



Contribution of territorial social capital mechanisms to social innovation: the mediating role of the knowledge absorption capacity of territorial actors in the city of Agadir

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Abstract: This paper is part of an essay in territorial economics, aims to study the contribution of territorial social capital to social innovation, while understanding the theoretical specificities and empirical analysis tools. The main goal is to answer the following question: "Can territorial social capital serve as a locomotive for the development of social innovation? And to what extent the knowledge absorption capacity of territorial actors can contribute to it". To answer this question, we were inspired by a methodological posture referring to a deductive reasoning mode and a post-positivist paradigm. An arrangement and a raking between the theory and the observed reality allowed us to draw up a hypothetical model, linking the triptych social capital/absorption capacity/social innovation, tested on 257 actors at work in the management of territorial affairs in the city of Agadir. The results converge towards the existence of strong and significant contributions between the different concepts, but also towards the need to enhance the value of new actors in order to better involve them in the management of the common good that is the city.

Keywords: Social capital; Territory; Social innovation; Absorption capacity; City of Agadir.

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1. Introduction

This research aims to develop knowledge on an old but under-theorized phenomenon in the Moroccan context, namely the contribution of social capital to social innovation. Indeed, the current theoretical corpus remains essentially descriptive with little explanatory or predictive scope, which leads us to a lack of knowledge on objective and subjective measures in the context of research on social innovation practices. While our research is geographically limited, it nevertheless advances knowledge on this topic. Our

theoretical and conceptual framing has highlighted that while the concept enjoys remarkable attention from the research community, given the number of publications in the last decade dealing with the concept, there is still little consensus on the construct and insufficient empirical studies. This theoretical void can be explained by several factors, including the multiplicity of disciplines that use the concept of social capital, each with different purposes and theoretical perspectives.

The economic relevance of the research is as fundamental as the academic interest. At this level, there is a paucity of commonly accepted indicators that would allow the understanding of the impact of social capital on social innovation, but also the role that knowledge absorption capacity can play in marking this transition.

The main goal is to answer the following question: "Can territorial social capital serve as a locomotive for the development of social innovation? And to what extent can the knowledge absorption capacity of territorial actors contribute to this? In this sense, we have opted for a methodological posture that is largely inspired by post-positivism following a deductive reasoning mode. This reasoning consists in formulating one or several hypotheses in order to deduce predictions allowing to determine their validity.

In order to respond to the problem, we envisaged a reflection starting from a theoretical and conceptual framework, passing through the choice of the variables of the study and going up to an empirical verification by means of a SEM (structural equations model).

Thus, we have divided this paper into three axes. The first axis is dedicated to the conceptual and theoretical geneses relating the key concepts; the second axis refers to the methodology adopted and the research field; the third axis is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the results obtained. Broadly speaking, the results obtained have enabled us to respond to the problem raised and provide elements of a response to the spatial mechanisms of social capital in a context of social innovation.

2. Social capital and social innovation at the crossroads of different theoretical conceptions

In this section, we will try to outline the theoretical understandings of the socio-spatial transition of social capital and social innovation of actors, with the aim of identifying causal relationships and establishing the research model.

2.1 Social capital as a socio-spatial process

The term social capital often refers to the social embeddedness of individuals (Granovetter, 1985), while producing a number of benefits and constraints influencing their choices. It also allows access to resources embedded in relationships (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998) between individuals and between groups and which require trust, support and exchange between its members (Burt, 2000). In this sense, research on social capital has revealed that it is generated by the networks of social relations and the social embeddedness of any economic activity.

However, the mobilization of social capital in various studies and research fields suggests the complexity of the concept and refers to a multiplicity of definitions and approaches. From this perspective, its relational

and collective vision has allowed it to be studied from several dimensions in order to explain organizational actions and results. In our case, these include the three dimensions of cognitive, relational and structural dimensions of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), and the extent to which these dimensions of social capital contribute to social innovation.

Furthermore, cognitive social capital is mainly related to the same shared vision of the group, common goals to achieve, the same culture and similar interests. This improves understanding between the different parties through common and shared representations, interpretations, meaning systems, languages and codes (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998).

Relational social capital refers to the trust, obligations, respect and friendship between members of a group (Granovetter, 1985; Kale et al., 2000). This provides access to resources available in networks and, therefore, strengthens an actor's identity and identification within a particular social space (Lin, 2001).

Structural social capital is concerned with patterns of linkages between members of a group or network (Pearson et al., 2008). These describe the way in which the structure of the group or network influences the exchange of resources between its members. It is therefore about the network's pattern and configuration through its density, connectivity, hierarchy and the strength of the links that make it up (Granovetter, 1985; Uzzi, 1996). It is a model of the connections between the different actors in a network and the degree of connectivity that exists within that network.

At present, many researchers consider social capital as a social and economic process that leads to knowledge and attitudes embodied by individuals or not in a given territory. That said, in order to talk about social capital, it is necessary to follow a spatio-temporal path respecting, among other things, the laws of time and space, in particular those that allow for interaction between territorial actors.

In the same vein, the concept of territorial social capital, as a tool of analysis, makes it possible to add robust elements to territorial functioning and collective actions, insofar as the knowledge and accumulation of individual and collective experiences of territorial actors are developed, with the aim of favouring governance mechanisms aimed at remedying the social and economic problems of local populations in the territories (El Moutaoukil and Chakir, 2021).

Reconciling the concept of territorial social capital is one of the major challenges raised by the scientific community. In this respect, we will make an adjustment between the leading theoretical works and the observations made in the field, considering territorial social capital as a natural extension of territorial human capital. Indeed, social capital can be seen as:

- A process integrating various skills and competences acquired through learning and/or experience;
- It includes innate abilities and involves knowledge, learning and relationships;
- In socio-spatial terms, social capital refers to three dimensions: relational, cognitive and

structural.

In parallel with the reflections carried out on the territorial social capital and on the socio- economic functioning of the territory, new readings centred on the notion of social innovation have been developed concerning the nature of the action of the actors and the means implemented to organise and regulate the societies in the space. This is how we are going to dissect the workings and specificities relating to the social innovation of territorial actors.

2.2 Social innovation of territorial actors

The concept of innovation occupies a central place in current debates on the emergence of renewed companies, better able to meet the challenge of competitiveness in a now globalised context. Whether in academic circles or in the professional and institutional spheres, there is a consensus that innovation is a key factor in the success of organisations, regardless of their status, sector of activity, size or market scope.

Following the growing interest in social innovations in recent years, the orientation towards a post-industrial innovation paradigm is beginning to emerge (Howaldt and Jacobsen 2010). In this perspective, social innovations as well as technological and economic innovations could be integrated as components of social change in a holistic or comprehensive approach to innovation (Hochgerner, 2009; Azzahidi et al., 2020).

By the admission of several authors (Moulaert et al., 2013; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), the debates that currently mark the academic literature on the definition of the concept of social innovation are a reflection of the fragmented nature of this theoretical corpus and the ambiguity surrounding the scope and meaning of this concept.

One of the first attempts to broaden the debate on the meaning of social innovation is proposed by Moulaert et al (2005) who suggest three interacting dimensions (Moulaert et al., 2005):

- Addressing currently unmet human and social needs;
- Introduction of changes in social relations;
- Empowerment through increased socio-political capacity and access to resources.

More recently, Cajaiba-Santana (2014) has developed an analytical framework for addressing social innovation. Departing from conventional approaches, he defines social innovations as new social practices created from collective, intentional and goal-oriented actions aimed at bringing about social change through the reconfiguration of the way social goals are achieved. However, his analysis combines the structural perspective of social innovation, focusing on organisation and social structures, with the agency perspective, focusing on individual actors and their characteristics as determinants of social innovation.

From this perspective, two features of social innovation are important. First, social innovation itself produces or continuously improves social capital (Dro and Therace 2011; Edwards- Schachter et al. 2012),

which is not a tangible outcome, but it is highly likely that this social capital can subsequently lead to a tangible outcome. As such, social innovation should focus on building assets and not just needs. This dimension seems to be as critical for the success of social innovation as the outcome (Moulaert et al., 2013). This understanding of social innovation implies that empowerment and learning are both sources and outcomes of well-being (Dro and Therace 2011). Moreover, not all social learning, networking or collaboration processes necessarily result in social innovation. In order to be able to speak of a successful social innovation.

In the extension of these observations, we can bring the concept of social innovation closer to the territorial actors by referring to three essential components, namely

- Mobilisation and collective management of territorial resources;
- Economic and social dynamism;
- Remediation of social problems.

However, territorial social capital alone is not enough; knowledge absorption mechanisms are a necessary condition to ensure better social innovation. Hence, territorial actors, endowed with multiple facets, can play the role of springboard to guarantee a better socio-spatial inscription of social capital.

2.3 Knowledge absorption capacity: a renewal for the social innovation factors

Knowledge absorption capacity is a polysemous concept that covers a vast literature and a remarkable jargon. This revival is linked to changes in the global production system and the increasing complexity of the institutional needs it is called upon to meet, including the exploration and exploitation of a range of tools to express and assess the impact of certain visions and policies.

However, the debates on absorptive capacity are not uniform, the concept remains multidisciplinary and its meaning differs according to the field of analysis, the discipline or even the object of study.

According to (Cohen and Levinthal, 1989) it is a matter of explaining the determinants that drive an organisation to invest in absorptive capacity through the use of knowledge, with the aim of identifying, assimilating and exploiting knowledge from its environment.

As this concept has been integrated into various organisational theories and disciplines, Zahra and George (2002) attempt to introduce a dynamic perspective on absorptive capacity, producing a model with four dimensions. These are the recognition of the value of knowledge, the acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation of that knowledge for business purposes. This is the result of the cumulative nature of knowledge.

From a territorial perspective, however, the capacity to absorb knowledge can be seen as the process of externalising tacit knowledge already acquired, or using explicit knowledge in the context of managing

territorial affairs. However, absorption can only take place if the actor is willing and able to receive and use the knowledge, whether tacit or explicit.

In other words, it is the set of coordinated actions of research, processing and distribution, with a view to its exploitation, of information useful to territorial actors. These various actions are carried out legally with a range of guarantees for the preservation of the territory's heritage, in the best conditions of time and cost (Redouaby and Lafrem, 2020).

In the same vein, knowledge absorption capacity refers to the set of processes that enable the decision-maker to have a better grasp of the terrain in which he or she operates on the basis of available data in order to make relevant strategic decisions. In other words, it is knowing and understanding in order to act.

However, the issue of territorial social capital and social innovation is a joint responsibility of private actors who are at the origin of this activity and public actors in charge of the management of the territory. In this perspective, absorptive capacity should be another way of understanding and evaluating the mechanisms of value creation in relation to the physical and information flows induced by human activities.

It must allow for an intervention to improve the structures of access to the territory and the investment climate and to link them to other fields. It is therefore necessary to find the means of action allowing the coordination of the actors involved in the valorisation of the territory in a search for global performance of the territory.

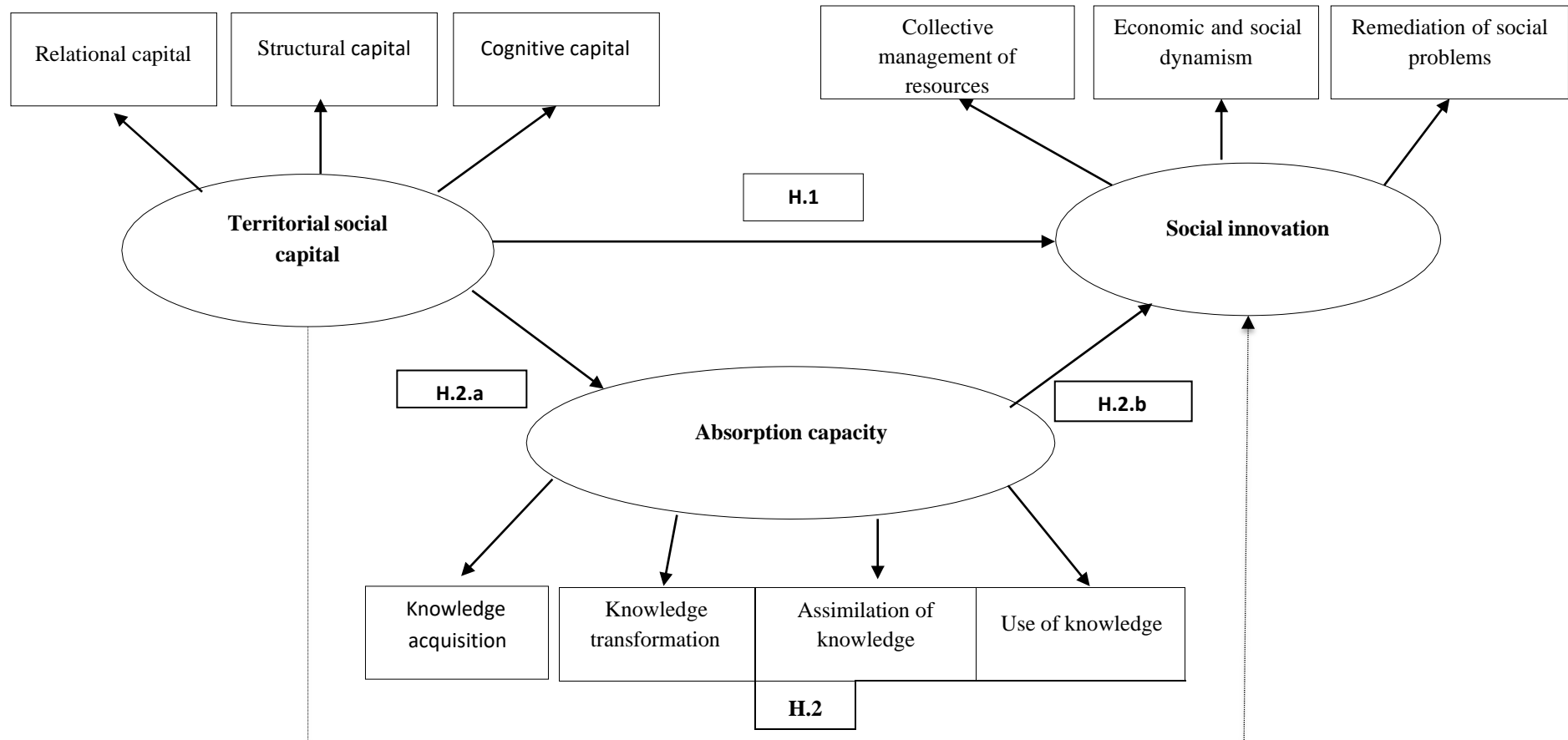
In the light of these theoretical implications, we can propose an approximation to the concept of knowledge absorption capacity by referring to four devices commonly used to understand this concept, namely

- Knowledge acquisition;
- Knowledge transformation;
- The assimilation of knowledge;
- Knowledge exploitation.

Broadly speaking, the conceptual and theoretical analysis discussed throughout this axis has enabled us to build a theoretical corpus describing the key concepts and underlying hypothetical links, from different theoretical perspectives, which can serve as a reliable basis for developing the measurement scales and validating them.

In this vein, the hypothetical research model resulting from the back and forth between abstract theory and observed reality can be represented in the figure below.

Figure 1 Hypothetical research model



Source: Authors

Operationalising the concepts and sub-concepts is now one of the crucial phases in order to test the research model. In this sense, we have mobilised twenty-one measurement items referring to aspects characterising the forms of territorial social capital, the knowledge absorption capacity of territorial actors and social innovation. These measurement items will be coded according to the procedures of the five-point Likert scale. The table below provides information on the different items used to bring together the latent concepts studied.

Table 1 Latent concepts and selected measurement items

Latent concepts	Selected measurement items	Codes
Territorial social capital	Sharing the same culture and similar values and lifestyle	CCOG_1
	Sharing the same philosophy and similar approaches to business relationships	CCOG_2
	Sharing the same vision with compatible goals and objectives	CCOG_3
	Frequent, intensive close personal interaction	CREL_1
	Respect and mutual trust	CREL_2
	Dissemination and exchange of information in business networks	CSTR_1
	Interaction at different territorial levels and in different ways	CSTR_2
Social innovation	Actors optimise financial and non-financial resources	MGCR_1
	Actors manage skills and knowledge according to their activities	MGCR_2
	Promoting and supporting projects in promising areas help to enhance the territory	DES_1
	The development of social care facilities is a form of territorial enhancement	DES_2
	Territorial projects contribute to the employability of young people and women	RPS_1
	Territorial projects contribute to the improvement of the population's well-being	RPS_2
Absorption capacity	Access to information strengthens the degree of involvement of territorial actors	ACC_1
	Coordination between actors allows ideas and concepts from external sources to be analysed, exchanged and shared quickly between them	ACC_2

	Monitoring and support for territorial actors strengthen their involvement	TRC_1
	The steering of activities initiated by the territorial actors involves their participation	TRC_2
	The collective mobilisation of actors contributes to their involvement	ASC_1
	The collaboration of actors is an effective form of territorial participation	ASC_2
	The integration of the acquired knowledge allows a better performance of the territorial actors	EXC_1
	The development of knowledge and skills allows actors to adapt to mutations and changes in the territorial environment	EXC_2

Source : Authors

It is now appropriate to proceed with the justification of the methodological choices and the description of the research field, in order to give more ethics to our research.

3. Methodological choices and materials

Our methodological reasoning is largely inspired by the deduction referring to a post-positivist paradigm. This approach is based on the principle of 'back and forth' between abstract theory and the reality observed in the field, i.e. the researcher formulates his or her research question by relying on theoretically existing constructs without the causal relations being tested beforehand, generating hypotheses with a view to invalidating or confirming them.

In order to provide elements of an answer to our problem, we have consulted a range of works that structure the key words in some way, through an overview of the conceptual genesis and theoretical and empirical literature, allowing us to draw up an adequate framework of analysis. Then, following the logic dictated by the post-positivist paradigm adopted in this essay, we proceeded to model the facts in order to better understand the issues of social capital, absorptive capacity and social innovation.

To do this, we chose the city of Agadir as a research field with a diversity of actors. Regarding the institutional, economic or civil actors who interact in the management of the city's business. Agadir has an important place in the economic and administrative fabric of Morocco. Therefore, it seems logical and relevant to study the socially innovative aspects of its actors. It is relevant to point out that access to the research field allows us to identify a panoply of territorial actors who operate in the management of the affairs of the city of Agadir. It is essentially:

- Public actors with significant institutional power are the backbone that manages and monitors territorial action in the city. They are represented by the regional council, the provincial council, the local authority of Agadir, ministerial departments, administrations, public institutions

and companies;

- The economic actors of the city of Agadir which are represented by a large number of companies and cooperatives that operate and contribute to the development of the city. In this respect, we have tried to work on the main categories of economic actors as well as their respective representative bodies;
- Civil actors are also considered as decisive actors of economic valorisation. In this context, civil society organisations (CSOs) with a passion for the management of territorial affairs contribute, within the framework of participatory democracy, to the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of decisions and projects of elected institutions and territorial public authorities.

Social innovation therefore involves a large number of actors and takes place over a long period of time. To get a comprehensive view of the process would have required a sufficient number of surveys of a representative sample of the different stakeholders. The extraction of samples, taking into account the sampling lists and strata, seems to be important. The table below gives a clear overview of the different information underlying the sample collection.

Table 2 Determination of sub-sample sizes

Actors (Strata)	Sub-populations	Information sources	Sub-samples	Survey rate	Response rate	Final investigations
Public actors	32	Snowball of data from field visits (2019)	24	75 %	100 %	24
Economic actors	54 565 companies	Morocco Wilpro data base (2021)	96	0.18 %	83.33 %	80 companies
	306 cooperatives	ODCO (2021)	74	24 %	94.60 %	70 cooperatives
Civil actors	9 875	Civil society direction (interior ministry-2021)	95	0,96 %	87.36 %	83 SCOs

Source: Authors

In the final register, we conducted the study with 289 actors involved in the management of territorial affairs in the city of Agadir through a questionnaire survey. In this sense, only 257 questionnaires were used, the results of which were extrapolated to test the specified model and provide elements of response to the questions underlying the contribution of territorial social capital to the social innovation of actors.

4. Results and discussion

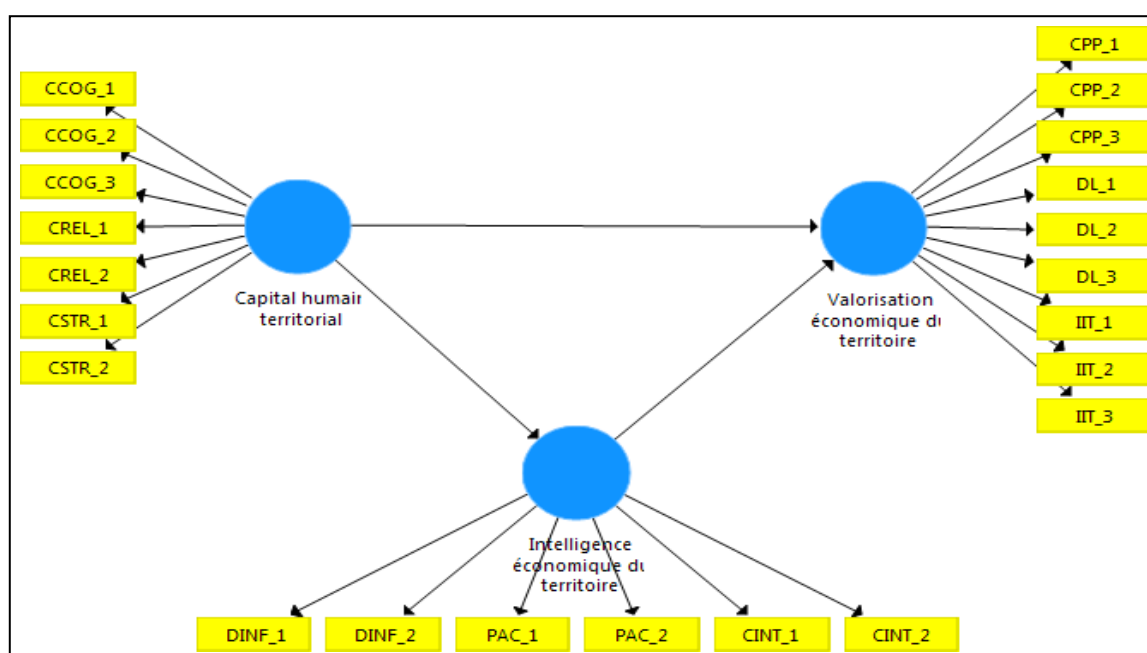
To test our SEM model, we used the PLS method, which is now more suitable than covariance-based methods both in its objectives and in its constraints of use. In this sense, it allows us to test developing models, to take into account non-normally distributed data and to work on small samples. This is how we will proceed with the analysis and discussion of the results.

4.1 Data analysis results

After extrapolating the resulting questionnaire data, we tested our model using recent developments in the PLS algorithm, under the SmartPLS v.3 procedure. However, SEM modelling normally goes through five steps, namely: model specification; model identification; model estimation; model goodness-of-fit assessment; and finally model confirmatory analysis.

Specifying the model is based on a graphical representation of the overall model measurement scheme. In this phase the various elements of the model and the assumed relationships between them are specified, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2 Global model specification (SmartPLS V.3.0)

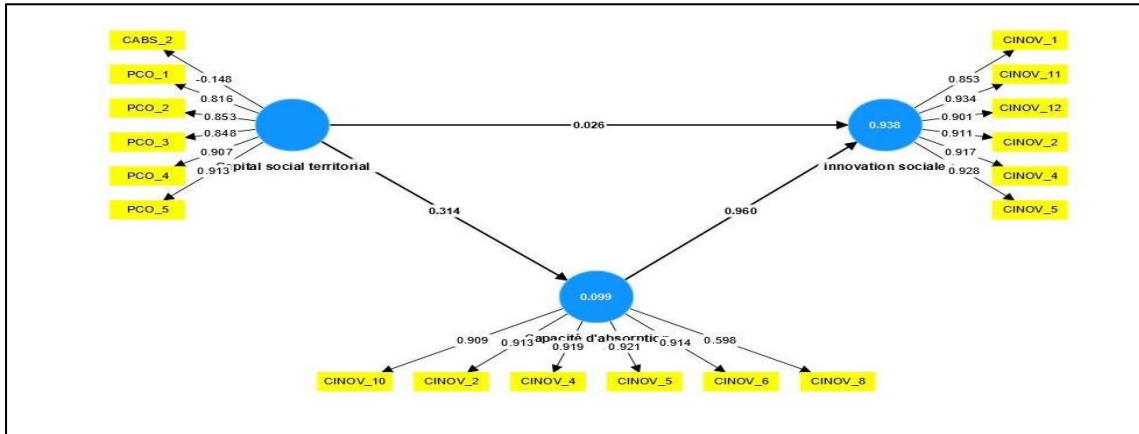


Source: Authors

The model, to be confirmed, is presented by twenty-two observed variables. In theory, these variables are assumed to be measures of three factors that are latent variables. The identification of the model is now the second phase of our methodological approach to SEM modelling. In this sense (Schumacker and Lomax 2004) recommends the evaluation of the order condition by the number of degrees of freedom which must be greater than zero. For our model, the order condition is well verified and the degree of freedom is positive ($dfl=210$).

The third phase of the approach refers to the estimation of the model by means of the factorial algorithm of the PLS on the whole of the statistical units, in this case 257 territorial actors operating in the city of Agadir. In this way, we obtained the figure below.

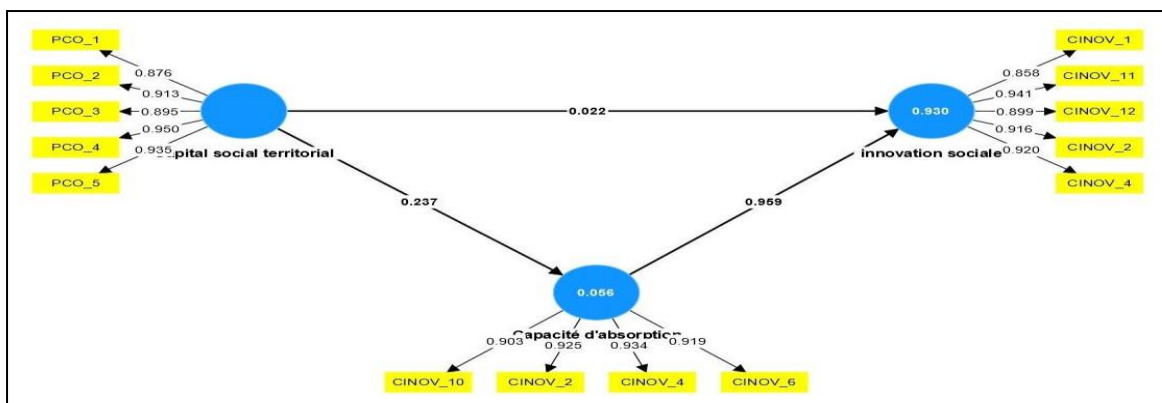
Figure 3 Global model estimation (SmartPLS V.3.0)



Source: Authors

The results of the estimation of the parameters of the model confirm that the majority of the measurement items mobilised had contribution values (*loading factors*) greater than 0.7, with the exception of a few items operationalising the three dimensions which recorded relatively low correlation coefficients. In this sense, a readjustment is necessary to capture the dimensions and the underlying contribution links, by deleting the items that do not meet the condition of order and validity. In fact, the new global model respecified is as follows:

Figure 4 Estimation of the global respecified model (SmartPLS V.3.0)



Source: Authors

Assessing the goodness of fit of the respecified model can be done on the basis of its explanatory power. In this sense, we are called upon to verify the convergent validity and the discriminant validity of the model. Convergent validity consists of calculating one or two measures of convergent validity: Cronbach's alpha and the internal consistency developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The interpretation of the values obtained is similar, but also the guideline given by Nunnally (1978) can be adopted. Discriminant validity refers to the use of the average extracted variance shared between the construct and its measurement

indicators. This measure must be greater than the variance shared between the construct and the other constructs in the model. In line with this, Chin (1998) recommends an AVE greater than 0.5.

Thus, we proceed to the evaluation of the overall model in the light of the tests and critical values recommended in this sense. To do this, we present the table below which provides information on the values of a range of indicators, namely: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average extracted variance, R² and the Gof (Goodness of fit) index.

Table 3 Indicators for assessing the goodness of fit of the global model (SmartPLS V.3.0)

Latent constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	R ²	Gof Index
Territorial social capital	0,955	0,962	0,836		0,6417
Knowledge absorption capacity	0,940	0,957	0,847	0,056	
Social innovation	0,946	0,959	0,823	0,930	

Source : Authors

In light of the results obtained, it appears that our model has an acceptable quality of representation given the standards recommended by data analysts. However, in order to test therobustness of the results, we believe it is necessary to carry out a bootstrapping analysis to deduce the significance of the contribution relationship between territorial social capital and social innovation in the different scenarios, including the mediating role of the absorption capacity. The results of this analysis are presented in the table below.

Table 4 Estimation of the causal model by bootstrapping and hypothesis testing

	β (correlation coefficient)	t-Student (Bootstrap)	P-values	Decision
H1. Territorial social capital => Social innovation	0,022	0,672	0,501	Rejected
H.2.a. Territorial social capital => Knowledge absorption capacity	0,237	2,136	0,000	Validated
H.2.b. Knowledge absorption capacity => Social innovation	0,959	58,382	0,000	Validated

Source : Authors

In order to provide robust answers to the problem raised, we plan to discuss the main results obtained in comparison with the literature review.

4.2 Discussion

At the end of this analysis, it appears that the choice of favouring both a theoretical approach and a field application makes this work a contribution to research targeting the issue of territorial social capital in relation to the social innovation of territorial actors.

Indeed, to be interested today in the theme of social capital in the context of research on social innovations could not be done without mentioning the evolution of the process and mechanisms of knowledge absorption capacity, at least in the intentions underlying its current configuration and the development of its emergence.

We can conclude from the results of this research that social capital does not contribute directly and significantly ($\beta = 0.022$) to the social innovation of actors in the city of Agadir.

If we place social capital in the strict sense of the mode of production and regulation of the city on the basis of territorial management, that is to say, on the negotiation of urban operations between the representatives of the urban government and, essentially, the economic actors, we could claim, without great risk of error, that the actors of the city of Agadir have for a long time been endowed with a great relational and cognitive potential structuring their intervention in the development of the city.

However, the results of the study show that the social innovation of the actors of the city of Agadir is essentially based on the promotion of economic and social dynamism, on the mobilisation and management of territorial resources and on the search for solutions to social problems.

By relying on its geographical position which makes it a real hinge between the North and the South of the country, the city of Agadir has been able to make the most of the diversity of its functions, by taking advantage of the numerous natural assets it has and particularly the legendary dynamism of its population, and thus develop a great social immunity and an unprecedented economic boom.

On the negative side, however, territorial social capital, conceived exclusively in its variant of capacity building of actors, would appear as a risk, as a threat even to democracy and citizenship. Indeed, the public interest would be reduced to a categorical interest among others, in the game of negotiated action between actors. The risk of a definitive confusion between democracy and management would be coupled with a subjection of cities to economic logic alone.

Hence the need to promote a system of solidarity and coordination in networks and on the scale of the city, of the sectoral actions of the decentralised services of the administrations. Such a scheme should be part of a policy of refocusing the role of actors on strengthening this network at the level of a city such as Agadir and which are largely inspired by the practices of the knowledge absorption capacity.

This is demonstrated by the results found, which emphasise the mediating transition of the absorption capacity, which is now necessary for the success of social innovations, of the actors in the city, based on the strengthening of the networks of actors.

This result is not surprising. The confrontation with the reality of the empirical parameters of transition, from social capital to social innovation through the absorption of knowledge, demonstrates how normal and realistic it is to indicate, through a set of standard measures, a sure way to an effective system of enhancement of the city of Agadir.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, given the enormous difficulties involved in managing the city of Agadir, and the complexity of the coordination/participation/involvement mission, it is not easy to achieve such a transition. Any proposal in this sense would only be indicative, not prescriptive. Because the re-foundation of the territorial thing is an expedition to be situated in its context and to be undertaken by taking into account the various contingencies of the application environment.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, dedicated to the study of the contribution of forms of territorial social capital to the social innovation of actors in the city of Agadir, we have developed a panoply of theoretical conceptions, definitions and analytical tools relating the main concepts and the underlying hypothetical links. The work is spread over three axes.

In the first axis, devoted to the conceptual genesis and theoretical meanings of key concepts, we presented the conceptual and evolutionary workings that can provide concrete definitions before highlighting the measures that can eventually be detected.

Then, in the second axis, we presented the methodological choices and the research field. In this sense, we conducted a survey by questionnaire with a sample of territorial actors operating in the city of Agadir. That is to say a total of 257 definitive grids whose data were extrapolated for the envisaged analyses.

The third axis refers to the presentation of the results of the analyses carried out using recent developments in structural equation modelling under the SmartPLS procedure. These results have allowed us to deduce conclusions concerning the contribution of social capital to the social innovation of actors in an urban area.

Roughly speaking, there are many indications that the relationship between the triptych of social capital/knowledge absorption/social innovation has evolved in a double win-win relationship, in which the gain of one represents the gain of the other, and the strengthening of one was not at the expense of the unity and integrity of the other. The proof of this is the state of transition of the urban environment and the mutations of different kinds, social, institutional, managerial, in which the city of Agadir is immersed. These elements give proof that the diversification of actors and the enactment of new norms are essential, on their

own, to reinforce the transition from a monocentric conception of the city to urban development based on a polycentric conception of development.

Despite all the contributions of this research, the conclusions drawn must be put into perspective because of certain limitations. The investigative mechanism used has some limitations, particularly with regard to the difficulties encountered in collecting data from the actors. The identification of these limitations leads us to propose new research avenues capable of refining the study.

In this respect, in order to provide some answers to the questions underlying the relationship between social capital, absorptive capacity and social innovation, we plan to carry out a study targeting not only the city of Agadir, but also all the actors, public and private, involved in the management of territorial affairs in the Souss Massa region. In addition, it would be even more interesting to examine separately the impact of the three dimensions of territorial social capital on the generation of social innovation. This would allow for a more refined understanding of the direct or indirect facilitating role that aspects of each dimension can play in this contribution.

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