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Social Innovation in the Non-Profit Organization Framework: A Review

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Abstract: This article reviews the literature related to the concepts of social innovation and non-profit organizations, applying a bibliometric analysis to the last five years of publications in the Scopus platform and Web of Science. The results suggest that these concepts complement rather than exclude each other, as social innovation can add to the social value of this type of organization. The social commitment of non-profit organizations and its relevance to integrating an innovative approach in their management is also discussed as a way to confront social problems through innovation and promote more participation and development in the social sector.

Keywords: social innovation; organizations; non-profit organizations; social sector

1. Introduction

The continuous search for a balance between the freedom, will, and responsibility of organizations has represented the starting point for Navarro (2013) in the definition of an ethical framework that allows identifying, managing, and institutionalizing resources, capacities, and their link with economic activities. This framework leads itself toward the projection and social transformation that is required by vulnerable contexts and the construction of a society characterized by being fair, equitable, and sustainable.

The context of Latin American countries suggested by Romeu (2017) is positioned as a scenario of emerging issues that demand the joint work of agents and actors in social ecosystems. This assumption complements (Parada Camargo et al. 2017) in arguing that Latin America is characterized by offering social crisis scenarios that combine difficulties such as inequality, vulnerability of communities, and environmental effects, among others.

Facing this view that brings together various social problems, socially responsible actions are required to respond to the different limits that are generated in the territories, alluding to principles such as strengthening the education quality at all levels to create human capital and managing a civilizing change that stimulates the generation of added social value, contributing to collective welfare, and the construction of excellent social scenarios (Parada Camargo et al. 2017; Romeu 2017).

For the management of an organization, innovation has represented a different strategy that has allowed the applied improvement of practices based on the knowledge and dynamism that the concept implies when building and creating scientific capacities (Amar-Sepúlveda 2017). Complementing this assumption, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2005) expresses in its Oslo manual the innovation definition from the perspective of research and technological

development, offering several guidelines and key principles of its appropriation and application; this situation is not indistinct from non-profit organizations and the relevance of innovating in a social way.

On the other hand, [Echeverría \(2008\)](#) expresses that innovation is not only limited by the scientific and technological dimensions, since the concept beyond its applied perspective represents a process that implies a socio-cultural process, which represents a link between aspects, such as the redefinition of roles, the classification and degree of change, and the actions of knowledge and technology transfer—actions whose scope impacts the economic, social, and cultural spheres of social structures or organizations.

Faced with this scenario, it is pertinent to determine how research on social innovation and non-profit organizations is related to each other, and to review the literature related to the concepts of social innovation and non-profit organizations, taking into account the publications on the Scopus platform and Web of Science. It is also pertinent to resolve the need to promote social innovation management in non-profit organizations and consider how to respond to the social issues that emerge, especially in the Latin American context, which is characterized by crisis situations from different fronts, such as climate action, quality education, decent work, economic growth, and other sustainable development goals ([UNDP 2015](#)).

2. Social Innovation and Non-Profit Organization Framework

2.1. Social Innovation: A Conceptualization

From the perspective of organizations, innovation is seen as self-regulation and internal management that facilitates the articulation of key policies and guidelines in the pace of change with projection toward the social environment, which implies a combination of competences, learning, and social scenarios. In the same way, [Rodríguez Herrera \(2008\)](#) affirm that social innovation requires considering the following key factors: public policy management, strategic alliances, consensus and synergy of actors, and added values of change. From this point of view, social innovation is considered a concept that intervenes as a management strategy aimed at strengthening the enterprise–society relationship and the internal responsibility to improve environmental conditions ([Melamed-Varela et al. 2017a](#)).

In the same way, the concept of social innovation according to [Villa and Melo \(2015\)](#) is aimed at defining mechanisms that facilitate the search for and development of alternatives to social problems, characterized by their novelty and orientation to improve the quality of life and reduce the vulnerability of communities. In this sense, the application of actions should contribute to the design and creation of practical solutions that respond to the appropriate social issues ([Ortíz 2016](#); [Parton 2017](#)).

In this sense, the definition of social innovation also refers to the perspective of corporate social responsibility and its management, similar to the results of ([Gallardo-Vázquez and Sánchez-Hernández 2013](#)) in the case of enterprise in which the primary objective is aimed at generating abilities that allow them to be competitive and lasting over time. Therefore, it is argued that responsible management and the appropriate principles of innovation must be institutionalized in organizations' strategies. [Parada Camargo et al. \(2017\)](#) highlight the relevance of social relations, as they contribute to the collective construction of sectors and actors that allow the definition of a platform that generates better results.

Meanwhile, in a technical perspective, [Echeverría \(2008\)](#) exposes the relevance that social innovation has achieved in the socioeconomic and cultural areas of diverse communities, listing as key aspects the transfer of knowledge and technology for applied improvement and sizing from the sources of innovation, the linked sectors, and the scale implied by the change—crossing the principle of responding to social needs ([Tracey and Stott 2017](#)). [Gurrutxaga \(2011\)](#) complements this perspective by disaggregating innovation in the capacities of creativity and inventiveness as options to define how to respond to social necessities, defining structural constraints and rescuing the relevance of innovation in today's scenarios.

Based on the aforementioned perspectives, innovation is understood as a process of change and novel contribution to certain contexts, using a social perspective that is conditioned to respond to

the problems and necessities that arise in the socio-cultural environment and related communities, orienting itself from the responsible management of organizations, as well as from the technical development that involves universities, technological development centers, and others. The relevance acquired by social relations and the collective construction of capacities to foster social innovation and respond to the social problems of each context stand out, including relevant points of view, such as health, education, infrastructure, and vulnerable communities (Kohler and Chesbrough 2019).

Social innovation can be defined as the process aimed at the search, design, and implementation of alternatives that respond to social problems in a novel way and contribute to socioeconomic development in the global territories, distinguishing themselves by their originality, relevance, and transformative scenarios and ideas (Villa and Melo 2015; Rodríguez Herrera 2008); display of the concept implies dimensioning factors, such as frontal change, the principles of governance, and the processes that guide the operational strategies—these being determinants in the scope and the value proposal that offers appropriate social innovation (Cels et al. 2012). In the same way, Nicholls and Murdock (2012) propose to categorize social innovation at levels adjusted to the objectives and related actors.

Oinas-Kukkonen and Oinas-Kukkonen (2013) emphasizes the idea of an intelligent society with greater interconnection, an aspect that social innovation must link the use of technology for the creation of value, applied strategies for the interaction of communities, and the diffusion of ideas and management, as well as the disclosure of knowledge that creates an impact and eases the co-creation of value. It is notorious that in this argument, technology and digital channels represent a tool and not the means of innovation as such—a position supported by Christensen (2013)—when saying that technology is often understood as an innovation, a fact that has led different organizations to fail because of the lack of added value.

The Latin American context disaggregates different social issues; in view of this, Parada Camargo et al. (2017) express that social innovation gradually takes on a boom in those territories, characterized by step change and new forms of coping with difficulties and needs; this approach is influenced by the philosophy of corporate social responsibility that expands the vision of the company's interests and emphasizes its commitment to society (Jiménez and Pérez 2016). Despite this, it still requires greater appropriation by companies and other organizations of the socioeconomic systems of the principles that condense both concepts.

As an international reference in Spain, Martínez-Celorrío (2017) argues the institutionalization of social innovation as a strategy of socioeconomic growth, and development has been limited due to the lack of appropriation of the concept, as well as the lack of knowledge by the government side and government spheres. Public policy, however, also exposes the transcendence of the concept as a theoretical and applied reference that catalyzes the social transformation of territorial scenarios, requiring active participation of actors that intervene in the different social processes.

In the case of Colombia, social management has shown adherence to global principles aimed at tackling social and environmental impacts from the management of organizations—being determinants in the evolution of the concept—as well as the formalization of key institutions and the documentation of guidelines for their appropriation—framing the activity in the legal field and preserving the character of voluntariness as evidence of the sense of responsibility (Melamed-Varela et al. 2017b). Contributing to this finding, Moreno and Mantilla (2016) express the relevance that social observatories acquire as agents of oversight and promotion of social initiatives undertaken by organizations.

From the approach of Cohen et al. (2013), the new forms that economic systems have acquired day-by-day encourage a greater degree of social commitment on the part of the organizations that make up its structure. Duckworth and Moore (2010) propose a process based on learning and improvement, creating spaces for social transformation based on social practice based on the criteria of ethics, the environment, and joint operation, highlighting thinking, acting, evaluating, and improving the application of principles of social innovations as key activities.

Based on the notion of linking actors Azagra-Caro and Consoli (2016) express the relevance acquired in the transfer of technology by the joint action of the industries in tune with state agencies and

universities in order to toughen a platform of resources and capacities generating results with a high impact for society. Social innovation does not ignore this type of linking strategy; however, its context is different from the actions of research, development, and technology transfer. Following [Duckworth and Moore \(2010\)](#), the entrepreneurship of social innovation actions are based on a transformation of paradigms that sustain responsible management of organizations.

Complementing this idea, the new forms of the economy and implementation of social practices ([Cohen et al. 2013](#); [Parton 2017](#)) by the actors that make up the architecture of the system make it possible to appropriate and apply social innovation to generate social transformation in certain contexts. [Lévesque \(2013\)](#) argues the shared responsibility between the public and private sectors, requiring uprooting the myth of innovation as an activity tied to enterprise organizations. This emphasizes the role of the state in the undertaking of social change and of the participation of the other social institutions in the framework of the advance in the sustainable development of territories ([Melles 2019](#)) through applied solutions such as the diversification of sectors, generation of responsible technologies, and the opportunity for growth and community advancement.

2.2. Non-Profit Organizations

It is common to see a subdivision in the different types of organizations that exist. One of them is referred to as the third sector, the social sector, or simply the non-profit sector—organizations run by civilians and governed by private law that have a heritage that is established to fulfill the purpose of the same, with their surpluses being used only in the accomplishment of their targets so that they are not distributed among its founders or third parties ([CCONG 2016](#)).

However, there are many institutions that have given some definitions of non-profit organizations; one of them is the United Nations, which states that they are a voluntary non-profit organization and that they can be developed in the national or international order ([Vargas et al. 1992](#); [Montoya 2017](#)). Other organizations that define non-profits are the United Nations Development Program, which determines that they are institutions that work with the contribution of their members, developing objectives related to the promotion of development programs ([Pineda 1999](#); [Cardozo 2017](#)).

[Banco Mundial \(2004\)](#) defines non-profits as private organizations dedicated to calming distress, defending the interests of poor people, protecting the environment, providing social services, and promoting community development. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) refers to them as organizations founded and governed by a group of private citizens with a philanthropic intention maintained by individual contributions ([Boni and Ferrero 1998](#); [Holguín and Ramos 2016](#)).

Within this sector there are many subcategories of non-profits; among them community action boards in the field of culture, religion, non-profit educational organizations, among other fields, can be found, and in sectors such as healthcare, clinics and other organizations that work for the attention of clients without thinking about any kind of economic retribution also exist ([Pineda 1999](#); [Mejía 2017](#)).

However, [Mannarini et al. \(2018\)](#) express that non-profit organizations measure their operation methods to support and contribute to their decision-making processes, guaranteeing responsibility toward all their stakeholders and always foreseeing transparency and generating social added value that allows for the maintenance of the benefits that this type of organization generates. This leads to the provision of necessary services for the community, allowing all its actors to be managed in a socially responsible manner. [Macková and Dvořáková \(2017\)](#) have confirmed the relevance of the social sector and non-profit organizations on the conditions and market scenarios of the contemporary world.

An important aspect of this type of organization is that they are characterized by their value through important social tasks, thus they become a notable component for society. At the same time, they are a difficult aspect of study because of the plurality of organizations that they integrate ([Valentinov 2005](#); [Hernández-Ascanio et al. 2016](#)). These entities play an important role of social cohesion since their mechanism of action is aimed at the promotion of social values, as they have unique characteristics

conditioning their type, such as volunteering, and the provision of free or almost free services in addition to containing aspects relevant in their development, such as donations (Fuentes 2007).

Through these characteristics of non-profit organizations, their contributions can be broken down into three types: economic, political, and social. From the political point of view, Díaz and Bel (2003) state that non-profit organizations, because they are autonomous institutions of the state, can influence the decision-making process of a government; that is, where their political stance can be seen. However, it is noteworthy that these factors take on great importance in the democracy of the state, encouraging the development of communities and preventing corrupted governments (Pérez et al. 2011). This is how these institutions can perform a few humanitarian services to inform the government of the people's concern and call for political participation at the community level, generating mechanisms in the development of government policies.

From the social point of view, non-profit organizations are included in the so-called 'civil society' of Cruz and Espinoza (2002), in which social leaders, the academy (academics and researchers), civil society organizations, and non-profit organizations participate to have a role that allow them to denounce injustice, stop poverty and corruption, and generate guarantees that allow non-violation of human rights. It is important to highlight that civil society is seen as an independent part of the state, although some define it from the point of view of an ideal between the public and the private (Cohen and Arato 2000; Flórez 2018). From this perspective, for Mezzalama and Schumm (1993) and Martins and Masdeu (2015), non-profit organizations offer services in low-income (poor) communities and in areas of difficult access where other development organizations and governments do not reach at all.

Regarding the economic aspect, non-profit organizations are seen as legal or formal companies that operate in an environment that affects them (Marulanda and Sepúlveda 2004; Garrido and Guevara 2017), and from that perspective, they use business elements such as social balances to respond to the criterion of transparency that must exist with society in general, along with quality monitoring to avoid falling into the issue of social activism occurring without quality and relevance. This also requires the presentation of balance sheets and financial statements to have clear information on how they use and invest the resources they have (Fernández 2003).

With regard to their nature as social organizations, non-profit entities are positioned as key actors for the development and promotion of social innovation initiatives that allow the transformation of the different world realities and confront emerging problems (Breßler et al. 2016); in this way, they contribute to the collective construction of a just, equitable, and sustainable society, overcoming the limitations of the economic, social, and environmental aspects for future generations of the world (UNDP 2015).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Type and Design

This research was based on the literature review and text mining of the themes "non-profit organizations" and "social innovation" aimed to carry out bibliometric analysis of the theoretical framework of these research fields in the circuits of specialized knowledge (Ávila-Toscano 2018). This approach was developed in the investigation based on the strategy of documentary review of books, chapters, articles, and working documents, among other literary genres, including documents that have been characterized by their selectivity, reliability, and scientific validity (Behar 2008), as well as their connection to the defined themes.

This analysis identified the most outstanding features of the context and the theoretical–conceptual framework of social innovation and its ideas related to non-profit organizations. The review and bibliometric analysis were based on the following criteria: (1) registry in circuits of specialized scientific knowledge (Scopus and Web of Science), (2) relevance of the subject in relation to the discipline of administration and business, and (3) the observation window of the last five years (2014–2018) for the presentation of the results.

3.2. Techniques and Instruments

Secondary sources of scientific information were used to analyze the information (Behar 2008). As a guiding principle of research, the international scientific community was considered as the largest input that ensures reliable and pertinent information (Miguel et al. 2011). The main sources consulted were Scopus and the Web of Science-Core Collection, complemented by the Scimago Journal and Country Ranking (SJR) and Journal Citation Reports (JCR). These tools have allowed the specialized consultation and characterization of different scientific documents and impact measurements that have generated their sources (Suárez and Pérez 2018). This information has been integrated into the framework of the study from the critical analysis of concepts, the contrast between theoretical perspectives, and the arguments of researchers to generate new knowledge (Scribano and De Sena 2015).

3.3. Procedure

The revision of literature registers of the concepts related to social innovation and non-profit organizations in the narrative of the international scientific communities and their main contributions, a specialized search in Scopus and Web of Science has been realized under the keywords “non-profit organizations,” “organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro,” “social innovation,” and “innovación social,” then adding the Boolean operator “AND” and mining the records in the period 2014–2018. This allowed for the consolidation of documents in Spanish and English related to the topics. We structured the search equations in the following way:

Scopus: ALL FIELDS= “non-profit organizations” (1)

Scopus: ALL FIELDS= “organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro” (2)

Scopus: ALL FIELDS= “social innovation” (3)

Scopus: ALL FIELDS= “innovación social” (4)

Scopus: ALL FIELDS= “non-profit organizations” AND “social innovation” (5)

Scopus: ALL FIELDS= “organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro” AND “innovación social” (6)

Web of Science: ALL= “non-profit organizations” (7)

Web of Science: ALL= “organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro” (8)

Web of Science: ALL= “social innovation” (9)

Web of Science: ALL= “innovación social” (10)

Web of Science: ALL= “non-profit organizations” AND “social innovation” (11)

Web of Science: ALL= “organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro” AND “innovación social” (12)

The results of the specialized search obtained from the different structured equations were consolidated in the bibliometric analysis, identifying the number of publications per period in the observation window (2014–2018) and characteristics associated with them. In this way, they contrasted the main contributions and contributions related to social innovation and non-profit organizations, as well as their link in the argument and constructivist development of the fields.

4. Results and Discussion

The research findings that have resulted from the specialized search integrating the topics “social innovation” and “non-profit organizations” represent the result of the text mining that was carried out in the Scopus and Web of Science platforms, referenced as servers of scientific literature of high quality and greater international impact (Macías 2017). These findings present a significant advance in the thematic and literary development that these concepts have presented in the bibliography of business, management, and accounting. In order to deepen this information, the results per year and registration in each database referring to non-profit organizations are presented in Figure 1 below.

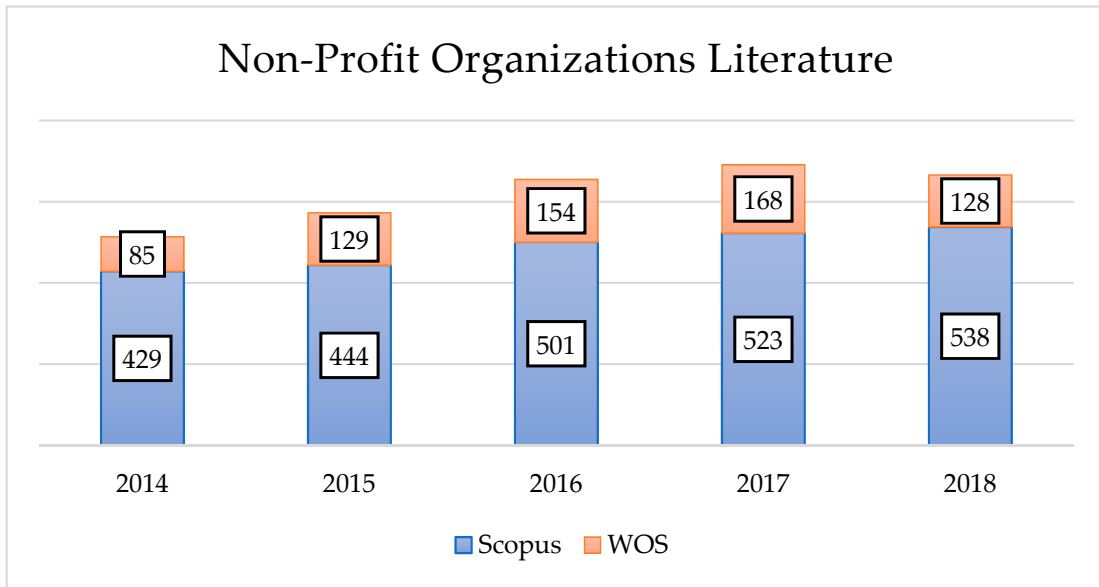


Figure 1. Documents related to non-profit organizations (2014–2018). Source: Query on Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) (2019).

These first results of the specialized search referring to non-profit organizations provide information regarding the number of indexed publications; the graph shows how most of the documents in the Scopus platform has been consolidated in the last five years, showing a similar representation in this period of time and an increase relation in each period, while the publications in Web of Science regarding the theme reached their peak in the last four years. However, a relative decrease of the information in this topic is evident. This shows the theoretical relevance of the topic and its interest in the academic world, including the dynamics of study and analysis of non-profit organizations with their conjunctures, particularities, and changes in the so-called third sector (Valentinov 2005; Anheier and Seibel 2013). Figure 2 shows the list of papers published on social innovation in the 2014–2018 period, constituting a total of 9.191 documents in Scopus and 1.078 in Web of Science.

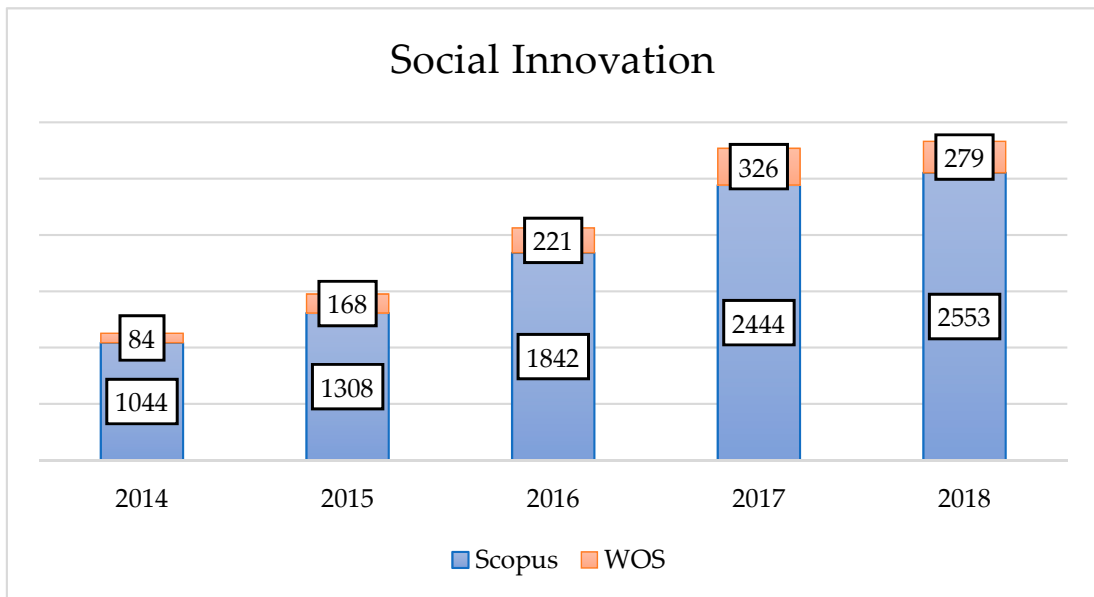


Figure 2. Documents related to social innovation (2014–2018). Source: Query on Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) (2019).

Figure 2 presents the issue of social innovation, which has been a theme widely studied from different spheres, and the volume of publications related to it demonstrates an interesting boom (Azagra-Caro and Consoli 2016). Compared with non-profit organizations, the number of articles published on innovation subjects represents almost three times the number of publications in Scopus, constituting a subject with a broader spectrum of study; in the Web of Science platform, a lower proportion of information indexed to the Scopus is maintained, with greater coverage of information at the international level (Ríos-Ospina 2017).

Non-profit organizations are positioned as systems that, by their nature, are more related to the development and promotion of social innovations (Tracey and Stott 2017; Kohler and Chesbrough 2019); therefore, it is necessary to carry out a specialized search that allows for the identification of the volume of publications and research that relate these aspects as a point of reference, as well as the evolution of the concept in the years 2014 to 2018. The results of this consultation are presented below in Figure 3.

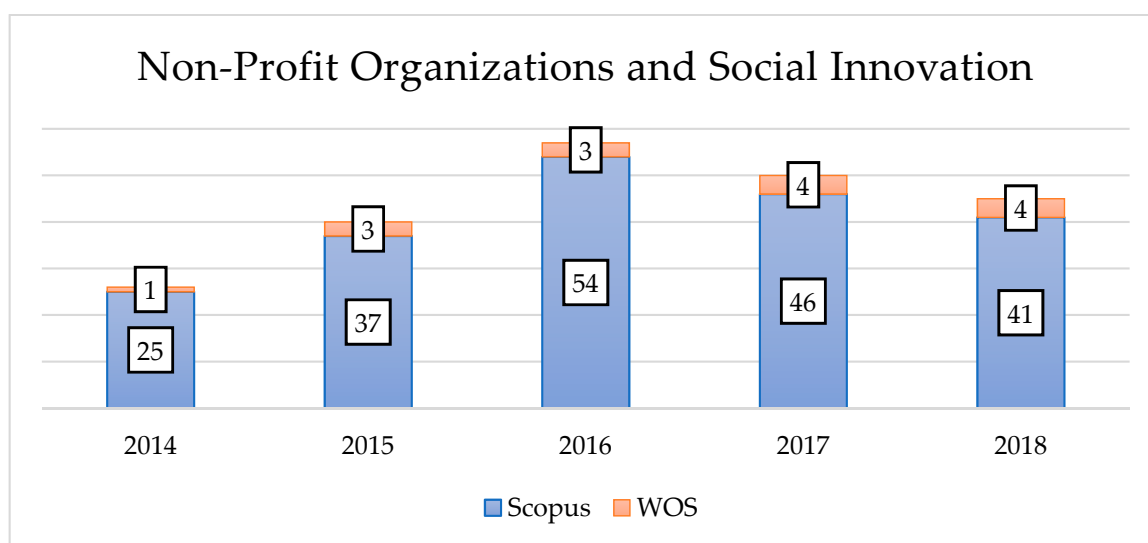


Figure 3. Documents related to non-profit organizations and social innovation (2014–2018). Source: Query on Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) (2019).

According to the query on Scopus and Web of Science (2019), some of the fields related to the documents shown at Figure 3 are ‘social enterprises’, ‘social entrepreneurship’, ‘third sector’, and ‘corporate social responsibility’; the research that articulates these concepts and gives an account of the pertinence that constitutes the impulse of social innovation in non-profit organizations (Breßler et al. 2016) aimed to develop novel alternatives that allow the overcoming of the contextual problems of the current society (Villa and Melo 2015). Relating to the information above, the association of the topics in the academic debate of scientific communities at an international level is shown, consolidating the publications on the topic in the Scopus and Web of Science platforms, giving evidencing of the relevance for the international communities of research in these fields. In this order of ideas, Table 1 shows the deepening of the sources that make up the integrating publications of social innovation and non-profit organizations.

Table 1. Top of journals on publications on social innovation and non-profit organizations.

Source	Country	Scopus		WOS	
		SJR	Best Quartile (2018)	JIF	Best Quartile (2018)
<i>ACM International Conference Proceeding Series</i>	United States	0.169	-	-	-
<i>Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics</i>	United Kingdom	0.517	Q2	-	-
<i>Ciriec-España Revista De Economía Publica Social y Cooperativa</i>	España	0.347	Q2	-	-
<i>Human Service Organizations Management Leadership and Governance</i>	United Kingdom	0.644	Q1	1.044	Q3
<i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>	United States	0.429	Q2	-	-
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Netherlands	1.86	Q1	3.796	Q1
<i>Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>	United States	1.086	Q1	1.925	Q2
<i>Non-profit Management and Leadership</i>	United States	1.015	Q1	1.917	Q2
<i>Public Management Review</i>	United Kingdom	1.756	Q1	3.162	Q1
<i>Public Relations Review</i>	United States	1.001	Q1	1.616	Q2
<i>Studies in Public and Non-Profit Governance</i>	United Kingdom	0.155	Q3	-	-
<i>Sustainability</i>	Switzerland	0.549	Q2	2.592	Q2
<i>Voluntas</i>	United States	0.61	Q1	1.469	Q2

Source: Query on Scopus, Web of Science, Scimago Journal and Country Ranking (SJR), and Journal Citation Reports (JCR) (2019).

Table 1 identifies the main sources that bring together publications that relate social innovation and non-profit organizations. The countries of origin list shows sources from the United States and some European countries predominate, consolidating the hegemony of publications by Anglo-Saxons on the subject and the significant representation of publications in English. This aspect limits Latin American publications for researchers because of the linguistic difference. Considering the impact of the related sources, it is verified that the investigations have been published as follows: from the Scopus platform, seven of the first quartile, four second quartile journals, and one third quartile, which represents a greater number of journals positioned as high-impact under the evaluation carried out periodically by means of the Scimago Journal and Country Ranking indicator (Miguel et al. 2011).

In the Web of Science platform, the panorama is reduced in relation to the classification of the journals, ranking two in the first quartile, five in the second quartile, and one in the third quartile. In this way, the positioning of publications of non-profit organizations and social innovation in high-impact international journals is interpreted, highlighting the need to increase Latin American publications aimed to promote research on the subject and the impact of researchers of the region.

Complementing the international perspective of the bibliometric analysis that has been carried out regarding social innovation publications and non-profit organizations, the case of Colombia is presented in order to identify the aspects inherent to its development in the National System of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Colombia (Figure 4). For this purpose, a specialized search was carried out in this system, where the curricula and scientific production generated by the researchers in Colombia are grouped into products of new knowledge, social appropriation, technological development and innovation, and human resource training.

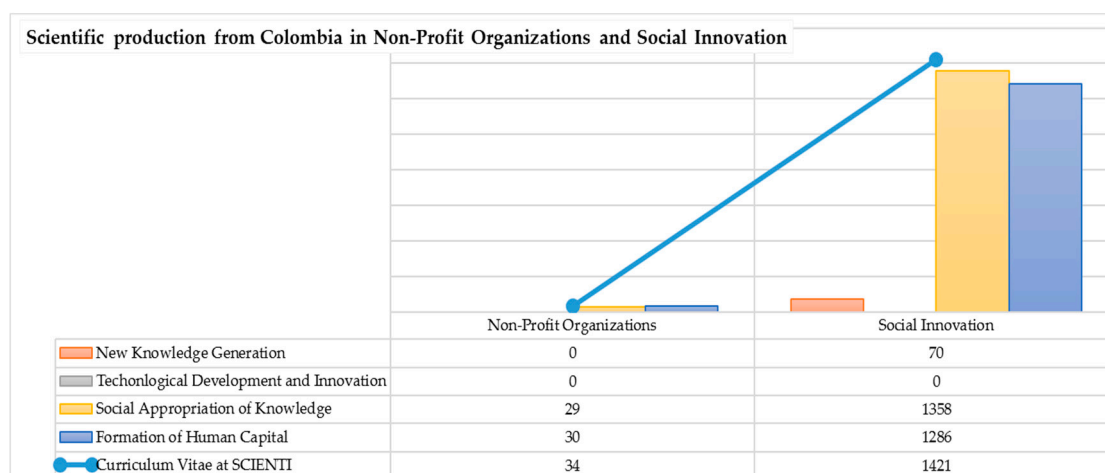


Figure 4. Colombian scientific production on social innovation and non-profit organizations fields. Source: Query on National System of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Colombia (SCIENTI)-COLCIENCIAS (2019).

This evidence makes it possible to interpret that new knowledge and technological development and innovation work has not been developed. While there is a relationship between the published works in human resource formation and social appropriation of knowledge with respect to the subject of non-profit organizations, interpreting the work of this current has been oriented to the dissemination of research work and the development of degree projects as research training activities.

Social innovation in the case of Colombian researchers shows a thematic development in the categories of human resource formation and the generation of new knowledge and social appropriation, identifying itself as a current of research and development on the part of the institutions of the science national system, Colombian technology, and innovation. As an opportunity for improvement, technological development and innovation are positioned in the scientific production of researchers

to generate applications and practices relevant to social communities through social innovation (Parton 2017).

These different considerations of bibliometrics regarding social innovation and non-profit organizations allow us to resolve the relevance of contemporary organizational management with a view of sustainable development (UNDP 2015; Melles 2019) in such a way that the social role of organizations is promoted through innovative actions in the face of the problems of today's society (Tracey and Stott 2017; Kohler and Chesbrough 2019)—especially the relevance of the development of these concepts in the Latin American region (Villa and Melo 2015)—with a view of strengthening the visibility and impact of the region's research in the international circuits of scientific knowledge in the field of social sciences and business, management, and accounting.

5. Conclusions and Limitations

This article has aimed to review the literature related to the concepts of social innovation and non-profit organizations. The review and bibliometric analysis conducted on this theoretical framework allowed for the knowledge of the dynamics generated around scientific publications in platforms such as Scopus and Web of Science, showing how researchers confront these issues to demonstrate advances in knowledge through the investigations they carry out. Likewise, the state-of-the-art quality was verified, which positions these topics as an opportunity to study the management of organizations in the area of business, management, and accounting.

The social innovation field and work at non-profit organizations are complementary and constitute an opportunity for the generation of new lines of research in countries where such research is limited—including the Latin American region—representing a first step to confront the emerging contextual problems through social innovations and promote the participation and development of non-profit organizations in the social sector.

Taking as reference the case of Colombia, there are several organizations of this type with a defined social role that are aligned to the various problems that the context presents, but still present spaces in terms of scientific research products to be made to cover those gaps in knowledge that have been denoted in the registers of the National System of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Colombia (SCIENTI). It is for this reason that this analysis acquires great importance, as it allows the academic community to determine fronts of future research through a collective construction between university, business, government, and society.

This review of the literature also highlighted the relevance of social innovation and non-profit organizations in the current scenarios of administrative discipline; in this sense, the research was limited to a bibliographic review that, in future, will allow more empirical investigations to be carried out, where problems of non-profit organizations are analyzed and consideration is given to ways that, through their activities and social commitment, they can face processes of social innovation that allow them to appropriate and apply such factors the development of the organization.

This type of management in organizations is an opportunity to study and analyze each one of the particularities that it handles and contribute to the re-dimensioning of the social role inherent in organizations independent of their economic purposes. In this way, research has made it possible to identify how social innovation is a factor in the generation of value and social capital for this type of organization, identifying its nature and relationship with the social world and reinventing the ways of generating an impact upon society and the world.

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