UNIVERSIDAD DEL ROSARIO

RENNES SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL INNOVATION: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN. SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM: HIGHLIGHTS FROM COLOMBIA AND FRANCE

Graduating Project

STEFFANY, Lenis Salcedo

Bogota, Colombia / Rennes, Francia

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Steffany Lenis Salcedo
Mayo 26, 2020

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Steffany Lenis Salcedo
Mayo 26, 2020

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Abstract

Social problems have always shown a challenge to solve; certain with more urgency than others. However, although there are currently new tools and opportunities to solve them, a more holistic view of these problems is still needed to arrive at a more effective and efficient solution. A relatively new phenomenon within the academy is focused on the study of diverse ecosystems and their behaviors. Following this logic, through collaboration and human networks, all the actors within an ecosystem are empowered and thus participate in the search for a solution. Social innovation ecosystems are a comprehensive tool that helps to understand not only the interactions between all the actors involved, but also the complexity inherent in any innovation ecosystem. Furthermore, social entrepreneurship companies such as Ashoka, show the role of organizations within the Social Innovation Ecosystem and how they can participate in solving these social problems; notwithstanding, in this work it is highlighted that the roles of traditional companies or companies with other approaches are also fundamental for the success of the ecosystem. It is highly important to understand the institutional context and how it can affect complex networks that ultimately affect the success of the ecosystem. Additionally, due to the complexity of these social issues, it is also important to highlight and consider the institutional differences in each country that help all the actors involved and policy makers to implement effective and place-based solutions.

Keywords
Social Innovation, (Innovation) Ecosystems, Institutional Theory, Social Entrepreneurship

Resumen

Las problemáticas sociales siempre han representado un reto a resolver. Sin embargo, aunque actualmente hay nuevas herramientas y oportunidades para resolverlas, aún hace falta una mirada más holística de estos problemas para así llegar a una solución más efectiva y de manera más eficaz. Un fenómeno relativamente nuevo dentro de la academia se está enfocando en el estudio de diversos ecosistemas y sus comportamientos. Siguiendo esta lógica, a través de la colaboración y redes humanas, todos los actores dentro de un ecosistema se logran empoderar y de esta manera, participar en la búsqueda de una solución. Los ecosistemas de Inovación Social son una herramienta integral que ayuda a entender no solo las interacciones entre todos los actores involucrados, sino también la complejidad inherente en cualquier ecosistema de innovación. Por otro lado, empresas de emprendimiento social como Ashoka, permiten mostrar el rol de las organizaciones dentro del Ecosistema de Innovación Social y cómo estas pueden participar en la solución de estas problemáticas sociales; sin embargo, en este trabajo se resalta que los roles de las empresas tradicionales o con otros enfoques también son fundamentales para el desarrollo óptimo del ecosistema. Es de vital importancia entender el contexto institucional y cómo este puede afectar las redes humanas complejas y a la larga el éxito del ecosistema. Adicionalmente, es importante también resaltar las diferencias institucionales de cada país que ayudan a todos los actores involucrados y a los creadores de políticas para así implementar soluciones efectivas y adaptadas al lugar de aplicación.

Palabras Claves
Innovación social, Ecosistemas (de innovación), Teoría Institucional, Emprendimiento Social

1. Introduction

Social challenges such as poverty, urban mobility, inequity, global warming and the lack of education are of increasing importance today. Thus, the need to find innovative solutions for these social problems is becoming very prominent in the literature and in the empirical field. There are different approaches that this problematic could be addressed; for instance, Social Innovation (SI) could offer its contribution with a central aim to revitalize the social aspects of innovation considering not only a technological view but also a holistic view of innovation (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016).

In this sense, technological and social innovations are simultaneously enhanced to create a positive impact on the well-being of a society. So far SI literature remains scattered among different fields such as urban and regional development, public policy, management, social psychology, and social entrepreneurship (Cajaiba-santana, 2014). That is why many of its aspects remain unclear. Social Entrepreneurship (SE) centers on triggering social outcomes for a group of stakeholders (or community), and therefore, in this particular case, the focus relies on the way how SI can be tackled and enabled through SE (Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017).

However, the potential of SI per se, might be questionable due to the high complexity of social challenges, which should not be underestimated (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). Usually, with these social issues come along political and economic instabilities, historical or cultural backgrounds or even geographical voids. For instance, developing countries in South America, evidently face more issues than European countries due to their geographical complexity, which might represent an obstacle in the implementation of an innovation. Furthermore, this complexity within any SI involves interdependencies between diverse

actors such as government, NGO's, citizens, firms, and social entrepreneurs. Notwithstanding, the interests, goals, and expectations may vary from actor to actor leading to possible incongruences or misunderstandings (Phillips *et al.*, 2015). In order to overcome these issues, there is a need to understand these interactions with an holistic perspective, where not only formal institutions as rules are relevant, but also informal institutions as shared values, principles, communication and collaboration are key to form a sustainable system (Purtik and Arenas, 2017).

Ecosystem theory embraces a larger scope and consequently, this theoretical background would be relevant in addressing SI to fully understand its dynamics (Phillips *et al.*, 2015; Gomes *et al.*, 2016; Avelino *et al.*, 2017; Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017). However, while Innovation Ecosystem has been studied (Gomes, Facin, Salerno and Ikenami, 2016; Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a); the specific case of SI has not received much attention from an ecosystem perspective.

Another relevant point is that, as well as innovation ecosystems, SI is highly interconnected and complementary to its territory. Consequently, institutional context is embedded within the territory and these institutions could potentially enable or hinder any type of innovation, specially SI (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). This adds more complexity and therefore, SI's outcomes differ whether it is applied on a developed or developing country, due to its institutional differences (Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017; Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017; Paolo, Lima and Paroutis, 2018).

In order to shed some light into the overlooked aspects of SI and SE, this study focuses on exploring the effectiveness of the implementation of SI and SE from an (innovation) ecosystem perspective considering the differences across countries by addressing the next research question: <u>What is the role of Social Innovation from a Social Entrepreneurship perspective within a multicultural (innovation) Ecosystem?</u>

The path will be as follows: firstly, this research question is going to be tackled from a theoretical background in order to define the concepts and its connections (Figure 1). Namely, we part from institutional theories and the relation with SI; and simultaneously we address the territorial ecosystem approach, following the rationale of different authors that will be discussed in the process of the article. Afterwards, we connect SI and the (innovation) ecosystem perspective regarding three important focuses: (a) One of the clusters identified by van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016), namely: the cluster of social and societal challenges; (b) the structuration perspective stated by Cajaiba-santana (2014), relating an agentic focus (usually Social Entrepreneurship) and the importance of the context, and; (c) both the social and technological innovations within one of the main types of ecosystems i.e. innovation ecosystem (Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a). Finally, through this conceptual relation we define Social Innovation Ecosystem and highlight how this approach varies according the territory in which it is applied both theoretically and empirically.

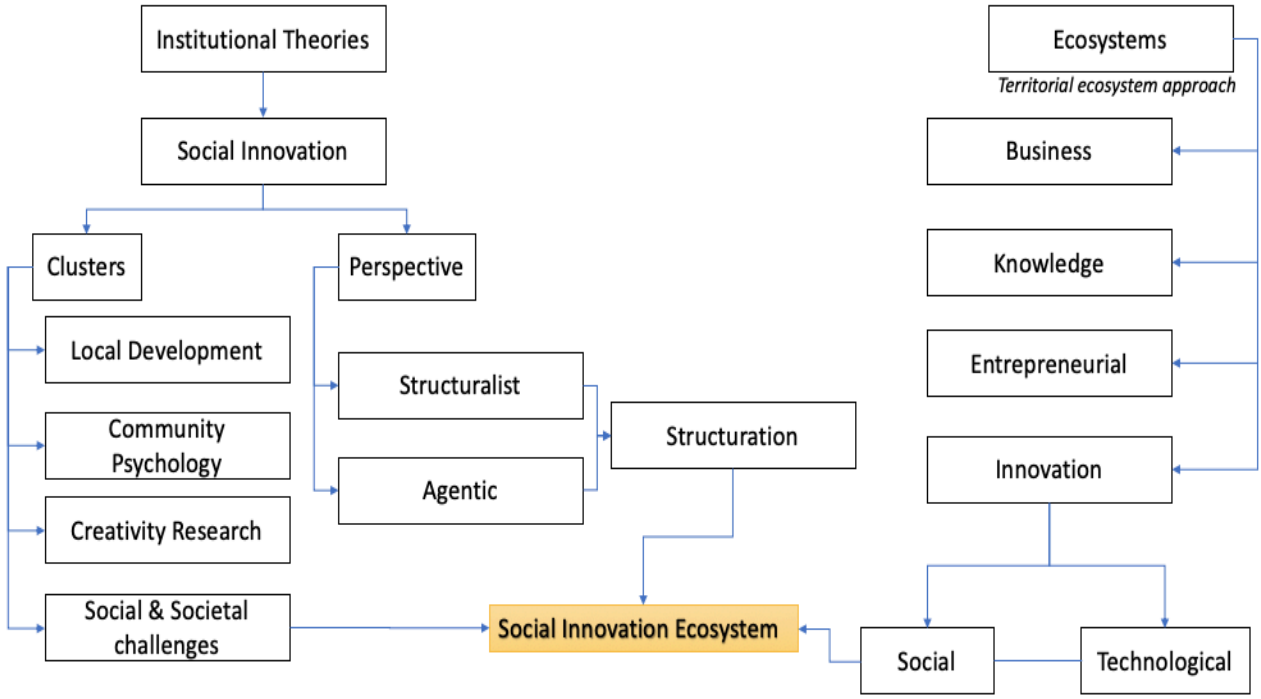

Figure 1. Model and interconnections that make up the SIE

Source: Author's own work

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Social Innovation (SI)

Although the definition of SI is scattered among diverse fields, the core definition relies on a social change enabling the well-being of a population with unmet needs (Pol and Ville, 2009; Moulaert, Maccallum and Mehmood, 2014). However, the complexity of SI may be one barrier to accomplish an integrative solution towards social issues that the world is facing today (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). In order to understand SI is necessary to understand all the complexity around it. In this sense, one of the outcomes of SI is the change on social structures (Cajaiba-santana, 2014; Moulaert, Maccallum and Mehmood, 2014).

Change is not always easy to manage or implement and it inevitably carries change aversion from some involved actors (Wijk *et al.*, 2018) who are embedded in a specific context. For instance, at the consumer level, changes on products and services towards a more sustainable and social approach requires changes in habits, and ways of living and being (Wijk *et al.*, 2018) which sometimes are hard to implement.

Accordingly, SI may not be good for everyone. In other words, while SI may act as a helpful tool for some groups that were before somehow neglected or excluded from society that faced difficulties; it may affect undesirably other groups due to the changes that inevitably appear within the social structures (Cajaiba-santana, 2014). For instance, governments or receiving refugees in a country that might bring social conflicts. Regarding these issues, the importance of a collaborative network, such as co-creation, education and inclusion, enables adaptability considering these uncomfortable changes.

Furthermore, this complexity is greater due to the participation of different factors, such as institutions, governments, firms, charities, NGO's, policy makers, consumers and social

entrepreneurs, that are interdependent and crucial for the succes of SI. Consequently, SI could impact different sectors and fields that affect different actors creating *"*issue fields thus typically feature participants with very different norms, beliefs, practices and other institutions, as they often remain embedded in their (different) home exchange fields*"* (Wijk *et al.*, 2018. p. 14).

One useful tool to overcome misunderstandings and incongruences coming from the different goals and expectations of these multiple actors, are partnerships presented as cross-sectoral or private-public relationships (Phillips *et al.*, 2015; Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017). In this sense, collaboration between different and yet not related sectors could make agreements that could benefit both parties aiming always for a positive social impact. Furthermore, the specific case of private-public partnership could efficiently work in a developing country where usually institutions are represented as weak and therefore, joining public and private parties could bring innovative social solutions overcoming these institutional voids (Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017).

Cajaiba-santana (2014) identifies two different perspectives of social innovation: the context- dependent or structuralist approach and the individual or agentic approach. However, both the agentic and the structuralist (cultural, historical and territorial) matter and inevitably affect SI. In this sense, the author remarks the importance of both perspectives by unifying them into what he calls "structuration perspective" as it: "highlights how social systems and social structures are iteratively and reciprocally created by agents who are both constrained and empowered by institutions" (Cajaiba-santana, 2014. p. 47).

Social entrepreneurs usually play a role under the agentic perspective and institution theory under the umbrella of the structural perspective. This structuration perspective considers the relation between the agents and its context and therefore, the dynamics of SI are clearer (Cajaiba-santana, 2014).

Furthermore, Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016), through a bibliographic coupling, divide SI into four different clusters defining each one with different approaches: Community Psychology (purple cluster), Creativity Research (red cluster), Social and Societal Challenges (blue cluster), and Local development (green cluster). Following these clusters' identification from SI, they state that all clusters are somehow interconnected. Nonetheless, the strongest relationship within clusters is presented between the blue cluster (social & societal challenges) and the green cluster (local development).

The connection between the geographical context and the social challenges has not been explicitly addressed and that is why the focus relies on the blue cluster in this work. This is particularly relevant thus, by local development the authors imply local changes, the role of governance institutions and their relationship with the community through empowerment, participation, inclusion and social change of the citizens (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), which is going to be highlighted later on with the importance of institutional theory on SI. Accordingly, this strong relationship between both clusters, remark the importance of the context and the territory in order to address social innovation.

2.2. Social Entrepreneur

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) gives an economic background to SI. Investors and other actors are more attracted when not only philanthropic innovations are considered but also its economic profitability, as what Turker and Altuntas (2017) referred the commercial logics of SI.

Consequently, SE is defined through the lenses of a bifocal perspective or double bottom line view in order to attempt economic and social outcomes simultaneously (Pol and Ville, 2009; Phillips *et al.*, 2015). Social entrepreneurs or 'the actor' (Turker and Altuntas, 2017) is

the agent that facilitates SI; as well as intermediary organizations and transnational networks, act as crucial nodes connecting different agents (Avelino *et al.*, 2017) in order to have simultaneously positive social and economic advantages.

One of the current challenges that some Social Innovation companies face, and that we could see on the interviews made to some of them, was the problem of funding or investment on SI initiatives. Therefore, if SI is shown to be profitable, this could help gain more funding.

Correspondingly, social enterprises could have better scalability and less costs through this shared value creation from the SE perspective rather than with pure social approaches (Shaw and Bruin, 2013). In this sense, social entrepreneurs need to interact not only with NGO's, charities or the government but also with the market forces involving commercial practices. All of these interactions (social, public sector, commercial) are highly institutionally embedded and represent a crucial point of the success of SI (Turker and Altuntas, 2017).

As shown in Figure 1, the focus on this article relies on the blue cluster from Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016) or the service cluster as Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017) later called, which is highly related with SE studies (Weerawardena and Mort, 2012). In this cluster, the goal is to find innovative solutions to socio-technical and environmental challenges highlighting aspects such as socio-technical transitions, Public Private Partnerships (PPP), cross alliances and public management (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016).

Accordingly, a social entrepreneur plays a vital role within SI, thus it has a social mission that is accomplished through entrepreneurial actions, playing along with the institutions and building networks and systems enabling needed partnerships (Phillips *et al.*, 2015; Surie, 2017). Notwithstanding, this does not necessarily mean that SE is the only way but rather one feasible and highly effective way to build coherent and powerful networks. In fact, these

complex formal and informal networks are made by different important actors that need to collaborate, learn collectively and participate to enhance SI as Phillips *et al.* (2015) stated:

> […] social innovations are not reliant on the sole ventures of a lone social entrepreneur but are dependent on collective learning between a range of actors that transcend sectoral boundaries, giving rise to new combinations of capabilities, which result in social innovation Phillips *et al.* (2015. p. 450).

2.3. Institutional Theory

The institutional context is inevitably territory-specific and so does SI as "social innovation is quite often either locally or regionally specific, or/and spatially negotiated between agents and institutions that have a strong territorial affiliation" (Moulaert, 2009. p. 12).

In this sense, regarding SI, a holistic view from a structuration level (Cajaiba-santana, 2014) of its dynamics is necessary to understand its complexity at the individual level and at the structural level. Accordingly, both the actor, i.e. social entrepreneur, and the structures are determined by its institutions in a historical, territorial and cultural context (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). These institutions could be presented as opportunities or barriers to implement SIs in a specific territory.

Societal challenges may be successfully addressed through SI if they gain incremental permanence in their formal (regulations, rules) and informal (values, principles, traditions) institutions (Moulaert, 2009; Phillips *et al.*, 2015). In this sense, institutional theory studies

these influences regarding three different levels: the micro or individual level; the meso or organizational level; and the macro or societal level. According to Wijk *et al.* (2018), the microlevel is related to social entrepreneurship or an agentic perspective, hence it highlights the links created from different committed individuals, developing trust worthy relationships, stimulating social innovation through cooperation, emotional bonding and networking.

Although SI requires new ways of living, meaning changes at the individual level or as the author called: disrupting the status quo; being involved in these networks allows individuals to feel identified and to participate through co-creation of products that could make these changes more scalable (Wijk *et al.*, 2018).

On the other hand, at the meso level Wijk *et al.* (2018) called "interactive spaces" as the setting that enables those interactions between individuals, i.e. (re) negotiations and agreements made in that particular context. However, these interactions may be not easy and may require effortful embedding dynamics due to resistance to change (Courpasson, Dany and Delbridge, 2017; Wijk *et al.*, 2018). Finally, the macro level focuses on a broader societal perspective where aspects such as democracy, poverty, exclusion and institutions are evident. These three institutional levels are equally relevant and important to consider at the time of implementing any kind of innovation to surpass possible barriers.

Accordingly, Turker and Altuntas (2017) characterized these institutions as voids or supports that in turn may enable or hinder SI and SE. Institutional voids are represented as the absence or failure of formal and informal institutions within a particular environment, however, this may also represent motivation and innovation opportunities for social entrepreneurs in order to overcome these voids (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). Usually, these institutional voids are presented in unstable environments like developing countries. In contrast, institutional supports, that are mostly available in developed countries or specific technology clusters, are the opportunities provided by formal institutions such as

governmental support; or informal institutions such as networks, coopetition, partnerships or collective action which highly support social entrepreneurs enabling their social outcomes (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). Therefore, the connection of SE and the institutional theory embedded in a territory is relevant to implement innovative solutions to societal challenges and enhance SI.

2.4. Ecosystems

From Moore (1993) until now, multiple studies have used the comparison between natural ecosystems and business related fields, where interactions among different agents take place, operating as a system involving cooperation, competition, interconnectedness and interdependencies between them (Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a). There are different types of ecosystems that scholars have been defining hitherto. However, according to Scaringella and Radziwon (2017), the main ecosystem types are 4, namely: business, innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge ecosystem. According to their research, by 2017, the business ecosystem had 62 records, being the most studied of all ecosystems. On the contrary, innovation, entrepreneurial and knowledge ecosystems have 37 records altogether.

The knowledge ecosystem focuses on the creation of knowledge by research centers and/or universities which are usually proximate to each other (Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a). On the other hand, the entrepreneurial ecosystem gives great importance to the support of policy makers in order to have a positive outcome, thus the relationship between government and entrepreneurs is crucial (Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a). Finally, business and innovation ecosystems share multiple similarities but are different in the sense

that the first one aims to *capture* value, searching competitiveness; while the second one aims to *create* value, addressing innovation (Gomes, Facin, Salerno and Ikenami, 2016). The creation of value maybe not only technological but also social even with technological tools in order to hinder some of those societal challenges that we face today in the world.

Diverse scholars agree that within an ecosystem there is in most of the cases the creation of trust-worthy relationships, sense belonging, knowledge spillovers, economies of scale, spatial and/or virtual proximity, localized learning, tacit and explicit knowledge exchange, geographical clusters, coopetition, open innovation and other factors that show the importance of the geographical context within an ecosystem (Moore, 1993; Iansiti and Levien, 2004; Adner and Kapoor, 2010; Chesbrough and Bogers, 2014; Gomes, Facin, Salerno and Ikenami, 2016; Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a; Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018; Walrave *et al.*, 2018). In fact, Scaringella and Radziwon (2017) identified a high interdependence between the ecosystem theory and the territorial approach which in turn, highlights the context dependency that policies have, reducing the effectiveness of one-fits-for-all policies.

2.4.1. Innovation ecosystems. According to Russell and Smorodinskaya (2018), one important characteristic of the innovation ecosystem is its instability or non-linearity. This invokes high uncertainty that calls for quick self-adaptation and the understanding of the environment through collaborative networks and non-hierarchic models of governance (Adner, 2017; Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018). Nonetheless, collaboration does not hinder competition between firms, in fact, it may enable competitiveness of firms while cooperating; what Drucker (1993) and Moore (1993) called coopetition. The concept of collaboration and co-creation is present in the ecosystem thus "collaborative innovation networks are able to

achieve dynamic sustainability in a non-linear environment" (Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018. p.3), in turn implying formal and informal relationships between actors; increasing their complexity. Correspondingly, understanding this complexity and adapting to these changes enables innovation and dynamism within the ecosystem (Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018).

Furthermore, Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt (2016), focused on the innovation ecosystem genesis part of the lifecycle that Moore (1993) divided on 4 phases, namely: birth, expansion, leadership and self-renewal or death. The birth phase has the higher uncertainty and therefore, informal and formal roles are necessary to make the transition to further phases (Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016). According to the authors, at this stage of the ecosystem, one of the crucial roles is the one of the entrepreneurs. This role is a key connector between different actors existing within the ecosystem, enabling their communication and cooperation, as well as the commercialization from inventions, opportunity findings, and even possible resource funding (Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016). However, the authors also remark that multiple actors could play the same role at the same time giving flexibility and more adaptability to the ecosystem per se.

In this sense, and as stated before, the aim of innovation ecosystems is the creation of value through the improvement of products and services (Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016; Gomes, Facin, Salerno and Ikenami, 2016) by using these tools from the literature i.e. innovation ecosystem lifecycle and complexity. However, this aggregated value from the innovation ecosystem perspective is focused mostly on technological inventions (Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016) disregarding socio-technical changes (Walrave et al., 2018).

As Walrave et al. (2018) stated, the most impactful and path-breaking innovations requires inevitably socio-technical changes. This implies that there is a need not only to see innovation ecosystems as technological but also considering the external viability of it

(Walrave et al., 2018). However, following the institutional theory, when those socio-technical changes take place, there is a rise on cultural change resistance (Wijk et al., 2018), which may hinder the success of an innovation. Accordingly, Walrave et al. (2018) proposed two mechanisms to enable external viability: through learning or what they called socio-technical experimentation and the accurate adoption of the environment with the help of the dominant regimes. In this sense, the relationship and the environment play a vital role in order to implement an impactful innovation.

Territorial approach

Within the innovation ecosystem's literature, there are also different streams dealing with its territorial importance, however, mostly all of them are addressing policy makers. Notwithstanding, due to the lack of collaboration and agent-interconnectedness within an ecosystem, policies fail to meet the complexity of the system, finally hindering innovation (Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018). In order to avoid these issues, concepts as Regional Innovation or National Innovation Systems are often recalled with background theories as the neo-schumpeterian, institutional theory, complexity science or multiple-helix models (Uyarra *et al.*, 2017; Hauser *et al.*, 2018; Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018) with the aim to improve and enhance innovation through adaptive, place-based and bottom-up solutions (Uyarra *et al.*, 2017).

According to Russell and Smorodinskaya (2018), this puts the public and the private sector working and communicating together towards ensuring economic sustainability. Consequently, this means an institutional change and a great effort from each actor to adapt to these changes. However, with these interactions not only this economic growth could be enhanced but also social well-being and sustainable environments.

2.4.2. Social Innovation Ecosystem. Although the link between entrepreneurial activities and thus, entrepreneurship ecosystem exists; the link between social innovation and innovation ecosystem is not clear within the literature. Nonetheless, both social innovation and innovation ecosystem, share commonalities such as its complexity regarding the relationships between actors creating networks that allow the creation of value for a specific outcome (Cajaiba-santana, 2014; Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016; Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017), the context-dependency (Cajaiba-santana, 2014; Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017a; Turker and Altuntas, 2017; Wijk *et al.*, 2018), and the role of a "hub", "enabler", "champion", or "keystone" actor as a social entrepreneur (Iansiti and Levien, 2004; Phillips *et al.*, 2015; Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016; Walrave *et al.*, 2018).

Such as Walrave *et al* defined innovation ecosystem: "a network of interdependent actors who combine specialized yet complementary resources and/or capabilities in seeking to (a) co- create and deliver an overarching value proposition to end user, and (b) appropriate the gains received in the process" Walrave *et al.* (2018. p.104); these gains and value propositions could be not only economic and technological but also social; enhancing the well-being of the actors involved within the ecosystem. In this sense, collaborative networks are platforms in which participants co-create technological, service and social innovations (Russell and Smorodinskaya, 2018. p.2).

At this point, Social Innovation Ecosystems, encompasses the previous theories highlighted before: Social Innovation, (Innovation) Ecosystem theories and the importance of the territory within the ecosystem considering institutions and policies. Some other authors have stated the relationship between SI and different territorial approaches. For instance,

Surie (2017) and Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan (2017) related SI and SE with National Innovation Systems in developing countries such as India. This is particularly important due to the increasing social issues and challenges that the world is facing today regarding poverty, exclusion, global warming, lack of education and/or resources particularly in developing countries.

However, SI is about the enhancement of the well-being within a given context. This means that if this criterion is met, SI could also be applied in developed countries providing a better lifestyle, for instance, smart cities or better ways to reduce environmental impacts. Notwithstanding, the potential of SI could be questionable due to the high complexity of these social issues (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to place social innovation into a framework that provides a holistic and complete perspective of this innovation in order to understand its complexity (Cajaiba-santana, 2014). In fact, authors as Phillips *et al.* (2015) proposed the innovation approach as an accurate framework for further studies on social innovation and entrepreneurship (Figure 2).

Accordingly, some authors highlight the difficulties social innovators face when they are attempting to find funding or other types of support, thus they "struggle to identify which conventional networks to align with, as social innovations often span boundaries and do not neatly fit into a single category" Lettice and Parekh (2010. p.150). Understanding social innovation as part of an ecosystem may enable the participation, collective learning and cooperation among the multiple actors involved in a same social system, which is crucial for the success of Social Innovation Ecosystem (Neumeier, 2012).

This stream of literature is somehow increasing and consequently, this vision has been blurring the gap between profit and non-profit organizations due to this hybridity on collaborative innovation (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017). However, the aim is not to avoid technological developments or technical innovations but rather to develop them in hand

with a social perspective. Accordingly, social innovation may be technological or purely social (Pol and Ville, 2009; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), nevertheless, the focus on this article relies on the bifocal perspective creating social and economic outcomes, and for this reason social entrepreneurship is addressed as the enabler for this process. This is relevant, hence these keystone actors i.e. social entrepreneurs, "often operate at a very local scale, but connect to others on a global scale" (Avelino et al., 2017. p. 3). In other words, social innovators act according to their environment and the context in which they are embedded but connect with external actors.

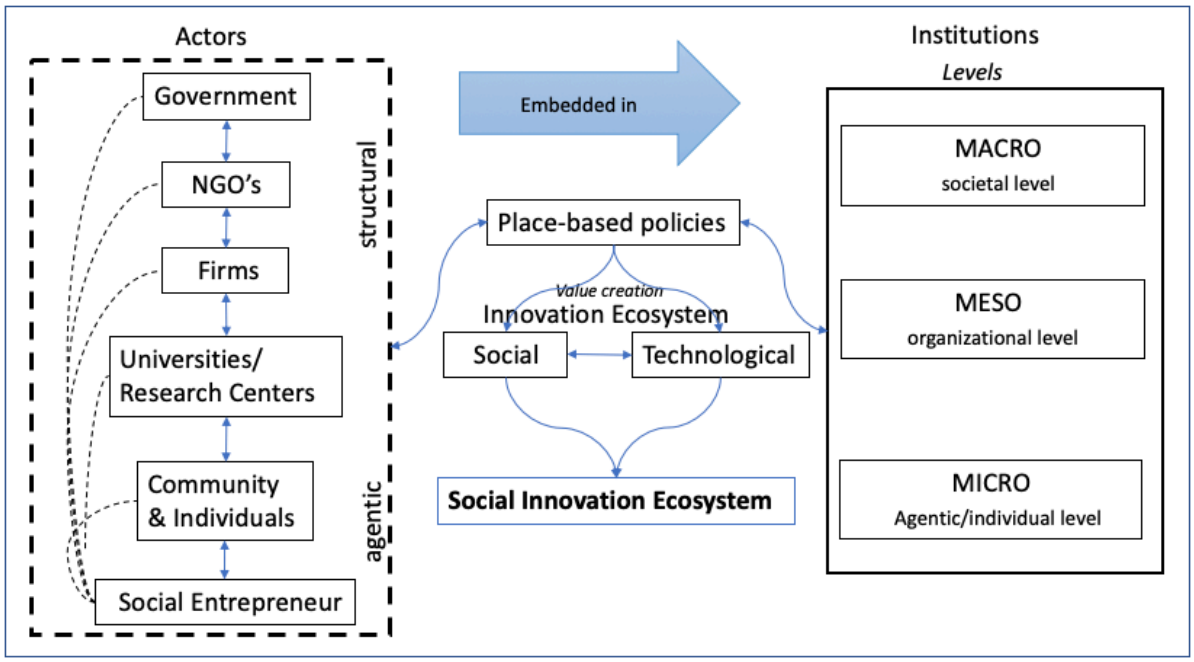

Figure 2. Framework of Social Innovation Ecosystem

There are multiple actors within the ecosystem; each one with a different role and perspective i.e. agentic or structural. However, all of them are embedded in the institutional context that involves 3 levels that are necessarily territorial dependent. At the macro level, the government and NGO's; at the meso level, the organizations, research centers, universities and firms; and ultimately at the micro level the individuals or users and the social entrepreneurs. Understanding this complexity in the interactions enhance the creation of place-based policies that feeds the creation of value for both technological and social innovations. This in turn, creates the social innovation ecosystem through complex networks defined by collaboration, trust, communication and spatial or cognitive proximities.

Source: Author's own work

Correspondingly, Surie (2017) relates social entrepreneurship with the creation of an innovation ecosystem for renewable energy in India understanding the role of National Innovation Systems, social entrepreneurs, community, processes and services provided. Similarly, Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan (2017) studies the relationship between National innovation systems and social entrepreneurship through a case study of the Emergency Management and Research Institute (EMRI) in India. Through public and private partnerships, EMRI has been able to implement an innovative social solution, transferring patients to hospitals in an efficient and accessible way.

Despite these innovations might be a clear example of social innovation by providing access to lacking resources in developing countries such as India; there are other examples that provide enhancement on the population well-being through the improvement of services, products and processes using technology (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017). As an example, initiatives as Smart Cities using big data, Internet of Things, and Artificial Intelligence improve infrastructures, mobility, governance, and ultimately the well-being of a certain population regardless its internal development (Paolo, Lima and Paroutis, 2018).

Evidently, these types of social innovations vary depending on the needs of the population in a specific context. This issue is going to be developed later by making a comparative analysis between developed and developing countries such as France and Colombia. Nonetheless, at the end, social innovation deals with either technological and social innovations (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016) that change social structures by providing innovative solutions to enhance social and economic outcomes.

However, through social changes and social cohesion as an outcome of social innovation, there comes along inevitable changes in the relations and possession of power within the different actors involved (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). This might carry power struggles and shifting relations and therefore, there is an increased call in public discourses for a ‘state’ or ‘Third

Sector' agent in order to intermediate between the government, community and market (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). The aim of this intermediary is to empower the community to enhance participation through co-creation and cooperation systems between diverse actors, representing a crucial social system change such as the re-thinking of "*dominant structures and practices of a societal sub-system"* (Avelino *et al.*, 2017.p.3). Consequently, an ecosystem approach enhances cooperation and facilitates these (re)negotiations between agents that may be needed among different actors within the system, due to the building of trust and informal relationships.

It is although relevant to highlight that the creation of a Social Innovation Ecosystem is not to highlight which actors are more important than others but to consider all of them as part of the system that are fundamental to the success of any type of innovation. Although NGO's and the role of the government may be crucial for its success and even more for developing countries (Surie, 2017); the creation of these networks within the ecosystem requires the participation and collaboration of every agent involved in it. In this article we highlight the importance of social innovators/entrepreneurs as key players to facilitate the creation of these connections between actors within the ecosystem.

Accordingly, Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt (2016), highlights the importance of the entrepreneur as one key actor of the development of the ecosystem genesis; which is one of the most crucial phases of an innovation ecosystem. There are different roles that are important in this first phase of the lifecycle: (1) leadership roles, usually played by the government, universities or research centers; (2) direct value creation roles performed by value chain actors within a firm; (3) value creation support roles such as NGO's; and (4) entrepreneurial ecosystem roles like entrepreneur, sponsor, and regulator. Notwithstanding, multiple actors may play different roles or the same one simultaneously (Dedehayir, Mäkinen and Roland Ortt, 2016), as the ecosystem lifecycle changes from one step to another. This

clearly highlights the interconnectedness and collaboration that must be presented within the ecosystem in order for it to be successful.

Even though within the literature the individual as a consumer or user is not frequently named, it is still one key actor within the ecosystem (Purtik and Arenas, 2017). For instance, within a new development for products or services, the user can still participate and even influence the design of that product or service (Wijk *et al.*, 2018). This gives not only empowerment to the community (Turker and Altuntas, 2017; Wijk *et al.*, 2018) as their role of users, but also an integrative perspective and a collaborative system to receive ideas and propositions from different points of view aiming for a holistic understanding and application to overcome social challenges.

2.5. Multi-context perspective of Social Innovation Ecosystem

Any type of social innovation could potentially have a powerful and positive impact in a society. According to Nicholls and Murdock (2012), there are three different levels of SI: (1) at an incremental level, which aims to provide unmet social needs through new services or products increasing efficiency; (2) at an institutional level, which aims to (re)configure market structures to provide not only economic profits but rather using technological and intellectual capabilities in order to produce a social change; and (3) at a disruptive level, which change a whole system altering social structures. Therefore, depending on its institutions supports and voids, some types of social innovations may be feasible in certain contexts but in others not (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). For this reason, the next section deals with the differences of social innovation in developing and developed countries according to their needs.

It is stated that social innovation aims to enhance the well-being of particular targets like communities, regions or social groups. However, this enhancement on the welfare depends strongly on the needs of that specific territory. While in France or Germany the implementation of smart infrastructures and governance improves the quality of life of the citizens (Paolo, Lima and Paroutis, 2018); in developing countries as Colombia or India, there is an urgent need of alleviating firstly the poverty, inequity, hunger or poor access to education and fresh water.

Correspondingly, according to Hutchinson's model, a physical infrastructure is necessary in order to implement a smart project within a city (Paolo, Lima and Paroutis, 2018). In other words, without having infrastructural stability is difficult and even useless to implement smart projects or cities. SI could make sense by addressing the most important needs for each country; in developing countries, basic needs must be covered first. Nonetheless, poor institutions (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016; Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017), hinders this first step.

Accordingly, in developing countries there are usually more institutional voids than supports in comparison with developed countries (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). For this reason, when institutions are not strong enough, social innovation may be enhanced through public-private-partnerships or collaboration among different actors aiming to solve social issues (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016; Wijk *et al.*, 2018). Thus, institutions not only play a vital role in the implementation of social innovation but also differs from country to country. On the other hand, in already developed countries that actually have the advantage of having strong and stable infrastructures, SI is easily applicable for other types of projects. Collaboration also between developed and developing countries are nowadays increasing in order to have a greater social impact in a global scale.

Within the literature, authors have found a way to understand how to implement SI within a territory. In order to identify social innovation opportunities and its viability in a specific context, the level of field multiplicity (Greenwood *et al.*, 2011) and the level of institutionalization (Dorado, 2005; Turker and Altuntas, 2017) play a vital role (see figure 3) (Wijk *et al.*, 2018).

By multiplicity on the fields Wijk *et al.* (2018. p.14) refer to the "*multiple and potentially competing logics or institutional contradictions"*. In other words, how many institutional voids are presented within a territory. Consequently, Dorado (2005) called "Opportunity hazy" when there is low institutionalization and high multiplicity due to the uncertainty on the social innovation outcomes coming from the fragmentation and volatile fields in this particular case (Wijk *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, there are not a lot of evident opportunities to implement social innovation with the presence of high institutional embeddedness and low multiplicity; in this case Dorado (2005) called it "opportunity opaque". This is caused due to the high institutionalization that does not allow to create value through SI or any other type of innovation even if opportunities are multiple and eager to be solved.

Evidently, a friendly environment such as moderate levels of institutionalization and multiplicity would favor the implementation of social innovation (Wijk *et al.*, 2018). However, this might be slightly utopic, thus there are environments in which these field conditions are not always favorable but that should not imply that social innovation is useless or impossible to apply. This framework is important to understand in order to know what types of solutions and approaches are necessary according to the level of institutionalization and multiplicity.

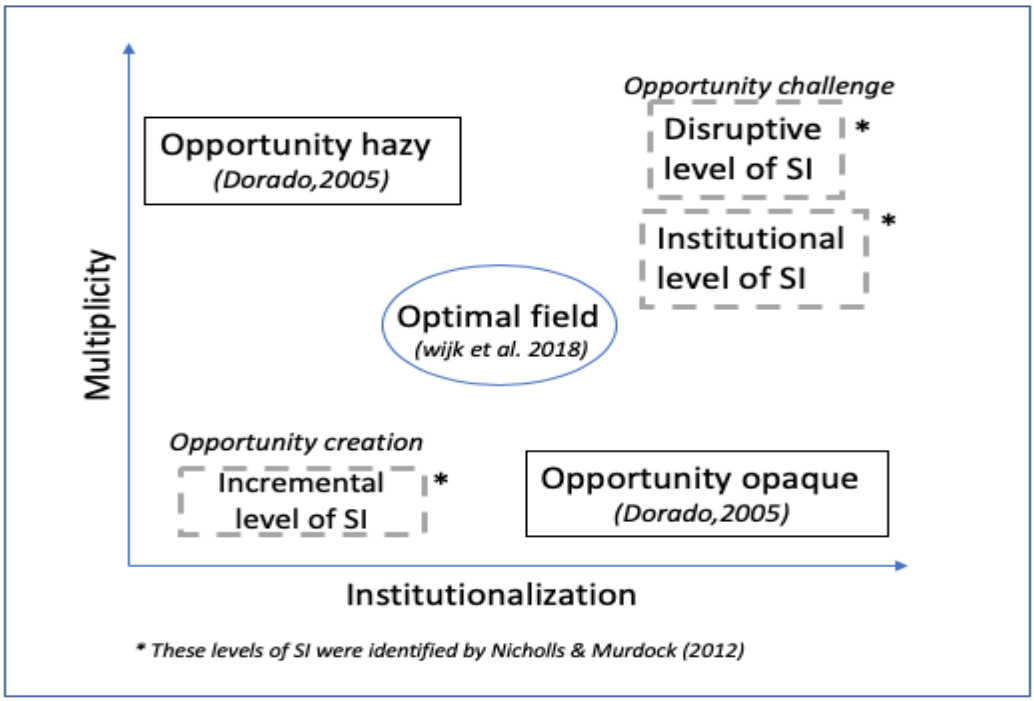

Figure 3. Matrix following opportunity recognition

Source: Author's own work

For instance, when there is low multiplicity and low institutionalization incremental social innovations could be applied where small changes within a specific territory are applied that could still positively impact the society. As is called in this article, "*Opportunity creation*" should be then social inventions or incremental improvements in some social aspects that could be enabled through technology, collaboration, clusters, or individual action. At this point, the social entrepreneur plays a vital role in order to enable the needed connections between actors to attempt a social innovation, for example, public-private partnerships.

Furthermore, when a context is highly institutionalized and has high multiplicity, social innovation could be implemented in a disruptive or institutional level (Nicholls and Murdock, 2012), aiming a change in market or socio-technical structures. Evidently, these changes are the most challenging ones and may present the highest risk, and therefore it is called in this figure 3 as "*opportunity challenge*". However, due to the highest risk is the one that represent the greatest impact for the social and societal challenges.

Accordingly, Huq (2018) highlights the importance of disrupting actions in highly institutionalized contexts to enable actor reflexibility and thereby social innovation. This also make sense, hence disruptive social innovations usually rely afterwards on institutional support for stability, coordination and knowledge sharing (Phillips *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, collaboration between different actors within the ecosystem may enable social innovation at different levels overcoming social challenges and change resistance coming from the implementation of these solutions.

This matrix facilitates decision making for different actors within the ecosystem. For instance, policy makers could attempt diverse solutions depending on the level of institutionalization and multiplicity from a country (Uyarra *et al.*, 2017; Wijk *et al.*, 2018). Although this might be useful for the creation of policies or governments; as seen before, the importance relies on the network and how all actors can participate and engage within the ecosystem in order to provide enough tools to implement social innovations.

For instance, Huq (2018) studies the importance of the organizations to implement social innovations through disrupting action, that ultimately modifies the structures within the professional field. Similarly, universities and research centers are necessary to understand the path of different industries or institutional logics that comes along with territorial theories. These actors enable the development of products and services, as well as the "research commercialization process that connects different actors within the ecosystem" (Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017. p. 5).

Furthermore, considering the individual level it could be divided into two groups: the individual as part of the community and as a social entrepreneur. As stated before, community behaviors could enhance or hinder SI. Regarding this point, through collaborative networks and co-creation (Wijk *et al.*, 2018), the community and individuals could be empowered and could participate in the process of implementing SI. Allowing individuals to

be part of the process facilitates the acceptance of the SI and alleviates the pressure caused by institutional changes that may be uncomfortable. On the other hand, social entrepreneurs could act as individuals but also as organizations such as Ashoka or social firms (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). In this article, the social entrepreneur is ultimately the enabler that encourages the participation and needed connections within the ecosystem to implement a successful innovation whether technological or social.

Correspondingly, the role of the actors varies depending on how institutions are embedded and the ratio on supports and voids coming from the institutional context in each country (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). Evidently, SI is facilitated when institutional supports are presented, however, understanding these interconnections and networks within the social innovation ecosystem, it is plausible to alleviate some institutional voids through collaboration and participation.

3. Methodology

Hence the aim of this paper is to understand the complexity of SI within different contexts, the methodology to address this research question will be a qualitative comparative case study (Yin, 2009) between developed and developing countries. The research sample consists of social entrepreneurs and social enterprises from Colombia and France. However, there is one case of a British firm that complies with the requirements of a technological social innovative company. It was added to the sample hence is an interesting case regarding collaboration between the British company and India. Each case will be discussed in detail later on.

There is a total of 8 semi-structured interviews coded in Nvivo 12 (with transcripts and notes), 4 from Colombia and 4 from Europe (3 from France and 1 from the United Kingdom). These social firms or entrepreneurs were chosen under the concept of social innovation. Companies that its aim has to do of course with an economic outcome but through a positive social impact in the territory/territories that they are addressing. Each of them has different approaches and ways to implement social innovation but at the end they share commonalities in terms of challenges, types of collaboration and ways of doing things.

Through this process it was indeed identified the differences previously mentioned between countries with higher institutional supports or the ones that face more instability. The approach is slightly different and they shared with us some of these insights in a 30 to 40 minutes semi-structured interview done, some to the founders or to managers from the company. In the Appendix 1 there is the template of the interview as well as two of the examples of interviews considered the most relevant ones for this article.

The social entrepreneurs from Colombia were: 1) Myriam Jimeno, the legal representative and president of the "Asociación Colombiana de Bipolares" (Bipolar Colombian Association) in where they treat the people diagnosed with bipolarity through different mechanisms. However, being a non-lucrative organization, the association relies on private investments and collaboration not only with the people involved within the company but also with the government and other firms. 2) Gina Collazos one of the founders of "Un periódico Feliz" (A Happy Newspaper), a foundation that tries to provide news and accurate information to the most remote places in Colombia, where they usually do not have access to information of any kind. They also have a campaign of selling Eco-friendly speakers to the people that want to help them, being that one of the main sources of funding in the hand of other investors and her family businesses. 3) Roger Dávila, the project manager of "Aldeas Infantiles SOS Colombia" (Children foundation). This is a multinational organization present in 135

countries, founded in Austria 50 years ago. The focus on this organization is the protection of homeless children. In developing countries, these challenges are more evident than in developed countries. In Colombia, this organization tries to identify the previous family or a group of people that will give that kid a familiar environment (SOS families). Finally, 4) Daniel Martinez one of the key employees of a non-lucrative organization in Colombia named "Techo" (Roof). This is a civil organization founded in 1997 in Chile, being present in 21 different countries in Latin America. In Colombia, they are working since 2007 and they help mainly building houses for people that were affected by violence or natural disasters.

On the other hand, the European social entrepreneurs are: 1) Flora Gobatti the responsible for operations in the company of "La Cloche" in France. This company is also related with the people without a stable place to sleep. They provide different programs and activities so these people can stay temporarily in different places from their partners. 2) Hugo Williams one of the main employees from Logically which focus mainly on providing true and accurate information to the society with the help of artificial intelligence. For instance, they try to uncover fake news from political discourses. They have until now a very strong relationship with their office in India where local employees work and where they have learned a lot from the cultural differences and political instabilities. 3) The student association "Enactus" that aims to implement Corporate Social Economy into Rennes School of Business. Enactus is an international association based in multiple countries that tries to implement "conscious" economy within the businesses. In this case, the students work and cooperate with the university and the association in order to attain this goal. Lastly, 4) Boris Marcel one of the founders of "Europe Tomorrow". This company works as an intermediary in order to help firms who aim to create social innovation. In this sense, they enhance and enable partnerships, funding and different supports to projects presented by different start-ups

or companies that want to attend this goal of social innovation. They have done multiple projects in Europe and now they are trying to expand to Latin America.

Table 1.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR	COMPANY NAME	COUNTRY
Myriam Jimeno	Bipolar Colombian Association	Colombia
Gina Collazos	A Happy Newspaper	Colombia
Roger Davila	Children Villages SOS Colombia	Colombia
Daniel Martinez	Techo (roof)	Colombia
Flora Gobatti	La cloche	France
Hugo Williams	Logically	United Kingdom
Students from Rennes School of Business Enactus association	Enactus	France
Boris Marcel	Europe Tomorrow	Europe Tomorrow

Figure 4. Summary of the interviewees from Colombia, France and the UK.

Source: Author's own work

3.1.Results and analysis

Social innovation can be implemented regardless the development of each country. The difference is in the how it is implemented. Social Innovation involves basically the enhancement of a society. In the case of Logically, Hugo Williams stated that its social innovation was focused on providing people with accurate and true information as:

"[…] broadening people's perspectives on issues that really affect them and hopefully enabling them and empowering them to make better decisions."

Within the company they use different types of technologies for different purposes. For instance, they use artificial intelligence to analyze the information within public discourses or news on the internet or television. In this sense, they could even track how the emotions and discourses are trying to manipulate or misguide any type of information to the civils. On the other hand, they work also with internal technology to automatize the requests of fact check from their customers in a way that they can provide the best service. It is important to highlight that these types of technologies are also applied in their offices in India. However, as Hugo W. expressed on the interview. The fact that they have local employees working in India has been the success of the application in this country. Indian government does not allow so easily foreign investment, the lack of trust for foreign companies is very high in this developing country. The fact that the CEO of the company has Indian roots helps a lot with the connections and resources needed in this country to be able to operate:

"*So, we have a lot of personal connection with India which is another reason that obviously we kind of kicked off our product launch there as well. We would never work with the government there and there are various policies in place which make it difficult for us as a U.K. based company to do much because there are laws in India which prohibit foreign funding of Indian journalism. And these laws we don't see in many other countries."*

The same applies for Boris Marcel from Europe Tomorrow, who wanted at some point to expand the company with his both partners to other countries outside Europe but they have faced a lot of challenges in terms of policies, investment and institutional support. For this

reason, Europe Tomorrow is principally based in Europe. However, as today negotiations and the ecosystem are getting slowly more interconnected, then one of the projects is to expand to Brazil and then hopefully, to other parts of the world where social innovation can be enhanced and applied.

Within the SIE, collaboration is a crucial factor to have in order to attain success. Every participant mentioned the importance of collaboration with different actors. In places where institutional voids are more evident, i.e. developing countries, the partnerships with other companies in the private and public sector are more evident than with the government. Roger Davila, the project manager of the company Children Villages in Colombia stated that:

"It has to be said that the political interests in a country like Colombia are very visible. So many times, those parties invest in the social activities just because of the friend, or with the newest corporation for money to have, let's say, diversity of resources."

By codifying the information with Nvivo, a tree map from the node "government" give an idea on how all the interviews talked about this topic in specific:

Figure 4. Nvivo output tree map from "Governments"

That is the reason why private and public collaborations with other partners become relevant. However, according to Boris Marcel, Flora Gobatti and Hugo Williams, although

the institutional voids are less in developed countries, it is important to remark that the attention given to start ups or social enterprises in terms of funding and support is not as strong as it is for other topics within the industry. The collaboration between partners achieving for a good social impact has given them a great tool to achieve their own goals. They remark the positive impact it would have if they could obtain more support and resources from the public sector.

Figure 5. Nvivo output: Word cloud

By codifying the interviews done with Nvivo, we can identify the number of references that each word was mentioned from all the participants. In this sense, in this visualization of the word cloud, the biggest words are the ones that are the most mentioned within the interviewees. There are different topics surrounding the complexity of this Social Innovation Ecosystem. Gina Collazos, expressed that she wanted to provide not only an enhancement of

the society from a merely philanthropic point of view but also because of the functionality of the product.

In this sense, nowadays instead of fighting against capitalism or the system that affect greatly other groups of people, the idea is to adapt to it with a different perspective. She expressed that even though the goal is social, they are still a company and people that need to be payed and that need to pay rent. This was one of the topics that all of the participants stated: the relationship with others and how that could help them develop the product or the service that they are trying to provide. Every actor within the ecosystem, government, research centers, community, private and public firms and even competition are relevant and almost crucial for the success of today's companies and even more social enterprises.

Most of the topics addressed by the social innovations done from all the participants are very sensitive for the community and that involves normally the intervention of the state which creates greater complexity. This goes along with the literature expressed before. However, all of them mentioned at least one or two ways to collaborate with others in a sense that the projects that they want to create are feasible.

Furthermore, cultural differences and geographical complexities are also factors that may hinder or enhance the implementation of SI. In this sense, as Myriam Jimeno and Gina Collazos expressed, is that in Colombia sometimes is very difficult to address all the population just of the mere fact that the geography is very complex. However, there are different paths of communication and partnerships that they are trying to build in order to continue with their projects.

Cultural differences in today's globalized world are becoming easier for the companies to deal with. Roger Davila and Daniel Martinez from Colombia and Hugo Williams from the United Kingdom stated that within the company, in organizational terms, the company is very diverse. That gives a lot of different perspectives and ways to address an international public

that with today's technology is so needed. Evidently, there are a lot of cultural challenges from the customer side in terms of adapting to the fast and inevitable changes. Nonetheless, strategies as co-creation and active participation from the customer may ease this process. Logically provides accurate information from the requests that the customers per se send and want to know, in this sense they feel empowered and have access to valuable and good data through technology.

In theory, this framework should be further developed in order to have more clarity about how all the actors involved may enhance the process and implementation of social innovation. In this article, it is addressed from the social entrepreneur perspective showing the importance of 'the actor' (Turker and Altuntas, 2017), however, it is relevant to have a deeper understanding about how the government and public policies might be adapted to support this projects and finding a way to hinder institutional voids in every type of territory.

The implementation of social innovation is indeed very territory-specific as stated in the literature review and also in the interviews done to these social entrepreneurs. Notwithstanding, social innovation just deals with the enhancement of the society without disregarding any group and having social and economic impact simultaneously (Pol and Ville, 2009; Phillips *et al.*, 2015).

4. Conclusions and implications

Innovation not only involves technological development but also complex socio-cultural processes considering multiple actors and knowledge exchange (Garud *et al.*, 2013). This means that any kind of innovation involves participation of diverse actors in order to be successful. It implies the creation of formal and informal relationships between the agents

within an innovation ecosystem (Gomes, Facin, Salerno, Ikenami, *et al.*, 2016), enhancing concepts as coopetition and trust worthy relationships.

Until now, this complexity within the ecosystem has been focused mainly on business, entrepreneurial, knowledge and innovation ecosystems (Scaringella and Radziwon, 2017b). However, as well as the (innovation) ecosystem, SI needs a holistic perspective in order to understand its complexity (Cajaiba-santana, 2014) and alleviate the ambiguity that SI incorporates due to multiple and different definitions (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016).

This social focus is not only presented on SI but also in terms like grassroots innovations, frugal innovation, bottom of the pyramid, between others (Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017). Nevertheless, the aim in this paper is to understand innovation not only from a technological perspective but also in hand with social innovations that will enhance the well-being of a population (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016). Accordingly, we relate SI with SE, thus SI could also be profitable through this bifocal perspective (Pol and Ville, 2009) that aims for social and economic outcomes simultaneously.

Social Innovation Ecosystem represents a framework that encompasses the complexity presented as interconnections between different actors such as firms, NGOs, government, community, universities and social entrepreneurs. All of these actors are inevitably embedded on their respective institutional context which may hinder or enable any type of innovation regarding institutional supports or voids (Turker and Altuntas, 2017).

According to Pol and Ville (2009), SI is not a market construct but is rather developed and enhanced through institutional change and interactions. By understanding the network through connections between different important and powerful actors, the power of discourse is huge and may enable institutional change (Avelino *et al.*, 2017). Nonetheless, these institutional changes are not easy to implement due to cultural resistance and changes on the

'status quo' of the individuals, thus it takes time, effort and on the ground involvement long term view (Wijk *et al.*, 2018).

Therefore, the social entrepreneur may play the role of "social disruptor" by facilitating the creation of the networks between agents but also the destructions and (re)formation of new ways of living (Huq, 2018; Wijk *et al.*, 2018).

Evidently, as well as SI, institutional contexts are highly place dependent (Turker and Altuntas, 2017). Therefore, the development and implementation of SI varies according to the territory where it is placed. Accordingly, enabling the well-being in a developed country as France, using SI, could be the implementation of smart cities (Paolo, Lima and Paroutis, 2018). Despite the usefulness of AI, IoT or Big Data to attempt smart projects in a city, according to Paolo, Lima and Paroutis (2018), there is a need of strong infrastructural background to succeed in these type of projects. Accordingly, developing countries as Colombia, are represented by poor infrastructures and multiple institutional voids that may hinder innovation (Rao-Nicholson, Vorley and Khan, 2017). Therefore, SI should be implemented considering the priorities and needs that each territory has. This article aims to prove theoretically and empirically through a qualitative comparative case study of social entrepreneurs or social firms in Colombia and France.

One of the main limitations of the paper could be that the collection data, due to lack of time and economic resources, was done just to key actors from social enterprises. One path of further research would be to integrate all the actors involved in the framework presented. In this sense, with a mixed methodology, further research could get valuable quantitative and qualitative data while also having different sources of data, such as surveys from the community to understand how they can be further involved in these solutions; interviews to governmental forces, policy makers and some decision makers within industries; gathering

data from research institutions, universities and see how they could participate more proactively within the social innovation ecosystem industry, etc.

This article is focused on the social entrepreneur perspective and lack the participation and opinion of other actors and industries. As well as the implementation of social innovation depends on the territory and the situation, the industry where is applied could potentially have a crucial role within it.

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