CAPABILITIES APPROACH TO SOCIAL INNOVATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

ABORDAGEM DAS CAPACIDADES PARA INOVAÇÃO SOCIAL: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA

ENFOQUE DE CAPACIDAD PARA INNOVACIÓN SOCIAL: UNA REVISIÓN SISTEMÁTICA

Leonardo Ferreira Batista[1]
Suzanne Érica Nóbrega Correia[2]

Cite as – American Psychological Association (APA)

Abstract

Objective of the study: This article aims to address paths and trends in the capabilities approach for developing the scientific field of social innovation (SI).

Methodology/approach: Systematic literature review guided by the PRISMA recommendation with analysis of 16 articles suitable for discussion, after filtering 114 studies returned by the Web of Science database.

Originality/Relevance: The study is justified in terms of the development of the SI field, which has resorted to the approach of Amartya Sen's capabilities, mainly for the advancement of SI in public policies.

Main results: Results led to a current understanding of the conceptual support from the perspective of capability development to help delimit the processes and results of social initiatives on three fronts: grassroots innovations, social innovation processes, citizenship actions, and public policies.

Theoretical/methodological contributions: It is pointed out that the congruence between SI and the capabilities approach works as an incremental theoretical contribution of the role of social actors in the bases of social and/or organizational structures through the development of their capabilities.

Social/Management Contributions: As an empirical contribution, the practices of inclusion, the interaction of social actors, and the strengthening of public policies are presented, which, ultimately, can consolidate alternative management and socioeconomic development practices.

Keywords: Social innovation. Capabilities approach. Amartya Sen. Grassroots innovation. Public policies.

Resumo

Objetivo do estudo: Este artigo objetiva abordar percursos e tendências da abordagem das capacidades para o desenvolvimento do campo científico da inovação social (IS).

[1] PhD student in Administration at the Federal University of Pernambuco. Master in Administration from the Federal University of Campina Grande. leonardofb.leo@gmail.com

[2] Professor at Federal University of Campina Grande. PhD in Administration from the Federal University of Pernambuco. suzanne.correia@ufcg.edu.br

Metodologia/abordagem: Revisão sistemática da literatura orientada pela recomendação PRISMA com análise de 16 artigos adequados à discussão, após filtragem de 114 estudos inicialmente retornados pela base Web of Science.

Originalidade/Relevância: Justifica-se o estudo no sentido de desenvolvimento do campo da IS, que tem recorrido à abordagem das capacidades de Amartya Sen, principalmente para o avanço da IS em políticas públicas.

Principais resultados: Resultados direcionaram a um entendimento atual do suporte conceitual da perspectiva de desenvolvimento de capacidades para o auxílio na delimitação de processos e resultados das iniciativas sociais em três frentes: inovações de base, processos de inovação social e ações de cidadania e políticas públicas.

Contribuições teórico-metodológicas: Aponta-se que a congruência entre IS e abordagem das capacidades funciona como uma contribuição teórica incremental da atuação dos atores sociais nas bases das estruturas sociais e/ou organizacionais mediante o desenvolvimento de suas capacidades.

Contribuições sociais/gerenciais: Como contribuição empírica, apresenta-se as práticas de inclusão, de interação dos atores sociais e de fortalecimento de políticas públicas, o que, em último fim, pode consolidar práticas alternativas de gestão e de desenvolvimento socioeconômico.

Palavras-chave: Inovação social. Abordagem das capacidades. Amartya Sen. Inovação de base. Políticas públicas.

Resumen

Objetivo del estudio: Este artículo tiene como objetivo abordar caminos y tendencias en el enfoque de las capacidades para el desarrollo del campo científico de la innovación social (IS).

Metodología/enfoque: Revisión sistemática de la literatura guiada por la recomendación PRISMA con análisis de 16 artículos aptos para discusión, luego de filtrar 114 estudios inicialmente devueltos por la base de datos de Web of Science.

Originalidad/Relevancia: El estudio se justifica en términos del desarrollo del campo de SI, que ha recurrido al enfoque de las capacidades de Amartya Sen, principalmente para el avance de SI en políticas públicas.

Principales resultados: Los resultados llevaron a una comprensión actual del soporte conceptual desde la perspectiva del desarrollo de capacidades para ayudar a delimitar los procesos y resultados de las iniciativas sociales en tres frentes: innovaciones de base, procesos de innovación social y acciones de ciudadanía y políticas públicas.

Aportes teórico-metodológicos: Se señala que la congruencia entre SI y el enfoque de capacidades funciona como un aporte teórico incremental del rol de los actores sociales en las bases de las estructuras sociales y/o organizacionales a través del desarrollo de sus capacidades.

Aportes Sociales/de Gestión: Como aporte empírico, se presentan las prácticas de inclusión, interacción de los actores sociales y fortalecimiento de las políticas públicas, que, en definitiva, pueden consolidar prácticas alternativas de gestión y desarrollo socioeconómico.

Palabras clave: Innovación social. Enfoque de capacidad. Amartya Sen. Innovación de base. Políticas públicas.

Introduction

In the last decade, due to the growing interest of the scientific community in social perspective issues (Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019; Taylor et al., 2020; Ziegler et al., 2017), research on social innovation (SI) has grown and been strengthened, especially with the support of management and entrepreneurship (Biggeri et al., 2017; Biggs et al., 2010; Maclean et al., 2013; Phillips et al., 2015; Portales, 2019). From this perspective, SI is seen as an innovative action

aimed at social transformation in various spheres (Abad & Ezponda, 2019; Cajaíba-Santana, 2014), capturing new combinations or emerging social configurations (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017).

Despite having its objective of social change, it is understood that SI still does not have a clear definition of its processes. It coexists in different approaches with theoretical and empirical contributions (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Pel et al., 2020; Van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016) to clarify them (Voorberg et al., 2015). In this effort, some systematic reviews have been presented in the literature to conceptualize and theoretically discuss the phenomenon at hand (Foroudi et al., 2020), which leavess gaps in alternative approaches that can support significant advances in the field discussed.

It is argued that an essential path for the advancement of social innovation in literature can be built with an integrative approach between the process of social construction marked by the context of social relations and other explanatory theories (Abad & Exponda, 2019; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017; Jessop et al., 2013; Nicholls & Murdock, 2012; Ziegler et al., 2017). In this understanding, the capabilities approach (CA) of Amartya Sen (1990, 2001), an Indian economist who discusses human development, has its importance. This approach discusses the agency and freedom of social actors, aimed at their individual and collective purposes in the most varied spheres of life (Deneulin & McGregor, 2010; Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019).

The capabilities approach reveals a potential to contribute to the understanding and development of social innovations from their bases (Ibrahim, 2017), which scientific productions have been using over the past few years (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017; Tiwari, 2017; Ziegler et al., 2017). The congruence between the constructs is supported by the search for structuring the SI and by the development of collective capabilities of its actors (Batista & Correia, 2021; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017; Tiwari, 2017; Ziegler et al., 2017).

Given the relationship between SI and the capabilities approach (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017; Tiwari, 2017; Ziegler et al., 2017) and the absence of studies that discuss the research gaps in this relationship, we seek to answer the following questions: is there a supportive relationship of the capabilities approach to SI? Why is this approach arousing the interest of SI researchers? What are the paths for the development of the theme?

With this in mind, this article aims to carry out a literature review guided by the PRISMA recommendation (Moher et al., 2009, 2015), in order to address the pathways and trends in the use of the capabilities approach (Sen, 1990, 2001) for the development of the

scientific field of SI. The aim is, therefore, to encourage research in SI from the perspective of capabilities, strengthening the phenomenon as a possible instrument of economic and social development.

Theoretical reference

Social innovation

There is a growing interest of researchers from several countries in SI research (Adro & Fernandes, 2020), which is due to the search for solving social problems and the need to change the relationship between human beings and the environment in which they live. With the evolution of the studies carried out, conceptual and methodological deepening became necessary to understand the scope of social innovations (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Foroudi et al., 2020; Neumeier, 2012; Van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016).

The term SI ran through various understandings, such as the generation and implementation of new ideas through social interactions, whether in the creation of new types of social institutions, in the formation of new ideas about government, or the development of new social movements (Cajaiba -Santana, 2014; Portales, 2019; Schubert, 2018; Van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). There is not a single act. Thus, studies on the subject require immersion in interdisciplinarity to understand the phenomenon (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Ziegler, 2017b). The lack of ability to transfer information between areas of knowledge that study SI can separate local innovations from broad transformations (Moore & Westley, 2011; Portales, 2019; Schubert, 2018).

An SI arises when a network of actors changes their way of thinking and doing things, resulting in some kind of tangible improvement for the network or even for society (Schubert, 2018). It is a tangible improvement and a transformation in attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions, which results in a new form of collaborative action. Thus, it explains why social innovations, unlike technical and economic innovations, are difficult to identify (Neumeier, 2012), representing relatively rare and diffuse events (Mumford, 2002).

In all conceptions, social innovations are found as parts of the process and products of the social changes generated (Avelino et al., 2019). They are at the organizational, institutional, and procedural levels and are directed both in the internal affairs of the actors involved and in matters of society in general (Neumeier, 2012; van Wijk et al., 2019). Thus, an increase in the SI trend can change the structure of innovation systems, corporate identities, strategies, and public and private governance (Gerometta et al., 2005; Portales, 2019).

From this perspective, the concept of capabilities (or human capabilities) (Sen, 1990, 2001) entered the scientific field of SI as a possible theoretical path for understanding grassroots development, the social actors involved in social purpose initiatives (Ibrahim, 2017; Martin et al., 2015). From the perspective of Sen (1990, 2001), the singularities of these participants are highlighted and express that the freedom to participate and act can generate the development and expansion of structures through capabilities that are developed collectively (Batista & Correia, 2021; Ziegler, 2010).

Capabilities approach

The capabilities approach sees the social actor as an active subject of achievements with different purposes in all areas of life and discusses how the contribution of this actor in a social structure can be developed from the relationships with other social actors for solving their collective problems. It is an alternative process to the preponderant conceptions of economic thought (Burchardt, 2004; Orton, 2011), considering the base as the subject and public of the actions performed (Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019; Ziegler, 2010).

Correct use of the three main elements of the approach is needed, defined as functions, capabilities, and agency (Deneulin & McGregor, 2010; Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019). Functions build the scope of actions that a person aims to have as a result. They represent the human belief, and what is necessary to accomplish for this purpose, later reflected in the capabilities, related to the freedom with which the action is undertaken or the alternative combinations arising from these for better practices in their lives - although limited by their favorable contexts (Sen, 1990, 2001). Agency, in turn, is the effort undertaken to achieve the goals reflected and valued (Sen, 1990, 2001), evidenced in organizational structures by their alternative scope of social transformation (Biggeri et al., 2017; Chiappero-Martinetti & Von Jacobi, 2015; Ibrahim, 2017; Tsakanika & Chaves-Ávila, 2017).

With this understanding, the discussions between the perspective of capabilities introduced by the works of Sen (1990, 2001) and the SI come together in purposes, which, ultimately, translate into social transformation (Chiappero-Martinetti & Von Jacobi, 2015; Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019), while they can cumulatively contribute to the development of management processes (Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019). This path, however, still presents an emerging path (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017; Tiwari, 2017). In the organizational context, for example, this perspective can be applied in the reorientation of processes so that those involved

have more freedom of action and can collaborate more with the objectives of that structure (Sferrazzo & Ruffini, 2019).

Methodological procedures

This article aims to address the paths and trends in applying the capabilities approach (Sen, 1990, 2001) in SI studies through a systematic literature review. For this, we followed the items of the PRISMA recommendation (Moher et al., 2009, 2015), a methodology for conducting a systematic review capable of identifying, selecting, and organizing data for analysis (Moher et al., 2009).

At first, the scope of studies was extracted from the Web of Science, a world-wide database of high reliability (Bar-Ilan, 2008; Dzikowski, 2018; Rossetto et al., 2018), and the result was refined by type of document (articles) and alignment of titles and abstracts to the theme. Due to the cut defined from the Web of Science, records from other databases were not considered. Figure 1 represents the synthesis of theoretical portfolio selection:

Figure 1

Systematic Synthesis of Study Selection
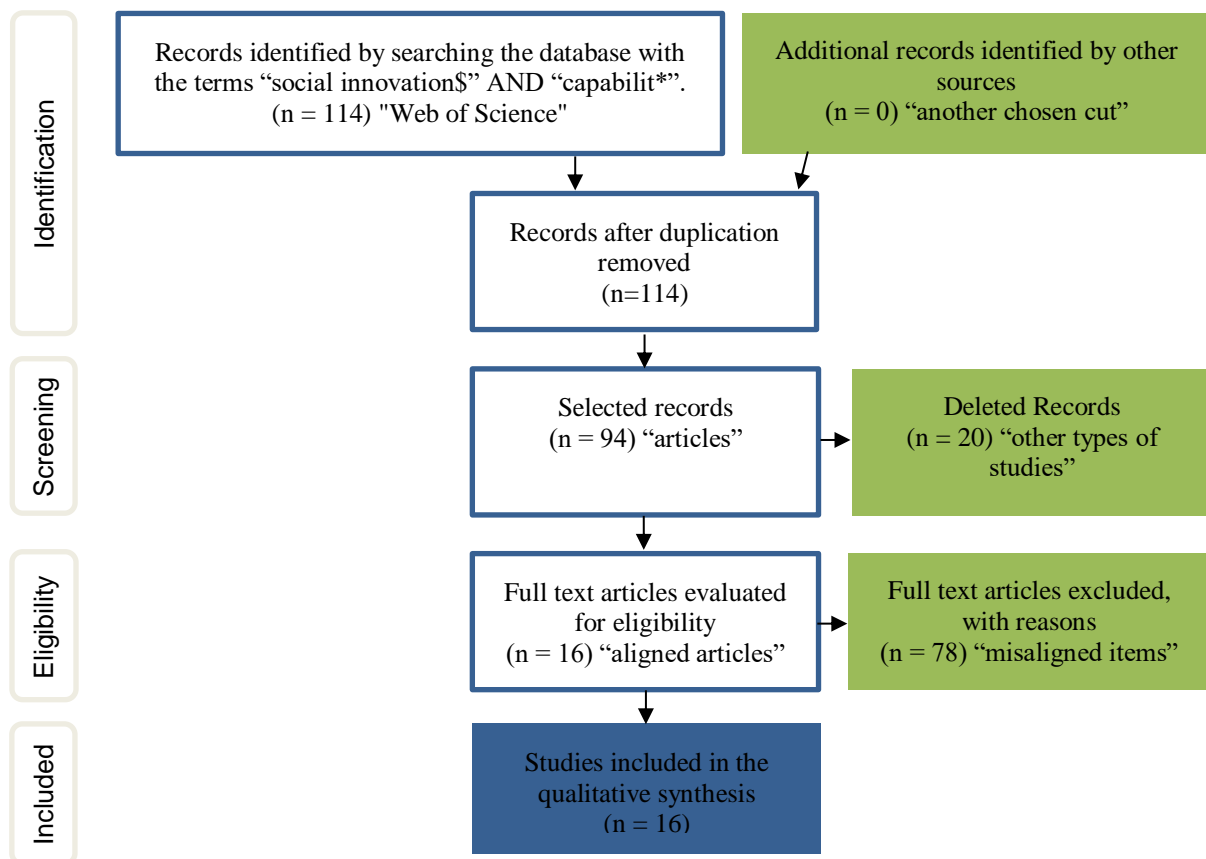
Source: Prepared from the PRISMA recommendation (Moher et al., 2009, 2015).

To systematize the theoretical portfolio used in the analysis, the terms "social innovation$" AND "capabilit*" ("$" for the presence or absence of plural and "*" for suffix variation) were sought in the topics of the indexed studies, in order to obtain the most significant amount of discussions about the relationship between social innovation and the capabilities approach. Initially, this search returned 114 studies, which were filtered by type of document "article", resulting in 94 articles.

Characterizing the narrowing of the systematization of a literature excerpt, we started with a more significant number of studies returned with the search for subsequent assertive filtering. To the final theoretical portfolio, titles and abstracts of the 94 articles were read, which found the misalignment of 78 articles since they did not bring theoretical or empirical discussions about the congruence in question within their scope.

A portfolio was chosen for objective analysis in a relevant corpus of studies whose scenario was categorized. Posteriorly, the data evidenced in the analysis of the articles were compared, and possible gaps in knowledge were mapped. Finally, the analyzes of the contributions of the investigated studies are presented.

The analysis of the portfolio was carried out to present the application of the scope of capabilities in the field of social innovation and its effectiveness for the advancement of the theme. In this intent, the analysis focused on answering the initial questions of this study, including resulting in well-defined study categories exposed in a later section, based on thematic approaches with relational analysis techniques based on text data (Roig-Tierno et al., 2017). An overview of each study was also presented with its objectives, results, and gaps for future research.

Results and discussions

After systematizing the research in the chosen database, the Web of Science, 16 selected studies are discussed below, as well as subsequently providing a research agenda. These studies have different methods and approaches. The researcher of most significant interest in the subject is Rafael Ziegler, professor at the University of Greifswald in Germany, an author who discusses SI as a collaborative concept. Its applications permeate themes such as sustainability, creating economic space, combating marginalization, politics, and human development (von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017; Ziegler et al., 2013; Ziegler, 2017a; Ziegler et al., 2017).

As a starting point for the discussion, the article "Social Innovation in Disability Nonprofits stands out: An Abductive Study of Capabilities for Social Change", which identifies

the resources used by nonprofit organizations as they develop social innovations. This objective is only achieved by understanding the resource ability perspective or "functions", as the capabilities approach predicts (Sen, 1990, 2001), since social actors are seen, in this context, from the perspective of their management capabilities.

Regarding social actors, it is revealed that nonprofit organizations can further develop the capability of those involved to deal with complex social issues, whose solutions are perennially the main challenges faced (Sen, 1990, 2001; Taylor et al., 2020). For example, the inclusion of people with disabilities through processes centered on individuals and systemic structures, which trace a path from the individual to the institutional level, since both the target audience and the various parties involved, such as institutions partners, are interested in absorbing the SI dynamics in all ways (Taylor et al., 2020).

Still on the management capability of SI initiatives, the study "Comparison of Four Different Livelihood Programs for Urban Refugee Women in Durban, South Africa: Insights from the Capability Approach" corroborating the defense of institutional partnerships as a way to strengthen SI initiatives (Van Raemdonck, 2019) discusses the importance of identifying barriers to these processes as a critical factor in optimizing the strategies and actions taken, applying the understanding of capabilities to review aspects that enhance or hinder livelihood programs for refugee women about their capabilities and their establishment agencies in an urban context (Van Raemdonck, 2019).

After generating these internal strategies, it is necessary to look at the external impact. From this perspective, many SI initiatives do not care about or fail to measure the impact of their actions on society (von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017; White, 2018). In this sense, there is a significant contribution from the study "A Cook's tour: Towards a framework for measuring the social impact of social purpose organisations," which develops a framework to measure the impact of social purpose organizations from the capabilities approach, also using the theory configurational (White, 2018) when analyzing organizations as related structures and practices with a common purpose (Fiss, 2007). This theory is similar to systems theory, but its differential predicts the possibility of variation in internal relationships since configurations are not static (Miller, 1990).

It is argued that the comprehensiveness of the capabilities approach offers several conceptual and evaluative benefits for understanding SI (von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017). The work of Von Jacobi, Edmiston and Ziegler (2017), entitled "Tackling Marginalization through Social Innovation? Examining the EU Social Innovation Policy Agenda from a

Capabilities Perspective", for example, advocates SI's ability to combat marginalization through economic inclusion of actors and transformation of their lives. In this sense, the need for practical applications of SI is justified since this type of innovation can continue to be treated as a means and not an end, generating a lack of specific attention and damage to institutional relations and networks of actors involved. (von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017).

From this perspective, the application of the capability approach can lead to discussions about empirical processes of inclusion (Molnar, 2017; von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017). For example, the study "Toilet Monuments: An Investigation of Innovation for Human Development," published in 2013, discusses inclusion when defending the role of capabilities in human development, using a reflection on how public toilets in urban centers and slums can represent notable inequality and opportunely the possibility of acting (Ziegler et al., 2013). Following the same understanding, Molnar (2017), in the study "Capability building combined with microcredit: the loan alone is insufficient," analyzes the specific characteristics of an SI, in particular, a nonprofit corporation that provides microcredit aimed at helping socially excluded social groups.

It is observed, then, the various lenses for the visualization of possible human realizations in the sense of favoring the processes of inclusion in society. However, for these processes to be effective, SI needs to create its own economic space that strengthens its acting scope. The studies of Ziegler et al. (2017), "Creating (Economic) Space for Social Innovation," with the proposition of this space from the perspective of capabilities with an emphasis on cultural, economic, and political aspects - for this author, the construction of "space" for SI depends on the engaged action of social actors - and Biggeri, Testi, and Bellucci (2017), "Enabling Ecosystems for Social Enterprises and Social Innovation: A Capability Approach Perspective," which presents specific policy suggestions to create an ecosystem for social enterprises and promote their SI capabilities (Biggeri et al., 2017).

Biggeri, Testi, and Bellucci (2017), however, argue that ecosystems can also harm organizations in achieving their goals because, in order to achieve these goals, strategies are needed to overcome the lack of resources, the lack of commitment of the network of actors and institutional structure and the difficulties of an unfavorable political context, motivating the use of the perspective of capabilities to assist in this attempt (Biggeri et al., 2017).

In order to propose improvements in the processes that fill these gaps, Ibrahim (2017) developed a conceptual model to describe the capability development process of social innovation actors, considered a sedimentary basis. Three processes are presented as seminal

conditions to fill the gaps discussed and promote scalability and sustainability of social innovations: (1) Conscientization, from the individual perspective; (2) Conciliation; from the sum of interests; and (3) Collaboration, based on cooperation. Thus, the work "How to Build Collective Capabilities: The 3C-Model for Grassroots-Led Development" stands out for its essential discussions for consolidating the focus of capabilities in SI.

In the same vein, the work by Pellicer-Sifres et al. (2017), Grassroots Social Innovation for Human Development: An Analysis of Alternative Food Networks in the City of Valencia (Spain), explores the contribution of literature on the capabilities approach to a better understanding of the complexity, richness and specificity of the ascending processes of SI, from an empirical perspective of grassroots innovation.

A discussion of this type of SI deserves to be highlighted. The literature argues that grassroots innovations can drive the transformation of sociotechnical regimes, correlated rules that guide the activities of social groups and go beyond technology, coordinating cultural, scientific, political, market, and industrial aspects (Geels, 2011). This process is explored in the study by Boni, Belda-Miquel, and Pellicer-Sifres (2018), "Transformative innovation. Proposals from grassroots innovations towards human development", which shows the possible alignment between this type of initiative and human development expressed by the perspective of capability.

Given this perspective and the necessary empirical understanding of SI, there is a tendency to produce empirical studies on the subject (Mazigo, 2017; Pellicer-Sifres et al., 2017; Van Raemdonck, 2019; von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., et al., 2017). In this way, the study "Promoting Social Innovation Through Action Research: Evidence from an Empirical Study in the Fisheries Sector of the Ukerewe District in Tanzania" presents action research as collaborative for the triggering and promotion of SI processes in communities (Mazigo, 2017).

Although this need for empirical studies is consensual among some authors (Mazigo, 2017; von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017), there is significant relevance in the theoretical development of the subject under analysis since it still has gaps and needs to evolve theoretically. Examples are the studies: Howaldt and Schwarz (2017) – "Social Innovation and Human Development - How the Capabilities Approach and Social Innovation Theory Mutually Support Each Other" -, which examines the need to develop a concept of SI as an analytical category supported for human development, Tiwari (2017) – "Exploring the Role of the Capability Approach in Social Innovation" -, which similarly uses the capabilities approach to understand the human dimensions of SI, and Ziegler (2017a), who discusses the concept of

citizen innovation as niche restoration and its implications for political participation and sustainability.

In general, it was noticed that the authors mutually support each other in the construction of research that complements each other in the sense of expanding the locus of SI implementation and the improvement of its processes based on collective human capabilities. In this way, it is possible to have an ongoing discussion about the various phases of SI starting from its bases.

Thematic gaps and suggestions for future researches

From this perspective, by using the capabilities focus and consequently the focus on the social actor as a relevant point for the theoretical-empirical development of the SI field, the studies analyzed open a significant path for new research that fosters models of management/development of collective capabilities of these actors. By grouping these studies, it is possible to present three main paths:

Figure 2

Main Paths of the Capabilities Approach to Social Innovation

Grassroots innovation	*Social Innovation Processes*	*Citizenship actions and public policies*
(Boni et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 2017; Pellicer-Sifres et al., 2017; Ziegler, 2017a)	(Biggeri et al., 2017; Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017; Taylor et al., 2020; Tiwari, 2017; Van Raemdonck, 2019; White, 2018)	(Mazigo, 2017; Molnar, 2017; von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017; von Jacobi, Nicholls, et al., 2017; Ziegler, 2017a; Ziegler et al., 2013, 2017)

Source: Own elaboration.

Among the studies of the "Base Innovations" dimension, the work of Boni, Belda-Miquel, and Pellicer-Sifres (2018) stand out for its theoretical discussion in defense of the need for studies with an emphasis on social actors. In this category, there are studies on innovations that come from community social actors, treating them as the principle of the social transformation process undertaken by SI initiatives.

With this perspective, the gaps raised follow:

Table 1

Suggestions for future studies about grassroots innovations

Paper	Goal	Results	Gaps
Transformative innovation. Proposals from grassroots innovations towards a human development (Boni et al., 2018)	Characterize the meaning of the transformation of grassroots innovation and its directionality	It presents substantial differences in how grassroots innovations understand production, technologies, policies and regulations, the industrial structure, access channels, and sources of knowledge concerning dominant sociotechnical practices.	Discussions on alternative transformation strategies in different dimensions from the sociotechnical transition.
How to Build Collective Capabilities: The 3C-Model for Grassroots-Led Development (Ibrahim, 2017)	Demonstrate the importance of individual behavioral change, collective agency, and local institutional reforms for the success, sustainability and scalability of grassroots innovations	It argues that three processes are necessary conditions for promoting successful, scalable, and sustainable social grassroots innovations: (1) Conscientization, (2) Conciliation, and (3) Collaboration.	From the presentation of the 3C Model, its theoretical support and limitations are discussed, which can generate further discussions and improvements in future studies.
Grassroots Social Innovation for Human Development: An Analysis of Alternative Food Networks in the City of Valencia (Spain) (Pellicer-Sifres et al., 2017)	It explores the contribution of the grassroots capability and innovation approach to a better understanding of the complexity, richness, and specificity of bottom-up SI processes and the promotion of social transformation	Creates a foundational SI framework for human development	From the presentation of the GSI4HD Model, a way to approach grassroots innovations for human development is discussed. New studies may discuss an improvement in the dimensions of this Model.
Citizen Innovation as Niche Restoration - A Type of Social Innovation and Its Relevance for Political Participation and Sustainability (Ziegler, 2017a)	Discusses decentralized water management, the concept of citizen innovation and its implications for political participation and sustainability	Results argue that niche restoration is a citizen innovation whose scope is possibly neglected due to the romanticism of the approach.	Discussions about the concepts presented can be deepened and can count on the theoretical support of the works of Juuti and Katko (2005), Sedlak (2014), and Scheuerle et al. (2016)

Source: Own elaboration.

In the second dimension, "Social Innovation Processes," practices for improving processes involving social innovations are discussed, using a perspective of capabilities like support for the design of new actions. The study by Ibrahim (2017), which also figures in the category of grassroots innovations, is a significant example when discussing the development of collective capabilities for SI, providing a significant boost for understanding the process. In this way, understanding how these practices take place guarantees a relevant contribution to the development of the field, as it awakens the possibility of gaining new forms and spaces for action.

Here are suggestions for future studies that focus on processes relevant to SI:

International Journal of Innovation

Batista, L. F., & Correia, S. É. N. (2021, May/Aug.). Capabilities approach to social innovation: a systematic review. *Articles*

Table 2

Suggestions for future studies with emphasis on social innovation processes

Paper	Goal	Results	Gaps
Enabling Ecosystems for Social Enterprises and Social Innovation: A Capability Approach Perspective (Biggeri et al., 2017)	Submit policy suggestions in order to create a ecosystem for social businesses and promoting their SI capabilities	It shows that ecosystems can prevent and allow social businesses to achieve their goals and, more generally, foster SI and sustainable human development	Research on simplifying the legal framework to encourage individuals and organizations to establish new social enterprise ecosystems and new agreements between other related organizations and on special programs and teaching methods in the educational system that promote sensitivity to social and environmental issues (enhancing social skill collaboration, altruism, solidarity, and empathy)
Social Innovation and Human Development How the Capabilities Approach and Social Innovation Theory Mutually Support Each Other (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2017)	Examine the need to develop an SI concept as an analytical category	It highlights the relationship between social theoretical foundations and SI, resulting in various interactions between social practices and human development concepts	Studies on roles, functions, resources, and capabilities (in addition to restrictions) of actors that fundamentally affect the potential of social innovations, their scopes, and their impacts
How to Build Collective Capabilities: The 3C-Model for Grassroots-Led Development (Ibrahim, 2017)	Note: See in the "Grassroots Innovations" category.	Note: See in the "Grassroots Innovations" category.	Note: See in the "Grassroots Innovations" category.
Social Innovation in Disability Nonprofits: An Abductive Study of Capabilities for Social Change (Taylor et al., 2020)	Identify the capabilities leveraged by nonprofit organizations as they develop social innovations	Reveals many resources used by nonprofit organizations with disabilities on the way to SI development	Further analysis of the SI within institutionalism with conceptual support from the work of Mahoney and Thelen (2009)
Exploring the Role of the Capability Approach in Social Innovation (Tiwari, 2017)	Understand the human dimensions of SI under the capabilities approach	It offers a new view of SI in terms of capabilities that can be relevant across a wide range of domains	The understanding of innovations led by non-market and market actors in distinguishing the types of innovations and the reorganization of existing human and social capital
Comparison of Four Different Livelihood Programmes for Urban Refugee Women in Durban, South Africa: Insights from the Capability Approach (Van Raemdonck, 2019)	Identify and review the improvement and limitation aspects of the analyzed programs about refugee women's capabilities and human agency to establish themselves in an urban context	The study highlights that, in order to effectively expand the capabilities of refugees and agencies to settle in an urban context, stakeholders must initiate partnerships with a combination of two intervention strategies: validated implementation of livelihood programs and analysis of structural obstacles to refugee capability	The study is limited to qualitative fieldwork with only one South African non-governmental organization, and one or two beneficiaries were interviewed per program. It can inspire applications in other contexts and with other forms of operationalization.
A Cook's tour: Towards a framework for measuring the social impact of social purpose organizations (White, 2018)	Develop a framework for measuring the impact of social purpose organizations	The objective is fulfilled, bringing together Sen's capability approach and configurational theory, advocating an integrative vision to show the value of social purpose organizations	Studies on participatory processes involving the perspective of capabilities and SI as means for social transformation

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the dimension "Citizenship Actions and Public Policies" brings together studies with the primary objective of subsidizing public policies, especially policies for the inclusion of marginalized and excluded groups. A prominent study is that of Von Jacobi, Edmiston, and Ziegler (2017), with discussions on SI as a way to combat marginalization. In this understanding, he even defends it as a path to the solution of complex social problems. The following researches raised by the dimension are suggested:

Table 3

Suggestions for future studies about citizenship actions and public policies

Paper	Goal	Results	Gaps
Promoting Social Innovation Through Action Research: Evidence from an Empirical Study in the Fisheries Sector of Ukerewe District in Tanzania (Mazigo, 2017)	Highlight the role of action research in triggering and promoting SI processes in communities	It shows how the provision of adequate spaces for dialogue allows the unveiling of innovative ideas and solutions to individual, sectoral and social challenges	Discussions on alternative structures for reflection and understanding of the socioeconomic challenges of communities and innovative solutions to repair existing problems
Capability building combined with microcredit: the loan alone is insufficient (Molnar, 2017)	Analyze the specific characteristics of an SI aimed at serving a marginalized and socially excluded social group	The main conclusion is that providing loans without capability building can accentuate the exclusion of the most disadvantaged	Discussions about the characteristics of an SI initiative and the specific resources required for each type of initiative
Tackling Marginalization through Social Innovation? Examining the EU Social Innovation Policy Agenda from a Capabilities Perspective (von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017)	Demonstrate that the resource approach offers several conceptual and evaluative benefits for understanding the SI and, in particular, its ability to address marginalization	It shows that the SI is effective in confronting marginalization based on the participation of marginalized individuals and the process of social structuring	The issue of secure capabilities and its influences on participation and policies deemed necessary to promote a relationship between participation and inclusion of marginalized groups
Theorizing Social Innovation to Address Marginalization (von Jacobi, Nicholls, et al., 2017)	Introduce the SI's role in dealing with marginalization	It presents the extended social network model, in which an institutionalist perspective on social forces can be combined with a capabilities approach	The relationship between SI and public policies, the processes by which the SI can fight inequalities and reformulate opportunities in society, and alternatives for measuring the impact caused by an SI
Citizen Innovation as Niche Restoration - A Type of Social Innovation and Its Relevance for Political Participation and Sustainability (Ziegler, 2017a)	Note: See in the "Grassroots Innovations" category.	Note: See in the "Grassroots Innovations" category.	Note: See in the "Grassroots Innovations" category.
Creating (Economic) Space for Social Innovation (Ziegler et al., 2017)	Discuss creating "spaces" for SI.	It shows that essential advances in cultural, political, and economic contexts are necessary.	Evolution of theoretical discussions and possible empirical research on the six points proposed by the study about the creation of space for SI
Toilet Monuments: An Investigation of Innovation for Human Development (Ziegler et al., 2013)	Analyze the role of capability innovations, defined as the realization of new combinations of capabilities in human development	Shows the success and failure factors related to the innovation of sanitary monuments	Studies with evaluative perspectives on innovation in the context of human development and with an explanatory perspective on innovation in a capabilities approach

Source: Own elaboration.

It is argued that the capabilities focus underlies and supports several secondary themes, always defined as SI process/product. These themes advance in suggestions listed as a structured pillar for the development of future research, in addition to pointing out significant advances for the development of SI with the integration between theory and practice, since several fronts of empirical understanding of the phenomenon are evidenced that lack deepening.

Final considerations

It is essentially concluded that there is support for the capabilities approach to SI to understand the SI scope from the individual level (base innovation) to the consolidation of public policies. From this perspective, researchers from around the world are using the work of Amartya Sen and its developments to strengthen research on human development with an innovative character. It was even seen that all spheres of human development, especially the ability of social innovation agents to carry out, can be contemplated with the integration of the constructs in question.

As main results, the research on the subject, currently led by researcher Rafael Ziegler, from the University of Greifswald (Germany), identified three categories of studies: "Grassroots Innovations," with studies that emphasize community social actors; "Social innovation processes," studies that discuss social innovation processes from the perspective of capabilities; and "Citizenship Actions and Public Policies," with current discussions on public policies and inclusion processes. As well as, it revealed the lack of studies on the subject, presenting a research trend with an emphasis on the social actors involved in the organizations covered and their inclusion processes. Here, the fundamental questions that this study addressed are answered.

Empirically, practical paths benefit social innovations by emphasizing the importance of capability development in these initiatives. Those studies try to undertake discussions for a better articulation of social actors and their actions in the initiatives (Boni et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 2017), development of organizational processes and alternative management models (Biggeri et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2020; Van Raemdonck, 2019) and contributions that reach the public and citizen sphere in policy formulation to combat social inequalities (Mazigo, 2017; von Jacobi, Edmiston, et al., 2017; von Jacobi, Nicholls, et al., 2017; Ziegler, 2017a; Ziegler et al., 2013).

It was limited to a database the credibility of the database and the filtered studies presented a relevant worldwide sample of studies on the subject. As a suggestion for future

work, other databases can be used, and researchers can theoretically advance in the thematic fronts and discussions presented to deepen discussions that catalyze social initiatives. Another future scenario may present empirical analyzes of the research identified that are suitable for their specific contexts.

References

Abad, A. G., & Ezponda, A. G. (2019). Recursos y dilemas de la innovación social: Un concepto problemático. *RES. Revista Española de Sociología*, 28(3), 135–150. https://doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2019.32

Adro, F., & Fernandes, C. I. (2020). Social innovation: A systematic literature review and future agenda   research. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 17(1), 23–40. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12208-019-00241-3

Avelino, F., Wittmayer, J. M., Pel, B., Weaver, P., Dumitru, A., Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Jørgensen, M. S., Bauler, T., & Ruijsink, S. (2019). Transformative social innovation and (dis) empowerment. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 145, 195–206. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.05.002

Bar-Ilan, J. (2008). Which h-index?—A comparison of WoS, Scopus and Google Scholar. *Scientometrics*, 74(2), 257–271. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-008-0216-y

Batista, L. F., & Correia, S. É. N. (2021). Capacidades coletivas em inovações sociais à luz do Ciclo 5C: Uma análise da Rede Paraibana de Bancos Comunitários . *Contextus – Revista Contemporânea de Economia e Gestão*, 19, 71-87. https://doi.org/10.19094/contextus.2021.61280

Biggeri, M., Testi, E., & Bellucci, M. (2017). Enabling Ecosystems for Social Enterprises and Social Innovation: A Capability Approach Perspective. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 299–306. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2017.1306690

Biggs, R., Westley, F. R., & Carpenter, S. R. (2010). Navigating the back loop: Fostering social innovation and transformation in ecosystem management. *Ecology and society*, 15(2).

Boni, A., Belda-Miquel, S., & Pellicer-Sifres, V. (2018). Transformative innovation. Proposals from grassroots innovations towards a human development. *Recerca-Revista De Pensament & Analisi*, 23, 67–94. https://doi.org/10.6035/Recerca.2018.23.4

Burchardt, T. (2004). Capabilities and disability: The capabilities framework and the social Model of disability. *Disability & society*, 19(7), 735–751. https://doi.org/10.1080/0968759042000284213

Cajaiba-Santana, G. (2014). Social innovation: Moving the field forward. A conceptual framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 82, 42–51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2013.05.008

Chiappero-Martinetti, E., & Von Jacobi, N. (2015). How can Sen's' Capabilities Approach'Contribute to Understanding the Role for Social Innovations for the Marginalized?

Deneulin, S., & McGregor, J. A. (2010). The capability approach and the politics of a social conception of wellbeing. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 13(4), 501–519. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431010382762

Dzikowski, P. (2018). A bibliometric analysis of born global firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 85, 281–294. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.054

Fiss, P. C. (2007). A set-theoretic approach to organizational configurations. *Academy of management review*, 32(4), 1180–1198. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.26586092

Foroudi, P., Akarsu, T. N., Marvi, R., & Balakrishnan, J. (2020). Intellectual evolution of social innovation: A bibliometric analysis and avenues for future research trends. *Industrial Marketing Management*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.03.026

Geels, F. W. (2011). The multi-level perspective on sustainability transitions: Responses to seven criticisms. *Environmental innovation and societal transitions*, 1(1), 24–40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2011.02.002

Gerometta, J., Haussermann, H., & Longo, G. (2005). Social innovation and civil society in urban governance: Strategies for an inclusive city. *Urban studies*, 42(11), 2007–2021. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500279851

Howaldt, J., & Schwarz, M. (2017). Social Innovation and Human DevelopmentHow the Capabilities Approach and Social Innovation Theory Mutually Support Each Other. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 163–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1251401

Ibrahim, S. (2017). How to Build Collective Capabilities: The 3C-Model for Grassroots-Led Development. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 197–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1270918

Jessop, B., Moulaert, F., Hulgård, L., & Hamdouch, A. (2013). Social innovation research: A new stage in innovation analysis. The international handbook on social innovation: *Collective action, social learning and transdisciplinary research*, 110–130.

Juuti, P. S., & Katko, T. S. (2005). Water, time and European cities-History matters for the futures.

Maclean, M., Harvey, C., & Gordon, J. (2013). Social innovation, social entrepreneurship and the practice of contemporary entrepreneurial philanthropy. *International Small Business Journal*, 31(7), 747–763. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242612443376

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2009). Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power. Cambridge University Press.

Martin, C. J., Upham, P., & Budd, L. (2015). Commercial orientation in grassroots social innovation: Insights from the sharing economy. *Ecological Economics*, 118, 240–251. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2015.08.001

Mazigo, A. F. (2017). Promoting Social Innovation Through Action Research: Evidence from an Empirical Study in the Fisheries Sector of Ukerewe District in Tanzania. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 239–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1256276

Miller, D. (1990). Organizational configurations: Cohesion, change, and prediction. *Human Relations*, 43(8), 771–789. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679004300805

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., & Group, P. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *PLoS med*, 6(7), e1000097. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000097

Moher, D., Shamseer, L., Clarke, M., Ghersi, D., Liberati, A., Petticrew, M., Shekelle, P., & Stewart, L. A. (2015). Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015 statement. *Systematic reviews*, 4(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.1186/2046-4053-4-1

Molnar, G. (2017). Capability building combined with microcredit: The loan alone is insufficient. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 8(3), 354–374. https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2017.1371632

Moore, M.-L., & Westley, F. (2011). Surmountable chasms: Networks and social innovation for resilient systems. *Ecology and society*, 16(1).

Moulaert, F., Martinelli, F., González, S., & Swyngedouw, E. (2007). Introduction: Social innovation and governance in European cities: Urban development between path dependency and radical innovation. *Sage Publications* Sage UK: London, England. https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776407077737

Mumford, M. D. (2002). Social innovation: Ten cases from Benjamin Franklin. *Creativity research journal*, 14(2), 253–266. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326934CRJ1402_11

Neumeier, S. (2012). Why do social innovations in rural development matter and should they be considered more seriously in rural development research?–Proposal for a stronger focus on social innovations in rural development research. *Sociologia ruralis*, 52(1), 48–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2011.00553.x

Nicholls, A., & Murdock, A. (2012). The nature of social innovation. In Social innovation (p. 1–30). *Springer.* https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230367098_1

Orton, M. (2011). Flourishing lives: The capabilities approach as a framework for new thinking about employment, work and welfare in the 21st century. *Work, employment and society*, 25(2), 352–360. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017011403848

Pel, B., Wittmayer, J., Dorland, J., & Jørgensen, M. S. (2020) Unpacking the social innovation ecosystem: an empirically grounded typology of empowering network constellations, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 33:3, 311-336. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2019.1705147

Pellicer-Sifres, V., Belda-Miquel, S., Lopez-Fogues, A., & Boni Aristizabal, A. (2017). Grassroots Social Innovation for Human Development: An Analysis of Alternative Food Networks in the City of Valencia (Spain). *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 258–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1270916

Phillips, W., Lee, H., Ghobadian, A., O'Regan, N., & James, P. (2015). Social innovation and social entrepreneurship: A systematic review. *Group & Organization Management*, 40(3), 428–461. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601114560063

Portales, L. (2019). Social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Fundamentals, Concepts, and Tools. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13456-3

Roig-Tierno, N., Gonzalez-Cruz, T. F., & Llopis-Martinez, J. (2017). An overview of qualitative comparative analysis: A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 2(1), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2016.12.002

Rossetto, D. E., Bernardes, R. C., Borini, F. M., & Gattaz, C. C. (2018). Structure and evolution of innovation research in the last 60 years: Review and future trends in the field of business through the citations and co-citations analysis. *Scientometrics*, 115(3), 1329–1363. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-018-2709-7

Scheuerle, T., Schimp, G.-C., Glänzel, G., & Mildenberger, G. (2016). Report on Relevant Actors in Historic Examples and an Empirically Driven Typology on Types of Social Innovation.

Schubert, C. (2018). Social Innovation. In Innovation society today (p. 371–391). *Springer*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-19269-3_17

Sedlak, D. (2014). Water 4.0: The past, present, and future of the world's most vital resource. Yale University Press.

Sen, A. (1990). Development as capability expansion. The community development reader, 41–58.

Sen, A. (2001). Development as freedom. Oxford Paperbacks.

Sferrazzo, R., & Ruffini, R. (2019). Are Liberated Companies a Concrete Application of Sen's Capability Approach?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04324-3

Souza, A. C. A. A., Lessa, B. de S., & Silva Filho, J. C. L. (2019). Social innovation and the promotion of local economic development. *Innovation & Management Review*. https://doi.org/10.1108/INMR-10-2018-0074

Taylor, R., Torugsa, N., & Arundel, A. (2020). Social Innovation in Disability Nonprofits: An Abductive Study of Capabilities for Social Change. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 49(2), 399–423. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764019873965

Tiwari, M. (2017). Exploring the Role of the Capability Approach in Social Innovation. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 181–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1271312

Tsakanika, L., & Chaves-Ávila, R. (2017). Building Social Innovation Ecosystems: A capability approach. Retrieved April, 29, 2019.

van der Have, R. P., & Rubalcaba, L. (2016). Social innovation research: An emerging area of innovation studies?. *Research Policy*, 45(9), 1923–1935. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2016.06.010

Van Raemdonck, L. (2019). Comparison of Four Different Livelihood Programmes for Urban Refugee Women in Durban, South Africa: Insights from the Capability Approach. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 20(2), 497–519. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0618-5

van Wijk, J., Zietsma, C., Dorado, S., De Bakker, F. G., & Marti, I. (2019). Social innovation: Integrating micro, meso, and macro level insights from institutional theory. *Business & Society*, 58(5), 887–918. https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650318789104

von Jacobi, N., Edmiston, D., & Ziegler, R. (2017). Tackling Marginalization through Social Innovation? Examining the EU Social Innovation Policy Agenda from a Capabilities Perspective. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 148–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2016.1256277

von Jacobi, N., Nicholls, A., & Chiappero-Martinetti, E. (2017). Theorizing Social Innovation to Address Marginalization. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 8(3), 265–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2017.1380340

Voorberg, W. H., Bekkers, V. J., & Tummers, L. G. (2015). A systematic review of co-creation and co-production: Embarking on the social innovation journey. *Public Management Review*, 17(9), 1333–1357. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2014.930505

White, L. (2018). A Cook's tour: Towards a framework for measuring the social impact of social purpose organizations. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 268(3), 784–797. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2017.06.015

Ziegler, R. (2010). Innovations in doing and being: Capability innovations at the intersection of Schumpeterian political economy and human development. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 1(2), 255–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2010.511818

Ziegler, R. (2017a). Citizen Innovation as Niche Restoration—A Type of Social Innovation and Its Relevance for Political Participation and Sustainability. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 8(3), 338–353. https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2017.1364286

Ziegler, R. (2017b). Social innovation as a collaborative concept. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 30(4), 388–405. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2017.1348935

Ziegler, R., Karanja, B. H. K., & Dietsche, C. (2013). Toilet Monuments: An Investigation of Innovation for Human Development. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 14(3), 420–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2012.693070

Ziegler, R., Molnar, G., Chiappero-Martinetti, E., & von Jacobi, N. (2017). Creating (Economic) Space for Social Innovation. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(2), 293–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2017.1301897