a discount on the electricity bills. Electricity theft was common in the area before the favelas were pacified, so Light implemented a collaborative approach based on *dialogue* and *mutual benefit*.

In the beginning, representatives visited the favelas to communicate with residents and explain how the service was going to be delivered. These interactions were reported to improve customer relationships, build community members' *trust*, and increase the *willingness* to participate. The existing social capital within the neighbourhood was also emphasised (one of the citizens reported that he was helping his friend's grandmother, who could not get her organised waste to the collection point). In fact, social capital enables people in disadvantaged positions to look after each other and act collectively (Voorberg et al., 2015). *Trust* and *motivation*, led by *shared values* and *dialogues*, were identified as key mechanisms here.

Third, semi-formal and formal social networks can be mentioned regarding social capital. *Church networks*, which can be shown as semi-formal networks, were mentioned in several evaluations and religious institutions were found to be enablers for spreading the messages and reaching external resources. A programme from Kenya targeted disadvantaged women (e.g., former prostitutes, AIDS patients, poor single mothers, or widows), and aimed to

empower them to establish and sustain their ventures with the support of faith-based organisations. Marketing support through church networks was provided together with microfinance, and strong positive results were reported. For example, floor mats made by a group of women in the south of Nairobi were exported to the USA. Another group, that was making Christmas cards exported their products to countries such as Australia and the UK. Apart from these economic outcomes, social outcomes, such as *empowerment*, *increased confidence*, and *physiological relief*, were also reported.

Formal social networks are the ones that are established on purpose through official procedures and have a relative level of governance. However, the evidence shows mixed results in terms of the effectiveness of these networks. The main issue identified in these networks is the *lack of social capital*, observed in diverse networks and where networks members do not share the same geography.

For instance, the Rockefeller Foundation initiated the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network and aimed to build regional resilience for poor and vulnerable people in cities of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam through capacity building, knowledge sharing and expanding resources. However, targeting heterogeneous members (individuals and organisations) negatively affected active participation of the members due to differences in geography, language, and culture. Language and the technical level of documentation were found to be barriers to knowledge sharing regionally. As a result, the objectives (complementarity and synergy between the varied beneficiaries) were not achieved. Thus, it was assessed that *shared values* are critical for the effectiveness of these networks. Concerning this, proximity between network connections facilitates the development of relationships that can build shared values and norms, but creating shared values in external and diverse networks is a much greater challenge (Molina-Morales and Martínez-Fernández, 2010). The matter of *shared values* between different actors will continue in the next section (Section 4.4).

Title and Country: Collaborative Services in Informal Settlements, Brazil

Context: The energy company Light partnered with another company, launched an initiative called Light Recicla, and designed a new service to provide legal/sustainable access to electricity and promote recycling/waste management in the pacified slums of Rio de Janeiro. These districts were previously dominated by armed drug dealers before the pacification, making it problematic for energy companies to receive payment (electricity theft was a common problem for energy providers). Although the company was able to offer a formal service after the government took full control of this area through police forces, making regular payments for electricity became a new expense for citizens without additional income. Therefore, the company designed a complex structure for the payment system that includes two separate services: providing electricity and collecting recyclable waste.

Consumers were asked to separate and clean recyclable rubbish and then take them to collection points. In these facilities, the value of the waste was calculated, and the relevant discount was converted into credit to be considered in the next electricity bill. Each consumer had a unique card to record the discount.

Evaluation Method: a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and desk research.

Mechanisms: trust of community members among themselves and towards the organisation, increased motivation.

Light collaborated with different companies for various operations required in the process, especially the collection of recyclable materials and the provision of the ICT infrastructure used for the payment system. In addition, the local government was also involved in the process by providing the space and regulating the legal conditions. Initially, Light sent its representatives into the favelas to improve relationships with communities and explain the new formal electricity distribution process. This form of dialogue-based interaction helped build trust and good relationships, which may have impacted reducing debt and energy theft.

Relational interactions based on existing social ties emerged between peers, and between users and service employees. For example, an elderly person, who could sort and clean the waste but could not take it to the collection point herself, was supported by her granddaughter's boyfriend to drop-off the waste at the collection point. Likewise, a bar owner started collecting recyclable materials from other citizens who were unwilling to separate waste, as his bar was next to the collection point, thus increasing his income, and at the same time, supporting other users to reduce their bills. Besides, discount sharing occurred entirely informal. Finally, the front-line staff of the company, who were not locals, engaged with the users personally through informal conversations during the operation (increased trust).

Output, Outcomes, and Impact: The most notable success is that the company received the payments for the electricity it provided through the new form of service delivery. In this regard, some significant achievements were reported as follows: by the end of the first year (2011), the company reached 1715 registered customers. The average discount per user increased by around 82% in the second year (from £5.79 to £10.52). As of June 2013, the number of customers increased to 4898 by June 2013. On a monthly basis, 160.115 kg of recyclable material and 458.3 litres of cooking oil were delivered to the collection points.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on Cipolla et al. (2015)

4.3.5 *Summary of the Findings on Different Forms of Capital*

To summarise, the syntheses first confirm that capital forms can convert to one another. Economic capital gained through grants can bring credibility (symbolic capital), or interventions aimed to build capacity (development of human capital) can lead to sustainable earning (economic capital). However, it was shown that the strongest relation (convertibility) between capital forms is between social and symbolic capital. For instance, creating awareness (symbolic capital) through persuasion and in-person relationships is effective in creating trust (social capital). Accordingly, when people trust the intention of interventions (programme offerings), this trust can convert to a good reputation (symbolic capital) for the relevant intervention.

Economic capital was found to be effective when they are combined with human and social capital. The development of human capital is particularly critical to combat poverty and create sustainable earning in low- and mid-income contexts. On the one hand, *distrust* and *dependency* were found as mechanisms that create negative effects based on the instability of the funds. On the other hand, *empowerment* outcomes such as increased *confidence* and *pride* were also observed as positive mechanisms. Human capital was analysed by considering all relevant actors at the *individual level*. Soft skills, such as *leadership* and *vision*, and intuitive reactions, such as *willingness*, were found to be influential. Using and nurturing existing human capital was found to be equally important as human capital development. *Motivation, commitment, empathy, fulfilment, synergy, and increased trust* were identified as key mechanisms in this regard.

The syntheses also suggest that symbolic capital can increase other forms of capital by bringing credibility and leading to empowering outcomes. However, negative consequences might be possible when symbolic capital is not supported with social and/or economic capital (as reported in prize competitions and the case of disreputations). Symbolic capital, in the form of awareness, can also create *empathy* and lead to *advocacy* and *legitimisation* of relevant activities or ideas. Thus, the main mechanisms regarding symbolic capital were identified as *trust, motivation, self-confidence, empathy, and persuasion*. Accordingly, negative mechanisms identified as *distrust* and *disappointment*.

Finally, social capital emerged as the determining factor in the effectiveness of interventions, primarily through supporting collective actions. It significantly influences outcomes,

especially in marginalised communities that naturally have higher levels of social capital, based on *shared values* (common in origin, neighbourhood, and deprivation). Community actors (individuals, groups, and organisations) were found to be critical to use existing social capital and generate new ones. *Trust*, led by *shared values* and *dialogues*, emerged as the key mechanism that leads to positive responses such as *motivation*, *willingness*, *persuasion*, and *psychological relief*. While existing social networks within communities were effective in supporting interventions, formal social networks with diverse members were ineffective due to the lack of shared values (language, culture, geography). These findings are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Summary of findings on different forms of capital

Generalised Finding(s)	Context	Mechanism(s)	Outcomes
Economic capital is effective when combined with human and social capital.	Particularly in low- and mid-income countries and/or where poor and marginalised are targeted (e.g., Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malawi, India, China, Australia).	- <i>Distrust</i> and <i>dependency</i> . - <i>Empowerment</i> (feeling <i>confidence</i> and <i>proud</i>)	<i>Limited</i> –increased earnings in the short-term but limited impact in providing sustainable income.
A set of soft skills such as leadership and vision, together with willingness are required for leading roles. Mobilisation of human resources is equally important as the development of human capital.	High-income countries that mostly have higher levels of human capital (e.g., UK, France, Denmark, Spain, China).	- <i>Motivation</i> , <i>commitment</i> , <i>empathy</i> , <i>fulfilment</i> , <i>synergy</i> , <i>increased trust</i> .	<i>Mixed</i> – negative or limited outcomes where change agents are missing but positive where existing human capital is mobilised.
Symbolic capital increases other forms of capital by bringing credibility and leading to empowering outcomes, but it may require social and/or economic capital. It can also lead to acceptance, advocacy and legitimisation through awareness, empathy, and persuasion.	No specific context (e.g., South Africa, the US, the UK, and several European countries) but empowering outcomes are higher in low- and mid-income countries. Also, negative symbolic capital is observed in low-income.	- <i>Trust</i> , <i>motivation</i> , <i>self-confidence</i> , <i>empathy</i> , and <i>persuasion</i> . - <i>Distrust</i> and <i>disappointment</i> .	<i>Mixed</i> – empowerment and increased economic capital are observed but also disappointment and distrust are reported in others.
Social capital is vital for effective interventions mainly because it supports collective actions. Community actors (individuals, groups, organisations, and social networks) are critical to benefit from existing social capital and generate new ones. Dialogues are required to build social capital in formal social networks.	Particularly in marginalised communities that naturally have higher levels of social capital, which is based on shared values (common in origin, neighbourhood, and deprivation) (e.g., countries such as Brazil, India, Kenya, Thailand).	- <i>Trust</i> (led by shared values and dialogues) - <i>Motivation</i> , <i>willingness</i> , <i>persuasion</i> , and <i>psychological relief</i> .	<i>Mainly Positive</i> – empowerment and increase in health and living conditions.

Source: Author's own elaboration

4.4 Findings on Actors and Actor Interactions

One of the foundations of SIs and the aim of relevant interventions is to build new relationships between actors, which requires interactions, especially between previously disconnected actors. Interventions that promote interactions through partnerships, collaborations, and social networks were examined here in this regard. The role of higher-education institutions and large international organisations was additionally analysed. Thus, the focus of this section is mainly on interactions between organisations but also the role of specific organisations and their interventions. More than two-thirds of the data (n=187) provides evidence about actor interactions and highlight the barriers of cross-sector interactions. The findings show that interactions usually occur between public and third-sector actors, while the private sector has a limited role. Differences in organisational *culture* and the lack of *shared values* create difficulties in partnerships, thus emphasizing the role of *social capital*. *Trust* emerged as a critical mechanism that appeared to be positively affected by *dialogue, transparency, and respect*, all of which referred to *good communication*. However, *coordination* was found to be another barrier in co-working situations.

First, a *lack of social capital* in the form of *trust* was found among different sector organisations regardless of context. Several reasons were observed: *institutional differences (culture, vision etc.)*, *competition*, *inherited bias*, *misinterpretation of intentions*, and *lack of past partnership history*. In fact, the competition was found to cause hostility and prevent building trust between the actors. In a case from Europe, it was reported that there is a strong antagonism based on service provision between NGOs and social system institutions. The findings show that interventions can also be negatively affected when social capital is neutral or insufficient, as seen in the HIV Prevention Innovation Fund (England), in which a government agency supported third-sector organisations to reduce the impact of HIV. Although the fund aimed at building partnerships with local authorities, these partnerships were identified in only a few projects. Interviews revealed that the parties misinterpreted each other's intentions due to a lack of *communication* and *coordination* (one project leader claimed that their work was not on the agenda of the local authorities, while the local authority stated that they were not informed by the project leaders on how to support them).

The data provide substantial evidence that governments often use social sector organisations as *intermediaries* in service delivery to tackle trust-based issues, as these organisations have local credibility and experience working with targeted beneficiaries (see also Section 4.2.4).

In fact, social capital increases the quality of public services (Andrews and Brewer, 2013), as seen in the Chinese case. The Chinese government contracted social work organisations to deliver different services to the elderly; and positive outcomes, such as an increase in the number of beneficiaries, were associated with the experience and *trust* in these organisations. For example, some respondents stated that the personnel in the government units are not patient in *communication* because they do not have expertise in social work and psychology. This highlights the capacity of social sector organisations for *communication*, *dialogue*, and social work, which results in *trust* among beneficiaries.

In another case, a social sector organisation in Australia, targeted disadvantaged youth and aimed to create employment for them. A strong sense of trust in relationships with partners was reported. First, the organisation created trust among beneficiaries by respecting them and their unique processes. Second, the organisation gained the trust of funders and other investment partners through good relationship management and transparency. It was argued that the transparency about goals and activities underpinned this strong trust. Indeed, transparency directly impacts trust building in an organisational context (Kang and Hustvedt, 2014, Norman et al., 2010).

Secondly, *communication* and *coordination* were observed as two issues influencing the effectiveness of partnerships and collaborations. Although differences in the institutional logic (Rivera-Santos and Rufin, 2010, Le Ber and Branzei, 2010), such as the *culture* and *vision*, were common in several cases, communication can be a problem also for *political reasons*, as seen in conflict-affected regions. In Sudan, international cooperation (Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund) implemented a joint programme targeting the employment of displaced youth through UN agencies. The programme transformed into two separate programmes due to the separation of South Sudan in 2011, but interaction was still required between programmes. However, the conflict between the southern and northern parts caused problems in communication and coordination. Similar points were reported in other conflict-affected regions, such as Sri Lanka.

Regarding *coordination*, the findings show that collaborations and partnerships require coordination even if they have shared values and there is no trust issue in place. Several problems were identified: the number of partners, the need for a central coordinating body, and the uncertainties in the division of labour. For example, in a youth development programme funded by a US-based non-profit organisation, a joint venture with three non-

profits was launched to work in partnership, and close and trusting relationships between these organisations were reported. However, the outcomes were limited as they failed to unite as a single organisation due to a lack of clear division of labour and positional authority or central coordinating body over the group. In fact, previous research discussed *coordination* between actors as an integral part of collaborations (Gulati and Singh, 1998, Gulati et al., 2005).

Lastly, interactions are often mentioned between public-private-third sector actors; however, the findings provide little evidence of the impact of private-sector engagement in SI interventions. Accordingly, their contribution is assessed as limited when they are involved. For example, a national funding programme in Canada implemented a third-party delivery model to address the needs of vulnerable communities and increase non-profits' capacity. Rather than adopting a traditional funding approach, the programme also aimed to develop multisectoral partnerships. These organisations were expected to partner with and leverage resources from the private-sector, but the evaluation reported that the private-sector failed to make the expected contribution, and funders remained limited to the federal and provincial governments. Two possible reasons mentioned are the private sector's request for proof of success to provide funding and the *lack of a habit* of non-profits to involve the private sector in their activities. Also, despite the programme's aim for creating new partnerships, non-profits relied on their existing partnerships because of a shared understanding of social issues (*shared values*) and past partnership experiences (*trust* and/or *habit*). Indeed, using previous ties and choosing similar partners can prevent partnerships from failing (Le Ber and Branzei, 2010, Das and Teng, 2001) but through strategic cross-sector partnerships, they can also build relational capabilities that can replace this shared vision and experience (Dyer and Singh, 1998).

A final finding worth mentioning is the role of interactions and relationships in allocating resources. For instance, an intervention implemented by a US-based NGO in Vietnam and Cambodia aimed at enabling farmers to innovate in agricultural processes to secure their income and become resilient in tackling climate change. However, it was reported that the targeting was partner-driven; where the target zones were identified by the location of the partners, rather than the target regions being the most vulnerable geographies in terms of poverty and climate change. The reason of this action is to avoid coordination and communication problems.

The following sections present the findings on the role of international organisations and higher-education institutions in interventions and interactions with these organisations.

4.4.1 Findings on the Role of International Organisations

International organisations (IOs) mentioned here are considered as large non-governmental, intergovernmental, and developmental organisations, non-profits and large private foundations. Evaluation reports from these organisations represent approximately 15% (n=34) of the dataset, which provides mixed evidence about their impact.

Overall, their contribution was significant in providing substantial resources through a variety of channels including *grants* and *social networks*. They seem to be influential in *advocacy* and *lobbying*, acting as an intermediary in conflict-affected regions as well as in developing countries, but donor requirements constrained their actions. The positive results of their interventions were observed as *empowerment*, *reputation*, *awareness*, and *capacity building*. However, negative results were also reported where contextual needs were not considered. Moreover, overlapping activities were observed among IOs due to a lack of coordination and collaboration. While *self-confidence*, *being inspired* and *feeling proud* that cause empowerment emerged as positive mechanisms, *distrust* and *dissatisfaction* were identified as negative mechanisms.

First, *empowerment* emerged as a common outcome from interventions implemented by IOs, particularly in developing countries and/or marginalised regions, and often through empowerment or SE programmes. This is because of the *self-confidence* and *pride* deriving from the *reputation* and *inspiration* these organisations bring. Accordingly, *increased human capital* in beneficiaries was reported, not only through capacity-building programmes but also through interactions with international actors. Some unintended skills, such as foreign language learning, were reported among outcomes. The success stories of social entrepreneurs supported by these organisations were claimed to be an *inspiration* for others, possibly because of the unique solutions they introduce, such as changing the public school system in Morocco, teaching girls to code in Ghana, creating waste banks for recycling in Indonesia, and protecting biodiversity in Bolivia. IOs make another important contribution to these social entrepreneurs by connecting them to international partners, local authorities, distribution channels, and peers from other countries with their *social networks*. For example, Tom Szaky, the Schwab Foundation awardee, partnered with Procter and Gamble for his recycling company through

social networks provided by the foundation. However, a few evaluations reported *disempowerment*, implying that positive results disappeared in the long run due to the instability of operations.

The syntheses show that these organisations emphasise a sense of social change, and individuals are seen as agents of change along with their communities. For example, Ashoka⁶ reminds people of their individual and collective agency, using the power of narratives to stimulate changing the world and its institutions (Wittmayer et al., 2019). Thus, grantees start to think that they can create profound changes. Judy Stuart, an Ashoka fellow from South Africa, reported:

“There’s no doubt that the most important thing Ashoka did was to convince me that what I was doing was important, because I didn’t think that way. I was just a little farmer on a very small scale, and I mean if you’d said to me that I could do something to change agriculture in this country, I would have laughed at you because I didn’t imagine for a moment that I could make any kind of impact at all. And I had to learn that. And it’s great because now I know that every single person has got something that they can contribute to change lives” (Ashoka, 2018, p. 26).

Second, *distrust* in IOs was reported among local partners for several reasons, such as the temporary or volatile nature of their activities, as it creates distrust between stakeholders that depend on their resources, especially in resource-constrained areas. Additionally, it was observed that donor policies and political situations significantly restrict their actions in conflict-prone areas, thus creating uncertainty in their behaviours and leading to distrust. For example, an intervention funded by the Humanitarian Innovation Fund and implemented by the Catholic Relief Services aimed to design and implement a risk reduction and mitigation plan in the Gaza Strip. Although there were functional de facto authorities at the time, donor policies restricted contacting and working with them because of the collapse of the state and distrust of the de facto authorities. However, in some other cases, the interaction of IOs with local networks and decision-makers was found to be effective for sustaining their activities in similarly extreme environments with informal authorities (Burundi, Somaliland, Iraq).

The data also informs about the advocacy and lobbying skills of IOs through *dialogue* and *good communication* with key actors. These interactions resulted in increased awareness, local

⁶ Ashoka is a US-based nonprofit that promotes social entrepreneurship.

organisations' capacity building and knowledge dissemination. Furthermore, the interactions were influential in policy shaping in a few cases. For instance, the SE programme implemented by the International Labour Organisation⁷ aimed to create employment for youth in South Africa. The programme partnered with national authorities to develop regulatory frameworks and supportive policies for social enterprises. Although the evaluation shared short-term results only, it was reported that the government included the topics of SE and social enterprise in its strategic plans. The dialogue and good relations with key governmental actors and local alliances explain this achievement.

IOs operating in developing countries need to work with multiple actors, such as NGOs and local organisations, to implement SI programmes (Chowdhury et al., 2018). However, a lack of *coordination* and *collaboration* among these organisations was observed even though some operate in the same geographical region with similar objectives, which poses a risk for duplication of activities and waste of resources. First, coordination was found to be problematic due to physical distances and differences in organisational cultures. Second, there was no collaboration, as the actors were unaware of each other. For example, one of the evaluations informed about an empowerment programme funded by the UK Government and implemented by an IO. The programme targeted young girls in Zambia. During the same period, some other international actors (including governments and non-governmental organisations) were running similar programmes targeting adolescent girls in the same region. However, no interactions were reported between these organisations. Likewise, another evaluation from Uganda (funded and implemented by IOs) highlighted the need for better communication with similar programmes. This was shown as a missed opportunity to collaborate and work in complementary ways.

Finally, a need for more contextual understanding was observed in several evaluations. In such cases, the agendas, which were allegedly developed according to the requirements of the donors, did not represent the social issues of the context. For example, in Uzbekistan, local partners of the IO reported that the programme objectives were not in line with their needs and expectations, therefore resulted in *dissatisfaction* and *disagreement*. Similar results were reported in other programmes implemented in India, Congo, and Palestine.

⁷ The International Labour Organisation is an agency of the United Nations that sets international labour standards to promote social and economic justice.

4.4.2 Findings on the Role of Higher-Education Institutions

Higher education institutions are seen as societal stakeholders based on their traditional role in developing knowledge and disseminating learning as well as their contribution to policy agendas (see also Section 2.5.2). About 20% of the data (n=56) provide evidence regarding the involvement of universities in SI interventions.

Although there is implicit evidence showing their mediating role in collaborations, knowledge exchange activities, and youth-targeted programmes, the findings suggest that their key role is to *develop human capital*, which emerged as a critical resource for the success of SIs. Indeed, the development and implementation of degree programmes was found to be a common intervention used in different countries. However, the results are mixed regarding the impact of these academic programmes.

The analyses highlight three main points regarding the role of universities: raising *awareness* and *inspiration* among young people, developing *educational materials*, and *partnering with the social sector*. Programmes from high-income contexts (several European countries and the US) provided mainly positive outcomes, such as an increase in the number of social enterprises started by the alums. However, negative outcomes were reported where curricula and activities developed without considering the contextual needs and characteristics. Thus, loss of confidence and frustration were identified as negative key mechanisms, while motivation and collective feeling (social capital) were observed as positive mechanisms.

First, the data shows, motivation and inspiration arise in young people who are aware of social problems, equipped with the necessary skill set and supported with resources. Universities and their academic programmes seem important to encourage youth to consider becoming a change-maker, social entrepreneur, or actor in the social-sector as a career option. However, frustration and loss of confidence may arise after graduation if these programmes are poorly designed.

For instance, in an academic programme focused on SE in India, it was reported that 40% of the graduates started a social enterprise, showing that only some students become social entrepreneurs, and many are working in different roles for various reasons. The main causality here was explained by the gap between the curriculum and the needs of the social enterprise

sector in India because the programme design developed with inspiring from Western ideologies without considering contextual characteristics and needs.

Second, *interactions* are shown to be vital in *partnering with social sector* actors and *building social capital* in the environment to support experiential learning, developing necessary skills, and building a community of social change agents. For example, in a Chinese case, it was reported that new graduates need more professional skills or practical work experience, which was linked to a lack of interaction with the social sector (internship or employment could be offered). Furthermore, building a sense of community among students was another factor affecting programme results. By doing this, the aim was to increase the social capital among these young people which may lead to future collaborations. These points were observed in a Korean case that reported significant positive outcomes (Box 6).

The KAIST Business College launched a two-year master's programme to develop the social enterprise ecosystem in South Korea. The programme was designed to require students to start a social enterprise and scale it up to a certain level to graduate. The courses aimed to make students responsive to social problems, to have a good understanding of social issues, and to develop their business competencies. However, the distinctive feature of the programme was cited as *creating a community* of social entrepreneurs. While many activities were offered under the programme, such as workshops and experiential overseas trips, the evaluation reported that social networking was the most valuable support according to graduates, and a 91% of success rate was reported. In this case, the *increase of social capital* (collective feeling) and the *formation of emotional bonds* through interactions emerged as key mechanisms.

Title and Country: The Social Entrepreneurship Master Programme, South Korea

Context: In South Korea, the government supports social enterprises through legal certification (Social Enterprise Promotion Act in 2007 and the 3rd Basic Plan for Social Enterprise Promotion in 2018), and there are various support programmes specific to certified social enterprises. The Social Entrepreneurship MBA Programme was initiated in 2013 in collaboration between KAIST Business College and SK Group (one of South Korea's largest holding companies) to strengthen the social enterprise ecosystem in Korea. Within the scope of the programme that provides full scholarships to potential social entrepreneurs, it is mandatory to start a social enterprise with a sustainable business model and scale it to a certain level to receive the degree. Classes were designed differently from other MBA programmes, such that students are trained to gain a responsible attitude towards social issues and pursue rapid growth by improving their management competencies.

Evaluation Method: Combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches based on desk research, direct observation, interviews, and survey.

Mechanisms: A sense of community (increased social capital), strong emotional bonds.

The programme aims to function as a community of social entrepreneurs through multiple tools:
Cohort Programme: Students work with peers for two years, sharing the same physical environment and meet regularly on formal and informal occasions. These close interactions and building cohorts for students each academic year helped to cultivate a sense of solidarity and community; and they were rated as the most valued support by alumni.

Business Model Workshops: Students share their business models, knowledge, and experiences with others once each semester. Collaborations and stronger emotional bonds were reported due to attending these workshops.

The Start-up Weekend: All members, including staff, gather in a weekend retreat (all day or two days) that provides advisory meetings and recreational activities. These gatherings were intended to encourage partnerships and strengthen the sense of community.

Even though considerable interactions occurred within the Business College, an insufficient level of collaboration with other faculties (science and engineering) was reported due to the physical distance of these campuses. However, there was a plan to launch an online platform to increase interactions.

Output, Outcomes, and Impact: The programme has accepted approximately 20 students yearly since 2013. At the end of 2018, sixty-six (66) students graduated, and 60 (91%) started their social enterprises. Twenty-one (21) of the start-ups (35%) received a total of KRW 2.9 billion in funding through investments and cash prizes. Forty-nine (49) of the graduates (74%) had total sales of KRW 17.3 billion in 2017 (KRW 350 million each).

While the social issues addressed by alums were diverse, the evaluation reported that it is still early to measure social impact.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on Kim et al. (2020)

4.4.3 Summary of the Findings on Actors and Actor Interactions

The actors in this thesis are understood to be all relevant stakeholders who design, develop, implement, or engage in SI interventions. The interactions between these actors are of great importance in the context of SI, as creating new relationships is one of the principles of the

concept. Therefore, how their interactions (at the organisational level) affect SI interventions is investigated, and the results are presented in this section.

To summarise (see also Table 10), the lack of social capital in the form of trust has emerged as a key mechanism influencing cross-sector interactions, regardless of context. Institutional differences (or lack of shared values) such as culture and vision, competition, inherited bias, misinterpretation, and habits are the main reasons for undermining trust. The findings suggest that these barriers can be overcome through dialogue, transparency, and respect, all referred to good communication in interactions. Existing community groups and local social organisations are influential when used as intermediaries in government interventions mainly because of the social capital (trust) they hold but also because of their contextual experience. In fact, it was observed that interactions often occur between public and third-sector actors, while the private sector participation was found to be limited. Coordination was found as another obstacle in collaborations and partnerships, even if there is no trust issue. Several problems were identified: the number of partners, a lack of central coordinating body, and the uncertainties in the division of labour.

Findings show that IOs provide substantial resources in low- and mid-income countries through grants and social networks and contribute to the *empowerment* of communities by bringing credibility, building capacity, and providing international links. They were also effective in *advocacy* and *lobbying*, acting as intermediaries in conflict-affected areas. However, it was observed that they were restricted by donor requirements, thus creating negative mechanisms such as *distrust* and *dissatisfaction* as they overlooked contextual needs and characteristics. Furthermore, *coordination* between IOs was found missing even if they operated in the same region for similar objectives.

Universities are active players in SI interventions by developing and implementing academic programmes to meet the human resources needs of the social sector. However, the findings suggest that curricula need to be developed by considering the needs of the social sector in the relevant context. Therefore, their interactions with social sector actors were found to be important in enabling partnerships. On the one hand, *loss of confidence* and *frustration* (among graduates) were identified as negative key mechanisms in programmes that reported negative outcomes. On the other hand, *motivation*, and *collective feeling* (social capital) were observed as positive mechanisms in those with successful outcomes.

Table 10: Summary of findings on actors and actor interactions

Generalised Finding(s)	Context	Mechanism(s)	Outcomes
Cross-sector interactions and collaborations require social capital to be effective because interactions face difficulties due to institutional differences (lack of shared values), competition, and inherited bias. Coordination, as well as good communication, are key strategies for effective partnerships.	Context-free	- <i>Trust</i> (positively affected by dialogue, transparency, and respect). - <i>Distrust</i> (due to differences, competition, inherited bias, etc).	<i>Mixed</i> – positive outcomes (new partnerships) as well as limited results (short-term collaborations, low engagement).
Existing community groups and local social organisations are influential when used as intermediaries in government interventions based on their inherited social capital. In fact, interactions often occur between public and third-sector actors, while private-sector participation is limited.	Context-free but particularly where specific groups or regions are targeted by national or international actors.	- <i>Trust</i> (due to contextual understanding, previous experience, and good relationships).	<i>Mainly Positive</i> - increase in the number of beneficiaries, increased satisfaction.
IOs provide substantial resources and contribute to the empowerment of communities by bringing reputation, capacity-building, and providing international links. They are also influential in advocacy and lobbying, acting as intermediaries in conflict-affected areas. However, they may be restricted by donor requirements and overlook contextual needs.	In low- and mid-income countries (e.g., Tanzania, Senegal, India, Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia)	- <i>Empowerment</i> (self-confidence, being inspired and feeling proud). - <i>Distrust and dissatisfaction</i> (due to a lack of contextual understanding).	<i>Mainly Positive</i> – increased human capital, scaling of social businesses, change in government actions.
Universities are active players in meeting the human resources of the social sector. However, curricula need to be developed considering the context, and combining different tools and methods to cultivate skilled graduates. Partnerships with the social sector are essential.	Context-free but particularly in countries where social sector struggles in terms of human resources (e.g., India, China, South Korea).	- <i>Motivation, and collective feeling</i> (social capital among graduates). - <i>Loss of confidence and frustration</i> (due to ineffective degree programmes).	<i>Mixed</i> – a high number of social enterprises started by graduates (or vice versa).

Source: Author's own elaboration

4.5 Findings on Social Entrepreneurship

Previous sections in this chapter have included SE partially because of the organic link of the concept to SI, making it relevant in most interventions. Indeed, more than half of the data (n=141) provides evidence of SE. Interventions related to SE were considered as grants, incentives, regulations (such as legal recognition of social enterprises), capacity building and empowerment programmes, social networks, academic programmes and so on.

The findings suggest that SE promoted by different interventions contributes to *empowerment* and *regional development*, particularly in rural and deprived areas where unemployment and low income are extremely prevalent. Social entrepreneurs in these contexts, who usually appear to operate in the agriculture and food sectors, lead to marginalised groups' *social and economic inclusion* and *empowerment* by triggering *collective actions* through mobilising community resources, including *social capital*. However, relevant interventions in these contexts were found to be limited in their impact, mainly due to *institutional barriers* but also for other reasons, such as lack of market linkages and contextual understanding. *Trust (social capital)* is re-emerging as a key mechanism in interventions with positive outcomes. Negative *emotions* based on *frustration*, *loss of confidence* and *demotivation* were observed in others.

The analyses confirm that social entrepreneurs are motivated by their own problems and become passionate about helping their communities or others like themselves. Women's role is influential in entrepreneurial actions, but the participation of community groups and local organisations was found to be critical for their success. Social networks are vital to sustain and scale activities, regardless of context. Finally, the data from high-income contexts provide mainly positive outcomes such as an increased number of social enterprises, high levels of community engagement and awareness, empowerment and increased social capital. The mechanisms in these contexts identified as *motivation*, *inspiration*, and *increased awareness* emerged as a result of SE promotions.

These findings are presented in this section with two subsections, the contents of which are interrelated, "SE for Regional Development" and "Empowering Marginalised (Women and Youth)". The points that were mentioned in previous sections, such as the role of IOs on social entrepreneurs, are not repeated here.

4.5.1 *Social Entrepreneurship for Regional Development*

SE is promoted by different actors due to its potential to mobilise resources and contribute to social and economic development of regions. Related interventions are seen in the form of regulations, grants, incentives for SE, and other programmes that allegedly contribute to regional development by resulting in social entrepreneurial actions such as empowerment, capacity building and social networking. More than a third of the data (n=112) provide evidence of regional development⁸, targeted at or achieved in various ways. However, this section focuses on SE and how it affects regional development. This is because SE (as well as SI) is locally embedded, making regions and entrepreneurs interrelated.

First, the findings show that SE can significantly contribute to regional development by *creating jobs* for the poor and other marginalised groups. Social enterprises are considered the organisational forms of SE in this regard. Government interventions supporting social enterprises were observed in mid- and high-income contexts, and positive economic results were reported in countries such as the UK, the US, and Canada. However, focusing on the economic impact can sometimes lead to overlook the social impact. For instance, the South Korean government introduced the Social Enterprise Promotion Act (SEPA) in 2007 to respond to the global economic crisis and aimed at creating employment for socially excluded groups. The evaluation reported a significant increase in the number of certified social enterprises (from 55 in 2007 to 2626 by 2020), most of which operate in major metropolitan areas such as Seoul and Incheon, thus leaving doubts about its impact in suburban and rural areas. Furthermore, no impact was reported regarding social conditions in targeted populations, possibly due to the government's aggressive focus on job creation.

Second, *contextual factors*, including geographical resources and *institutions*, were found to be influential in the emergence and success of SE that support regional development in rural areas of low- and mid-income countries. Related to this, the agriculture and food sectors were often targeted by interventions as these are the most common livelihood in deprived geographies. This may be because communities have inherited knowledge from previous generations that helps them understand the environment in which they live (Vipinkumar et al., 2018). However, three main points affecting these interventions' impact were identified. First,

⁸ The relevant code on NVivo was named "Territorial Development" initially and was converted to "Regional Development" after the coding process (see also the literature review, Section 2.6.2). This is in line with the evolving nature of the realist process.

institutions create barriers to SE activities and, thus, interventions. Second, agricultural activities have the potential to have a *negative environmental impact*; and third, *contextual understanding* is vital in programme design. A couple of cases would be helpful to explain these points.

An international development agency implemented an intervention (Box 7) to support small-scale crop producers in Sri Lanka, where the government had subsidised tea and rubber plantations for years. The programme applied various components, such as training and providing improved agricultural materials, to create sustainable livelihoods and improved social conditions for rural smallholder farmers. However, the outcomes were evaluated as limited due to several issues, including a lack of marketing and the difficulty in bureaucratic procedures. Although the programme aimed at creating system-level changes, *institutional barriers* such as the deprivation of women from joint or individual titles remained as paramount issue. Additionally, regularization for land tenure security was not achieved because of the inability of farmers to afford the freehold applications' fees and the complexity of formal procedures. Furthermore, it was observed that interventions in the agricultural sector often focus on improving production and/or increasing farmers' incomes, but the evaluation reported some *negative environmental consequences*, such as land degradation and land use, despite the risk of erosion. Therefore, interventions need strict environmental measures to avoid the cultivation of unsuitable land and the use of chemicals harmful to the ecological environment.

Another case provides an explanation about the role of contextual understanding, which seems to be overlooked in some interventions. For example, a woman-training programme in Tanzania was implemented by national and international actors and supported woman entrepreneurs in the food processing industry to improve their earnings and living conditions. The programme aimed to enhance existing products through advanced training that included new tools, techniques, and marketing strategies. Although trained groups developed new products such as spices and essential oils, several issues were reported, such as the cost of testing, lack of infrastructure for large-scale production, and quality standards required for international sales. Moreover, the beneficiaries reported being reluctant to change their product range due to lack of local market demand. Thus, negative mechanisms emerged, such as *distrust* and *demotivation*.

Third, social entrepreneurs are intrinsically motivated individuals (or groups) who tend to develop solutions for their communities through social and economic empowerment, thus contributing to community development. These solutions are often in the form of *employment* because economic empowerment is shown as an essential part of overall empowerment, especially for the marginalised groups, such as the poor, women, and other disadvantaged groups. For example, an ex-offender, supported by a SE programme in the UK, started a social enterprise called “Rising Stars” to provide employment opportunities to other people like himself who struggle to find a job. Another entrepreneur, similarly, based on his personal experience, established a mail delivery company that offers new solutions to enable disabled people to participate in the labour market.

Box 7: The CMO configuration of the smallholder entrepreneurship development programme

Title and Country: Smallholder Plantations Entrepreneurship Development Programme, Sri Lanka

Context: Social and economic situation in Sri Lanka started to accelerate after the civil war ended in 2009. 30% of the labour falls into agriculture, characterised by both plantation as well as non-plantation sectors. The main cash crops are tea (the country is the third largest exporter in the world) and rubber (the second largest agricultural product for export after tea), and smallholders dominated in both sectors. There were about 400,000 smallholder tea farmers across the country by 2015. The government has historically supported the production of these cash crops through various subsidies. The programme implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) targeted about 8,700 households in two districts, primarily aiming to increase earnings and improve the living conditions of mostly poor smallholder farmers through productivity enhancement.

Evaluation Method: Mainly qualitative – data collected through desk research and review, interviews, focus group discussions, survey, and field visits.

Mechanisms: Demotivation and frustration.

The inability of women to own land either individually or jointly limited their empowerment compared to men within the programme. Farmers reported the need for post-harvest activities and direct marketing opportunities. Their net income remained limited because tea factories were the dominant marketing channel. Although the programme provided temporary utilisation permits to farmers, which could be converted into freehold upon a fee, conversion was slow due to the complexity of the procedures and the inability of smallholders to pay. For this reason, no significant institutional change was achieved in securing land rights.

Outputs, Outcomes, Impact: The beneficiaries reported the substantial improvements in their incomes and regular cash flows with the help of the programme. Although plantations provided steady incomes, more than these earnings were needed to meet all household needs, also calling for other income sources. There is little evidence regarding the impact of trainings whether they made any improvements in institutional capacity. There was also no impact relating to formal institutions (land tenure regularisation in particular) that could help to secure land rights. The programme did not consider using unsuitable lands for agricultural activities, resulting in planting in environmentally sensitive areas.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on the evaluation report of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (2019)

It was observed that these social entrepreneurs play an active role in regional development, particularly in the most deprived areas of low- and mid-income contexts, where social capital is high, as seen in the Indian case. Tamul Plates was launched in 2009 as a livelihood programme by a social entrepreneur based in Assam, which had a weak economy and exceptionally low productivity in North-eastern India. The programme aimed to help low-income village entrepreneurs by providing indirect loans, technical knowledge, and marketing support to produce high-quality biodegradable areca nut leaf plates. Over time, the organisation expanded its operations in the region and created sustainable earnings for hundred (100) village entrepreneurs and more than five-hundred (500) households (additional income opportunities emerged for seasonal raw material collection). Following the increase in average income, the region's living conditions also improved (a high rate of school enrolment, access to electricity and safe drinking water, and permanent housing). Interviews with the employees (see below) revealed that *social capital* among people is the key to success, as they work with family members, relatives, or close friends, making the process flexible and easy for them. *Empowerment* outcomes (such as feeling proud) among beneficiaries were reported.

“Three years ago, I set up an [affiliate production unit] with two machines at my home here in Patla. Last year I added a third machine. Now the whole family is helping to make plates in addition to our work on the farm” (Upaya Social Ventures, 2014, p. 29).

“We are both 48 years old. We grew up in the same village, went to the same school, married two sisters, and have been best friends all our lives. Now we work together, too, in areca nut leaf collection” (Upaya Social Ventures, 2014, p. 32).

A final point that emerged during the analyses is that SE may not be concerned with people only but with sustainability, it can address environmental issues, creating the potential to contribute to regional development. These ideas still require community involvement to advocate and change behaviour, so *social capital* is also critical for these initiatives. Furthermore, these social enterprises may be unable to generate income, making them dependent on external financial resources. However, positive outcomes were reported from these initiatives, such as *community empowerment* and *increased social capital*. For example, Penelope Dodd, a social entrepreneur from Tasmania, launched a social enterprise to create a sustainable food system. The primary mission was to provide free and locally grown food to

those in need through improved farming techniques and to educate children about food and gardening. The initiative has gradually collaborated with community members, including private and other non-profit organisations, and expanded its operations. Positive outcomes were reported, such as preventing food waste, ensuring food safety, nurturing the community spirit, and increasing awareness. Interactions among community members and having a common purpose led to increased *social capital and solidarity*.

4.5.2 Social Entrepreneurship and Empowering Marginalised (Women and Youth)

Empowerment, an essential principle of SI, refers to including marginalised groups in social and economic life. Relevant interventions were considered as empowerment programmes, but also other interventions such as grants, micro-credits, awards, and social networking that led to empowerment outcomes. Half of the data (n=136) provide evidence of empowerment, and almost two-thirds of this dataset (n=83) focus on women and/or youth empowerment. This section presents findings on the empowerment of the marginalised (with a particular focus on women and, where relevant, youth) and SE as an intertwined relationship was found between the two.

The findings confirm the active role of women in engaging in social entrepreneurial activities, which often results in *empowerment* outcomes for women and their communities. Interventions that provide resources to encourage women to take entrepreneurial action contribute to their economic and social empowerment through *personal growth* and *income generation*. Increased *human capital* was accordingly reported. Likewise, empowerment programmes were also found to be effective in motivating marginalised groups for SE.

Collective or individual entrepreneurial actions taken by women have resulted in positive economic and social outcomes, where causalities were often associated with *social capital (trust)* and the ability of marginalised women to use it. In general, it was observed that women have an intrinsic motivation to help other women. Local groups and organizations were found to be influential actors supporting women in their empowerment and entrepreneurial journey. Social networks emerged as effective structures for the success of their businesses, but also to support each other through sharing. *Collective feeling, self-awareness, self-confidence, and fulfilment* were observed as positive mechanisms. However, *institutions* that caused their marginalisation in the first place, were found to be the main barriers limiting the empowerment outcomes in low- and mid-income countries.

First, the findings suggest that women are passionate and intrinsically motivated individuals who seek to create change for other women and their communities. However, institutions negatively affect their efforts in patriarchal societies. For instance, several SE programmes targeting girls or women from countries such as Uganda and Bangladesh reported on men's participation after women's economic empowerment (willingness to use women's money). This highlights the importance of women's social empowerment and the need for changes in established norms. However, the data show that women are also inspired by these major social issues in their communities and come up with ideas that can potentially create a broader impact. For instance, Regina Honu from Ghana, supported by an IO for her socially entrepreneurial idea, aimed to grow a new generation of girls by teaching them to code and encouraging them to find a remedy to a social problem that can be solved through information and communication technologies. Apart from individual-level *empowerment* outcomes such as increased ability (*human capital*) and *self-confidence* in girls, the model was also claimed to be effective in changing the community's established norms which believe that girls can only be successful at home.

Second, social networks were found to be extremely important to the success of interventions aimed at empowering women through SE. This point has several aspects:

1. Social networks facilitate collective entrepreneurial actions through *social capital (trust)* among members. Local groups and organisations were found to be influential in terms of formal social networks.
2. These social networks can potentially disseminate impact and scale women-led businesses.
3. They provide *psychological* support to women and thus contribute to their empowerment through *self-awareness* and *peer support*.

These points are explained here with relevant examples below.

In the Indian state of Uttarakhand, where women are the primary workforce in agricultural activities, the women's cooperative, launched with the support of an NGO, started to implement different programmes to create sustainable livelihoods by empowering women and promoting collective entrepreneurship for organic farming (Box 8). The evaluation reported that the intervention implemented in a systematic and planned manner, resulted in significant

increases in *human capital*, *earned income* and crop production. Under the programme, advanced training on different topics was provided, and self-help groups were developed and strengthened. These groups claimed to include *initial social capital (trust)* and, therefore, were found to be effective in transferring knowledge between groups and women supporting each other. However, the evaluation revealed other potential factors behind the success, such as the high literacy rate of the female population and the growing demand for organic food in global markets. Additionally, the region was declared an organic state in 2000, which *motivated* community members to come together and advocate for their traditional way of production. Social networks, supported by the parent NGO, also helped create international links and scale the initiative's impact (an agreement made with a company from Japan). Several mechanisms were identified such as *collective feeling*, *increased self-confidence*, *feeling proud*, and *fulfilment*. However, institutional reforms regarding land ownership of women were not discussed.

Moreover, poverty significantly affects the health of deprived populations, and evidence shows that women can also play a role in improving community health (see also Section 4.2.4) by effectively using *social networks* and *trust* in place. Indeed, an intervention in remote rural Pakistan aimed at improving health conditions and empowered women to start social enterprises by training them and providing free maternal health products and services. The programme trained 450 women in three rural districts of Punjab. It helped them to start their microenterprises that meet community needs and sell health-related items such as hygiene and contraceptive products. For this purpose, the women were expected to first identify their communities' needs and then sell the products through in-person visits. They operated in their own social networks that helped to reach beneficiaries. These personal contacts, facilitated by the *trust* of these women, contributed to the scaling of their businesses (new items such as beauty products were added to the sales lists) and to the *empowerment* of both parties (psychological relief through conversations). Thus, the results were reported as positive regarding economic and social values, with a 78% survival rate.

Youth programmes emerged as another common path in SE interventions to address youth unemployment and improve community participation. These programmes overlap with women-targeted programmes when they focus on young girls. The findings provide substantial evidence from sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi) and South Asia (e.g., India, Sri Lanka) based on resource scarcity and limited formal job opportunities in these contexts. The findings are similar regarding the intertwined relationship

between empowerment and SE actions. However, it was also observed that young people similarly face institutional barriers in these patriarchal societies (they are not respected, and their ideas or businesses are not taken seriously). Furthermore, it was seen that the opportunities (and outcomes) could be shaped by existing capital, not only in terms of human and social capital, as discussed in women's programmes but also in terms of natural resources. For example, due to the more fertile soil in the region, the same youth SE programme implemented in different countries (low-income) produced more positive results in one of them.

Box 8: The CMO configuration of collective entrepreneurship by Rawain Women Cooperative

Title and Country: Collective Entrepreneurship by the Rawain Women's Cooperative Federation, India

Context: The Indian Central Himalayan Region (ICHR), also known as the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, is home to about 8.4 million people, corresponding to 0.83% of the country's population. Agricultural activities provide limited income throughout the different seasons of the year, forcing working-age men to emigrate for employment and women to become the primary workforce in the region. The female population in ICHR has a high literacy rate (60%) and is responsible for almost all agricultural activities. These women cultivators used traditional practices for producing pure organic crops and creating opportunities to change the mountain economy and the social status of women. The Rawain Women's Cooperative Federation (RWCF) was formed with the support of an NGO working in the region called the Himalayan Action Research Centre (HARC), providing institutional support for women to create self-help groups (SHGs).

Evaluation Method: Interviews and focus group discussions with 200 women from 20 SHGs.

Mechanisms: Collective feeling, increased self-confidence, feeling proud and fulfilment.

Advanced training - the organisation offered different income-generating activities and advanced training to women in production, packaging, processing, quality control, and management issues. Development and empowerment of self-help groups - women in different SHGs were initially not confident to undertake entrepreneurial activities. However, they then realised the benefits of collective action and indigenous knowledge management through training programmes. Acting collectively helped these groups transfer knowledge among farmers and support each other. Marketing network - a marketing strategy and a strong marketing network were developed to reach the market.

Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact: The average employment duration increased from 6 months to 300 days per year. The products became available in 16 cities across India, including Delhi and Mumbai. Women in the region were empowered by collective support and gained technical skills (increased human capital). A substantial increase was reported in production and crop diversification based on organised marketing and processing. The cooperative expanded its sales to the international market by making an agreement with a Japanese company. However, institutional reforms in terms of land ownership were not discussed.

Source: Author's own interpretation based on Sati and Juyal (2008)

In other respects, governments in developed countries were reported as more supportive of the younger generation. In the US, a SE programme aimed to encourage marginalised youth (low-income) to develop solutions to a community issue and implement their ideas by launching a social venture. The evaluation reported *increased human capital* (financial literacy and project management) and increased *community connection* among participants. It was claimed that these *social-emotional skills* were developed due to their *increased interaction with communities*. Another factor was shown as recruiting groups from youth service organisations and community centres, which were like catalysts in interactions based on their experience in working with young people. This was also confirmed by other studies which evaluated youth SE programmes implemented in European countries. These studies also provided evidence of the aspiration of young people and their high motivation for changing the world and doing something meaningful that benefits people in need. However, negative stereotypes were reported against the younger generation and their initiatives, even in these developed contexts.

Another aspect of youth empowerment is volunteering, which was mentioned in several evaluations in high-income contexts, and these studies identified the younger generation as a critical resource for social actions. However, it was reported that volunteering is also an effective strategy for youth to gain experience (increase in human capital) through working in social organisations and raising awareness of social problems among the young generation. It was observed that social entrepreneurs are effective in leveraging youth volunteer resources in developed countries and thus contribute to their empowerment. For example, an intervention implemented by a UK-based social enterprise aimed to address inequality and social exclusion by promoting SE with its free education and networking programme; the evaluation revealed that volunteering accounts for 31% of the average turnover of its graduates, making a significant contribution to social ventures initiated. Accordingly, empowering outcomes among volunteers were reported.

4.5.3 Summary of the Findings on Social Entrepreneurship

SE is a significant component of SI and therefore findings related to SE are also covered in other sections. However, in this section the concept is framed using two dimensions of SE, namely regional development, and empowerment. The findings can be summarised under four main points (Table 11), considering all the findings shared in this chapter.

First, SE can trigger collective action through the mobilisation of resources, leading to the social and economic inclusion of marginalised groups, and consequently their empowerment. However, institutions remain the main barriers to marginalisation, limiting empowerment and scaling of SE initiatives. This was particularly observed in rural and deprived areas where unemployment and poverty are extremely prevalent. The level of social and human capital was found to be influential for outcomes. The restrictive institutions, either regulations or social norms, embedded in these contexts create barriers to achieving or increasing positive impact. Social capital, in the form of *trust* was found as a key mechanism that supports collective actions, but negative *emotions* such as *frustration*, *loss of confidence* and *demotivation* were also observed when efforts are constrained by institutions.

Second, social networks are critical to sustaining and scaling the activities of social entrepreneurs while also facilitating SE processes and leading to the *empowerment (self-awareness, self-confidence)* of members through personal relationships. The social capital that supports the emergence of *collective action* is likely to be embedded in these networks. This is context-free but often seen in low- and mid-income contexts where resources are scarce and social entrepreneurs need market linkages. Informal social networks were also shown critical to facilitate SE processes through *personal relationships* (trust-based).

Third, when marginalised people are empowered, they tend to support their communities with SE ideas that often create employment for community members. Women are particularly influential in these interventions because of their intrinsic motivations, possibly triggered by their long-standing disadvantaged status.

Interventions that provide resources to encourage women to take entrepreneurial action contribute to their economic and social empowerment through increased human capital, including personal growth, as well as income generation. Social networks and women's organisations were found to be influential for women not only in terms of businesses but also for their empowerment. *Collective feeling*, *self-awareness*, *self-confidence*, and *fulfilment* were observed as positive mechanisms.

Finally, interventions, particularly government-led interventions that promote SE can contribute to the legitimisation of social issues, the increase in awareness and social capital, and the employment of marginalised. The mechanisms in these contexts were identified as *motivation*, *inspiration*, *community engagement*, and *increased awareness* as a result of SE

promotions. However, aggressive focus of governments on job creation may inhibit social impact, which might be in the form of human well-being or environmental sustainability, and these employment-focused approaches can lead to the underestimation of social entrepreneurs that are concerned with these issues.

Table 11: Summary of findings on social entrepreneurship

Generalised Finding(s)	Context	Mechanism(s)	Outcomes
SE can trigger collective action by mobilising resources, leading to marginalised groups' social and economic inclusion and empowerment. However, institutions remain the main barriers to marginalisation, limiting empowerment and scaling of SE initiatives.	In the context of marginalisation, particularly in rural and deprived areas (e.g., Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malawi, India, China)	- <i>Collective feeling</i> triggered by <i>trust</i> (social capital). - <i>Frustration, loss of confidence and demotivation</i> (when constrained by institutions).	<i>Limited</i> –positive outcomes such as increased earnings, but no change in institutions, such as land rights.
Social networks are critical to sustaining and scaling social entrepreneurs' activities while facilitating SE processes and empowering members through personal relationships. The social capital supporting the emergence of collective action will likely be embedded in these networks.	Context-free but particularly in low- and mid-income contexts (e.g., Brazil, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Thailand)	- <i>Motivation, inspiration, collective feeling (trust), self-awareness, self-confidence.</i>	<i>Mainly Positive</i> – new partnerships, access to market, increased income, and human capital.
When marginalised people are empowered, they tend to support their communities with SE ideas that often create employment for community members. Women are particularly influential in these interventions because of their intrinsic motivations, possibly triggered by their long-standing disadvantaged status.	In the context of marginalisation (e.g., South Africa, India, Tasmania, Ghana, Sri Lanka).	- <i>Collective feeling (trust), motivation, self-awareness, self-confidence, and fulfilment.</i>	<i>Mainly Positive</i> – social and economic inclusion of marginalised, women (and youth) in particular.
Interventions (government-led in particular) that promote SE can contribute to legitimising social issues, increasing awareness and social capital, and the employment of the marginalised.	High-income (e.g., the UK, France, Denmark, US, Spain, Australia)	- <i>Motivation, inspiration, and increased awareness.</i> - <i>Community engagement.</i>	<i>Mainly Positive</i> –increased number of social enterprises, increased awareness, and social capital.

Source: Author's own elaboration

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion and reflections on the findings presented in Chapter 4. The discussion is based on four dimensions of the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 2. Following a realist paradigm which seeks to understand the causalities, findings are interpreted to provide an improved understanding of SI interventions in different contexts. The chapter also includes the presentation of refined theories (RTs are the final version of the MRTs) derived from the discussion and concludes with the development of an SI model that illustrates the learnings of the research.

5.2. Institutions

The findings suggest that institutions have a significant effect on SI interventions because they create constraints through economic, political, and social structures, that ultimately shape opportunities and human behaviour. They create the root causes of inequality, poverty, and social exclusion, particularly in low-and mid-income countries that create economic institutions in favour of specific groups and prevent others from participating in the economy. The lack of regulations to secure the property rights of the poor and marginalised is shown to lead to economic and social constraints in these contexts, thus it becomes a major issue for SI interventions. Indeed, strong economic institutions require “*enforcement of property rights for a broad cross-section of society*” (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008, p. 138) to include those that face significant barriers to participation in economic activities, such as smallholders, entrepreneurs, and women. Once inclusive economic institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2019) are developed, this will not only mitigate the negative effects observed in the less developed context but will also change the distribution of power by providing equal opportunity.

The positive relationship between income and democracy (Robinson, 2006, Acemoglu et al., 2008) explains the undemocratic approaches seen in low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Economic and political institutions in these nondemocracies are

chosen by the groups (elites) who have greater political power (Acemoglu et al., 2005). However, these institutions are endogenous (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000, 2001, 2006) and are shaped by the same features of the society (Robinson, 2006). This means that all different institutions are the result of the collective choices of the same society (Acemoglu et al., 2005) that make these institutions intertwined. Moreover, these institutions are persistent because they are embedded in social, economic, and political systems, making it more difficult to create change as they conflict (or interact) with one another, and therefore requiring integration. For instance, the findings show that a social policy may require adjustments in other policy areas such as education and health. Thus, the first refined theory (RT) emerges as follows:

RT.1: “SIs are embedded in their institutional environment where economic, political and social institutions are intertwined; therefore, interventions need sufficient level of institutional support to succeed, with different institutions integrated with each other.”

SIs address societal challenges often posed by institutions, so institutional deficiencies create opportunities for socially innovative collective actions to emerge. SI can indeed be an effective way of overcoming institutional voids (Agostini et al., 2016) and strengthening institutional settings in emerging economies (Rao-Nicholson et al., 2017). However, the findings show such actions, triggered by institutional voids, are likely to experience legitimacy issues in terms of bureaucratic or procedural requirements as they scale. This creates need for government participation to legitimate these actions in low- and mid-income countries where the level of democracy is questionable, and no system-level changes are possible without government approval. In other respects, political power is better distributed in developed contexts, enabling other actors to play a role for legitimation. Also, these governments are subject to international agreements and unions, which create additional spaces to gain legitimacy. Thus, government participation in these contexts can be driven by different factors, such as vote concerns, pressure groups, and political decisions.

Culture, shaped by different experiences such as races, ethnic groups, religions and even geography, has emerged as the key determinant of human behaviour and therefore is seen to significantly influence SI interventions. Indeed, Weber (2001 [1930]) explicitly discussed the link between culture and economic development, using features of Protestantism to explain the economic success that underpinned capitalism. However, culture is not just about religion,

but also about historical experiences, heritage, and geography. For instance, individualism as a new cultural identity was reported in eastern European countries after experiencing long periods of socialism or communism. Furthermore, as this thesis shows, culture also shapes what to believe, whom to trust, what actions are respected, approved, or punished. Thus, culture can also be understood as regional identity, and becomes an important part of context. It also influences mechanisms by shaping human responses, as the findings suggest that people respond emotionally or rationally to programme offerings based on their cultural identity. This is because oppressions caused by different structures such as gender, religion, or class, are associated with each other, and their interplay affects the identities and actions of individuals, because they live and experience these oppressions simultaneously (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021).

Emotions, such as anger, anxiety, fear, and satisfaction, are natural human reactions that can be triggered by internal or external factors. For example, as shown, target groups become more responsive to programme resources because of the positive emotions (trust) they feel when their culture is respected. In fact, respect can create positive feelings at a cognitive and emotional level (Goodwin et al., 2014) but some interventions are criticised for not paying attention and respect to local identities or institutions (Rodrik, 2007). The lack of understanding of cultural identity emerged as a common causality in programme results. In such cases, it was observed that negative emotions can easily arise and lead to disempowerment, particularly when marginalisation is addressed, because these groups have long experience of exclusion, and are therefore, sensitive and fragile. These negative feelings may not necessarily be triggered by deliberate actions but may result from unintentional behaviours based on entrenched beliefs and habits, such as prejudice, and creates a risk of resistance. For instance, as reported, offering low-skilled jobs to indigenous enterprises resulted in feelings of frustration and loss of motivation. However, when people interact each other, positive emotions such as respect, trust and liking may arise (Fan and Zietsma, 2017) thus, dialogues between different groups can contribute to changing these norms.

Emotions are also critical to improving dialogues between different groups and to understand differentiated reactions (Mackie and Smith, 2002) because social interactions do not always create positive emotions, and instead can cause negative effects, which may result from prejudice and resistance. Stephan and Stephan (2001) suggested creating *empathy* and reducing threat to deal with prejudice. In fact, empathy is required for appreciation of others' feelings or experiences (Ioannidou and Konstantikaki, 2008, Halpern, 2003), therefore,

emotions and the causes behind those feelings need to be recognised to generate empathetic responses (Gao et al., 2021). Thus, the second refined theory emerges as follows:

RT.2: “People’s responses are influenced by cultural identities and human emotions, particularly in the context of social exclusion, where disempowerment can easily occur. Therefore, interventions need to be designed and implemented by paying particular attention to this sensitivity, because these feelings can lead to negative consequences by creating resistance in target groups to participation and adoption of innovations. Interactions and activities need to be conducted with respect and empathy to minimise this risk, making it possible to create positive emotions and build trust.”

5.3. Capital

The role of capital in SI interventions has been assessed using the theory of capital. The synthesis supports the notion of convertibility between different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and highlights this interplay rather than individual types of capital (Shaw et al., 2009). First, economic capital affects the choice of economic institutions in society, along with political institutions (forms of government, such as democracy or autocracy) (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008). These economic institutions in the form of funds, allowances, and property rights shape the opportunities available to citizens. However, as explained in the previous section, there are limits on the nature of economic instruments (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000), not only because they cause inequality in the first place, but also because the economic resources provided by SI interventions require a combination of other forms of resources.

Interventions that provide financial resources (grants and micro-funds) to the poor have resulted in limited and short-term results if they do not support human capital. However, investing in human capital appears to face institutional barriers in low- and mid-income contexts due to social norms that oppose programme objectives (e.g., women’s participation in the economy) thus creating the need for social *acceptance* of the intervention. The findings show that interactions and dialogues with community leaders and family members can contribute to building trust (social capital), leading to increased symbolic capital (reputation) and eventually acceptance. In fact, communities with low literacy rates and restrictive social

norms may be prejudiced against interventions and may feel that their cultural identity or religious principles are threatened (concerns were reported on issues such as abortion), so building *trust* in these contexts is essential for acceptance. Thus, the third refined theory emerges as follows:

RT.3: “Interventions that provide economic capital need to invest in human capital, particularly where literacy rates are low and/or social norms are restrictive in several ways. However, this will require building trust (social capital), which will lead to increased symbolic capital (reputation of the programme) and eventually acceptance.”

Human capital is central to SI interventions as it is people who develop, implement, and ultimately benefit from interventions, thus making human capital the main input in the process. It concerns different roles including policy maker, social entrepreneur, community member, programme staff, volunteer, and so on. While professional skills (social, political, financial, technical) such as field experience or technical expertise are required for key actors, the synthesis shows that SI interventions require *empathetic* individuals who demonstrate strong motivation, commitment, and genuine aspirations, particularly for leading roles. This is because people become civic-minded and responsible individuals through empathy, leading policymakers to develop better programmes, policies, and services for key social issues such as poverty (Segal, 2011, 2007). Indeed, empathetic individuals are more likely to react and “*behave in ways that benefit others*” when there are people in need (Spinrad and Eisenberg, 2017, p. 337). The findings show that encouraging and nurturing people with this characteristic, can lead to positive outcomes from interventions. The fourth refined theory thus identified as follows:

RT.4: “Interventions need different actors with a range of professional skills (social, political, financial, technical), but socio-emotional skills are required for leading roles, therefore finding and nurturing empathetic individuals who demonstrate strong motivation, commitment, and genuine aspirations must be aimed.”

Symbolic capital is assessed with concepts of awareness, recognition, and reputation. The findings show that awareness campaigns can motivate people to participate and support SI interventions in different ways, such as volunteering, advocating, collaborating, and funding. Public advocacy is important because the generation of SI ideas does not ensure their implementation and acceptance (Mumford, 2002). Furthermore, a social problem can only be addressed when community members and other relevant actors are aware of the problem and are interested in solving it (Zeyen et al., 2013). Therefore, interventions need to increase symbolic capital about the social problem addressed.

Media channels and the internet provide a great opportunity to acquire or increase symbolic capital by disseminating information and raising awareness about a particular social issue or an intervention in mid- and high-income contexts, but as it was shown, there may be a lack of accurate information despite awareness. Moreover, in low-income contexts, interventions can be less popular due to resistance or opposition by a part of community, and require persuasion campaigns, in which face-to-face interactions and dialogues were found to be effective. Even though it is claimed that people react emotionally to campaigns (Marcus and MacKuen, 1993), these emotional reactions can be temporary and therefore should be supported with explicit knowledge and data to promote rational choices. This transparency, together with emotional motives, can create trust and contribute to positive responses. For instance, providing a clear description about the causes, consequences and solutions of the social issue may help to create behavioural changes and positive attitudes towards the problem (Staats et al., 1996). Thus, the next refined theory emerges as follows:

RT.5: *“Interventions need public support (for acceptance, advocacy, and participation) that can be gained through awareness or persuasion campaigns (symbolic capital), which should include emotional and rational approaches to influencing others on cognitive, emotional, and motivational levels; this also has the potential to create trust (social capital).”*

Another aspect of symbolic capital is that it brings *legitimacy* through recognition or reputation. First, interventions that provide legal recognition of social enterprises are seen in mid- and high-income contexts with a motivation of addressing social needs and creating employment. While this legitimacy was found to be important for these organisations to access

resources and have a voice (positive results were reported in terms of quantitative indicators such as the number of jobs created), other findings suggest that political institutions (the form of government) shape activities in this way and that this may not always be in line with social sector expectations (for example, in China, a controlling approach was obtained through this legal recognition). In addition, it was observed that in these interventions, the social impact is often ignored, instead focusing on the economic outcomes. The importance of economic impact of SI cannot be underestimated as economic empowerment is a key element of social inclusion (Bennett, 2002) and poverty alleviation (Narayan-Parker, 2002) but emphasizing this economic aspect may cause a reductionist interpretation of SI and its potential (Jessop et al., 2013).

Moreover, interventions that specifically target symbolic capital through awards and competitions were found to have mixed results based on the emotions they create. While there is sufficient evidence that reputation leads to empowerment of its owner (thus increase human capital) through positive emotions such as pride and confidence, the findings also imply that providing symbolic capital (reputation) should be implemented as a supportive dimension rather than an intervention on its own, as there is a risk of creating disempowerment through negative emotions such as disappointment. Therefore, these interventions need to be carefully designed (Gök, 2016) and combined with other forms of capital (economic, human, social) to avoid negative consequences. Thus, the next refined theory emerges as follows:

RT.6: “Symbolic capital can be converted into economic, human, and social capital by bringing legitimacy to its owner and leading access to resources, empowerment, and trust. However, interventions aimed at providing symbolic capital (legal recognition and reputation) have the risk of creating negative outcomes, especially in contexts where the gains offered through symbolic capital are not in line with the expectations of beneficiaries. These interventions need good governance that takes into account not only economic but also social impact. Additionally, they need to be integrated with other interventions to combine symbolic capital with other forms of resources.”

Social capital, in the form of norms, trust and networks, has emerged as the most significant input for SI interventions. This is because the collective action is the foundation of SI and

social capital enables people to act collectively for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1993, Woolcock, 2001). The findings provide substantial evidence on how social capital influences interventions, as it appeared repeatedly as a critical factor in all four dimensions. As it has been touched upon earlier, **trust** has been observed as the most common factor affecting the results of interventions. This can be discussed in two dimensions: generalised and institutional trust (Dakhli and De Clercq, 2004).

First, generalised trust refers to interpersonal trust between people and can be rational or emotional. Such trust was found to be particularly intense in deprived communities with limited access to resources, and the findings confirm its facilitating role in initiating collective actions (usually in the form of SE). This is because personal relationships among the poor derive from shared origin, religion, or neighbourhood that lead to mutual support and trust, thus creating the potential to act and exist collectively (De Wit and Berner, 2009). In addition, generalised trust has also found to be effective in collective empowerment, which usually occurs as a result of positive emotions such as pride, confidence, and a sense of solidarity. This can take a variety of forms, such as educating others using trust (e.g., programmes where community members are trained to improve health conditions through sanitation solutions or maternal health products) and feeling empowered through collective achievements (e.g., the indigenous tourism initiative in the Bolivian Amazon, see Section 4.3.3). However, as findings show, strong bonds and trust among community members may lead to collective distrust of interventions and may require additional efforts (increase symbolic capital as well as trust) to remove these barriers.

Secondly, institutional trust is considered as the trust people have in institutions and organisations (Dakhli and De Clercq, 2004). This form of trust was found largely lacking in low- and some mid-income countries where there are several institutional gaps and securing property rights remains the main challenge for SI interventions. These societies are made up of elites and citizens; though the number of citizens is greater, they are disenfranchised and marginalised by political institutions (autocracy or dictatorship) (Robinson, 2006). Thus, distrust in institutions emerges based on previous experiences and negative emotions such as disappointment and loss of motivation. This creates barriers to scaling the impact of interventions and leads to disempowerment. The first refined theory of social capital thus emerges as follows:

RT.7: *“Social capital can exist in the form of trust between people, and this trust often facilitates SI interventions by enabling collective actions that can result in collective empowerment. However, it can also lead to collective resistance if there is distrust towards interventions and requires additional measures to invest in social and symbolic capital. In other respects, where parts of society are disenfranchised and marginalised by political and economic institutions, distrust of institutions leads to disempowerment and creates barriers to scaling the positive impact of interventions.”*

Social capital is also about *social networks*, and the findings suggest that social networks facilitate interventions that provide service delivery in marginalised areas. Interpersonal relationships and trust in these networks help members to look after, and share information with, each other. These networks also help to reach targeted beneficiaries and disseminate clear knowledge about programme resources. Although a network provides the opportunity to access knowledge, it is social capital that enables the transfer of existing knowledge (Hughes et al., 2014). In fact, the complementary nature of diffusion of information and social capital (e.g., Rogers, 2010 [1962], Burt, 1999), and its positive impact especially in poorer regions (Narayan and Pritchett, 1999, Whiteley, 2000), is well established.

Social networks provided by pre-existing community groups or organisations, including faith-based organisations, have also been found to be effective in accessing resources, particularly in rural and resource-scarce areas (e.g., marketing support by church networks). These networks also contribute to the empowerment and well-being of the beneficiaries by providing emotional support on personal-level challenges (such as domestic violence). However, these networks may limit the opportunities of their members with intentions based on social norms (e.g., girls cannot go to school, women’s place is at home). This point again indicates the need for investment in trust and symbolic capital, but also the need for interventions to interact and partner with these existing networks.

Social capital is also seen to be critical in formal social networks established by professional actors for a purpose. Although findings provide positive and inspiring cases regarding social networks, especially in the context of philanthropic foundations and their social entrepreneurs, over-reliance on external networks can limit their activities and ability to learn local country opportunities (Lassalle et al., 2020). Moreover, several problems have been detected in these networks, all of which derive from the lack of social capital. For instance, the lack of shared

values, due to differences in geography, language, and culture, were reported as barriers to active participation and knowledge sharing within networks that have heterogeneous members. Another issue that emerged is governance: although built on purpose, the social network structure is informal in nature. Members may have varying levels of power but do not (and should not) have authority over others. However, the issue of coordination in governing relationships arises. Therefore, these networks require time and effort, as well as key members with specific skills (e.g., diplomacy, initiating new relationships, raising energy) to be functional (Moore and Westley, 2011, Gulati et al., 2012). Thus, another refined theory on social capital emerges as follows:

RT.8: *“Social networks offer various supports (e.g., access to resources, emotional support) to their members, particularly in deprived regions. These networks often incorporate trust, based on shared values and informal relationships between network members, and have the potential to facilitate or hinder SI interventions. Therefore, interventions need to interact and partner with these existing networks to overcome issues regarding social and symbolic capital. In other respects, interventions that establish or support formal social networks with heterogenous members face difficulties due to a lack of shared values and coordination, thus requiring good governance and investing in social capital.”*

5.4. Actors and Actor Interactions

Actors and actor interactions are considered in this section as actors at the organisational or institutional level. Interventions encourage, support, or require interactions between different sector actors because building new social relationships is fundamental in SI. Findings indicate that *trust* is the most significant factor in actor interactions and lack of trust negatively affects the results of interventions. *Distrust* between different sector actors was observed due to several reasons including competition, lack of co-working habits, and polarisation, even in high-income countries with multiple support structures for SI. The inherited bias and lack of experience in working with one another underpins this mutual distrust, and leads parties to misinterpret the intentions of the other (Rondinelli and London, 2003). Intergroup contacts fostered for partnering activities is suggested to change groups' perceptions of each other (Kolk and Lenfant, 2015) but the findings show that interventions often fail when they enforce partnerships between previously disconnected actors.

First, lack of shared values (institutional differences) in missions and organisational cultures hinders different groups' interactions, often seen in high-income contexts and in the interactions of different geographical actors. Although the diversity of actors (for example, in networks) creates opportunities for heterogeneity of knowledge (Hughes et al., 2014), coordination becomes imperative to manage such relationships. Second, power inequalities between actors may hinder trust in relations (Moore et al., 2012a) because, when one party perceives the other as more powerful, they may fear that the power may be used against them, which might cause the less powerful to feel insecure. Therefore, trust issues can arise in interactions in which the government, donor, or funder is actively involved, so interventions need to address these power inequalities for effective relationships.

Interactions can create dialogues which can eventually lead to the generation of social capital. Indeed, Senge (2006) suggests improving dialogues to reduce conflict and create common meaning among participants. However, trust is necessary also for meaningful communication (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000) and willingness to cooperate (Putnam, 1993, Mair and Marti, 2006). Indeed, actors share knowledge only if there is a meaningful and trusting relationship between the parties (Hughes et al., 2014). Dyer and Singh (1998, p. 672) call this willingness (or ability) "*relational capability*". Transparency (about objectives and activities), shared goals/values, mutual respect and long-term commitment were observed as significant factors to build trust and increase willingness. For instance, a lack of trust in IOs was reported due to the temporary or volatile nature of their activities (due to, for example, donor policies, funding restrictions, operating in conflict prone areas). This "*behavioural uncertainty*" (Krishnan et al., 2006, p. 895) creates difficulties in understanding or predicting the actions of partners. Therefore, interventions require specific measures to increase social capital and relational capabilities of different actors. The relevant refined theory is defined as follows:

RT.9: "*Interventions that aim to create new social relationships require actor interactions between different groups, but interactions do not automatically build trust and shared values between parties, both of which influence the effectiveness of new relationships. Instead, distrust can easily arise in various ways, including inherited bias, uncertain behaviours, competition, and power inequalities, thus creating the need for new communication strategies to build trust and relational capabilities. Dialogues, transparency, and long-term commitment in these interactions can contribute to building trust and shared values.*"

Actors are primarily considered as public, private and third sector actors. However, the dataset of this thesis does not provide sufficient evidence to evaluate the role of the private sector. Their contribution was assessed as limited where they were involved in several interventions, without providing strong causalities about those results. Thus, the main actors emerged as public (governments, policymakers, municipalities, and other local authorities) and the third sector (social enterprises, non-profits, community organisations, local groups etc.) actors. Additionally, the role of higher-education institutions (universities) and IOs (including NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, development banks and foundations) is also assessed as institutional actors.

The role of universities seems to be important in meeting the human resource needs of the social sector as the qualified employee gap led to negative or limited outcomes in several interventions. Thus, undergraduate, and post-graduate-level programmes in SE or SI, which are implemented in many countries, become relevant. The participation and motivation of young people is important in this respect. However, findings show that universities need to develop their curriculum considering the context. This can be achieved by addressing specific questions during the design (e.g., what are the main social challenges of the relevant context, what skills does the social sector need most), and these questions can only be addressed effectively with the participation of social sector representatives. Collaborations with social sector actors are necessary also to provide job placement or internship opportunities for students.

Regarding international organisations (IOs), these seem to be influential in some respects, particularly in deprived areas of low- and mid-income contexts where resources are scarce, and communities are marginalised. In addition to flow of funds, the reputation (symbolic capital) they bring to their grantees or awardees often resulted in empowerment outcomes such as pride, confidence, and motivation in the short-term. Furthermore, social networks that they offer to beneficiaries create opportunities to scale and disseminate impact through international links. However, disempowerment was also observed in the long run due to several reasons such as instability, thus, leaving doubts as to whether positive outcomes are limited to overly polished success stories.

Partnering with local groups and organisations seems to be a common approach of IOs and was found to be an effective way to reach target groups using existing trust (social capital). However, two problems with these collaborations have been identified. First, dissatisfaction and distrust among local partners were reported due to the lack of contextual understanding. This is mainly because IOs have their own agendas and funding constraints, but another reason may be the lack of interaction, dialogue, and empathy that prevents them from understanding needs and contextual challenges.

The negative experiences of local partners and beneficiaries may also cause them to be sceptical of future funding and programmes, and in such cases, (re)building trust can become more challenging. Second, there is also evidence that beneficiaries are not satisfied with the support or service of the local organisation. Therefore, IOs also need to interact with powerless groups or organisations in order not to create another layer of power structure while partnering with local actors (De Wit and Berner, 2009).

IOs are also found to be influential in managing conflicts through their (relatively) non-political status and communication skills (Barnett and Finnemore, 2005). Findings show that in extreme environments (e.g., the Gaza Strip, Iraq, Somalia) where most governments cannot contact informal authorities for political reasons, IOs have sustained their activities by communicating with relevant actors (de facto authorities). Although such situations risk empowering dominant de facto authorities or legitimising their actions, IOs can support conflict-affected communities in this way. Yet, there is evidence showing that their activities can be interrupted and constrained in these areas due to donor policies or for political reasons, conflicting with the literature suggesting that they can be isolated from institutional pressures on the areas where they operate (Greenwood et al., 2011)

A final point regarding IOs is the lack of dialogues between them, as the findings show they may operate in the same region for similar purposes without any interaction or collaboration. This may be due to a lack of visibility (symbolic capital) of the programmes or coordination, and is likely to result in duplication of activities (Morrar and Baba, 2022), waste of resources and missed opportunity to share knowledge. The next refined theory emerges from these points as follows:

RT.10: *“International actors implementing SI interventions allocate substantial funds to the resource-scarce areas of low- and mid-income countries, thus having the potential to contribute to the social and economic empowerment of underprivileged communities, but at the same time, they may cause disempowerment in the long run, due to instability and lack of contextual understanding, both of which lead to distrust. Partnering with local groups and organisations is an effective strategy for leveraging existing social capital (trust), but interactions should also include less powerful groups, and empathetic approaches should be adopted in dialogues to understand needs and challenges. Interactions between IOs that operate in the same regions with similar purposes are also important to enable collaborations. Additionally, they have the capacity to support conflict-affected communities through dialogue with de facto authorities.”*

5.5. Social Entrepreneurship

SE interventions are evaluated using the concepts of regional development and empowerment as they are the most common approaches of these interventions. First, the findings suggest that SE often addresses social exclusion and disadvantage (Haugh, 2012, Mair et al., 2012), thus empowerment underpins the logic of social entrepreneurial actions (Cunha et al., 2015, Santos, 2012). However, deprivation is often in the form of poverty, and social exclusion leads to unemployment for certain groups, making economic empowerment central for SE activities. In fact, as the data show, government interventions (support for social enterprises) in mid- or high-income contexts are driven by job creation that can lead to regional development. Thus, employment becomes the main concern for many social entrepreneurs, especially where poverty and unemployment levels are high.

Social entrepreneurs seem to be more active in low- and mid-income countries due to external incentives and low-income levels. These are mostly necessity entrepreneurs that are deprived in several ways, making it important to recognise the specific problems these vulnerable entrepreneurs face in order to adequately support their activities (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021). Interventions targeting these groups reported positive outcomes (increased income and wider social impact such as permanent housing, increased school enrolment, access to electricity and safe drinking water), particularly in communities that have higher levels of *social capital* and *human capital* (e.g., high literacy rate). Collective actions in these communities are facilitated

by trust and strong bonds. Agriculture seems to be the main sector in these contexts where entrepreneurs are focused most and where women are influential, but access to market was observed as a common issue. Additionally, their growth and impact are significantly constrained by formal institutions, as no change was reported in property and inheritance rights, or land tenure processes. In fact, social entrepreneurs are often described as inspirational actors that pursue system-level changes, but the evidence show social change is not possible without change in political institutions (e.g., democracy, laws, regulations). However, these institutions are persistent (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008), meaning that they can only be changed slowly. Therefore, it may still too early to see the real effects of interventions due to their relatively short history.

The empowerment of women is one of the fundamental issues of development processes (Sen, 1999). Although income growth is not a guaranteed way to lead to their empowerment (Narayan-Parker, 2002, Mansuri and Rao, 2004, Haugh and Talwar, 2016), the findings suggest that women play a significant role in SE and economic empowerment is essential for them to achieve an overall empowerment, particularly in deprived areas where women do not have a social status. They have strong motivation and emotional motives to create change for themselves, their children, and their peers. Motivation is an antecedent condition that leads to acting in a specific way (Roberts et al., 2014) and emotions triggered by experiences may affect motivation. Indeed, women participate in entrepreneurial actions not only because of the structural oppressions such as gender roles in the household but also because of the subjective interpretation of lived experiences (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021).

Additionally, they demonstrate a natural ability to use *social capital* (support each other or trust other women), probably due to years of collective oppression. Therefore, women's groups and organisations emerged as important actors to leverage social capital. The participation of women was also found critical to health-related interventions, such as maternal health, infant mortality, and sanitation, in which significant positive outcomes were reported, confirming that SE can support community health through training of local actors (women) and knowledge transfer using social networks (Heinze et al., 2016). However, gender inequality persists as an ethical and democratic issue in many countries, leading to disempowerment of women. Thus, the first refined theory regarding SE interventions emerges as follows:

RT.11: *“Interventions that promote SE can contribute to regional development through job creation, social inclusion, and empowering communities because social entrepreneurs have the capacity to trigger collective action using social capital. However, their growth and impact are constrained by institutions that create ethical and democratic issues that lead to disempowerment.”*

In other respects, empowerment has been evaluated as an effective approach in SE interventions, as a causal relationship between SE and empowerment was observed. This is because people feel pride, self-confidence, and fulfilment (empowerment) when they help others and contribute to their community through SE, and when they become empowered, they start to feel that they can make change and help other people (motivation for entrepreneurship). The youth population appears to be influential in this regard, as high levels of community connection (increased social capital) and enhanced social-emotional skills were reported in youth empowerment and SE programmes in high-income countries. In this way, the final refined theory emerges as follows:

RT.12: *“Interventions that promote SE need to adopt empowerment approaches, particularly for women, youth, and other marginalised groups, because when these people are empowered, they tend to support their communities through SE. Women are particularly effective in these interventions, based on their strong motivation and emotional motives to create change for themselves and their communities.”*

SI and SE are also involved in sustainability discussions (e.g., Eichler and Schwarz, 2019, Aquino et al., 2018, Rover et al., 2017, Bock, 2012) but there is insufficient evaluations of environmental consequences to understand the impact of interventions in terms of sustainability. Still, the little evidence of this research from SE programmes provides mixed results. On the one hand, there are eco-sensitive ideas developed by people who know their geography best and respect their nature; on the other hand, there are programmes with negative environmental impacts (e.g., land degradation due to using unsuitable areas for agriculture, depletion of natural resources). This is because the expected impact of relevant programmes depends primarily on economic (e.g., increased earning, enhanced productivity) and then on social criteria (e.g., improved living conditions, empowerment), thus ignoring the

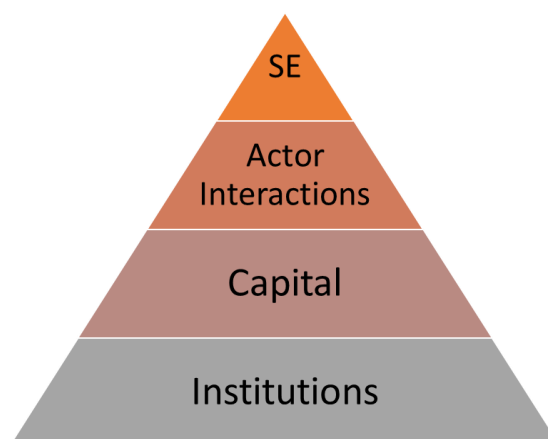
environmental dimension. However, “*an integrated and multifaceted approach*” to development (Sen, 1999, p. 126) should be adopted. This requires integration of economic, social, environmental, political, and cultural dimensions of development (Beer and Haughton, 2003, Pike et al., 2007).

5.6. Conclusion

To conclude the discussion, the study first suggests a hierarchal relationship between four dimensions, which is presented with an SI pyramid. Afterwards, an SI model is developed to explain the interrelationships of the components presented in four main dimensions.

The conceptual framework of this research identifies four main dimensions of SI interventions, all of which are interrelated. However, it is important to interpret the hierarchical relationship between these dimensions to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how interventions work. A pyramid figure can be used to visualize the hierarchy that flows up, considering the weight of the concepts. According to this, institutions can be interpreted as the base of the SI pyramid because the evidence show that social change is not possible without change at the institutional level. Later, capital can be interpreted as the second layer of the pyramid as it refers to all available resources, including non-monetary resources. Interventions offer different resources, used in a variety of ways, to address societal challenges, and these resources are embedded in social, economic and political institutions. The other two dimensions, ‘actor interactions’ and ‘SE’ can be seen as activities that require SIs to occur. SI aims to create new social relationships and therefore interventions encourage interactions between different sector actors to foster collaborations, overcome institutional barriers (e.g., build shared values or break down the prejudices through dialogues) and combine resources. Finally, SE is a collective action by individuals, groups, and organisations. This study evaluated SE as instrumental in mobilising community resources, creating employment, empowering people, and contributing to regional development. Although there is no boundary for SIs, SE is often locally based and operates in specific settings. Therefore, the fourth dimension, SE was placed at the top, resulting in the pyramid shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The social innovation pyramid



Source: Author's own illustration

The realist synthesis starts with developing programme theories that explain how a programme is supposed to work. It uses empirical data to test these theories and provides in-depth insights subsequently about how programmes actually work in different circumstances (Wong et al., 2013b). The review does not result in explicit and definite findings, but instead produces detailed, deep, and evidence-based information about the relevant programmes, how they work and why they do so (Pawson, 2006), thus building narratives of “*success, failure, and various eventualities in between*” (Wong et al., 2013b, p. 1006). The realist synthesis is an explanatory approach rather than judgmental, and the results may end with a refined theory or implications informed by evidence for future research, policy, and practice (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012). A theoretical framework model can also be developed following the writing of the synthesis (Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012) .

In line with the guidelines, this research process concludes with refinement of theories and development of a model of how SI operates. Refined theories have already presented in this chapter under the relevant sections. Accordingly, an SI model (Figure 8) is also developed to visualise these final propositions and to draw a big picture of SI interventions. The model is developed by considering the conceptual framework proposed at the end of the literature review, which was used as a middle-range theoretical framework. However, the framework became more developed with this model using findings, implications, and finally discussions.

Whetten (1989) suggested visualising the concept under consideration when the set of relationships is more complex, which clarifies the author's thinking and helps the reader's comprehension. Taken this into account, the model, presented in Figure 8, highlights the role

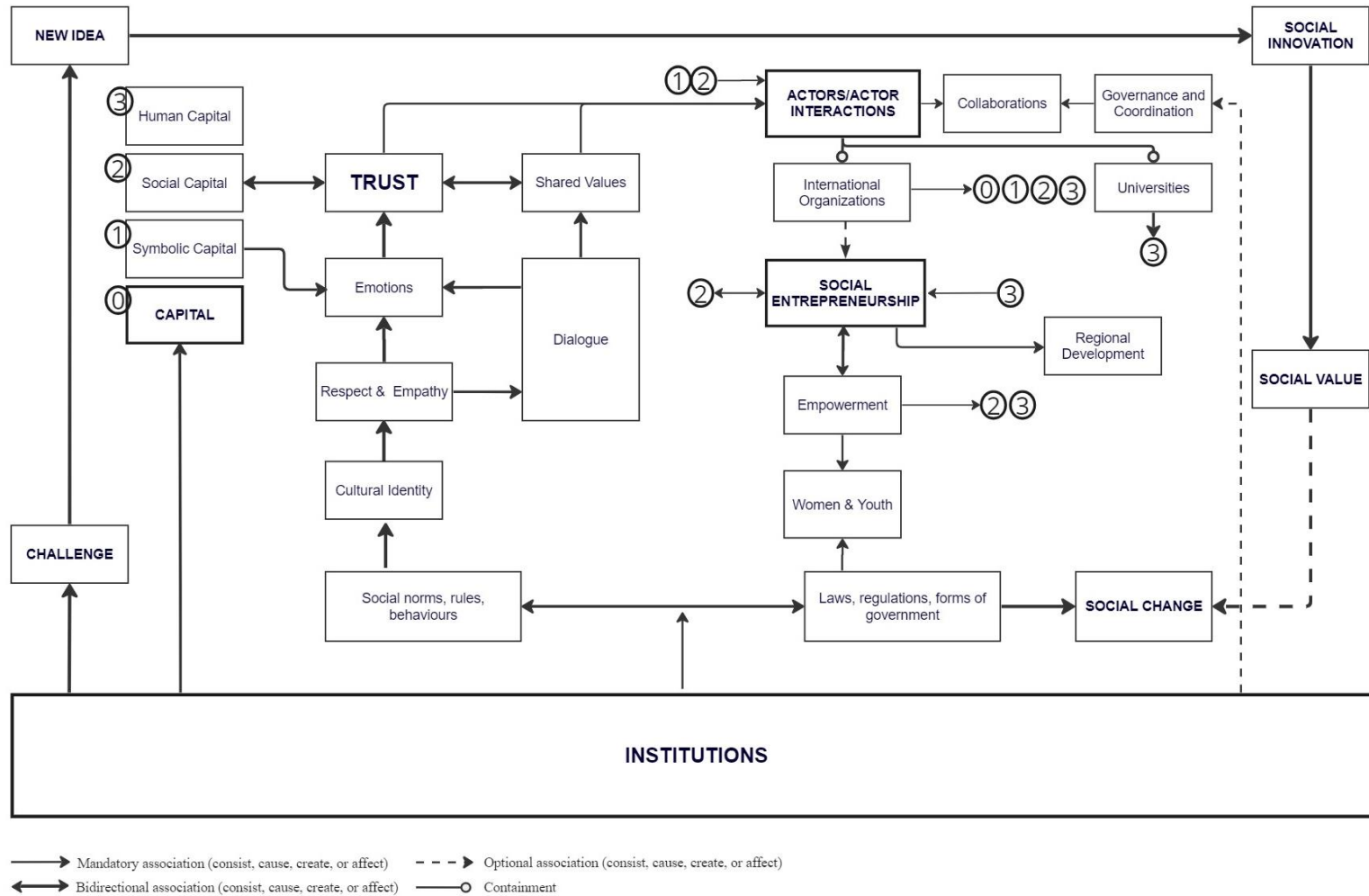
of institutions first, by locating it as a basis of the process where the challenge starts and the potential social change ends. The direction of the arrows represents the association (consist, cause, create, affect) or order of the process. Dotted lines are used to show relationships that may or may not exist. And forms of capital are represented numerically to demonstrate their relationship with other entities as an input or output. Economic capital is simply included in overall capital and represented as zero (0). The proposed model emphasises the role of trust and shared values, both of which are influenced by emotions; and it suggests that dialogues need respect, and empathy to generate positive emotions. A set of explanations is provided below to elaborate the logic of the model:

1. The model suggests that social challenges that provide opportunities for SI ideas, are created by institutions in the first place. These ideas lead to SIs that aim to create social value and ultimately reach to social change. Social change requires changes in formal institutions such as laws, regulations, or the form of government (democracy or autocracy) because institutions create barriers for SI interventions where authoritarian and nondemocratic approaches are dominant. Institutions consist of formal and informal institutions that are mutually intertwined, meaning supporting and reinforcing each other. For example, social norms that exclude certain groups from society are often promoted by formal institutions that also restrict their legal rights.
2. Informal institutions, such as social norms, create a unique cultural identity among those who share these values, and others need to recognise these characteristics during the design of interventions and interactions with these groups. Recognition of cultural identity requires respect and empathy in dialogues, because these approaches create positive emotions among the owners of the identity (beneficiaries or target groups) and can eventually lead to gaining the trust of these groups. Interactions between different actors enable new relationships and collaborations, but these interactions require shared values and trust to be effective; therefore, dialogues between groups should take place with respect and empathy, thus making it possible to create shared values and trust.
3. Since the distribution of financial resources is defined by economic institutions, economic capital (0) is also embedded in institutions. Symbolic capital (e.g., awareness and persuasion campaigns) can trigger emotions and build trust in targeted groups. Social capital, in the form of trust, is the central point of interventions and SI

processes. This is because actor interactions are fundamental to SI interventions and effective interactions are only possible with the presence of social capital (2) (in the form of trust and shared values) as well as symbolic capital (1) (perceptions of actors about each other). However, collaborations, resulting from actor interactions, require governance and coordination, and this can be handled by institutional actors (e.g., governments, local authorities, etc.).

4. The box for “actors and actor interactions” represents all relevant actors (public-private-third sector) and their interactions, however, IOs and universities are added to the model as separate entities based on the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter 2. IOs provide substantial resources to SI globally, and the findings show that they have the potential to generate all forms of capital through varied interventions, such as empowerment programmes, providing social networks and marketing links, and collaborating with local authorities; so, the numbers associated with capital forms (‘0’ for economic, ‘1’ for symbolic, ‘2’ for social and ‘3’ for human capital) are shown as outputs of IOs. Universities, on the other hand, play a role in social change efforts by addressing the need for human capital (3).
5. Social entrepreneurship can be triggered by the interventions of IOs or other means. It needs social capital (2) as well as human capital (3) to create positive outcomes, because SE requires collective actions (social capital) that each member is motivated to contribute (human capital) in several ways, such as opportunity recognition, participation, and adoption. These activities lead to an increase in social capital (2) through collective feelings such as pride and solidarity and contribute to regional development through empowering (social and economic inclusion) communities.
6. Economic empowerment is an important outcome of SE and often contributes to social empowerment in marginalised communities, because these groups are excluded from economic opportunities due to social norms that lead to social exclusion. Therefore, SE empowers marginalised groups, especially women (and youth) who have long been socially and economically excluded, but also other powerless groups such as small farmers and ex-criminals. However, the impact of empowerment remains limited without changes at the institutional level, particularly in non-democratic contexts where these groups are most deprived. Thus, the SI cycle ends where it started: in institutions.

Figure 8: Research Output: The Social Innovation Model



Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, the study concludes by considering the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapters. The chapter begins by recalling the methodology and why it was chosen for this study (Section 6.2). The structure and logic of the research design are briefly given in this section (6.2). Section 6.3 employs the insights from the findings (Chapter 4) and discussion (Chapter 5) to address the research questions. However, the research questions are broad, and the findings are complex; therefore, the questions are addressed concisely and in a simplified manner. Following this, the theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions of this thesis are introduced in Section 6.4. These contributions, along with the insights gained from previous chapters, are drawn upon to suggest implications for future research (Section 6.5) and innovation policy (Section 6.6). The chapter then presents objective limitations by reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology, analytical framework, and data set (Section 6.7). Finally, the epilogue section concludes the chapter and this thesis.

6.2. The Realist Synthesis Approach

This research aimed to investigate the impact of SI policies and programmes to reveal the mechanisms underlying SI processes. Since the fundamental idea of SI is to create social value and lead to social change in the long term, this complicates evaluation efforts because of the multicausal and nonquantifiable dimensions of social change (Austin et al., 2006) and normative judgments about social value (Santos, 2012, Pol and Ville, 2009). The research used an innovative but an accepted methodological approach (see also Section 3.4) that was identified as appropriate and well suited to addressing the overarching aim of the research, thus, addressing calls from previous researchers to be innovative in evaluation techniques (Edler et al., 2012, Mulgan, 2014), particularly when measuring the impact of long-term missions (Amanatidou et al., 2014) and, more generally, when researching concepts that traditional techniques cannot easily cope with (Wittmann et al., 2020, Weber and Polt, 2014).

To date, no systematic evaluation synthesis of SI interventions has been conducted, independent of sectors and countries, based on a large number of secondary data. This research applied a *realist synthesis* to systematically explore SI interventions and better understand how and under what conditions interventions work. Realist synthesis creates an ontologically deep understanding of how programmes work, considering that reality is stratified in layers and only the surface layer is observable (Jagosh, 2019). Following the philosophy and the available guidelines of the realist perspective, middle-range theories were developed and tested using empirical data. The hidden mechanisms underlying SI were explored simultaneously to understand why programmes result in the way they do. While the overarching research question was determined as investigating the impact of interventions, it is important to note that the unit of analysis is understood as mechanisms, not an intervention, based on the chosen methodology and the identified research gap. In this way, the research responds to previous calls to develop strong foundational knowledge on how SI operates (Pel et al., 2020, Neumeier, 2017a, Pue et al., 2015, Borzaga and Bodini, 2014) by considering a significant number of different contexts (Martins et al., 2022, Tracey and Stott, 2017b, Westley and McGowan, 2017, Wittmayer et al., 2017).

6.3. Addressing the Research Questions

Based on the findings derived from interpretive analyses presented in Chapter 4 and the discussion using these findings in Chapter 5, this section now summarises the thesis by recalling the research questions introduced in Section 1.4. However, the scope of this research is broad and addressing the research questions is not straightforward. Still, this section provides simplified answers by reflecting on the discussion and the refined theories introduced in Chapter 5.

1. *What kind of SI interventions work (i.e., achieve their intended outcomes)?*

Interventions provide different forms of capital, such as economic capital through grants and incentives, human capital through capacity-building and empowerment programmes, or symbolic capital through awards, awareness campaigns and recognition. This research demonstrates that interventions that offer (or enable the generation of) a combination of different forms of capital are successful in their efforts. This requires the provision of a mix of economic, human, symbolic and social capital.

First, economic capital needs to be supported by human (professional skills) and social capital (trust and networks). Second, socio-emotional skills (empathy, motivation, commitment) are required for actors taking the leading roles in interventions. Third, symbolic capital (awareness of social issues, reputation, recognition) can support interventions by influencing others on cognitive, emotional, and motivational levels, but it has to be converted into or combined with other forms of capital. Finally, social capital in the form of trust or social networks, triggers collective actions and collaborations, both of which are pillars of SIs. The dynamics between forms of capital were discussed in Section 5.3.

2. *For whom do SI interventions work and which communities do these interventions benefit?*

SI concerns social challenges such as inequality, deprivation and social exclusion; therefore, it aims at communities' economic and social empowerment (Moulaert et al., 2013a). This research reveals that SI interventions often target groups or communities that are disenfranchised and marginalised in society; thus, these groups benefit from interventions in several ways, including enhanced services, needs satisfaction, employment, and empowerment. Empowerment processes require the combination of multiple activities, including revealing needs, integrating deprived groups into the labour market, and training or educating these groups for this integration (Moulaert, 2009). However, disempowerment can easily occur in the context of exclusion and requires empathetic approaches to understand needs and challenges.

3. *Under what conditions do SI interventions work?*

SIs are embedded in their institutional environment, where economic, political, and social institutions are intertwined, meaning that different institutions can constrain, conflict, or support each other. Therefore, interventions require a supportive institutional context that enables adjustments and integration between different institutions. Furthermore, established institutions are often the root causes of societal challenges, and it is unlikely to create social change without change in these institutions (Westley and Antadze, 2010). Indeed, innovation policies aim not only to promote innovation in the existing institutional context but also to promote and enable innovation by changing the institutional context in a way that may require reform of fundamental structures (Lundvall and Borrás, 2006). However, political actions

often cause reactions and have the potential to create institutional conflict (Nicholls et al., 2015a) due to vested interests (Lundvall, 2007), and not all governments are motivated to support SIs that challenge existing institutions (Westley and Antadze, 2010).

4. *How do SI interventions work?*
5. *Why do SI interventions work the way they do?*

One fundamental principle of sociology is that *context matters* (Becker, 1995, Allan, 1998); this is also reflected and acknowledged in SI literature (e.g., Moulaert et al., 2013a, Moulaert et al., 2005). This research reveals that SIs are highly localised and significantly differ across contexts. The key reasons for these differences are the unequal distribution of resources caused by capitalism, political and economic institutions, and geographical conditions. However, as the findings show, people's responses to interventions are shaped by several factors, including cultural identities, previous experiences, and human emotions, all of which have the potential to inhibit participation and adoption through resistance. Trust (social capital) positively affects interventions and can be built through dialogues, but dialogues must be conducted with respect, empathy, and consideration of cultural identity. Otherwise, adverse effects such as distrust and disempowerment may arise.

6.4. Contributions

This thesis presents original findings by undertaking a novel approach to analysing the impact of SI interventions and uncovering the hidden mechanisms and local contexts that have been overlooked by previous studies. As such, the research contributes theoretically, methodologically, and empirically.

The idea of *theoretical contribution* is largely based on “*the ability to provide original insight into a phenomenon by advancing knowledge*” (Corley and Gioia, 2011, p. 15). This research started by arguing that SI is theoretically underdeveloped (Mulgan et al., 2013) and that theories about how SI practices differ depending on context are limited (Martins et al., 2022, Tracey and Stott, 2017b, Westley and McGowan, 2017, Wittmayer et al., 2017, Choi and Majumdar, 2015). However, innovation systems have very different institutional settings that require ‘*theoretical backing*’ and consideration of ‘*assumptions on interdependencies*’ (Lundvall, 2007, p. 111). Following this, and considering the plurality of conceptualisations (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), together with the heterogeneity of SI practices (Borzaga

and Bodini, 2014), this research applied a theory-driven approach to conceptualise SI interventions and to advance knowledge of the research topic.

First, the research provides a novel and comprehensive conceptualisation of SI by identifying the main components and demonstrating their relationship, thus contributing to moving the field's thinking forward and building a common conceptual understanding of SI as an academic research field. SI is recognised as a multifaceted phenomenon (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, Choi, 2003) but the research on SI often focuses on one level of analysis leading to misrepresentation of the concept and limiting opportunities to improve knowledge (Saebi et al., 2019). The process of this thesis was based on the theory development and advancement in existing theory through the integration of current theoretical approaches (e.g., institutional theory, capital theory, social change theory) and the borrowing of concepts from other scientific disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology) to capture all major dimensions. While initial propositions that constructed based on existing theory, were improved using empirical data, a model that explains the process and the relationship between the main concepts, was also developed. This visualization can help academics and other interested parties better understand the complex connections between different components (Whetten, 1989).

Second, the findings presented in this research contribute to current academic knowledge by going beyond fragmented and context-dependent empirical evidence (Westley and McGowan, 2017, Wittmayer et al., 2017). The research acknowledges the critical role of context and therefore utilized multiple contexts to understand where and under what conditions observed outcomes were obtained. Most knowledge on SI is context-specific and not always relevant in other settings (Mulgan, 2012) but this research provides generalised knowledge on the antecedents and consequences of SI in different settings (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016) by considering a significant number of contexts and identifying the circumstances for each finding. While doing this, the researcher paid particular responsibility when deciding on the limits of generalisability (Whetten, 1989).

Third, the research is addressing calls from previous researchers for more comprehensive analysis about social value creation (Foroudi et al., 2021) and to understand how SI operates (Pue et al., 2015). To the best of the author's knowledge, this research is among the first to consider human emotions as an important factor explaining the results of interventions. Using emotions, the author sought to understand the cognitive and behavioural reactions of

participants and what kind of contextual inputs trigger those reactions. Thus, the study contributes to the SI literature by revealing hidden mechanisms and providing deeper insights about complex processes (Pel et al., 2020, Pue et al., 2015, Borzaga and Bodini, 2014).

The study makes *methodological contributions*. The origin of SI is rooted in practices that are heavily based on grey literature and policy documents, and, therefore, many contributions lack a systematic methodology or are not well explained, if at all (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b). Following previous scholars' suggestions that evaluations should be innovative and experimental in introducing new methods and contribute to better informing policies (Edler et al., 2012, Mulgan, 2014), especially when working on grand challenges with far-reaching goals (Amanatidou et al., 2014, Wittmann et al., 2020), this research can be shown as a first comprehensive attempt to employ a realist synthesis in SI research and thus makes a methodological contribution to the research area.

This method is chosen because standard approaches to social impact evaluation are not designed to consider the interdependence of different factors or recognise that social value creation often has multiple causes and therefore evaluations require more integrated methods (White, 2018). Speaking of policy evaluation, Curran and Storey (2002) consider qualitative evaluations distinctive, because qualitative methods enable an understanding of the logic of events involving people, which is often overlooked by quantitative evaluations. Indeed, policy makers may find it difficult to understand the recommendations presented by a statistical significance of a set of metrics, and therefore methods focusing on sense-making may have an advantage by providing explanations and justifications for certain types of action (Pawson et al., 2005).

Thus, this research can help policy makers not only to develop new policies, but also to justify their decisions by providing in-depth knowledge and explanations about different practices. The research also contributes to expanding knowledge by creating a reliable and comprehensive dataset in an innovative way (Gök et al., 2022, Shaw and de Bruin, 2013) and responds to the need for systematic data on the performance of public and non-profit programmes (Newcomer et al., 2015).

The research provides *empirical contributions* that can be particularly helpful to practitioners. In the opening of his famous novel *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy (2016 [1877]) observes that “*all happy families resemble one another; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way*”. This

can be interpreted by the uniqueness of the deprivation. Similarly, the practice of SI differs significantly between countries in the global north and the global south (Tracey and Stott, 2017b) because societal challenges and developing contexts contain such high levels of complexity that they cannot be grouped together. Additionally, the process of SI (from idea creation to adoption) in developing countries has different stages, therefore, research focusing solely on developed countries limits its application to other contexts (Ayob et al., 2016).

This doctoral research addresses this heterogeneity and provides a deeper understanding of different contexts, particularly developing countries, and underprivileged communities, and so can inform policy and practice by providing contextual knowledge on whether specific approaches to community issues are effective and worth pursuing (Rossi et al., 2018). This knowledge about microstructures such as relationships between people and institutional settings is important to understand and influence meso- and macro-level institutions and organisations (Lundvall, 2007) depending on the context. In addition to this contextual contribution, interest in social organisations is policy-oriented rather than research-based, so investigating the causes and consequences of activities in this sector will help them inform future social innovation interventions (Haugh, 2005). Finally, this research provides in-depth analysis of different forms of SIs in which social enterprises are often involved, and so can help social sector actors better understand SI processes and increase their knowledge.

Marchal et al. (2012) reviewed the practices of realist synthesis and identified significant diversity in implementation; and emphasised the lack of methodological guidance. This research can additionally contribute to the community of realist researchers by providing methodological guidance with a transparent approach and detailed reporting; this is especially relevant given that current applications of the realist method are diverse and there are potential benefits from researchers being explicit and transparent about the approach to inform and enable future researchers to understand and replicate the process (Berg and Nanavati, 2016). Furthermore, current applications of the method have been largely focused on single interventions or programmes. Even though this has posed a challenge in this research, it may encourage and support future researchers to use this method while addressing a similar broad topic with different programmes and interventions.

6.5. Implications for Future Research

Interventions are embedded in different structures and therefore it is always difficult to produce transferable lessons about policy or programmes (Pawson et al., 2004). Still, this thesis identifies several implications for future research and innovation policy. Starting with research opportunities, the first issue that can be suggested is the potential for negative or counterproductive outcomes of SI, if this exists. The main assumption in the logic of SI is that it ultimately produces social value, but as this study shows, there may also be unintended consequences that lead to negative social effects (e.g., disempowerment). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge these adverse effects (Nicholls et al., 2015a, Novikova, 2022) in order to understand their causation and prevent their emergence accordingly. Additionally, SIs and relevant interventions address social problems that are systemic and thus have the potential to create systemic impact (Moore et al., 2015). As this study highlights the interrelated nature of the interventions, the systemic impact, including adverse effects, can be explored by future scholars.

Second, the negative impact of SI can be observed in several ways, including *capture by vested interests* (Pel et al., 2020, p. 49) and *mission drift* (Nicholls et al., 2015a). For instance, there is a growing interest in corporate SI (Dionisio and de Vargas, 2020, Herrera, 2015) but the distinction is still blurred due to the increasing import of values and ideas from the social sphere to the private business sector, whereas SI is often used as a catalyst to support competitiveness and accompanies innovation activities as an add-on (Jessop et al., 2013). Future research may choose to focus on this issue to clarify the role of the private sector in the wider SI system and investigate whether ‘*minimal social consciousness*’ (Jessop et al., 2013, p. 120) is enough of a contribution on the private actors’ part. Regarding mission drift, most reformist SIs tend to bureaucratize and lose their strong commitment to the SI over time (Moulaert, 2013) so that scholars could explore the causalities of this change by going beyond common explanations such as financial constraints, and scrutinize processes to understand possible causes of shift in the originally stated missions.

Third, evaluation studies typically focus on immediate and short-term outcomes, and the dataset of this study cannot be seen as an exception. Mumford (2002) argues that SIs are expected to demonstrate their positive outcomes in a relatively short period of timeframe, possibly because of the need to show their impact within a reasonable time for fund allocations or the urgency of the solution. However, the role of time in institutionalisation of new social

practices is critical to understanding the path of change (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b) and by observing a longer period of time, institutionalisation can be taken into account in social impact evaluation (see also Becker, 2001). Besides, the long-term effects of SIs are unpredictable (Pol and Ville, 2009) and therefore need further examination. In this regard, future researchers could undertake longitudinal studies that have the potential to unpack processes of change, such as how power relations are affected by new forms of collaborations (Ayob et al., 2016, Evers et al., 2014).

The focus of this thesis was on the mechanisms of SI, understood as how people respond to programme resources, and from this point on, the role of the human factor in SI processes is emphasised. The findings show that people's responses can be on a cognitive, emotional, or motivational level (see also Nielsen and Miraglia, 2017, Goodwin et al., 2004) and significantly influence the effectiveness of programmes. However, there is limited work in the field of SI regarding emotions and reflexivity (Van Wijk et al., 2019), which are often nourished by informal institutions such as social norms and rules. Therefore, it is important to understand where these social norms, rules, values, and beliefs come from (Neubert et al., 2017) and what kind of emotions they cause, because in most cases SIs aim to change these institutional factors. Additionally, how people are triggered and how they act accordingly, as Cajas-Santana (2014, p. 49) puts it, how they "*give meaning to their actions*", also require attention from future researchers. Therefore, as a third implication, scholars, especially from the psychology and sociology domains, should address these issues.

A final research opportunity that could be suggested is sector-specific research (Angelidou and Psaltoglou, 2017) because SI occurs across an extremely broad spectrum, including education, the environment, agriculture, and social inclusion, all of which are driven by different mechanisms and need different interventions. This thesis is an attempt to uncover the mechanisms in SI processes and aims to draw a general but improved understanding of SI. Academics can use the findings of this research to focus on particular topics such as urban resilience, social farming and zero-carbon housing, thereby contributing to increasing knowledge about certain sectors. In addition, some sectors, such as energy transitions, need specific forms of evaluations to measure environmental impact and this dimension needs attention in SI programmes, so future scholars may also wish to focus on the environmental impacts of SIs.

6.6. Implications for Innovation Policy

SI can be useful to governments, but it is important to clarify what it needs in terms of effective political institutions, as it may require varied and even conflicting policy adjustments (Grimm et al., 2013). One fundamental proposition of this study is that SIs are highly localised and context-dependent, so interventions work differently in different contexts. For this reason, there is no ideal or one-size fits all model for innovation policies due to differences in regions (Tödtling and Trippl, 2005). The significance of local factors should be the first issue to be considered in policy formulation; and the local focus must be maintained not only to understand the unique needs but also to make use of local resources such as regional identity. In fact, communities have unique characteristics that influence programme processes, therefore governments need to find and focus on those specific characteristics as the primary approach to programme development (Adams and Hess, 2010).

Once having the contextual understanding, policy development should start with a *useful definition to distinguish SI* from other forms of innovation (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014). Related to this, Howaldt and Schwarz (2010, 2017) propose a sociological practice theory that provides an analytical approach to distinguish SI because in normative approaches the notion of ‘social’ is open to a range of interpretations, but defining SI in an analytical way can help differentiate SIs from other types of innovations. However, this does not necessarily mean that technological innovations cannot be SI, on the contrary, technological innovations can have strong social objectives (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017b), and in this socio-technological approach, SI is not understood as merely an output or side effect of technological innovation (Howaldt et al., 2016). Mission, profit expectation and new social relationships should be the main distinguishing factors in this regard (see also Section 2.3.4). For this reason, to interpret a vacuum cleaner as an example of SI by claiming that it can contribute to gender equality by changing the power balances in the household (Smeds et al., 1994) would be an exaggeration and far beyond the borders of the concept. Once the SI is defined, a clear rationale emerges to support it with a particular policy intervention (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014).

Next, a *collective problematisation by various actors*, including representatives of different groups, is required in order to identify the social issues to be addressed. This participation requires a wider consideration of diversity, including representatives from all segments of society, regardless of ethnicity, race, disability, religion, or gender (Yamamura and Lassalle, 2020, Yamamura et al., 2022). The public sector needs to consider citizens’ involvement in

public services to meet the real needs of these groups, so *co-creation or co-production* becomes relevant in this respect, whereas public organisations lack the habit and tools to do so (Voorberg et al., 2015). On one hand, co-production is seen as a “*tool to reinvigorate democracy*”, on the other, it also has a dark side (Steen et al., 2018, p. 286) mainly due to the problem of redistribution of power among stakeholders (between representatives and professional experts) (Bovaird, 2007). Furthermore, there is also scepticism about the democratic process in any society that decides which institutions and actors determine common values or interests and how these subjects find a place in policy debates (Gerometta et al., 2005), or which groups can be integrated in shaping society (Steyaert and Katz, 2004). For example, civil society actors can support local authorities but even their actions might reproduce inequality, as they represent particular interests for specific groups. Leach (2006) argues that many collaborations in public management lack critical stakeholders and therefore he provides a framework for these collaborations to be democratic and effective. According to this, he defines several ideals including representativeness, inclusiveness (openness to all), transparency (clear information about rules and process), impartiality (equal treatment to each participant), and empowerment (empowering participants to influence policy).

Societal challenges are complex, multi-layered, and embedded in different policy areas, thus requiring *complementary and integrated policies*. For instance, “*poverty cannot be solved without attention to the interconnections between nutrition, health, infrastructure, and education, as well as redistributive tax policy*” (Mazzucato, 2018, p. 803). This creates a need to broaden the responsibilities of innovation policy across different ministries and government units (Edler and Fagerberg, 2017). Thus, systemic approaches that combine policy instruments (Borrás and Edquist, 2013) can be developed by considering interrelations between different parts of the social and innovation systems. Moulaert et al. (2005) address the same issue in terms of local development and suggest that interventions in different domains (economy, democracy, housing, education, etc.) must be integrated. However, this is not an easy task and related to this, Storey (2016 [1994]) calls on public authorities to consider the potentially conflicting objectives (or activities) of different policies when developing policy measures. Even if the objectives do not clearly conflict with each other, they can still create constraints on the effectiveness of one another, resulting in limiting positive outcomes (Lundström and Stevenson, 2005). In fact, as seen in the findings, many SI activities are constrained as they face policy-level barriers (e.g., lack of regulation in agricultural policy, legal barriers for women to own land, lack of education policy to include disabled children in schools).

Therefore, horizontal integration is essential to coordinate with specific sectoral policies such as agriculture, healthcare, energy, and transport (Schot and Steinmueller, 2018).

While SIs can utilize technology or produce advanced products, most of them address societal needs through new social relationships rather than using physical technologies (Gök et al., 2022). The findings show that SI activities focus heavily on human well-being and economic empowerment, thus, some social challenges (specific to several sectors, such as energy, environment, and health) are left to public and private actors. Therefore, governments should also play a more active and guiding role in recognition of problems that are not addressed by the private sector (Borrás and Edquist, 2013) (and social sector) through *mission-oriented policies* to focus on solving grand societal challenges (Robinson and Mazzucato, 2019) and enable experimentation and diversity of social problem subjects (Schot and Steinmueller, 2018). The provision of direction and incentives is required for public sector involvement otherwise public sector actors may fail to concern with, and invest in, these challenges (Mazzucato, 2018). This approach is similar to the *transformative* framework of innovation policies (e.g., Diercks et al., 2019, Fagerberg, 2018, Steward, 2012) but differs somewhat by providing directionality with a more explicit focus (Wesseling and Meijerhof, 2021) as these policies target a concrete challenge such as preserving biological diversity with a wider impact potential and specific timeframe (Wittmann et al., 2020, Mazzucato, 2018). The explicit political push (Mellahi et al., 2023) is important to translate socio-economic objectives into problems defined in concrete terms that can be directly supported by innovation policy instruments because policy instruments cannot in themselves influence ultimate objectives, but innovation processes (Borrás and Edquist, 2013). However, mission-oriented approaches can be overly optimistic because they assume that science, technology, and innovation are available and prepared for these new challenges, neglecting that structural foundations might be missing (Janssen et al., 2021). Therefore, these policies require cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approach including the promotion of different forms of collaborations between public and private sector actors (Kuhlmann and Rip, 2014), and higher coordinative efforts as they hold varying degrees of complexity (Wittmann et al., 2020).

The findings show that SIs and relevant interventions often need *government support to legitimise and scale* their practices. In terms of legitimisation, *recognition of social sector organisations and regulations with clearly defined legal frameworks* are critical (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001) for these organisations to access resources including public subsidies (Kerlin, 2006), and to relax legally binding rules that hinder them meeting their social objectives

(Terjesen et al., 2016). At the same time, a well-defined SI policy should be concerned with the scalability and sustainability of successful local SIs and ensure their dissemination within the society (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). There is also a need for specific policy action for SIs that do not have the potential to generate income, which some researchers (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014, Pol and Ville, 2009) refer to as *pure SIs* and result in market failures due to failure to price social value (Van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). Governments can support such SIs through its purchasing power, and they can follow traditional paths such as providing financial incentives, introducing new regulatory frameworks and the removal of bureaucratic processes (Grimm et al., 2013). Indeed, *public procurement* is a powerful instrument of innovation policies (Foray et al., 2012), reflecting the shift to more demand-based policies to tackle societal challenges (Edler et al., 2015).

Innovation policies use a set of public measures to increase actors' capacity and willingness to innovate; thus, the main logic of innovation policy interventions is based not only on market failure and system failure, but also on "*capability and adoption failure*" (Gök and Edler, 2012, p. 3). This might be considered at the individual, organisational, and institutional levels. Organisations with higher absorptive capacity can better capture and make use of the opportunities (Hughes et al., 2021), thus capacity building in social enterprises and other stakeholder organisations would appear to be appropriate activities. Indeed, the primary focus of innovation policies in developing countries is on *improving basic living* conditions due to difficulties in material conditions, but simultaneous focus on capacity building is still necessary for long-term development and impact (Lundvall, 2007). Mulgan et al. (2007) suggest *empowering individuals and communities to drive innovation for their own benefit*, through several tools such as incentives, legitimacy, and financial support. For example, governments can provide concrete structures (such as social innovation funds) to encourage actors to interact with their social context, and then take action accordingly (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). The findings show that economic empowerment is indeed crucial in these contexts, but social empowerment and institutional support are required to scale the impact. The role of government is critical here too as governmental actors have the capacity to support SIs by raising awareness about social issues and possible solutions, such as energy consumption and health promotion, for example, by using social marketing campaigns (Westley and Antadze, 2010). Awareness raising can also increase willingness to participate in SI and contribute to the adoption of proposed solutions. In addition, new legal arrangements, and policy instruments (such as incentives for renewable energy or reducing carbon emissions) could demonstrate the recognition of solutions by public actors, and thus, influence and motivate

people to participate. Thus, the role of states in these transitions is differential and varied, and depends on the mode of governance, whether acting as promoter, facilitator, enabler of societal engagement, or guarantor (Borrás and Edler, 2020).

6.7. Limitations

This doctoral study is a comprehensive work of SI research and aims to contribute to current knowledge of the concept and guide future research, policy, and practice. However, the research has some limitations that should be identified.

Methodological limitations are already covered in Chapter 3. To recap, the realist synthesis is subjective and interpretive (Wong et al., 2010), based on the judgements of the reviewer and therefore neither standardizable nor reproducible, but it offers illuminations rather than hard and fast truths, giving explanations, and thus, focusing on sense-making for interested parties (Pawson et al., 2005). Lundström and Stevenson (2005) state that each evaluation technique has its own strengths and weaknesses, even if conducted from a sound methodological perspective. The results as well as conclusions and evaluation circumstances are always questionable (Lundström and Stevenson, 2005). However, given the nature of the substantive topic, the aim of the research, and the research questions, the chosen method is assessed as the best available among the alternatives. This is mainly because there is *positivity bias* in evaluations (Peeters and Czapinski, 1990) as evaluators bring their unique prior experiences along with their own biased perspective (Anderson et al., 2016), but also because of the potential dependency of the evaluation team (for example, in evaluations conducted by programme owners). Therefore, when a sufficient number of evaluations are merged, their synthesis may bring greater dimensionality and eliminate positivity bias. Furthermore, the research aimed to explore the impact in different contexts and included evaluations from 87 countries (or regions), which would not be feasible with other approaches.

The main quest of the realist approach is to answer the “how” and “why” questions to develop explanations for causal mechanisms. However, social problems are systemic and interconnected (Mazzucato, 2018), and social outcomes often have multiple causes (White, 2018), therefore cause-and-effect is not straightforward in these complex processes (Westley and Antadze, 2010). Moreover, the concept of *social value* is problematic in terms of theory development as it requires a normative judgement about what is social and what is not, thus the distinction is always relative (Santos, 2012). Regarding this, the author of this thesis is

fully aware that other researchers may develop different set of theories even if they use the same literature and evidence (Wong et al., 2010). This relative judgement is also valid for the results because the method is qualitative, meaning that the findings are subjective and interpretive. However, the analytical logic of qualitative evaluations is often not well-understood (Curran and Storey, 2002), indeed, interpretation is required in any research, not only words but numbers also need interpretation (Gummesson, 2003). To deal with these possible criticisms, maximum effort was made by the author to improve interpretation skills through increased knowledge, conference presentations, formal and informal discussions with other academics and stakeholders. Moreover, the results were interpreted by including different perspectives from other disciplines (sociology, psychology, anthropology) in order to increase the richness of interpretations.

Another limitation is that the theory development was carried out without focusing on a specific sector and intervention. The decision was made to provide a high level of evaluation and draw an overall picture of SI interventions. However, the study relies on the assumption that SI is context-dependent and there is a need for theoretical particularity (Moulaert and Mehmood, 2014, Moulaert et al., 2005), this also means that, a specific epistemology and a set of logics could be identified for each SI in different areas (e.g., education, agriculture, healthcare, rural/urban development, policy transformation, and economic growth) (Nicholls et al., 2015a). Moreover, there is a huge diversity in interventions in terms of their scope and objectives, which reflects the diversity of innovation policies (Wittmann et al., 2020) and SI practices. For this reason, the highest level of evaluation syntheses that are not directed to regional or sectoral sub-systems pose a great challenge and require extensive effort (Edler et al., 2008). To overcome these points, several generalisations and conceptualisations have been used. First, capital theory was employed to conceptualise interventions with the resources they offer (economic, human, symbolic, social). Second, although the context has multiple dimensions, it was generalised with the income level of the country, the target group/region, and the problem addressed, to deliver the findings. Third, interventions that address different types of sectors (e.g., health, agriculture, education etc.) were included to ensure diversity.

Another limitation concerns the interrelatedness of different interventions. These interactions and interdependencies between different policies are discussed under the concept of policy mix, which emphasises the multi-level, complex and multi-actor nature of innovation policies (Flanagan et al., 2011). This makes policy evaluations challenging and requires different evaluation questions and methods for different policy measures (Edler et al., 2012).

Additionally, different types of missions require different approaches as they differ in processes (Wittmann et al., 2020). In fact, realist review is well suited for interventions where human interactions are central (for example, empowerment programmes) but it may not work perfectly for some others (for example, public incentives aimed at reducing carbon emissions). However, the implementation of realist synthesis is suggested to be more effective when there is heterogeneity within the dataset and when the data provide conflicting evidence about the programmes (Paternotte et al., 2016). In addition, it is important to note that the dimensions identified in this research and the results of the analysis may not cover all possible elements of SI because the concept is multifaceted and related to a wide range of topics (Foroudi et al., 2021). As a matter of fact, the impact assessment of policies targeting societal challenges is problematic, as the results of relevant interventions do not go beyond contributing to the desired systemic change (Molas-Gallart et al., 2021). Indeed, realist synthesis does not seek to provide simple explanations for complex problems or simply answer yes or no to whether a programme works or not, but rather provides rich, detailed and highly practical knowledge on complex social programmes (Pawson et al., 2005).

A final possible limitation may be the exclusion of private sector SIs from the dataset. This was not an intentional action, but a consequence of conceptualisation and inclusion criteria. As such, future studies may seek to use the approach outlined in this study to focus on the corporate SI concept (currently under discussion in the literature). Despite the focus of this study, the findings do provide some degree of insight into business sector actors as they are involved in programmes considered by this research.

Epilogue

Humanity and our home planet have been suffering from global challenges such as pandemics, unemployment, inequality, social exclusion, and the environmental impacts of climate change. Traditional welfare systems are falling behind in meeting these challenges and making room for social innovation, which has become a new development model with its promising approach to addressing societies' diverse and challenging needs. Thus, innovation, which has been based on competition and technological developments for many years, has expanded its boundaries to include collective actions and empowerment approaches.

The increasing awareness of the challenges of modern life and the growing interest from individual to institutional level actors has led to SI experiments in different fields and sectors, resulting in a substantial level of social value, as well as improved knowledge about the concept. However, societal challenges are complex, persistent, and highly interconnected, requiring systemic approaches with the contribution of different actors working in collaboration, and where interplay between different components is well-considered.

Since the SI seeks systemic changes that require reforms in fundamental institutions, this can potentially affect privileged groups by redistributing resources and power. Therefore, social innovation reminds us of moral and ethical values by advocating inclusive and democratic approaches.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

A.1 Stakeholder Interviews

Between June 2021 and August 2021, interviews with ten stakeholders were held online due to Covid-19 restrictions. Participants were from the management boards of social organisations (3), academics working specifically on SI and/or social programmes (5), an evaluation practitioner (1) and a public sector manager (1). At the time of these interviews, participants were actively working in Scotland (5), England (1), Ireland (1), Canada (1), Greece (1) and the Netherlands (1). They were found through an internet search and advice from supervisors, and an invite via email was subsequently sent. An informative document containing the initial rough theories was then shared with participants which also outlined the purpose of the research and the expected contribution from them. While there were some leading questions to understand their work and how do they approach SI, interviews were conducted in an informal way and lasted between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours. Participants were asked for their opinions on initial theories, and the researcher encouraged participants to elaborate on their answers to gain further insight. The first initial interviews shaped others, as the researcher's ability to manage the conversation and focus on the topic developed in time through experience. These interviews were highly beneficial for the researcher in terms of improving her knowledge and reflecting on her learning.

Table A.1.1: Initial rough theories discussed during the stakeholder interviews.

	<i>Initial Rough Theory</i>
1	Some specific types of institutional frameworks (i.e., contexts, characteristics, and resources) provide better results in SI interventions because institutions have a dominant role in innovation processes, which can be both facilitators and barriers.
1.1	SI interventions are more likely to be successful in contexts where collective action is a characteristic of the culture.
1.2	SI initiatives are more likely to be diffused and scaled up in contexts where social enterprises and social projects are supported by legislative regulations.
1.3	The interaction between formal structures (e.g., firms and universities) and institutions (i.e., routines, rules, or laws) have a positive effect on the generation, diffusion and adoption of SI ideas.
1.4	SI interventions focused on specific social problems or themes can be effective strategies when designed with considering social needs and available resources.

1.5	Institutional change is more likely to occur in deprived areas through SI interventions because people in these areas have strong emotional responses to situations such as poverty, ignorance, and oppression. Therefore, these emotions can lead them to generate and advocate SI ideas that can create system-level change.
2	Mixed interventions or interventions that provide a combination of resources are effective strategies for SI because each resource has different functions and SI practices require different resources in different stages. Moreover, new functions can be emerged when it is combined with another resource(s).
2.1	SI interventions that provide financial capital combined with social capital (e.g. social networks) have positive outcomes because social capital stimulates SI practices.
2.2	SI interventions should provide symbolic capital in environments where it is lacking because outcomes will be weak or limited in institutional frameworks which do not recognise and advocate SI actions.
2.3	Empowering participants should be provided as a default action in any type of SI intervention because SI aims to create system-level change that requires resilient societies.
3	SI interventions that create and support processes to enable interactions between previously disconnected groups will lead to change in power relations, mutual learning and resource mobilisation because interactions can build trust and promote parties to take collaborative actions.
3.1	Interventions include some specific type of organisations (e.g. universities and research centres) to the process have better outcomes with increased learning in all parties because organisations that produce and disseminate knowledge, influence institutions.
3.2	Interventions implemented by or in cooperation with international organisations, philanthropic foundations, and large transnational organisations will help to change power relations because the resources, experience, and independence of these organisations can enable the growth of social innovation practices, overcome power barriers, and mobilise existing resources.
4	SI interventions aimed at territorial development should be designed and implemented in cooperation with the active participation of local actors because the involvement of local members improves social inclusion, help better identification of needs and create local commitment.
4.1	Interventions aimed at territorial development require human development as well as addressing unmet needs because human development contributes to sustainability through the social and economic integration of empowered groups.
4.2	Territorial development interventions that target a smaller region will produce better outcomes because collective actions critical to SI processes are common in smaller neighbourhoods.
5	SI interventions that encourage individuals to take entrepreneurial actions can lead them to solve the problems of their communities because people are connected to their communities, and the lack of service to these groups creates opportunities.
5.1	Interventions that empower and encourage women to take entrepreneurial actions can create social value in various ways because women are more passionate, innovative, have better skills in social relations, care more in social issues and support their fellows.
5.2	Interventions that empower youth can create future social agents because young people have a significant population all over the world and thus, the common future will be shaped by the combination of their values, aspirations, and opportunities.

6	SI interventions that assess and select projects according to their transformative potential will be effective and achieve their intended results because transformative actions aim to create profound changes in social systems through sustainable solutions, which is the primary goal of SI.
7	SI interventions that build or improve social networks with diverse actors in different positions will lead to resource mobilisation, change in power relations and diffusion of SI practices because networks enhance interactions, facilitate access to market resources and can displace states and other hierarchies.
7.1	SI interventions aimed to build different kind of networks with key actors will create positive outcomes because SI practices need different types of networks in different stages and focal nodes (i.e., institutional entrepreneur) are required to leverage resources.

Appendix B

B.1 List of the Dataset

Table B.1.1: The list of the dataset

id	Document Title
1	Mid-term evaluation of the EU programme for employment and social innovation - EaSI : final evaluation report.
2	Performance monitoring report of the European Union programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2015-2016.
3	Two Decades of Impact: How Social Entrepreneurs Have Improved 622 Million Lives
4	Evaluation of the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone innovation fund-Final report
5	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program, GEWEP II 2016-2018
6	Social Entrepreneurship Programme Evaluation-Invest Northern Ireland
7	Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities - Phase I
8	Evaluation of the College and Community Innovation Program and SSHRC's Community & College Social Innovation Fund
9	Social Innovation in Practice: The Case of the Fe y Alegría Project for Educational Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Ecuador
10	Measuring the impact of eInclusion actors : impact assessment framework: main report.
11	Social Enterprise NI Evaluation
12	Evaluation of the Life Chances Fund - Interim report
13	Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program: final report
14	Local authority child poverty innovation pilot evaluation: final synthesis report
15	Independent evaluation of the Q Improvement Lab
16	Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme-Social Impact Review
17	Ashoka Romania Impact Report 2019
18	Ashoka Unlonely Planet Impact Report: 2018
19	Schwab Foundation 2020 Impact Report
20	Global Social Entrepreneurship Network (GSEN) Impact Report 2015
21	The School for Social Entrepreneurs-Impact Evaluation 1997-2011
22	Social Entrepreneurship Education-Is it Achieving the Desired Aims?
23	Municipal Support for Social Entrepreneurship
24	Social Entrepreneurship In Tanzania-Assessment Of Enabling Environment
25	Dynamic systems and the role of evaluation: The case of the Green Communities project
26	Promoting Social Justice Through a New Teacher Training Program for the Bedouin Population in the Negev: An Evaluation Case Study
27	The Leader programme 2007–2013: Enabling or disabling social innovation and neo-endogenous development? Insights from Austria and Ireland

28	Local public food strategies as a social innovation: early insights from the LOMA-Nymarkskolen case study
29	Social Tech Programmes Social Impact Evaluation April 2017
30	Evaluation of Social Innovation Learning Pilots-HEFCE
31	Evaluation of the Innovation Fund pilot - Quantitative assessment of impact and social return on investment- 2016
32	Early Learning Innovation Fund Evaluation Final Report
33	Children's Social Care Innovation Programme Final evaluation report-2017 (Round 1)
34	Three-year evaluation of the Workforce Development Innovation Fund, 2011/12-2013/14 Final Report-2014
35	Evaluating the Public Value of Social Innovation
36	Evaluation of social entrepreneurship educational programs in India
37	European Learning for Youth in Social Entrepreneurship (ELYSE) Final Report
38	Gender Mainstreaming and Impact of Self-Help Groups: A Study on Social Entrepreneurship through Fish Aggregating Devices in Mannancheri of Alappuzha, Kerala
39	Social and Economic Impacts of Tuungane
40	Tamul Plates Social Impact Report 2014 Baseline
41	Social entrepreneurship in the Baltic and Nordic countries. Would the variety of existing legal forms do more for the impact on sustainable development?
42	Between Migrant Care Work and New Occupational Welfare Tools: Changing Home Care Arrangements in Italy
43	Evaluating Innovation in European Rural Development Programmes: Application of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) Method
44	An experimental evaluation tool for the Public Innovation Lab of the Uruguayan government
45	The role of the social innovation and entrepreneurship development fund in fostering social entrepreneurship in Hong Kong: A study on public policy innovation
46	Open social innovation dynamics and impact: exploratory study of a fab lab network
47	Care and rehabilitation services to child victims of abuse in the United Arab Emirates: Examples of innovation
48	Extending access to care across the rural US south: Preliminary results from the Alabama eHealth programme
49	Innovation as a vehicle for improving socially vulnerable groups' access to basic provisions: A research note on the development of a questionnaire module
50	Participative evaluation with children in educational maker projects
51	Social Innovation as a Driver of Urban Transformation? The Case of Planning Approaches in the Dominican Republic
52	Assessing social innovation across offshore sectors in the Dutch North Sea
53	Lessons From the Social Innovation Fund: Supporting Evaluation to Assess Program Effectiveness and Build a Body of Research Evidence
54	Analyzing how a Social Base Impacts Economic Development and Competitiveness Strategies in a Cross-border Context: The Case of Region Laredo
55	Developmental evaluation: Bridging the gaps between proposal, program, and practice

56	Does Social Innovation Contribute to Sustainability? The Case of Italian Innovative Start-Ups
57	Comparing internal and external impacts of sustainable innovation: an exploratory study
58	Strengthening Organisational Practice Evidence from the Social Innovation Fund National Assessment
59	Rural innovation activities as a means for changing development perspectives - An assessment of more than two decades of promoting LEADER initiatives across the European Union
60	Community service contracting for older people in urban China: a case study in Guangdong Province
61	Financing Social Innovation for Poverty Reduction: A Case Study of Microfinancing and Microenterprise Development in Bangladesh
62	Success and failure of grassroots innovations for addressing climate change: The case of the Transition Movement
63	Local public food strategies as a social innovation: early insights from the LOMA-Nymarkskolen case study
64	Open social innovation dynamics and impact: exploratory study of a fab lab network
65	Consumer Preference Programs for Individuals Who Are Homeless and Have Psychiatric Disabilities: A Drop-In Center and a Supported Housing Program
66	Evaluation and Social Impact Measurement Amongst Small to Medium Social Enterprises: Process, Purpose and Value
67	The Mesquite ‘MicroSociety’ school: identifying organisational factors that facilitate successful adoption of an innovative program
68	Measurement as legitimacy versus legitimacy of measures: Performance evaluation of social enterprise
69	Assessing sustainability of faith-based enterprises in Kenya
70	Fighting hunger through innovation: Evaluation of a food bank's social enterprise venture
71	Managing tensions between evaluation and research: Illustrative cases of developmental evaluation in the context of research
72	The effectiveness of community-based social innovations for healthy ageing in middle- and high-income countries: a systematic review
73	Can public venture capital support sustainability in the social economy? Evidence from a social innovation fund
74	Active Aging: Social Entrepreneurship in Local Communities of Five European Countries
75	Reproductive health services: “Business-in-a-Box” as a model social innovation
76	Innovations in sustainable agriculture: Case study of Lis Valley Irrigation District, Portugal
77	Social entrepreneurship policy: Evidences from the Italian reform
78	Potentialities and constraints in the relation between social innovation and public policies: some lessons from South America
79	Living Labs for Rural Areas: Contextualization of Living Lab Frameworks, Concepts and Practices
80	Innovation and Social Investment Programs in Europe

81	Coproduced game-changing in transformative social innovation: Reconnecting the “broken city” of Rio de Janeiro
82	Participatory science and innovation for improved sanitation and hygiene: process and outcome evaluation of project SHINE, a school-based intervention in Rural Tanzania
83	Grassroots Niches in Urban Contexts: Exploring Governance Innovations for Sustainable Development in Seoul
84	Social Innovation and Sustainable Rural Development: The Case of a Brazilian Agroecology Network
85	A theoretical and methodological approach to social entrepreneurship as world-making and emancipation: social change as a projection in space and time
86	Collaborative Services in Informal Settlements: Social Innovation in a Pacified Favela in Rio de Janeiro
87	Indigenous tourism and social entrepreneurship in the Bolivian Amazon: Lessons from San Miguel del Bala
88	Supporting social enterprises in the context of financial effectiveness
89	Evaluation of the Start-Up Visa (SUV) pilot
90	Ex post evaluation of the EQUAL Community Initiative (2000-2006)
91	Synthesis of the Evaluation Reports of the EQUAL Programmes in the EU10 Member States Submitted to the Commission within 2006 and 2009
92	To Evaluate the Role of Government in Promoting Social: Entrepreneurship among Young Students: A Case Study of Indonesia
93	Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities-Mid-term Evaluation Report
94	Multidimensional Impact: A randomized control trial on conflict-affected women in Northern Uganda
95	Three Cases of Social Innovation Impact Assessment
96	Evaluating social innovations and their contribution to social value: the benefits of a 'blended value' approach
97	Social Entrepreneurship as Mechanisms for Social Transformation and Social Impact in East Africa An Exploratory Case Study Perspective
98	Non-formal educational practices as a tool for achieving social inclusion
99	Evaluation of the Ex-Service Personnel in the Criminal Justice System Programme
100	Using developmental evaluation to enhance continuous reflection, learning and adaptation of an innovation platform in Australian Indigenous primary healthcare
101	Understanding and evaluating the sustainability of frugal water innovations in Mexico: An exploratory case study
102	The effectiveness of outdoor behavioral healthcare with struggling adolescents: A comparison group study a contribution for the special issue: Social innovation in child and youth services
103	From community participation to co-design: “Quartiere bene comune ” case study
104	“Why can’t this work here?”: social innovation and collective impact in a micropolitan community
105	Social Impact Measurement in Incremental Social Innovation
106	Acceptance of social innovation in Malaysia Advocacy and the impact of government transformation programme

107	Policy impacts on social innovation in forestry and back: Institutional change as a driver and outcome
108	Social Innovation, Societal Change, and the Role of Policies
109	The Role of Intermediaries in Social Innovation: The Case of Social Procurement in Australia
110	Intellectual Property Management in Publicly Funded R&D Program and Projects: Optimizing Principal–Agent Relationship through Transdisciplinary Approach
111	Social Entrepreneurship Education as an Innovation Hub for Building an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: The Case of the KAIST Social Entrepreneurship MBA Program
112	Designing Rural Policies for Sustainable Innovations through a Participatory Approach
113	The Role of Public Innovation Labs in Collaborative Governance—The Case of the Gipuzkoa Lab in the Basque Country, Spain
114	Social Entrepreneurship and Regional Economic Development: The Case of Social Enterprise in South Korea
115	Building an enabling legal environment: laws and policies on social enterprises in China
116	Fostering social enterprise in woodlands: Challenges for partnerships supporting social innovation
117	Independent country programme evaluation Republic of India.
118	Independent terminal evaluation. Programme for Country Partnership in Ethiopia, 2015-2019
119	Independent Country Evaluation Federal Republic of Nigeria
120	Independent UNIDO Country Evaluation United Republic of Tanzania
121	A Critical Analysis of UNDP Supported Social Innovation Projects in Local Governance in Armenia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan
122	Assessing international organisations’ support to social enterprise
123	Citizen-centric model of governmental entrepreneurship
124	Social entrepreneurship as intervention: Findings from a venture development program for marginalised youth
125	Evidence in promoting positive parenting through the Program-Guide to Develop Emotional Competences
126	Support of Social Innovations: Case of the Czech Republic
127	Evaluation of social innovations—their characteristics and impacts, cross-country comparison and implications for policy support
128	Real Societal Impact of Projects Supported within Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme in Selected Czech Regions
129	Evaluation of the European Social Fund as a Measure to Support Social Innovation in the Public Sector
130	“Be or Not To Be”: A Dilemma of Business Policy Support on a Regional Level
131	Evaluation of financial instruments for social innovation development
132	Towards systemic change: on the co-creation and evaluation of a study programme in transformative sustainability science with stakeholders in Luxembourg
133	Achievement of Exercise Objectives and Satisfaction with the Walk with Ease Program-Group and Self-Directed Participants

134	The 'Girl Effect' and martial arts: social entrepreneurship and sport, gender and development in Uganda
135	Promotion Of Social Entrepreneurship Through Public Services In The Madrid Region: Successful Aspects
136	An ESID Case Study at the Federal Level
137	Italy report on evaluation of health initiatives in Bolivia (2009-2020)
138	Thematic global evaluation of European Commission support in the sectors of ESI (Employment and Social Inclusion) in partner countries
139	Indonesia: Social Protection Sector Development Program Performance Evaluation Report
140	Sector Assistance Program Evaluation for the Social Sectors in Pakistan
141	Final Evaluation: Social Marketing Strategies for Maternal and Child Health in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal & Jharkhand, India
142	Using "remote" training and coaching to increase providers' skills for working effectively with older youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions
143	Entrepreneurship for Economic and Social Empowerment of Women: A Case Study of a Self-Help Credit Program in Nithari Village, Noida, India
144	An Interregional, Transdisciplinary and Good Practice-Based Approach for Frailty: The Mind&Gait Project.
145	Disability citizenship and digital capital: the case of engagement with a social enterprise telco
146	Developmental evaluation of the Safe Babies project application of the COECA model
147	Evaluation of the Teacher-Led Innovation Fund: Final Report
148	Qualitative evaluation of the DWP Innovation Fund-Final report
149	Health Innovation Fund Final Outcome Evaluation Report 2017
150	The Humanitarian Innovation Fund External Evaluation
151	Development Innovation Fund–Health Summative Evaluation Report
152	Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation
153	NYC Cultural Innovation Fund Evaluation Report
154	Public Health England HIV Prevention Innovation Fund-Cohort 3 Evaluation Report
155	Evaluation of Sightsavers Innovation Fund Round-1
156	Evaluation of Sightsavers Innovation Fund Round-2
157	Evaluation of the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund
158	Final Evaluation of Birmingham City Council's Local Innovation Fund
159	Assessment of Results of the Social Innovation Fund
160	Renewable Energy Venture Capital Program Evaluation Report
161	Evaluation of the Innovation Strategy 2014-15 to 2018-19
162	The Outcomes Evaluation of the Housing Innovation Fund
163	Evaluation of farmer- led agricultural innovation for Resilience-2010-2012
164	Effectiveness of innovation grants to smallholder agricultural producers:An explorative systematic review
165	Innovation in Democracy Programme Evaluation
166	Evaluation of the Rural Innovation Fund
167	Social Entrepreneurship: A Step Towards Independence (SESTI) External Project Evaluation Report

168	Social Enterprise Development & Investment Funds (SEDIF) Evaluation Report
169	Evaluation Of Futurpreneur Canada
170	System-level Evaluation of Asante Africa's Girls-Led Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship Program
171	Impact Evaluation of End of Program Data from the Educate
172	Mid-Term Evaluation Of The Women Entrepreneurs Project in South Africa
173	Children's Social Care Innovation Programme Round 2 Final Report
174	Final Report on the Evaluation of the Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme (YEPP)
175	UNIDO Interventions in the Area of Enterprise Development for Job Creation, including for Women and Youth
176	Social Entrepreneurship Targeting Youth in South Africa (SETYSA)
177	The Project "Social Innovation and Volunteerism in Uzbekistan" Final Evaluation Report
178	Homeless Health Innovation Funding Programme Evaluation Report
179	Independent Evaluation of the Global Innovation Fund
180	Social Innovation Fund Ireland's Education Fund
181	Evaluation of Vancouver Foundation's Systems Change Grantmaking
182	Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Evaluation Report
183	Social Innovation Fund: Early Results Are Promising
184	Evaluation Report for the Toronto Enterprise Fund
185	Business Support for Social Enterprises-National Evaluation of the Office for Civil Society Social Enterprise Business Support Improvement Programme
186	Evaluation of White Box Enterprises (Pilot Project) Final Report
187	Community Business Fund Evaluation Interim Report
188	Youth Social Action Journey Fund Evaluation Report of Research Results
189	How effective and efficient is the public support granted to social enterprises?
190	External evaluation of migrant entrepreneurship projects
191	Evaluation of the Firstport Awards Programme
192	Children's Social Care Innovation Programme Final evaluation report
193	Evaluation of the GEF-UNIDO Global Cleantech Innovation Programme
194	Technical Innovations for Rural Poverty Reduction
195	Final Evaluation and Impact Assesment of Innovations for Women's Empowerment in Southeast Anatolia
196	Innovation Support for Social Protection
197	Mid-term Performance Evaluation Report USAID/India Millennium Alliance Program
198	Developmental Evaluation of Business with Impact (BEAM) Programme
199	SIF Experience Corps National Evaluation: Evaluation of Sustained Small Group Tutoring
200	AmeriCorps Promise Fellow Program Minnesota Alliance With Youth Impact Evaluation Report
201	2015 College Possible: Closing the Achievement Gap for Low-Income Students i3 National Development Study
202	Evaluation of the Connected Youth Initiative: Final Report

203	Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report-Kenya
204	External Evaluation of YDP and NUYEP Programmes: Final Evaluation Report
205	Creating Opportunities for Youth Employment-Mid-term Evaluation
206	Transition to Success: Evaluation Report
207	Horizontal Evaluation of The Community Futures Program
208	Hire LA: Summer Youth Employment Program Evaluation Report 2014
209	Summer Youth Employment Program Evaluation Report-2011
210	NRC Youth Programme – Jordan: Evaluation Final Report
211	Evaluation of the Impact of the Youth Service: NEET programme
212	Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation-Microsoft
213	Summative Evaluation of the Women’s Program
214	Evaluation Of The Women's Program Volume I – Final Report
215	Impact Analysis of the Prison Entrepreneurship Program
216	Transform Ageing Final Evaluation
217	Final evaluation of the "Youth" Community action programme (2000-2006)
218	Empowering Women through Education and Influence: An Evaluation of the Indian Mahila Samakhya Program
219	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Programme, Zambia-End Term Evaluation Report
220	External evaluation of The East African Program for the Empowerment of Grassroots Women (EAGWEN)
221	Smart economics: evaluation of Australian aid support for women’s economic empowerment
222	Cash for Women’s Empowerment? A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the Government of Zambia’s Child Grant Programme
223	The Impacts of Cash Transfers on Women’s Empowerment: Learning from Pakistan’s BISP Program
224	Mid-Term evaluation of "Innovation for Service Delivery (ISDA)"
225	Mid-term Evaluation - “Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems” (CDAIS)
226	Terminal Evaluation of GNCTD-UNDP Project: Innovation Support for Social Protection
227	Creating Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Women in India (CPD Output 2.1)-DISHA Impact Evaluation: Key Findings
228	Smallholder Plantations Entrepreneurship Development Programme
229	Youth Entrepreneurship Facility (YEF) in Uganda - Final Evaluation
230	Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) Final Evaluation Report
231	Enhancing youth employability and entrepreneurship in the United Republic of Tanzania
232	Support for the Sustainable Livelihood Recovery through improved Agricultural Productivity and Community-based Entrepreneurship
233	Entrepreneurship development programme for women in food processing in central VietNam (phase II)
234	Integrated Training Programme for Women Entrepreneurship Development in the Food Processing Sector in Tanzania, Phase II
235	Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment Project “Resource Efficiency and Eco-Innovation in Developing and Transition Economies”

236	Report on Lessons Learnt from Innovation Actions in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA project)
237	Evaluation of Business Capital and Support Services
238	Evaluating the Women Entrepreneurship Training Programme: A South African study
239	Beyond Measure? The State of Evaluation and Action in Ontario's Youth Sector
240	Third Year Evaluation of the Indigenous Procurement Policy
241	Evaluation of Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program
242	Practical Innovation For Inclusive Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood 2009
243	The Evaluation of the Challenge Fund Innovations Against Poverty, IAP
244	The Big Green Challenge Final Evaluation Report
245	Employer Innovation Fund Evaluation Report
246	Final Performance Evaluation of Securing Water for Food Grand Challenge for Development 2020
247	Evaluation Partner for the Future Ready Fund: Social and Emotional Skills
248	Reach-Evaluation Report and Executive Summary-2016
249	Storytelling for Social Change: Leveraging Documentary and Comedy for Public Engagement in Global Poverty
250	The Skillman Foundation's Youth Development Strategy: A Summary of Evaluation Findings 2014-2015
251	We're Listening: An evaluation of user-centred community engagement in emergency sanitation
252	Final Evaluation Report-Gaza Risk Reduction and Mitigation
253	Transforming Health Systems Initiative Final Evaluation Report- The Rockefeller Foundation
254	Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network Initiative-Summative Evaluation-The Rockefeller Foundation
255	Stimulating Opportunity: An Evaluation of ARRA-Funded Subsidized Employment Programs
256	Developmental Evaluation in Practice: Lessons from Evaluating a Market-Based Employment Initiative
257	Institutionalizing Urban Resilience- A Midterm Monitoring and Evaluation Report of 100 Resilient Cities
258	Evaluation of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's High School Grants Initiative-2001-2005 Final Repo
259	Building a Sustainable Changemaking Ecosystem in Hungary-Ashoka-Evaluation Report
260	Final Evaluation of the Fabric of Change Initiative-Ashoka and C&A Foundation
261	Evaluation Report-Changemakers United-Ashoka
262	Fusion Project Evaluation (2009-2010)
263	Emergency Food Security Program - Final Evaluation Report
264	Millennials empowerment: youth entrepreneurship for sustainable development
265	Orbis Africa Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report Zambia
266	Strive Together Evaluation Report: 2015-2017
267	What Are the Impacts of Social Innovation? A Synthetic Review and Case Study of Community Forestry in the Scottish Highlands
268	A Gender Approach to Sustainable Rural Development of Mountains

269	Impact of the European Commission's Social Business Initiative (SBI) and its Follow-up Actions
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Appendix C

C.1 Data Management, Coding and Analysis

As stated in the Methodology section, the entire dataset was imported to NVivo2020 as a first step, and then codes representing the main theories were created to link relevant sections of the text from the included papers or reports. The software also allows researchers to create subcategories and display/save codes in a tree view. These codes were created with keywords representing the initial theories (between rough theories and MRTs). The screenshots from the NVivo project, showing a sample view of imported files, main codes and their subcategories, code selection, and a sample view of a code content (on NVivo and from a word document) are as follows:

Table C.1.1: Sample view of imported files in the NVivo project.

Files				Search Project
Name		Codes	References	
169-Evaluating the Public Value of Social Innovation		4	4	
170-Evaluation of social entrepreneurship educational programs in India		3	15	
171-European Learning for Youth in Social Entrepreneurship (ELYSE)		14	67	
178-Gender Mainstreaming and Impact of Self-Help Groups-Study on So		4	5	
207-Social and Economic Impacts of Tuungane-Congo		3	14	
212-Tamul Plates Social Impact Report 2014 Baseline		3	8	
225-SE in the Baltic and Nordic countries-Would the variety of existing le		2	18	
227-Between Migrant Care Work and New Occupational Welfare-Changi		4	22	
231-Evaluating Innovation in European Rural Development Programmes-		5	30	
237-An experimental evaluation tool for the Public Innovation Lab of the		3	17	
238-The role of the social innovation and entrepreneurship development		2	3	
239-Open social innovation dynamics and impact-exploratory study of a		5	5	
240-Care and rehabilitation services to child victims of abuse in the Unite		4	7	
241-Extending access to care across the rural US south-Alabama eHealth		4	4	
246-Participative evaluation with children in educational maker projects		2	3	
248-Social Innovation as a Driver of Urban Transformation-The Case of PI		5	15	
249-Assessing social innovation across offshore sectors in the Dutch Nor		5	7	
252-Lessons From the Social Innovation Fund-Supporting Evaluation to		2	6	

Table C.1.2: Main codes created in the NVivo project.

Codes				
	Name	Files	References	Created on
+	Actor interactions	97	164	12/08/2021 16:48
+	Capital	75	125	12/08/2021 16:04
+	Institutional Settings	74	134	10/08/2021 09:13
+	Social Entrepreneurship	58	203	12/08/2021 16:55
+	Social Networks	63	129	12/08/2021 16:57
+	Territorial Development	112	285	12/08/2021 16:49
	Transformative SI	64	138	12/08/2021 16:56

Table C.1.3: Codes with subcategories in the NVivo project

Codes				
	Name	Files	References	Created on
-	Actor interactions	97	164	12/08/2021 16:48
	Formal structures - universities etc	56	106	12/08/2021 16:49
	Large international organizations	34	65	12/08/2021 16:49
-	Capital	75	125	12/08/2021 16:04
	Economic capital in combination with	34	44	12/08/2021 16:05
	Human capital	40	56	12/08/2021 16:06
	Symbolic capital	83	152	12/08/2021 16:06
-	Institutional Settings	74	134	10/08/2021 09:13
	Formal institutions - regulations etc	45	75	12/08/2021 16:02
	Informal institutions - social norms	26	36	12/08/2021 15:48
	Interactions	19	31	12/08/2021 16:03
-	Social Entrepreneurship	58	203	12/08/2021 16:55
	Women	46	139	12/08/2021 16:55
	Youth	37	165	12/08/2021 16:56
-	Social Networks	63	129	12/08/2021 16:57
	Network characteristics	22	30	12/08/2021 16:57
-	Territorial Development	112	285	12/08/2021 16:49
	Empowerment	53	92	12/08/2021 16:50
	Transformative SI	64	138	12/08/2021 16:56

Table C.1.4: Sample view of coding (highlighting the text in the data) in the NVivo project.

Name	Codes	Referenc
169-Evaluating	4	4
170-Evaluation	3	15
171-European	14	67
178-Gender M	4	5
207-Social and	3	14
212-Tamul Plat	3	8
225-SE in the B	2	18
227-Between	4	22
231-Evaluating	5	30
237-An experi	3	17
238-The role of	2	3
239-Open soci	5	5
240-Care and r	4	7
241-Extending	4	4
246-Participati	2	3

Another relevant constraint to youth social entrepreneurship is represented by the **lack of funding opportunities** and barriers to access traditional financing, according to 24% of responses. Reduced availability of public resources and reduced public sector demand for social enterprises - especially in sector such as welfare and healthcare - as a consequence of the economic crisis, bureaucracy and growing competition from traditional companies to access public procurement, are negatively impacting on the entire industry, not only on initiatives run by young people.³⁴

The complex regulatory and administrative framework (13%), which generates confusion and discourages the launch of new entrepreneurial activities, has been identified by support organisations as another barrier young people have to face.

According to 9% of responses from practitioners, young people seem far from being risk-takers, craving security and permanent contracts, and cultural barriers do not help either. A generalised scepticism towards social entrepreneurship and

Table C.1.5: Sample view of code selection for the highlighted text

Select Code Items

Search (CTRL+F)

- Codes
 - Actor interactions
 - Formal structures - unive
 - Large international organ
 - Capital
 - Economic capital in com
 - Human capital
 - Symbolic capital
 - Institutional Settings
 - Formal institutions - regu
 - Informal institutions - so
 - Interactions
 - Social Entrepreneurship
 - Women
 - Youth
 - Social Networks
 - Territorial Development
 - Transformative SI
- Relationships

Create New: Top-Level Code

Code Selection

Table C.1.6: Sample view of code content in the NVivo project

The screenshot shows the NVivo interface. On the left is a 'Codes' list with columns for Name, Files, and Referenc. The 'Institutional Setting' code is selected. On the right, a text snippet is displayed with several codes highlighted in blue. The codes are: <Files\\128-Ashoka Romania Impact Report 2019> - § 1 reference coded [0.05% Coverage], Reference 1 - 0.05% Coverage, <Files\\153-Dynamic systems and the role of evaluation-Case of Green Communities project> - § 4 references coded [1.46% Coverage], Reference 1 - 0.21% Coverage, and Reference 2 - 0.26% Coverage. The text snippet includes the sentence: "Living with such great political instability is like trying to build something on quicksand."

Name	Files	Referenc
Actor interactions	97	164
Formal structur	56	106
Large internatio	34	65
Capital	75	125
Economic capit	34	44
Human capital	40	56
Symbolic capita	83	152
Institutional Setting	74	134
Formal instituti	45	75
Informal institu	26	36
Interactions	19	31
Social Entrepreneur	58	203
Women	46	139
Youth	37	165
Social Networks	63	129

Table C.1.7: Sample view of code content in a Word (.docx) document

The screenshot shows a Word document with three code blocks highlighted in grey. The first code block is <Files\\027-Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program GEWEP II 2016-2018>. The text below it contains the sentence: "The partnership with local NGOs has been a multi-gain option (scaling up its action at the geographical level, fostering ownership by local actors in order to perpetuate the gains. Furthermore, the visibility and notoriety for CARE and its local, national and even international partners". The second code block is <Files\\031-Social Entrepreneurship Programme Evaluation-Invest Northern Ireland>. The text below it contains the sentence: "Maximize the results of actions to promote women's rights in SRH. We must resume dialogue with religious and community leaders. Messages from church leaders contradicting those of GEWEP on the field can compromise the achievement of results." The third code block is <Files\\089-Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities>. The text below it contains the sentence: "Encouragingly, the support provided through the SEP led to a number of unexpected impacts/ achievements e.g. it contributed towards enhancing the reputation of the social enterprises outside of the UK; and it assisted the development of relationships with other social enterprises in order to share experiences and advice." The text continues: "The SEP was marketed and promoted under the umbrella of Invest NI's 'Go for it' campaign, whilst ENI also undertook a range of more targeted activities across the three sub-regions in order to raise awareness of, and stimulate demand for, the SEP." and "During consultation, representatives from the five LEAs indicated that there were high levels of interest in the Programme from the outset, which was suggested to be based on the awareness raising that was being undertaken by ENI and at an overarching level by Invest NI. A representative from one of the LEAs indicated that, whilst Invest NI had no dedicated marketing budget for the SEP, this did not adversely impact on the LEAs ability to recruit prospective participants onto the Programme."