

# Management innovation and social innovation: convergences and divergences

## Inovação gerencial e inovação social: Convergências e divergências

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to discuss recent developments in the fields of management innovation and social innovation, in order to discover any possible convergences and divergences between them.

**Design/methodology/approach** – By examining the state of the art of the literature in both fields of study, this paper proposes a framework of theoretical approaches, conceptual dimensions, goals and objectives, processes, agents, outcomes, methods, and literature gaps.

**Findings** – There are substantial differences between management and social innovation in terms of theoretical and conceptual foundations. Although both share similarities given the relevance of technology and their focus on social relations, their generation and diffusion processes, among their other characteristics, are distinct.

**Research limitations/implications** – As this is a theoretical paper concerning innovations that involve social elements at their core, the challenge is to incorporate technological innovation into the theoretical framework. This would help empirically oriented research on more types of innovation.

**Practical implications** – The agenda of practitioners, scholars, government, and civil society should take different types of innovation into account, particularly those that go beyond technology.

**Originality/value** – This paper contributes to a better understanding of innovations that go beyond technology, by analysing innovations (i.e. management and social innovation) that involve social aspects at their core. Few researchers have analysed these types of innovations jointly.

**Keywords** Innovation, Management innovation, Social innovation, Technological innovation, Organizational innovation

**Paper type** Literature review



## Resumen

**Objetivo** – O objetivo deste artigo consiste em discutir os avanços mais recentes nos campos da inovação gerencial e da inovação social, na busca de possíveis aspectos convergentes e divergentes entre essas temáticas.

**Desenho/metodologia/abordagem** – Ao examinar o estado da arte da literatura em ambas as temáticas, propõe-se um framework de abordagens teóricas, dimensões conceituais, metas e objetivos, processos, agentes, resultados, métodos e lacunas da literatura.

**Resultados** – Há diferenças substanciais entre inovação gerencial e social em termos de fundamentos teóricos e conceituais. Embora ambas compartilhem semelhanças, dado o seu foco nas relações sociais e a relevância da tecnologia, seus processos de geração e difusão, entre outras características, são distintos.

**Limitações/implicações da pesquisa** – Como se trata de um artigo teórico sobre inovações que envolvem elementos sociais em sua essência, o desafio é incorporar a inovação tecnológica no *framework* teórico. Isso ajudaria pesquisas empiricamente orientadas sobre mais tipos de inovação.

**Implicações práticas** – A agenda de profissionais, acadêmicos, governo e sociedade civil deve levar em conta diferentes tipos de inovação, particularmente aquelas que vão além da tecnologia.

**Originalidade/valor** – Este artigo contribui para uma melhor compreensão das inovações que vão além da tecnologia, ao analisar inovações (no caso, as gerenciais e sociais) que possuem aspectos sociais como elementos centrais. Poucos pesquisadores analisaram conjuntamente esses tipos de inovações.

**Palabras clave** Inovação, Inovação Gerencial, Inovação Social, Inovação Tecnológica, Inovação Organizacional

**Tipo de documento** Trabajo de investigación

## 1. Introduction

This paper opens new possibilities to discuss the main theoretical and empirical developments in the field of innovation. Thus, it is necessary to recognise the contribution of innovation as a wider social phenomenon (Mulgan, 2006, 2007; Pol and Ville, 2009; Franz *et al.*, 2012), as well as an essential mechanism to economic development (Baumol, 2002; Tigre, 2006; Schumpeter, 1964/1997; Freeman and Perez, 1988).

In theoretical terms, the first advances in understanding innovation date back to the literature of economics. After its initial meaning was given in the 1930s by Schumpeter (1964/1997), the term innovation has been associated to economic value, but often acquires different meanings according to authors from different fields. In the mid-twentieth century, innovation studies emerged as a field of research, while many research projects aimed at generating reliable and systematic knowledge about how to influence innovation and how to fully exploit its effects (Fagerberg *et al.*, 2013).

Fifty years of academic and governmental projects focusing on science, research and development, and innovation have contributed to the formulation of public policies and to business development (Fagerberg *et al.*, 2013). In practical terms, important institutions such as OECD (2013), UNU-MERIT (2014), and IBGE (2013) recognise the progress of countries and organisations, but also the challenges to be faced along this journey.

In order to search for answers, recent research has attempted to effectively understand innovation as a topic of interest, and their results appear in new publications, such as Dodgson *et al.* (2014), Fagerberg *et al.* (2013), Franz *et al.* (2012), Macaulay *et al.* (2012), and Pitsis *et al.* (2013). Although this field of research is characterised by multidisciplinary, the concept of innovation has been traditionally related to technological innovation.

Conceptually, technological innovation involves “the situationally new development and introduction of knowledge-derived tools, artefacts, and devices by which people extend and interact with their environment” (Tornatzky and Fleischer, 1990, p. 11). An innovation is considered “technological” when it is based on or facilitated by technology. The success of a technological innovation is evaluated by commercial, rather than technical criteria (Burgelman *et al.*, 2012).

The literature on this topic recognises that social elements, together with physical ones, are inherent to technological innovation in many ways (Tornatzky and Fleischer, 1990). Furthermore, classical studies see any type of innovation as a universal process of social change. According to Rogers (2003), for example, every innovation has direct and indirect,

desirable and undesirable, anticipated and unanticipated consequences influenced by hardware, software, and social aspects. Nevertheless, it is clear that not every technological innovation is necessarily social innovation, as it will be discussed further on.

In general terms, management innovation concerns the creation or adoption of new organisational structures, management processes, and management activities and practices that are intended to improve organisational performance. In turn, social innovation regards solutions or answers to problems and needs of vulnerable people, in such a way that not only are their aspirations met and opportunities seized, but their quality of life and social relations are also improved.

At first glance, management innovation and social innovation have social systems changes, involving societies and organisations, in common. Since they focus on innovation in social systems, to what extent are there similarities between the theoretical and conceptual foundations of management innovation and social innovation? How can one analyse them, once their epistemological roots and construct are not always convergent?

To answer these questions, this paper discusses recent developments in the fields of management innovation and social innovation, in search of convergences and divergences between them. By examining the state of the art of the literature – i.e. scientific journals, books, and technical reports – in both fields of study, this theoretical paper contributes to a better understanding of innovations that go beyond technology; that is, ones with social aspects at their core.

This paper is structured as follows: the next two sections provide a theoretical overview of the main concepts, frameworks, and evidence of recent research in management innovation and social innovation. In the fourth section, we propose an integrated framework for analysing both types of innovations, including convergences and divergences. In the fifth section, the main conclusions and contributions of this paper are discussed, as well as research opportunities in this field of study.

## 2. Management innovation

Literature has been increasingly focusing on the importance of innovations that surpass the limits of technology, as in the case of management innovation discussed in this section. Although classical authors did not use the term management innovation, this kind of change can be recognised in the works by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx (Damanpour, 2002; Tigre, 2006).

Although literature has not yet found consensus on the proper terminology, management innovations involve new ways of managing and organising. Some authors refer to them as organisational or administrative innovation (Damanpour and Aravind, 2011; Damanpour, 2014), although Camisón and Villar-López (2014) argue that these terms are not interchangeable. In fact, management innovation can be seen as “one of the non-technological innovation types” (Cerne *et al.*, 2016, p. 82). Since the concepts related to management innovation are often misunderstood and research gaps exist (Volberda *et al.*, 2013), it is important to clarify the main theoretical frameworks and definitions, and to differentiate generation and diffusion processes and their consequences.

Theoretical perspectives show an increasing number of works addressing the foundations of management innovation. Lam (2005), for example, considers three approaches: organisational design theories, with a strong presence of contingency theory and industrial economics; theories of cognition and organisational learning that emphasise the micro level of the innovation process; and organisational change and adaptation theories, notably organisational ecology, institutional, evolutionary, and strategic adaptation theories.

Other authors have different, though complementary, approaches. Birkinshaw *et al.* (2008) identify institutional, fashion, cultural, and rational as key theoretical perspectives. Damanpour (2014), in turn, considers mainly the rational – including learning theories,

resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, and dynamic capabilities – as well as fashion perspective, based mostly on institutional and neo-institutional theories.

Different explanations for management innovation can be found, according to the theoretical approach used. Studies on creation examine the speed and effectiveness of management innovation development, while other works seek to understand the rate of diffusion from the innovation provider's point of view (Damanpour, 2014). There are also studies of adoption, concerned with innovation assimilation and evaluation from the user's/organisation's points of view (Damanpour, 2014).

As a matter of fact, management innovation is not a homogeneous phenomenon and should be analysed differently from other types of innovation. Such theoretical diversity is revealed by, and may also trigger, an array of concepts, such as those shown in Table I.

Common to many definitions is the goal to improve organisational performance and the focus on the social system of organisations. But management innovation concepts are singular in terms of emphasis, ranging from the generation of state-of-the-art management innovation to the adoption of management innovation as developed by another organisation. Also, they differ according to the analysis dimensions, although most regard novelties in management activities and practices, management processes, and organisational structures.

Innovations in management activities and practices are related to significant changes in “facets of the rules and routines by which work gets done inside organizations” (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008, p. 828); that is, in the work of management (Hamel, 2007). Innovations in organisational structures are those that influence, change, and improve the distribution of functions, responsibilities, accountability, command lines, and information flows (Armbruster *et al.*, 2008). Innovation also relates to management processes, such as strategic planning, budgeting, compensation, internal communication, knowledge management, among others (Hamel, 2007). Therefore, management innovation differs from innovations in operations, manufacturing, products, marketing, and strategy.

Taking these different analysis dimensions into account, it is now key to clarify generation and diffusion processes. Birkinshaw *et al.* (2008) proposed a process for generation (or creation, rather than diffusion) that involves internal and external change agents interacting with organisational and environmental contexts. According to these authors, the generation process follows a non-linear pattern due to its complex, recursive, and cyclical nature. In the first phase, motivation, there is the emergence of facilitating factors and circumstances that lead individuals to consider developing their own management innovation. Invention, the second phase, is one in which a hypothetical new practice is experimented for the first time, that is, when a new management practice emerges as a new idea or hypothetical practice. The implementation phase turns the hypothetical practice into something fully operational. The last phase, theorisation and labelling, encompasses social processes by which people inside and outside the organisation validate management innovation, looking for its legitimation.

Counter to generating something new, literature deals with the process of management innovation through diffusion and adoption perspectives. In these perspectives, innovation means something new to the adopting unit (Rogers, 2003). Thus, the process involves the stages of initiation, adoption decision, and implementation – the latter being a slower phase (Damanpour, 2014). Similarly, the Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005) suggests stages of planning, development, and implementation of organisational methods that are new to the firm. Management innovation adoption depends largely on successful diffusion. According to Damanpour (2014), the biggest issue is adaptation and assimilation, and this makes the process slower when compared to technological innovation process.

There are some challenges for researchers in the field of management innovation (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008; Volberda *et al.*, 2013; Damanpour, 2014; Cerne *et al.*, 2016). There is consensus about the need to understand the consequences of management innovation on organisational performance – profitability, productivity, growth, efficiency and

Author(s)	Concept
Daft (1978, p. 197)	"[...] pertains to recruitment policies, resource allocation, task structuring, authority and rewards"
Teece (1980, p. 464)	"[...] [refer to] improvements in administrative techniques and in the organization of economic activity"
Kimberly (1982, p. 640)	"[...] [is] any program, product or technique which represents a significant departure from the state of the art of management at the time it first appears and which affects the nature, location, quality or quantity of information that is available in the decision-making process"
Damanpour and Evan (1984, p. 394)	"[...] are] those that occur in the social system of an organization [...including] rules, roles, procedures, and structures [...]"
Damanpour (1991, p. 560)	"[...] involve organizational structure and administrative processes; they are indirectly related to the basic work activities of an organization and are more directly related to its management"
Chandler (1997, p. 48)	"[...] new methods and means of coordinating, evaluating and planning the effective use of a wide variety of human, financial and material resources"
Alänge <i>et al.</i> (1998, p. 7)	"[...] mean innovations in management practices, innovations in the administrative processes or innovations in the formal organizational structure"
Nickell <i>et al.</i> (2001, p. 6, 10)	"[...] management practices, innovations in the administrative processes or innovations in the formal organizational structure"
Mikl-Horke (2004, p. 104, 106)	"[...] new principles, practices, organizational designs, theories of leadership, or even quasi-philosophical concepts like the recent "Six Sigma" principle"
Hamel (2007, p. 19)	"[...] anything that substantially alters the way in which the work of management is carried out [principles and practices], or that significantly modifies customary organizational forms [structures and functions]"
Birkinshaw <i>et al.</i> (2008, p. 825)	"[...] invention and implementation of a management practice, process, structure or technique that is new to the state of the art and is intended to further organizational goals"
Damanpour and Aravind (2011, p. 429)	"[...] new approaches in knowledge for performing the work of management and new processes that produce changes in the organization's strategy, structure, administrative procedures, and systems"
Vaccaro <i>et al.</i> (2012, p. 30)	"[...] new managerial processes, practices, or structures that change the nature of managerial work"
Volberda <i>et al.</i> (2013, p. 1)	"[...] consists of changing a firm's organizational form, practices and processes in a way that is new to the firm and/or industry, and results in leveraging the firm's technological knowledge base and its performance in terms of innovation, productivity and competitiveness"
Camisón and Villar-López (2014, p. 2892)	"The present study uses the terminology and definition proposed by the OECD [Oslo Manual] [...] as the implementation of a new organizational method in a firm's business practices, workplace organization, or external relationships"
Damanpour (2014, p. 1269)	"[...] the development and use of new approaches for performing the work of management, new organizational strategy and structure, and new processes that produce changes in the organization's managerial procedures and administrative systems"
Lin and Su (2014, p. 86)	"[...] introduction and implementation of an existing or mature management practice, process, structure, or technique that has been not only implemented somewhere else successfully but also intended to improve operation efficiency and organizational performance and further organizational goals"
<b>Note:</b> These concepts were compiled from literature review and refer to management innovation, organisational innovation, and administrative innovation	

**Table I.**  
Concepts of  
management  
innovation

effectiveness of processes, and sustainable competitive advantage, among others, given that such consequences are complex and affect stakeholders differently (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008). By analysing empirical findings of previous research, Walker *et al.* (2015) confirm that management innovation positively affects performance. According to Damanpour (2014), several studies indicate that the contribution of this kind of innovation to firm performance depends upon the adoption of multiple interdependent and synchronous types of innovations. Camisón and Villar-López (2014), for example, suggest that managers should

pay attention to potentially positive joint effects between management innovation and product/process innovation capabilities in firm performance.

From another perspective, it is necessary to investigate soft consequences, such as those identified by Volberda *et al.* (2013): turnover, customer satisfaction, environmental impact, employee motivation, satisfaction, participation, happiness, and health. Consequence analysis may offer clues on possible convergences between management and social innovation. To address this and other issues, the next section brings in a detailed discussion on social innovation.

### 3. Social innovation

The term “social innovation” entered the agendas of some research groups and governments in the 1980s, when innovation turned out to be an answer to the failures and inconsistencies of neo-liberal models worldwide (Klein, 2013). There are multiple approaches focusing on the impact of innovation regarding life quality and social development.

Bignetti (2011) credits the emergence of this research topic to the rise of courses and research programs such as those given by Stanford, Harvard, and Brown (the USA), *Centre de Recherche sur les Innovations Sociales* (CRISES, Canada), The Business School for the World (INSEAD, France), and the University of Cambridge (the UK). Bignetti (2011) also mentions initiatives such as Emerging User Demands for Sustainable Solutions, Consumer Citizenship Network, Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles, and Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in Social Services, in Europe.

Parente *et al.* (2014) point to Ashoka’s pioneering introduction of innovation as a concept for social intervention. Ashoka has supported social entrepreneurs who act in a Schumpeterian sense, leading to systemic social change. Other initiatives have later supported and financed individuals in a similar way, such as Echoing Green, as well as Skoll and Schwab Foundations. These initiatives recognise individuals who stand out in developing new and better ways of responding to social problems or needs.

Still, Defourny and Nyssens (2013) argue that Chambon *et al.* (1982) pioneered research on social innovation. Canadians are also considered pioneers, starting from the Science, Technology, and Innovation Council investigations in 1997. Later, in 2000, their findings culminated in a final report entitled “Innovation sociale et innovation technologique: l’apport de la recherche en sciences sociales et humaines” (Ezponda and Malillos, 2011). In this report, social innovation refers to new practices, approaches, or interventions, and even new products, developed for improving a situation or solving a social problem within institutions, organisations, and communities (CST, 2000).

The new concept has the distinctive aspect of “new ways of doing things with the explicit purpose of rearranging social roles or responding to unsatisfactory and problematic social situations” (Rodrigues, 2007, p. 118). It emphasises actions aimed at satisfying human needs that are unmet by public or private institutions and organisations. Quebec cooperatives (Canada) can be regarded as social innovators, because they involve users’ participation in implementing innovations. Their work is based on principles of mutual aid, self-management, and collective participation.

By approaching social innovation more specifically, the previously mentioned studies were key to assisting government actions and institutions devoted to social development. For example, Young Foundation publications influenced Tony Blair’s political strategy in 2006 (Ezponda and Malillos, 2011). At the time, he created the third-sector office that promoted the social enterprise action plan. Likewise, Goldenberg’s (2004) work has also influenced other European institutions, such as Sweden’s innovation agency Vinnova, which has taken the Canadian innovation policy as a reference point. Under the influence of Canadian and Britain studies and initiatives, social innovation support and funding programs were also established in the USA, Australia, and New Zealand (Ezponda and Malillos, 2011).

Frazão *et al.* (2015) argue that social innovation processes must meet two requirements to be considered as such. The first is novelty, although social innovation need not necessarily be unique or original. Indeed, it should be perceived as something new to the user, territory, sector, or intervention area. The second requirement is improvement: a social innovation process or outcome must be more effective or efficient than the existing alternatives.

It is worth noting, however, that social innovation may have two different meanings. On the one hand, authors like Mulgan (2007), Pol and Ville (2009), and Ezponda and Malillos (2011) emphasise the innovation purpose, i.e. solving collective problems, rather than the agents or the ways in which it was conceived and developed. Works in this perspective focus on models and programs that have social impact and that are replicable to other contexts. On the other hand, authors such as Klein (2013) and Moulaert *et al.* (2013) consider the innovation purpose, but refer primarily to the innovative process, asserting that it arises from activities in collaborative networks.

It is also noteworthy that these notions of social innovation are associated with civil society actions and non-profit organisations, but they can be expanded to public and business sectors as well. Through collaboration, the three sectors together are more likely to generate social innovation (Ezponda and Malillos, 2011; Hernández and Sánchez, 2014). Social innovations begin within a sector and can later migrate to others, but the most exciting ones occur at the boundaries (Mulgan, 2010). Indeed, according to Mulgan (2007, 2010), social innovations are rarely just top-down or bottom-up. There is the need for partnership among small organisations, groups, and individuals (for their creativity, mobility, and speed), and large organisations such as governments, companies, and non-profit institutions. Although these organisations are usually less creative, they are more capacitated towards implementation, resilience, and promptness to make things happen.

In order to be “social”, the new idea intrinsic to innovation must have the potential to improve beneficiaries’ quality or quantity of life. It affects the “macro quality” of life, referred to by Pol and Ville (2009, p. 17) as “the set of valuable options that a group of people has the opportunity to select”. Then, the innovation goal moves from isolated individuals to communities.

Similarly to management innovation, social innovation has many definitions. Based on a hand search of key journals and grey literature from 1970s to 2011, Edwards-Schachter *et al.* (2012) found 76 different concepts. Recent definitions that conceptually reflect the plurality of social innovation are presented in Table II. At first sight, an analysis of these definitions suggests no evolution pattern in terms of concept. Emphases vary around (sometimes incoherent) notions of satisfying collective needs, adoption of socially creative strategies, collective creation processes involving learning mechanisms, and new organisational forms. Also, some definitions stress social innovation as new products, services, and processes that result in profound changes of basic routines, resources, and beliefs of a social system, or even improvements of social well-being, sustainability, and capacity for social action.

In a recent study, Parente *et al.* (2014) present a conceptual proposal in line with TEPSIE (Theoretical and Empirical Foundations), a research effort by European institutions targeted to developing the field of social innovation, by understanding its theoretical, empirical, and policy foundations. For TEPSIE, social innovation is a distinct sub-type of innovation; is new to the unit of adoption; leads to specific outcomes which are a measurable improvement on existing practices; can occur in any sector and often cuts across different sectors; has various stages and phases; is context specific; is not value neutral; has a product or content dimension as well as a process dimension; changes social relations with regard to governance; enhances societal resilience; and increases beneficiaries socio-political capabilities and access to resources (empowerment dimension) (Caulier-Grice *et al.*, 2012, p. 16).

Based on these characteristics, Parente *et al.* (2014) argue that social innovation, among other elements, is at the heart of social entrepreneurship, where innovation has the crucial mission of including vulnerable social groups by promoting collective interaction

Author(s)	Concept
Nilsson (2003, p. 3)	"A significant, creative, and sustainable shift in the way that a given society dealt with a profound and previously intractable problem such as poverty, disease, violence, or environmental deterioration"
Goldenberg (2004, p. 1)	"The term 'social innovation' is used to denote the development and application of new or improved activities, initiatives, services, processes, or products designed to address social and economic challenges faced by individuals and communities"
André and Abreu (2006, p. 124)	"[...] any new response enjoying social recognition that both seeks and achieves social change while fulfilling three criteria: i) the satisfaction of human needs not met through market mechanisms; ii) the advancement of social inclusion; and iii) the empowerment of agents or actors that are actually or potentially subject to processes of social exclusion/marginalisation, thereby triggering changes of varying intensity in power relations"
Phills <i>et al.</i> (2008, p. 38)	"Novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals"
Pol and Ville (2009, p. 884)	"We have proposed a new definition of 'desirable social innovation' based on the creation of new ideas displaying a positive impact on the quality and/or quantity of life"
Mulgan (2010, p. 56)	"New ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations"
Bignetti (2011, p. 4)	"Results of knowledge applied to social needs through participation and cooperation of all stakeholders, thus creating new and lasting solutions to social groups, communities or society in general"
Bouchard (2012, p. 51)	"An intervention initiated by social actors to respond to an aspiration, to meet specific needs, to offer a solution or to take advantage of an opportunity for action in order to modify social relations, transform a framework for action, or propose new cultural orientations"
Klein <i>et al.</i> (2012, p. 11)	"Social innovation concerns the implementation of new social and institutional arrangements, new forms of resource mobilization, new answers to problems for which available solutions have proven inadequate or new social aspirations (eg. autonomy and empowerment)"
Oliveira and Breda-Vázquez (2012, p. 522)	"Social innovation, therefore, meaning the application of creativity to social purposes"
Defourny and Nyssens (2013, p. 40)	"The satisfaction of human needs, the relations between humans in general and between social groups in particular, and the empowerment of people trying to fulfil their needs"
European Commission (2013, p. 6)	"The development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals' capacity to act"
Mehmood and Parra (2013, p. 54)	"Self-conscious collective action that seeks to address the unsatisfied needs for sustainable development"
Moulaert <i>et al.</i> (2013, p. 16)	"Progressive solutions for a whole range of problems of exclusion, deprivation, alienation, lack of well-being, and also to those actions that contributive positively to significant human progress and development"
Buckland and Murillo (2014, p. 58)	"New ideas that solve social problems and create social value"
Pue <i>et al.</i> (2016, p. 2)	"A process encompassing the emergence and adoption of socially creative strategies, which reconfigure social relations in order to actualize a given social goal"

**Note:** These concepts were compiled from literature review and refer mainly to the term social innovation

**Table II.**  
Concepts of social  
innovation

within the territory. Differently from Pue *et al.* (2016, p. 2), whose concept of social innovation emphasises on a process that encompasses the emergence and adoption of socially creative strategies, Parente *et al.* (2014) define this type of innovation as an intervention model that integrates two dimensions: the innovation process and its results or outcomes.



The process dimension focuses on collective “ways of doing”, through individuals’ training and strengthening of groups in networks and partnerships, in an empowerment fashion that leads to local territory development (Parente *et al.*, 2014). The second dimension focuses on interventions’ results or outcomes, which, however often immaterial and intangible, can be measured through indicators such as scale, range, and replicability. It is also necessary to recall the target population’s perception about the quality and effects of social innovation.

Mulgan (2010) and Murray *et al.* (2010) propose a six-stage model for the social innovation process. The first stage relates to prompts, inspirations, and diagnosis that signal the need for innovation. These factors may be crisis, poor performance, strategy, or even creative inspiration and new evidence that stimulate change. In this stage, it is essential to find the root causes of problems (not only their symptoms) and the best ways to solve them. The second stage seeks to generate ideas through formal methods for insight and experience analyses. These ideas are tested in practice during stage 3, either through trial and error or by means of pilots, prototypes, and controlled tests. Interactions during this stage strengthen coalitions and conflicts are addressed. In the sustaining stage, ideas are converted into routine practices and innovation proponents find ways to (financially) sustain and scale it. The scaling stage outlines strategies for innovation growth and diffusion. Finally, systemic change is the last goal of enduring social innovation and involves interactions of various elements within a “social ecosystem” (Pue *et al.*, 2016, p. 2; Buckland and Murillo, 2014, p. 58). According to Murray *et al.* (2010, p. 13), these elements comprise “social movements, business models, laws and regulations, data and infrastructures, and entirely new ways of thinking and doing”.

#### **4. Convergences and divergences between management innovation and social innovation**

These theories and approaches on management innovation and social innovation provide aspects that converge and diverge between the two. Convergences may accrue from the suggestion that many social innovations require a high degree of management innovation. However, the emphasis on outcomes beyond initial purposes makes social innovation a broader concept. It involves not only managerial aspects, but also conditioning factors related to innovation ambitions and results. Indeed, it can be said that social innovations require a certain level of management innovation. But not all management innovations, despite involving changes in social relations, hold the qualities of social innovation.

If, on the one hand, theoretical approaches to management innovation allow for the analysis of firms’ internal (e.g. RBV) and external environments (e.g. contingency theory), on the other hand, social innovations can only be analysed when their beneficiaries are considered (Frazão *et al.*, 2015). Hence, it is methodologically impossible to limit social innovation to internal analysis. Furthermore, while theoretical approaches of management innovation have a strong foundation in instrumental rationality, substantive rationality makes more sense when it comes to analysing social innovation.

Institutional analysis is explored in order to understand both concepts, given the particularities of each one. Although with reservations (Damanpour, 2014), institutional analysis helps to explain management innovation diffusion processes, as well as innovation in organisational structures. As for social innovation, such analyses assist in interpreting changes while making use of both internal and external resources, as well as in political and power relations of a given territory. They emphasise elements which are not only related to merely generating values, but to shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2011), thus facilitating and resulting in social practice learnt from integrating organisations and their environment. Thus, studies on social innovation are mostly conducted in organisations where collaborative practices take place (Klein, 2013).

Concerning the main conceptual dimensions, management innovations focus on changes in organisational structures, management processes, activities, and practices. In addition, social innovations present dimensions that refer to the involvement of various actors, scaling effects, power relations, resources, social practice learning, and nature of innovation, as well as its economic, political, social, and environmental impact.

In terms of goals, while management innovation authors highlight organisational performance improvement, social innovation theoreticians tackle social and public well-being issues by solving unanswered social problems. As much as social innovation allows for profit making in its conception, it is imperative to generate social value, improve life quality, and promote sustainable development. It is noteworthy that management innovations may include the goals of other stakeholders' interests, such as increasing customer and employee satisfaction, improving the quality of management processes and inter-organisational relationships, besides organisational performance, to name a few examples.

When looking at the processes through which innovations come about, theorists of both fields regard creation and diffusion as highly critical. As for management innovation, creation involves internal and external actors in stages such as motivation, invention, implementation, and theorising/labelling (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008). The adoption of management innovation that has already been created or is being diffused involves stages of decision making, planning, adaptation, and implementation. In this case, it also implicates internal and external actors, but with different roles from those who participate in creation. Instead, the social innovation process ranges from conceiving and developing to sustaining and scaling up to achieve systemic change. This process is contextually local and territorial, involving diverse internal and external actors (Mulgan, 2006, 2010; Oliveira and Breda-Vázquez, 2012; Buckland and Murillo, 2014).

Partnerships between a wide range of stakeholders, whether internal or external to an organisation, are implied in the concepts of management and social innovation. In the former, agents may assume hybrid roles in different moments, for example, as a consultant or as a manager. In the latter, the need for partnerships is basilar, requiring the joint actions of non-profit organisations, the state, civil society organisations, families, and leaders, which are key to achieving truly systemic changes (Pol and Ville, 2009; Mulgan, 2010; Klein, 2013).

As it may be observed from their results and consequences, both types of innovations are extremely complex, and efforts to innovate may be unsuccessful in both cases. In particular, management innovation can involve measures of hard performance outcomes but also the softer, tacit, and hard-to-measure ones, like those affecting employees and other stakeholders (Volberda *et al.*, 2013). Social innovation outcomes depend on its level of absorption and institutionalisation, and they can be perceived in new forms of organisation and social relations, new (or improved) products, services, laws, rules, procedures, models, strategies, and programs. Social innovation outcomes also include advances in welfare, sustainability, social and political inclusion, as well as life quality, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Moreover, further innovation waves are also mentioned as outcomes (André and Abreu, 2006; Pol and Ville, 2009; Mulgan, 2010; Hart *et al.*, 2015).

Methodological pluralism, marked by different analysis and abstraction levels, characterises research on both types of innovation. Thorough research has explained generation, diffusion, and adoption processes. Management and social innovation researches have also employed longitudinal research and in-depth case studies (Volberda *et al.*, 2013; Pitsis *et al.*, 2013). However, management innovation researchers are interested in large-scale international comparative surveys based on standardised measures, such as those from the Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005), although Damanpour (2014) points out some of their limitations. As for social innovation, researchers focus on its context of development, including factors that facilitate implementation and the resonance of successful experiences (Parente *et al.*, 2014).

Finally, with regard to literature gaps, there are many opportunities to advance research on both management and social innovation. Volberda *et al.* (2013) and Damanpour (2014) highlight the need to integrate theories, define clearer concepts, investigate interactions between management innovation and technological innovation, and adequately capture generation processes. Future research on social innovation should evaluate environmental conditions that favour sustainability and innovation diffusion; implement policies that encourage new ways of aligning diverse interests and actors; analyse the most appropriate approaches to optimise resources; and understand characteristics of social innovation that ease its diffusion (Oliveira and Breda-Vázquez, 2012). Pue *et al.* (2016) also emphasise that socially creative strategies' funders, when pursuing social impact maximisation, need more accurate information on how social innovation occurs and what obstacles may prevent well-succeeded socially creative strategies.

The main convergences and divergences discussed here are synthesised in Table III. This framework was built according to the following criteria: theoretical approaches, conceptual dimensions, goals, processes, agents, outcomes, methods, and literature gaps of management and social innovation.

## 5. Conclusions

According to the previously mentioned discussions, there have been substantial works on innovations that hold social elements at their core. Scholars from both management innovation and social innovation fields have advanced in their attempts to overcome research gaps, though there are still many others to be understood. In fact, multiple theoretical approaches are common to both fields. Regardless of their convergence (e.g. institutional and fashion theories), these approaches are reflected in a variety of definitions of management and social innovation. This kind of theoretical and conceptual pluralism, however, still causes confusion: sometimes there are difficulties in reaching consensual conclusions, therefore hindering advancement in a particular field.

It is clear that technology remains an important facet of management and social innovation. Technological innovation can be seen, for example, as a requirement, a facilitating factor, or a promoter of both types of innovation. Both these types of innovation can stimulate the creation of new technologies to innovate in social relations, either within organisations or more generally throughout society. On the one hand, management innovation may emphasise, for example, changes supported by information technologies that result in new organisational structures or relationships. On the other, social innovation that implies technologies requires the understanding of their goals and implementation impact.

Therefore, it is necessary to deepen this discussion and find empirical evidence about interactions between technological, management, and social innovations. At first glance, these types of innovation have distinct processes at their base because they intervene in different areas.

This paper has, however, shown that, as for the two types of innovation, there may be convergences in conceptual dimensions, goals, processes, agents, outcomes, and methods, among all of them. This being said, the challenge is to incorporate technology innovation into the theoretical framework.

As much as theories propose stages for the processes of management and social innovation, it is also necessary to understand stimulating and restrictive factors. Understanding the specificities of each process becomes necessary, given the substantial differences in the idiosyncrasies of generation and diffusion, in the attributes and outcomes of innovations. Innovations produce different impacts, in line with their characteristics and specific contexts. It is noteworthy that every innovation can have positive and negative impacts, depending on its results and according to particular points of view.

Criteria	Management innovation Singularity	Convergences	Social innovation Singularity
Theoretical approaches	Macro vs micro approaches Instrumental rationality, institutional and cultural Organisational design, cognition and organisational learning, organisational change and adaptation	Internal and external analysis (i.e. institutional, fashion, rational, and learning, though with their specifics)	Processes vs impact approaches Substantive and territorial rationality Creating shared value, social practice learning Networked and collaborative organisations, social ecosystem Collaborative processes, diversity of actors and use of resources Generation of new products, services, standards, rules, procedures, models, strategies, and programs Socially creative strategies Economic, political, social, and environmental impact
Conceptual dimensions	Organisational structure Management processes Management activities and practices	Conceptual diversity Organisational structures and processes New to the world vs new to the unit of adoption	Improve social and public well-being by solving unanswered social problems Profit making and not for profit innovations Emphasis on ends rather than means
Goals	Advance organisational goals Improve organisational performance Satisfy interests of employees, customers, and other stakeholders Emphasis on means to come to ends	Change in social relations Depart from problems, needs, or opportunities	Conception, development, sustain, scaling up, and systemic change Innovation activities are contextually and locally based
Processes	Generation: motivation, invention, implementation, theorisation, and labelling Adoption: initiation, adoption decision, planning, development, and implementation	Generation and diffusion as critical Non-linear processes Technology is incorporated in the processes	
Agents	Internal change agents: managers and employees External change agents: consultants, academics, gurus, and pioneers Roles differ according to stages and actors may have hybrid roles	Multiple internal and external agents Actors have specific roles Partnerships	For profit organisations State Civil society organisations, non-profit Families Community leaders
Outcomes	Affects stakeholders differently Tacit and complex consequences Hard (e.g. profitability, effectiveness) vs soft outcomes (e.g. environmental impact, participation, employee, and customer satisfaction)	Tangible and intangible outcomes Successful vs unsuccessful innovation	Depends on innovation's absorption or institutionalisation Outcomes beyond initial purpose (e.g. welfare, sustainability, social and political inclusion, quality of life) May result in new waves of innovation Obsolescence when problem is solved
Methods	Large-scale international comparative surveys	Methodological pluralism Different levels of analysis and abstraction in line with generation, adoption, or diffusion processes Longitudinal research and in-depth case studies	Contextually oriented methods towards innovation development Avoidance of ethnocentric replication, thus facilitating resonance of successful experiences

(continued)

**Table III.**  
Convergences and  
divergences between  
management  
innovation and  
social innovation

Table III.

Criteria	Management innovation Singularity	Convergences	Social innovation Singularity
Literature gaps	Lack of theoretical integration, established typology, processes and clear attributes As generation is a rare phenomenon, its research is more difficult Analysis of interdependent and synchronous innovations (e.g. management vs technological) Impact on organisational performance	Clarification of conceptual boundaries Assessment of resources favourable to innovation	Assessment of environmental conditions that favour social innovation sustainability and diffusion Understand new ways of aligning diverse interests and actors, and optimising resources Realise characteristics of social innovation that ease its diffusion

In this respect, it is possible to see significant differences between the goals and outcomes of management and social innovations. These differences may signal the need for improvements in the concept of management innovation. It should go beyond hard goals/outcomes and definitively prioritise softer ones that incorporate, for example, external stakeholders' interests.

These concerns lead to new issues that deserve in-depth studies. For example, with growing social control and stakeholders' involvement, are some management innovations close to what defines a social innovation? That is, when does management innovation become social innovation? Similarly, when does a particular technological innovation turn into social innovation? Would these be, in most cases, compatible constructs? After all, it is clear that some kinds of technological innovation can be simultaneously viewed as social innovation and vice versa. Indeed, convergences in methods may represent a good sign of compatibility between them, thus encouraging joint research efforts, at least for management and social innovations.

Future studies should explore the issues discussed in this paper. Particularly, researchers should address the literature gaps for each type of innovation discussed here, aiming at clarifying conceptual boundaries and resources that favour innovation processes. In addition, researchers should collect and analyse empirical data that integrate technological, management, and social innovations. All of them are relevant, each in its own way, to the extent that they are already on the agenda of practitioners, scholars, governments, and the civil society. The challenge is to promote coordinated discussions among experts from several areas in order to complement different points of view, according to common analysis criteria.

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