



How to Build Collective Capabilities: The 3C-Model for Grassroots-led Development

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Abstract

Capabilities need to be built from the bottom-up. Social innovations at the grassroots seek to present new solutions to existing social problems. However, since the poor suffer from limitations on their individual capabilities and agency, they engage in acts of collective agency to generate new collective capabilities that each individual alone would not be able to achieve. The question is: how can these acts of collective agency be initiated, supported and sustained in practice? What roles can development actors (such as the state, donors and NGOs) play in supporting these acts of collective agency? Drawing on the literature on social innovation, the capability approach, participation and empowerment, the paper argues that three crucial C-processes are integral conditions for promoting *successful, scalable and sustainable* social innovations at the grassroots, namely: (1) **Conscientization**; (2) **Conciliation** and (3) **Collaboration**. By linking the individual, collective and institutional levels of analysis, the paper demonstrates the importance of *individual* behavioural changes, *collective* agency and local *institutional* reforms for the success, sustainability and scalability of social innovations at the grassroots. The paper acknowledges conflict, capture and cooptation as potential limitations and recognizes the role of contextual factors in initiating, implementing and sustaining social innovations at the grassroots.

Keywords:

Collective agency, Sustainable human development, Collective capabilities, Grassroots-led development, social innovation

Introduction

Over the past two decades, great interest has been expressed in promoting people-centred development (UNDP Human Development Reports 1990-2015; Sen, 1999), empowering local communities (Alsop et al, 2006; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005; Narayan 2002; 2005), making the reality of the poor come 'first' (Chambers, 1997), listening to the voices of the poor (Narayan, 2000a; b), limiting the effects of 'tyrannical' participatory approaches (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 1999; Cornwall, 2002) and scaling-up the impact of NGO work in order to render it more effective (Edwards and Hulme, 1992; Korten, 1987). Despite this widely available literature on power dynamics (Rowlands, 1997; Gaventa, 2006; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007), empowerment (Alsop et al, 2006; Narayan, 2000; 2005; Friedmann, 1992) and participation (Chambers, 1993; 1997; Cornwall, 2008), only a few studies (Ziegler et al, 2013; Ziegler, 2013; Seyang and Smith, 2007) explore social *innovations* at the grassroots. These studies mostly adopt a case study approach to explain the dynamics of social innovation processes and the factors that affect them.

Building on this literature, the aim of this paper is to present a new model for social innovation at the grassroots that reframes and reconceptualises grassroots processes and their dynamics. *Which processes are necessary to render social innovations at the grassroots more successful, scalable and sustainable?* To answer this central research question, the model presented identifies three C-processes (conscientization, conciliation and collaboration) as integral *conditions* needed to promote and sustain social innovations at the grassroots. Instead of presenting case studies for social innovation per se, the paper adopts a new framework that explains the *dynamics* of each of the three C-processes, explores their interlinkages and identifies the various factors that can affect them. Recognising the role of contextual factors in influencing the success, scalability and sustainability of social innovations, the model presented not only shows that context matters; but also explains *how* it matters.

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3 The need to develop such a model has been expressed, for example, by national governments
4 who seek to empower marginalised groups and tackle structural inequalities. For example, with
5 the Big Society initiative, the UK government recently encouraged "the move towards smaller
6 government" and as a result "placed the onus on communities to creatively tackle their own
7 problems" (Chalmers, 2012, p.17). Local and international NGOs as well as donor agencies also
8 aim to support and scale-up grassroots-initiatives to enhance the relevance and impact of their
9 development work. New ways of thinking *and* 'doing development differently' have been
10 promoted to ensure that grassroots-led processes are not simply localised unsustainable
11 solutions, but can be a means for empowering local communities and inducing sustainable social
12 change. The question however remains: *How* can these initiatives become vehicles for social
13 innovation at the grassroots level?
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16 To address this question, section 1 presents the model and links it to the literature on social
17 innovation. Section 2 explains the conceptual foundations of the model by adopting the
18 capability approach as an evaluative framework and drawing on the literature on empowerment,
19 participation, agency and structure. Section 3 briefly explains how the model was developed and
20 examines the dynamics of conscientization, conciliation and collaboration processes and the
21 contextual factors that affect them. Section 4 discusses the limitations of the model and explains
22 how its success, sustainability and scalability can be promoted. The concluding section illustrates
23 the relevance of the model for policymaking.
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25 26 **1. The 3C-model for Social Innovation?**

27 28 *The 3C-model*

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30 Building on the literature on social innovation, the capability approach, empowerment and
31 participation, the aim of this model is to bridge the gap between theory and practice by
32 presenting a new framework for conceptualising and operationalising grassroots-led development.
33 Grassroots-led development (GLD) is defined as an improvement in one or more aspects of
34 human wellbeing brought about by people acting as *initiators and agents of change* (in collaboration
35 with other development actors/institutions) at the *grassroots*. The new 3C model for grassroots-
36 led development emphasizes the importance of three processes, namely: (1) **Conscientization**; (2)
37 **Conciliation**; and (3) **Collaboration**. The three identified processes promote social change at
38 three highly interdependent levels: the individual, collective and institutional levels. By exploring
39 the *dynamics* of each of these processes and examining the factors that affect them, the model
40 demonstrates the importance of *individual* behavioural changes, *collective* agency and local
41 *institutional* reforms for social innovations at the grassroots. This framework not only explores the
42 '*how*' question, i.e. the *dynamics* of each of the 3C processes and how they can be initiated and
43 supported, but also examines their impact. To do so, it stresses three *evaluative aspects of GLD*
44 namely, (1) **Success** (i.e. achievement of objectives), (2) **Sustainability** (i.e. focus on long-term
45 impact) and (3) **Scalability** (i.e broader institutionalisation rather than one-off solutions).
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49 Figure 1 shows how social innovations at the grassroots can be successful, sustainable and
50 scalable when they: (1) induce positive behavioral changes at the individual's level through
51 conscientization; (2) support acts of collective agency at the communal level through conciliation;
52 and (3) promote local reforms at the institutional level through collaboration. The process of
53 conscientization encourages citizens to think critically about their realities and nurtures their
54 'capacity to aspire' for better lives. The conciliation process blends individual and collective
55 interests rendering them mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting. Through conciliation, a
56 common vision is created to guide the acts of collective agency. Finally, collaboration between
57 local communities and other actors, such as the state, local NGOs and donor agencies, is crucial
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3 for challenging the existing unequal power relations among and between these 'partners'.
4 Through these partnerships, the sustainability, scalability and success of social innovations at the
5 grassroots can be promoted.
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7 **Insert Figure 1 here**
8

9 *Why the 3C-model for Social Innovation?*
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11 After briefly presenting the new model and its components; this section explains why the model
12 is one of social innovation at the grassroots. "Generally speaking, no agreed definition of 'social
13 innovation' exists" (Pol and Ville, 2009, p.881). That is why it has been perceived as a 'fuzzy
14 concept' (Cunha et al, 2015) or buzzword (Pol and Ville, 2009). Scholars have sought to define
15 the concept of social innovation (Dawson and Daniel, 2010; Mulgan et al., 2006; 2007; Phills et al,
16 2008), critically review its definitions (Nilsson, 2003; Goldenberg et al., 2009; Nicholls and
17 Murdock, 2012), present theoretical models to conceptualise it (Goldstein et al, 2010; Mulgan,
18 2006), or explore it by comparing it to social entrepreneurship and social enterprises (Cunha et al.,
19 2015; Bonifacio, 2014; Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012; Perrini, Vurro, & Costanzo, 2010; Chalmers,
20 2012). Others have distinguished between the normative and analytic definitions of social
21 innovation and analyzed the term 'social' (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2010; Ziegler, 2010; Mair and
22 Marti, 2006). A number of empirical studies have also examined the dynamics of social
23 innovation processes (Klein et al, 2010; Hamalainen and Heiskala, 2007; Holmes and Smart, 2009;
24 Gonzalez and Healey, 2005).
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28 In this literature, there is wide agreement that social innovation is linked to new solutions that
29 challenge the status quo and aim to induce institutional change; to promote the 'public good' and
30 to address these social needs that cannot be addressed by the market (Pol and Ville, 2009; Phills
31 et al., 2008). Social innovation is thus viewed as a process of social value creation at the
32 grassroots (Sharra and Nyssens, 2010; Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2005). Although there is no
33 agreed upon definition of social innovation, the process itself is viewed as a "novel solution to a
34 social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable or just than existing solutions" (Phills
35 et al., 2008, p.39). According to Dawson & Daniel (2010, p. 15 [emphasis added]), social
36 innovation is "a *collective* dynamic interplay across the technical, social, economic and political
37 dimensions in the group pursuit and development of social objectives and outcomes".
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40 Linking the capability approach and social innovation, this paper recognizes the role of social
41 innovations for the "carrying out of new combinations of capabilities" (Ziegler, 2010, p. 256). It
42 adopts the EU's definition of social innovation as the "development and delivery of new ideas
43 and solutions ... at different socio-structural levels that intentionally seek to change power
44 relations and improve human capabilities as well as the processes via which these solutions are
45 carried out" (Houghton Budd et al, 2015, p.3). This definition of social innovation suits the 3C
46 model given its focus on human capabilities, power dynamics as well as the processes that lead to
47 social change. The model is one for social innovation because it identifies three necessary
48 processes needed for the generation of new individual and collective capabilities, for the
49 reconfiguration of unequal power relations and for the promotion of sustainable institutional
50 reforms at the grassroots.
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53 As for the typology of social innovations, scholars distinguish between three types of innovations:
54 'pure business innovations'; 'bifocal' innovations (Pol and Ville, 2009) or 'pure' social innovations
55 (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014). The proposed 3C model applies mainly to 'pure' social innovations,
56 which seek to address those needs that the market or the state failed to address. Mair and Marti
57 (2009) present such an example through BRAC's Ultra Poor programme in order to show how
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3 social innovation can fill in the existing gap created by institutional voids and market failures.
4 Thus, whilst social change can be induced either through top-down policies or citizens' action
5 (Chiappero-Martinetti and Von Jacobi, 2015), the focus of the model proposed here is primarily
6 on social innovations that seek to promote social change and address market and state failures
7 from the bottom-up.
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10 Although social innovation was initially viewed as a localized solution, "it is only in most recent
11 times that social innovation has developed a significant public policy foothold" (Chalmers, 2012,
12 p.20). There is nowadays a growing consensus that social innovations are indeed relevant for
13 policy development (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014). Whilst the wider literature on social innovation
14 focuses on its definitions, conceptualization and application, "relatively little attention is being
15 paid to the actors and *mechanisms* that bring it about" (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014, p.412[emphasis
16 added]). The 3C model seeks to address this gap by identifying three processes that can initiate
17 and sustain social innovations at the grassroots. In line with Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012, p.381),
18 this framework is a "community-based, action-oriented model of social change (in preference to
19 a cognitive theory of behavior change)". It is not only a conceptual framework for understanding
20 social innovation and its dynamic processes, but is also a practical guide for actors to design, plan,
21 implement and support sustainable, successful and scalable social innovations at the grassroots.
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24 Building on previous work that sought to present models of *social* innovations at the grassroots
25 and to explore the barriers that affect these innovations (Mendes et al, 2012; Chalmers, 2012;
26 Biggs, et al, 2010; Seyfang and Smith, 2007), the 3C-model seeks to contribute to the literature on
27 social innovation in three ways. First, the model provides a *dynamic* picture of three processes that
28 are *integral* to social innovation at the grassroots. Instead of focusing merely on actors and
29 outcomes, the model emphasizes three processes of social innovation at the grassroots and
30 explores their dynamics and interlinkages. Social innovation is mainly about the *process of change*
31 *itself* and how a *new* reality is created (Cunha et al, 2015; Sharra and Nyssens, 2010). Despite its
32 importance, however, "very little attention is being paid to... the process that leads to social
33 innovation ('how' social innovation happens), and the characteristics of the actors or
34 organisations that carry it out ('who' can best deliver social innovation)" (Borzaga and Bodini,
35 2014, p.415). The 3C model addresses this gap by identifying and 'unpacking' three processes
36 (conscientization, conciliation and collaboration) that can lead to sustainable, successful and
37 scalable grassroots innovations.
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40 Second, despite its wide range, the literature on social innovation is characterised by conceptual
41 confusion. Expressing this conceptual confusion, Cunha et al (2015) explains how people have
42 been mixing up different ideas, theories and phenomena when exploring social innovation
43 processes. The proposed model seeks to address this conceptual confusion by proposing a *clearer*
44 framework for conceptualising social innovation at the grassroots. It primarily focuses on three
45 3C processes that – it argues – are essential and integral for the sustainability, scalability and
46 success of grassroots innovations. Other scholars (Moulaert & Nussbaumer, 2005; Moulaert, et.al,
47 2007; Moulaert et al., 2005) also sought to explore social innovation processes; but their studies
48 were mainly focused on particular challenges, such as urban development, regeneration and
49 social cohesion. The proposed 3C model, however, is *not* domain-specific as it presents a new
50 framework that can be applied to social innovations that seek to address *various* challenges at the
51 grassroots.
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54 Third, instead of providing a 'snapshot' of how social innovation occurs at the grassroots, the
55 *circular interactive* nature of the model and its components blurs the differentiation between means
56 and ends. This is crucial insofar as social innovations are defined as such "both in their ends and
57 in their means" (Murray et al, 2010, p.3). Each of the 3C-processes is thus both a means *and* an
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3 end for promoting social innovation. These processes are, on the one hand, a means for
4 widening individual freedoms and collective capabilities, and on the other hand, ends with
5 intrinsic value.
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8 The 3C-processes identified in our proposed model resonate with elements of other models;
9 such as those developed by Beckert (2010); and Gonzalez and Healey (2005). The latter have
10 developed a model to examine the micro-dynamics of governance transformations focusing on
11 cognitive framing, the interactive relations between agency and structure, and the
12 institutionalisation of policy discourses. Beckert (2010) has also identified three 'irreducible social
13 forces' – (1) cognitive frames; (2) social networks; and (3) institutions – that are well-linked to the
14 3C-processes. Following suit, conscientization addresses cognitive frames, conciliation deals with
15 issues of power and agency, and collaboration seeks to institutionalise grassroots innovations and
16 reconfigure power relations among development actors. Building on these models, the 3C model
17 aims to contribute to the literature on social innovation by going *beyond* economic outcomes and
18 market dynamics to *directly* conceptualise and analyse the *dynamics* of social innovation processes
19 at the grassroots.
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22 Despite its focus on markets, Beckert's work is still relevant for the 3C model as "apart from
23 providing a useful framework for the conceptualisation of social forces, Beckert's hypotheses
24 about *dynamics* seem to be relevant in order to identify the emergence of spaces (opportunities)
25 for social innovation processes" (Chiappero-Martinetti and Von Jacobi, 2015, p.3-4 [emphasis in
26 original]). Although 'capital' can be considered as a missing 'C' in our proposed model, the model
27 does not undermine the market as an "important social structure and a mechanism to foster
28 social and economic development" (Mair and Marti, 2009, p.422). This role is recognized but
29 intentionally underplayed because markets are either absent or weak in developing countries due
30 to the various institutional impediments that restrict market participation; especially at the
31 grassroots (Mair and Marti, 2009; Easterly, 2006). Therefore, while acknowledging the important
32 role that markets can play in promoting social innovations, the 3C model focuses mainly on
33 those processes that can help communities address the kind of social needs not 'taken on' by the
34 market (Pol and Ville, 2009).
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36 37 **2. Conceptual Foundations of the 3C model**

38 *Why the Capability Approach as Evaluative Framework?*

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40 Given that the CA views people not only as the centre but also as the main *agents* of development
41 (Sen, 1999), the 3C model adopts the capability approach (CA) as an evaluative framework for
42 conceptualizing and assessing social innovations at the grassroots. The 3C model aims to
43 demonstrate *how* individual and collective acts of agency can generate new collective capabilities
44 at the grassroots.
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48 By linking the individual, collective and institutional levels of analysis, the 3C model shifts the
49 analysis of human capabilities from the individual to the collectivity (Ibrahim, 2006). It aims to
50 show *how* social innovations can generate new collective capabilities from which *all* community
51 members can benefit – even if to different degrees. Through collective agency and the pooling of
52 personal responsibilities, new *collective capabilities* can be generated (Ibrahim, 2006; Ballet et.al.,
53 2007; Pelenc et al, 2015). In contrast to group capabilities which are "the average of the
54 capabilities (and sources of capabilities) of all the individuals in the selected groups" (Stewart,
55 2004, p.192), collective capabilities are *more than* the aggregation of individual capabilities. They
56 result from collective action and their benefits accrue to the community at large and not to a
57 single individual (Ibrahim; 2006). This is important, as social innovation processes create value
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3 that accrues "primarily to *society as a whole* rather than private individuals" (Phills et al., 2008, p.39
4 [emphasis added]). Sen (2009) does acknowledge the role of collective capabilities but rejects
5 them arguing that they are mainly 'socially dependent capabilities' (Sen, 2002). Alkire (2008) and
6 Volkert (2013) also presented several critiques of the concept. Despite these critiques (discussed
7 in Ibrahim, 2013b), the proposed 3C model considers acts of *collective agency* essential for the
8 generation of new *collective* capabilities.
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10 Sen (1985, p.206) defines human agency as "what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of
11 whatever goals or values he or she regards as important". Sen (1992) distinguishes between the
12 individual's well-being and agency achievements; where the former is linked to one's own
13 wellbeing; while the latter go beyond personal wellbeing to address broader goals that one has
14 reason to value. Evans (2002) argued that collective action is indispensable for the achievement
15 of human capabilities mainly because 'individual capabilities depend on collective capabilities'
16 and 'organized collectivities are fundamental to people's capabilities to choose the lives they
17 have reason to value" (Evans, 2002, p.56). Given the restrictions on individual agency, especially
18 in deprived communities, the role of *collective agency* is therefore essential for promoting
19 freedoms, choices and capabilities (Cleaver, 2007; Ibrahim, 2008; Tiwari and Ibrahim, 2012).
20 Collective agency, however, cannot be imposed but needs to arise from a learning process (Pahl-
21 Wostl, 2006). To initiate and sustain acts of collective agency, it is therefore important to link
22 between individual and collective agency and to explore the factors affecting both (Pelenc et al,
23 2015). Collective agency is viewed "as the capacity of the group to define common goals and the
24 freedom to act to reach the chosen goals" (Pelenc et al, 2015, p.229). Using the case of Nijera
25 Kori (NK) in rural Bangladesh, Kabeer (2003), for example, shows how collectivities are
26 important for "building the *collective capabilities* of poor women and men to claim their rights as
27 citizens rather than as clients" (Kabeer, 2003, p.3 [emphasis in original]). The 3C model thus
28 aims to explore the *dynamics* of these acts of *collective agency* and to show how new collective
29 capabilities can be generated through grassroots innovations. The next section explains how our
30 model seeks to address a number of key debates in the literature on agency and structure and on
31 participation and empowerment.
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35 *Addressing Agency and Structure*

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37 One of the aims of this model is to show how the 3C-processes link individual and collective
38 *agency* (through conscientization and conciliation) with institutional *structures* (through
39 collaboration). The proposed model transcends the dichotomy between agency and structure
40 (Giddens, 1984) by explaining how agency can change structure and vice versa. Several scholars
41 (Narayan, 2002; 2005; Alsop et.al. 2006; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005) showed how empowerment
42 depends on this interaction between agency and opportunity structure. (Giddens (1984, p.14)
43 defines human agency as the capacity to make a difference, i.e. to have a transformative capacity,
44 whilst structure include social systems and other reproduced social practices – which can have
45 either constraining or enabling effects (Giddens, 1984; Rose and Scheepers, 2001). The exercise of
46 agency is constrained by social structures (Giddens, 1984) and culture (Bourdieu, 1977; Douglas,
47 1987). The role of social innovation and the three identified processes is to initiate and sustain
48 individual and collective agency. The problem, however, is that through embedded agency
49 (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Sewell, 1991; Holm, 1995; Seo and
50 Creed, 2002) actors are subject to regulations, norms and cognitive frames that affect their
51 individual and collective behaviour. Conscientization is therefore essential to help those actors to
52 think critically about their lives and to help induce positive behavioural changes at the individual
53 and collective levels. This is because the "embedding structures do not simply generate
54 constraints on agency but, instead, provide a platform for the *unfolding of entrepreneurial activities*"
55 (Garud et al., 2007, p.961 [emphasis added]). Battilana (2006) and Battilana and Boxenbaum
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(2009), for example, examined the conditions under which actors can engage in entrepreneurial activities and induce institutional changes. It is this *interactive* relationship between agency and structure that this model seeks to explore through the three C-processes. The model stresses the interactive relationship between individual and collective agency, on the one hand, and institutional and social structures, on the other. In addition, it examines the role that social innovations can play in affecting this relationship.

Promoting 'Real' Participation and Empowerment

The aim of the model is to explain *how* the 3C-processes can promote, support and sustain grassroots innovations. A wide literature on participation and empowerment already exists (Rowlands, 1997; Gaventa, 2006; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Alsop et al, 2006; Narayan, 2000; 2005; Friedmann, 1992; Chambers, 1993; 1997; Cornwall, 2002; 2008). Nevertheless, in practice development projects still include 'participatory and consultative' elements only in the form of 'invited participation' (Cornwall, 2002) rather than truly 'people-centred' processes. The notion of the 'development project' itself limits the ability of poor and marginalised groups from meaningfully participating (Cornwall, 2006), thus rendering empowerment and participation merely as 'buzzwords' (Cornwall and Brock, 2005). As a result, several scholars (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 1999; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Hickey and Mohan, 2004) have critiqued the nature and practice of 'participation as a new tyranny'. However, none of these critiques offered an alternative vision as to how 'real participation and empowerment' can be promoted at the grassroots. The aim of the 3C model is to fill this gap by explaining how individuals and communities can act as agents of change through conscientization and conciliation and how they can collaborate with other actors to challenge the existing power relations within the current aid systems. The idea is to move beyond the 'invited' spaces for participation; so that communities can create their own participatory spaces through grassroots innovations (Gaventa, 2006; Cornwall, 2002). These are places "in which like-minded people join together in common pursuits" (Cornwall, 2002, p. 24). These are spaces where 'real empowerment and participation' are promoted through grassroots initiatives, and sustained through conscientization, conciliation and collaboration processes.

With reference to Rowlands' (1997) famous categorization of power, the 3C-processes also address 'power' at the individual, collective and institutional levels. Conscientization addresses the *power within*, conciliation enhances *power with*, and collaboration emphasizes the importance of *power over* and *power to* challenge unequal power relations between local communities and other development actors. The model also helps us analyse how individuals and communities try to navigate through three different forms of power: visible, hidden and invisible (Gaventa, 2006; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002). By raising the critical consciousness of individuals, helping them to form collectivities and linking them up with other development actors, grassroots innovations can thus help individuals and communities to address and challenge visible, hidden and invisible forms of power through behavioural changes, collective agency and local institutional reforms.

Change can happen either radically or incrementally. Oakley (2001) distinguishes between the power to induce radical change and the power – in a Freirian sense – to gain control. Our model adopts the latter view – focusing mainly on incremental social change through grassroots innovations. It is, however, acknowledged that social innovations can indeed "simultaneously enhance and disrupt the existing social order" (Nicholls and Murdock, 2012). Paradoxically, sometimes radical and disruptive changes can even lead to higher resilience rather than destruction (Lodemann and Ziegler, 2015). Nevertheless, the model advocates incremental social change that is gradually induced through the 3C processes at the grassroots. The following section explains the dynamics of each of these processes and the factors affecting them.

3. The Dynamics of the 3C model:

How the model was developed

The aim of this paper is primarily a conceptual one; hence this section will only briefly explain how the model was developed and will provide the background to some of the empirical data presented later in this section. The model was developed as a result of two rounds of data collection conducted in Egypt over a ten year period (2006-2016). Adopting a qualitative research design, the model was developed by building on rich qualitative data collected through 110 semi-structured interviews conducted with local activists, community members, state officials and NGO practitioners who are actively involved in three different grassroots innovations. The interviews explored the dynamics of the initiation, operation, impact and sustainability of these grassroots innovations over time.

The model draws on three particular case studies that were tracked in Egypt over ten years. The first case study was in Manshiet Nasser, one of Cairo's largest slum areas, in which grassroots initiatives sought to address environmental, health and educational challenges faced by slum dwellers. The second case study was in Tafahna Al Ashraf village in the Deltra region where – with the help of a local leader – the community succeeded in establishing a number of educational institutions from nursery to university through self-help (Ibrahim, 2013a). The third case study involves women groups in Upper Egypt who fight the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in rural villages in Menia. More recently, to assess the applicability of the model in different contexts, it has been applied on the community empowerment programme of Tostan, an international NGO that operates in six West African countries. Through 40 interviews and 6 focus groups conducted with community members, NGO staff and local state officials, the 3C-processes and their long-term impact on individual and communal wellbeing were examined. Adopting a grounded theory approach, the model is thus an inductive one that has been arrived at through comparative empirical analyses in different contexts. The model thus stresses the primacy of conscientization, conciliation and collaboration as integral 3C-processes to initiate, support and sustain grassroots innovations in practice. The following sections explain these processes and the factors affecting them.

Conscientization

The 3C-model presents conscientization as an essential condition for sustainable social innovations at the grassroots. This is mainly because the individual is the building block and the starting point of any social change. The model therefore starts with the articulation of individuals' values, aspirations and wellbeing goals in order to assess their ability to achieve these goals. Social innovation is closely linked to *changes* in values, social norms and local cultures (Murray et al., 2010) and can activate certain norms that encourage pro-social behaviour (Schwartz and Howard, 1981). It is therefore essential to study carefully local norms, social values and cultural practices, and to understand how people cognitively perceive their daily lives (Gonzalez and Healey, 2005). Sometimes, however, the implementation of social innovations can lead to a "fundamental clash of values, ideas and practices" (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012, p.384). To address this problem, the proposed model emphasizes the role of the conscientization process in articulating these norms and cognitive frames in order to induce positive behavioural changes. The question therefore is: *How* can the conscientization process support individuals to act as agents of change?

An agent is someone who initiates courses of action to achieve goals in accordance with his/her own values (Davis, 2004). Individuals who are agents "have diverse valued goals and commitments on behalf both of themselves and of their society" (Alkire, 2005a, 125). For an

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3 individual to become an agent, s/he needs to start thinking critically about his/her life. S/he
4 needs to *reflect* critically about his/her current status, *perceive* and aspire for better living conditions
5 and decide and plan an *action* to bring about this aspired change. The three stages 'reflection -
6 perception - action' constitute the conscientization process. Freire (1972, p.51 [emphasis added])
7 defines conscientization as "the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects,
8 achieve a deepening *awareness* both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of
9 their capacity to *transform* that reality". This process of self-scrutinizing and critical consciousness
10 is therefore the starting point of social innovation at the grassroots. It enables individuals to
11 think critically about their problems and then to actively engage in pursuing solutions to address
12 them (Freire, 2000).
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15 While *not* easy, awakening this critical consciousness is essential for the initiation and
16 sustainability of grassroots innovations. That is why many NGOs start their community
17 empowerment programmes with conscientization activities. According to Rowlands (1997, p.24),
18 "the strategies identified for this approach revolve around the training of change agents (from
19 within or outside the community); building women's groups; developing critical consciousness
20 through dialogues, discussion and analysis, about structures of inequality and other problems
21 raised by women; and enabling women to acquire new information and skills". These practices
22 are well documented in various case studies where NGOs use audio and visual aids and exposure
23 visits (Ziegler, 2013); human rights classes (Gillespie and Melching, 2010; Easton et al, 2003) and
24 advocacy campaigns (Ibrahim, 2014) to induce positive changes in individual and communal
25 behavior. The aim of these activities is to enhance the '*power from within*' in order to empower
26 local communities to lead their desired social change (Kabeer, 1994) and to support intrinsic
27 empowerment (Pick and Sirkin, 2010).
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30 Rowlands (1997, p.13) defines *power from within* as "the spiritual strength and uniqueness that
31 resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self acceptance and self-respect".
32 Whilst it is true that change can be induced through top-down policies or can happen through
33 evolutionary accidents, however, the focus of the model, is on *change from within* because true
34 power cannot be bestowed: it comes from within (Taliaferro, 1991). The power from within is
35 enhanced when individuals believe in their abilities to change their lives; when they are able to
36 challenge repressive household relations, and when they can rebuild their self-confidence and
37 learn how they can induce positive changes in their own lives and in that of their communities.
38 Social innovations can thus play an important role in unfolding this power from within, thereby
39 helping individuals to act as agents of social change.
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42 The dynamics and sustainability of the conscientization depend on a number of personal and
43 contextual factors. First, they are affected by the *individuals' personal traits* such as self-confidence,
44 educational level, profession and social status as well as the individuals' willingness to improve
45 their lives. Second, the *capacity to aspire* is also crucial for the conscientization process. The
46 'capacity to aspire' is "how a group ... succeed[s] in reducing the costs of developing a culture of
47 aspirations by collectively envisioning their future, and their capacity to shape this future,
48 through influencing other groups, the government and other factors in their physical and social
49 environment" (Appadurai, 2004, 64-65). This capacity, however, might sometimes be
50 compromised through adaptive preferences when individuals adjust their "aspirations to feasible
51 possibilities" (Elster, 1982, p.219). This *adaptation* is the third factor that can render the
52 conscientization process more difficult. This is mainly because individuals would have had to
53 "come to terms with their deprivation because of the sheer necessity of survival and they may, as
54 a result, lack the courage to demand any radical change, and may even adjust their desires and
55 expectations to what they unambitiously see as feasible" (Sen, 1999, p. 63). Adaptation can also
56 create a 'false consciousness' that encourages individuals to accept different forms of inequalities,
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3 e.g. those based on class or gender (Qizilbash, 2012). Recent work (Clark, 2012) has shown,
4 however, that individuals are less likely to adapt their aspirations or restrict them; especially if
5 their individual and collective agency is supported. The role of the conscientization process is
6 therefore crucial not only for awakening the critical consciousness of individuals and
7 communities to aspire and thrive for better lives; but also to equip them with the necessary skills
8 and training to achieve these lives.
9

10 Contextual factors, such as *unequal power relations* at the household and communal levels, can also
11 constrain the conscientization process. These unequal relations affect the individual's self-
12 confidence, esp. among women, and can thus restrict their ability and willingness to change their
13 lives. This constraining factor can be addressed through the conscientization process by
14 emphasizing the importance of role models (Ray, 2006), introducing new forms of education and
15 knowledge (e.g. on equal rights and responsibilities) and gradually promoting a culture of
16 dialogue in households and communal spaces. Promoting social innovation at the grassroots thus
17 needs to start with the conscientization process to help individuals to think critically about their
18 lives, to gain more self-confidence and to challenge these unequal power relations. *How* this is
19 done depends on each context; missing the whole conscientization process and starting
20 grassroots innovations without having 'awakened' this critical consciousness jeopardizes the
21 success of these innovations and limits their long term impact and sustainability.
22 Conscientization is also important for the conciliation process in order to enable individuals to
23 reconcile their self-interests with communal goals – as discussed in the next section.
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26 27 *Conciliation*

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29 Social innovation is not only about meeting social needs, but also about creating new social
30 *relations*, social networks and collaborations (Caulier-Grice et al. 2012, Borzaga and Bodini, 2014).
31 Networks are crucial enablers for new social practices and innovations (Cunha et al, 2015;
32 Seyfang and Smith, 2007). As explained earlier, by acting individually community members are
33 mostly unable to address the existing structural inequalities and social problems in their
34 respective communities. That is why they need to act collectively. Conciliation among
35 community members is therefore crucial to build on and enrich existing social capital for
36 sustainable social innovations at the grassroots. The question, however, is how can individuals
37 reconcile their own self-interests with communal goals?
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40 To reconcile individual and communal goals through the conciliation process, a number of
41 factors need to be addressed. First, a *communal vision* needs to be created through consensus-
42 building while taking account of the multiplicity of communal needs; especially those of
43 marginalised groups. The creation of a communal vision can happen via local deliberative
44 processes that reconcile individual and communal wellbeing goals. Schapke and Rauschmayer
45 (2014), for example, provide a useful analysis explaining how individual and collective interests
46 can be reconciled. Using the case study of watershed development in India, Ziegler (2013) also
47 explains how a 'social agreement' can arise in which different actors agree to cooperate, thereby
48 creating new spaces for capability creation. This positive 'social agreement' was also reached in
49 Tafahna Al Ashraf village in Egypt, where local communities pursued a communal vision or
50 'social agreement' to have education in their village '*from nursery to university*'. When they
51 established educational institutions through grassroots initiatives individuals benefited by
52 educating their children, while at the same time pursuing a common good. This is how, through
53 the conciliation process, a communal vision can be created at the same time as individual and
54 communal goals are reconciled.
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3 A second core factor in the conciliation process is *public deliberation and inclusive decision-making*.
4 Pelenc et al (2013, p.88) stress the "role of public discussion and social interactions in the
5 emergence of shared values and commitments. Indeed, social interactions such as group
6 discussions, community meetings or informal conversations, and so forth, are the means through
7 which people can reveal to others his/her own representation of what wellbeing is". These
8 deliberative spaces also provide agents with the opportunity to share and contest their diverse
9 perceptions of the 'common good' (Pelenc et al, 2015). This process of deliberation and public
10 reasoning was also emphasized by Sen (2002a) and Dreze and Sen (2002, p.368), who argued for
11 the "possibility of achieving wider changes in social norms through local action". These
12 deliberative processes, however, need to be institutionalised to ensure their sustainability and
13 inclusivity. This can be done through village development committees (Ziegler, 2013),
14 community management committees (Gillespie and Melching, 2010; Easton et al, 2003) or
15 communal groups (Ibrahim, 2014). Participation in these local institutions needs to be voluntary,
16 inclusive and transparent to enhance communal ownership of social innovation processes and to
17 ensure that decision-making processes are not captured by already powerful social groups.
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21 Third, for the conciliation process to succeed, a sense of *communal responsibility* needs to be
22 nurtured. Responsibility is important for enhancing the individuals' social obligations and for
23 balancing their wellbeing and agency achievements (Sen, 2008; 2004; 1985). Individuals need to
24 be responsible "not only *ex-post* (i.e. once freedom has been exercised), but also *ex-ante*, by the
25 capacity to exercise self-constraint on a voluntary basis in order to satisfy one's obligations
26 towards others" (Ballet et al., 2007, 185[emphasis in original]). The *voluntarism and ex-ante*
27 *responsibility* are crucial for the conciliation process. Grassroots innovations generate new
28 collective capabilities; however community members do not necessarily equally benefit from
29 these new capabilities. Adopting this *wider* concept of voluntarism is therefore essential for
30 community members to see the benefits of their participation, i.e. their agency achievements,
31 beyond their own wellbeing concerns. There are a number of ways through which one can
32 nurture this feeling of voluntarism, such as enhancing the individuals' sense of belonging to their
33 community, fostering inclusive decision-making processes, and solving existing communal
34 conflicts as well as creating open spaces for communal participation.
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37 By arguing for the importance of the conciliation process at the collective level, this paper does
38 not deny the existence of various *constraining factors* that can obstruct this process. Deprived
39 communities are highly disadvantaged in the formation of collectivities and groups given their
40 limited access to resources, political voice and the unequal power relations in these communities
41 (Thorp et al., 2005; Heyer, et al, 2002; Stewart, 2005). Group membership can even sometimes
42 not only perpetuate poverty traps, but also reinforce existing structural inequalities; rather than
43 helping individuals to overcome them (Durlauf, 2006). These constraining factors can be
44 addressed through enhanced self-awareness, conscientization and public deliberation that
45 can help communities to recognize their inherent *collective* strengths and the role their
46 organizations can play in improving their lives (Freire, 1970; Esman and Uphoff, 1984; Krishna
47 et al. (1997). The level of existing social capital (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Mair and Marti, 2006) and
48 the role of local leaders/innovators (their personality, leadership skills, passion and vision) can all
49 play a role in affecting the conciliation process. This, for example, was the case in Tafahna Al
50 Ashraf village, where the local leader, Haj Salah Ateya, played an effective role in initiating and
51 sustaining social innovation processes in the village (Ibrahim, 2013a). If, in contrast, local leaders
52 are divisive and exclusionary, this can pose yet another constraining factor to the conciliation
53 process. Thus, the reconciliation of communal and individuals' interests is not easy but not
54 impossible. The potential benefits that can accrue to communities from the conciliation process
55 can be important catalysts to help them overcome the various social, economic and political
56 constraints affecting this process. If the conciliation process fails, this might lead to
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3 confrontation and conflict and so disrupt the process of social innovation at the grassroots – as
4 will be discussed later in this article. To maximize the benefits from social innovation processes,
5 local communities might also decide to partner with other actors through the collaboration
6 process.
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8 *Collaboration*

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10 To sustain social innovations at the grassroots, local communities need to collaborate with other
11 actors, such as the state, donor agencies and civil society organizations. Collaboration is
12 important for two main reasons. First, it is essential for promoting *local institutional reforms*.
13 Reviewing different theories of institutional change (Kingston and Caballero, 2009; North, 1990;
14 2005; Ostrom; 2005), the proposed 3C-model adopts Alston's (1996, p.26-27) definition of
15 institutional change arguing that "institutional change results from the bargaining actions of
16 demanders and suppliers". Second, the exercise of individual *and* collective agency alone (through
17 conscientization and conciliation processes) is not enough for sustaining social innovations at the
18 grassroots. Local communities need to challenge the unequal power relations between them and
19 other development actors. Collaborations between grassroots actors (Leach et.al., 2012) is
20 therefore essential to induce institutional change and to enhance the bargaining power of local
21 communities vis-à-vis other actors.
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24 Collaboration is not always straightforward and a number of factors can affect its success. For
25 example, local communities might find difficulties in collaborating with local NGOs, if the latter
26 mainly respond to donor-driven development agendas. Thornton et al. (2000) point out this
27 tension in the role of NGOs as service providers and as facilitators. Some NGOs can be even
28 heavily involved in politics, thus reproducing – rather than challenging – clientelistic relations in
29 local communities (Devine, 2006). In this case, there is an urgent need to 'repair civil society
30 failure' and to enhance their roles in coordination and cooperation (Mansuri and Rao, 2012).
31 Ideally, NGOs need to play an effective role in "building the critical consciousness and collective
32 capacity of poor men and women to lead the struggle for a more democratic society" (Kabeer
33 and Sulaiman, 2015, p. 63). NGOs need to play the role of the "intermediary to accelerate the
34 pace of the creation of GROs, provide them with assistance as they expand, and foster links
35 between them" (Edwards and Hulme, 1992, p.84) and to act as "catalysts for institutional and
36 policy change" (Korten, 1987, p. 145). For NGOs to play this facilitating role, they also need to
37 coordinate their development work more effectively. This is how collaboration between local
38 communities and NGOs can be based on the supportive and facilitative role that NGOs can play
39 in initiating and supporting grassroots innovations.
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43 For grassroots innovations to induce sustainable social change, local communities also need to
44 collaborate with the state as this change "is embedded in the larger structure of the state and its
45 coercive power" (Zielger, 2013, p.12). The relationship between the state and local communities
46 is affected by the political context. For example, authoritarian regimes can affect all three C-
47 processes by restricting the spaces for deliberation and controlling local institutions. The state
48 can even reinforce existing social hierarchies based on class, gender and caste (Ziegler, 2013; Kale,
49 2011). Effective accountability channels and decentralized decision-making processes are
50 therefore necessary to promote effective partnerships between local communities and the state.
51 Collaborating with the state is also essential for scaling-up grassroots innovations and integrating
52 them within local and national development policies. Given the difficulties that communities face
53 in partnering with the state, Miltin (2013) points out the important role of alliance-building. She
54 explains how local communities link up with professionals to establish partnerships with the state
55 and adds that in order "to legitimize and/or resource their struggles, these groups make alliances
56 with a range of professionalized support agencies... Such alliances appear necessary for a
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3 grassroots voice to be heard and recognized...[but] the difference in social status self-evidently
4 puts local groups and social movements at risk of being undermined and displaced" (Mitlin, 2013,
5 p.483). This, however, does not mean that meaningful collaboration between local communities
6 and professionals cannot exist. The example of SDI (Shack/Slum Dweller International) (Patel
7 et.al, 2001) shows how through federation activities, communal meetings and regular
8 consultations, local communities are able to discuss solutions with professionals and state
9 officials.

10
11 Other factors, such as funding availability and the nature of partnerships, can also affect the
12 success of the collaboration process. Whilst communities need funding to undertake
13 conscientization activities and to pursue their communal vision, getting funds from other actors
14 can sometimes create dependency, distort the 'voluntary' nature of grassroots innovations and
15 cause communal divisions - thus jeopardizing all 3C-processes. Furthermore, for effective
16 collaborations, development actors need to perceive local communities as equal partners and
17 acknowledge their positive role in enhancing development outcomes (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010).
18 Finally, different actors operate within different timeframes. For collaboration to succeed, it is
19 therefore important that "we conceive change of the social forces in the correct timeframe, [and
20 that] we expect social innovation processes to alter the context in which they have been born"
21 (Chiappero-Martinetti and Von Jacobi, 2015, p.4). Effective collaboration therefore requires
22 actors to reconcile their visions of social change and their perceived timeframes in which they
23 seek to achieve this change.
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27 This section explained the dynamics of the conscientization, conciliation and collaboration
28 processes and the factors affecting them. The next section presents the limitations of the 3C
29 model and explains how the impact of grassroots innovations can be assessed.
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31 **4. The Limitations of the 3C-Model**

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33 Having presented the model and its 3C-processes, it is important to also explain its limitations.
34 These limitations can be summed up in terms of another set of 3C processes, namely:
35 confrontation, cooptation and capture. This section also emphasizes the role of context as the
36 'invisible' C in the model.
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39 *Confrontation and Conflict* are not unlikely either among community members in multi-ethnic
40 societies or between the state officials and local communities; esp. when the former fail to
41 address the needs of the latter. Social innovation processes can by nature be contested processes
42 as they involve a power struggle between agents (Beckert, 2010; Chiappero-Martinetti and Von
43 Jacobi, 2015). Ziegler (2010) provides a useful account of how 'the social' can be complex in the
44 context of value diversity and conflict of interest. Confrontation and conflict can therefore occur
45 when communal priorities change or when the state fails to adapt its policies to meet those
46 priorities. Griewald and Rauschmayer (2014) analyze such a conflict between collective actors
47 and demonstrate how cooperation can fail and lead to confrontation. Pelenc et al (2015, p. 228)
48 also show how "public discussion and social interactions do not automatically lead to the
49 convergence of motivations ... Sometimes differences arise (divergence) between individuals
50 during the confrontation of their values, interest, motivations and sense of responsibility" thus
51 leading to conflict (Cleaver, 1999). To avoid conflict, Griewald and Rauschmayer (2014) and
52 Pelenc et al (2015) identified a number of 'conversion factors' that affect the nature and outcome
53 of this conflict, namely existing legal frameworks, political context as well as the actors' values,
54 characteristics and adopted strategies. Deliberative processes and accountability mechanisms are
55 also important for articulating communal voices and for resolving potential conflicts of interests
56 before they lead to confrontation.
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3 *Cooptation* is yet another crucial process that can interrupt social innovations at the grassroots. It
4 is similar to clientization which "reduces grassroots organizations .. to clients of the state
5 apparatus, because either their critical capacities are blunted by benefits received from the state,
6 or their activities are reduced to delivering social services for the state (Fowerake, 2001, p.26)
7 Cooptation is thus a process in which "clientelist practices can reassert themselves at the expense
8 of community interests" (Fowerake, 2001, p. 24). Cooptation of local leaders and active
9 community members can distort the collective spirit of social innovations and disrupt the
10 conciliation process. The danger of cooptation is particularly evident in collaborative
11 partnerships with other actors, especially the state. Growing state control and its distortion of
12 bottom-up processes through cooptation is a serious threat to all 3C processes. Whilst
13 development actors (such as the state, NGOs and donor agencies) are encouraged to support the
14 3C processes, their collaboration, however, needs to be based on transparency and mutual
15 accountability to avoid cooptation. To limit cooptation, it is also important that communities
16 openly discuss what they want to get out of their collaborative partnerships with other actors and
17 to clarify the responsibilities of each actor in social innovation processes.
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21 *Capture* is also another important factor that can negatively affect grassroots innovations as it
22 creates 'winners and losers' and can lead to unequal distribution of benefits and capabilities -
23 generated by these social innovations. Elite capture is particularly threatening in stratified
24 societies with multiple ethnic and religious groups, because elites tend to 'divide and rule' to
25 maintain their control over local communities and use this control for economic and political
26 patronage. In addition to elite capture, institutional capture and path dependence are further
27 limitations on the 3C processes. Pel and Bauler (2014, p.25) point out that "institutionalisation
28 could also be a foreboding of transformative impulses being channelled, encapsulated,
29 domesticated and eventually stifled by the very institutional structures they were to change". It
30 is therefore important to safeguard the benefits of social innovation processes against elite and
31 institutional capture in order to enhance the success, sustainability and scalability of grassroots
32 innovations.
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35 *Context* plays a crucial role not only in enabling or constraining social innovations, but also in
36 affecting the direction of social change and how (and whether) it occurs. Whilst 'Context' can be
37 in fact the 'invisible C' in the proposed model, the aim of this analysis is to explain *how* context
38 matters and to identify the contextual factors that can hinder or enable the 3C processes. In
39 addition to the aforementioned limitations, there are a number of *contextual factors* that affect
40 social innovations at the grassroots. Mendes et al (2012), for example, differentiate between
41 structural and agency barriers. The former refer to factors affecting the uncertainty and
42 complexity of social processes, such as insufficient information, path dependence (Seyfang and
43 Smith, 2007), limited funding (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012), and lack of data and measurement
44 (Mendes et al., 2012). The latter are linked to the characteristics of individuals or organisations
45 involved in social innovation processes. Exploring the factors that affect capability innovation,
46 Ziegler et al (2013) also distinguish between direct and indirect conversion factors. The former
47 relate to the actors involved in the social innovation process; while the latter refers to the (formal
48 and informal) institutional setting in which they act. Through comparative case study analysis of
49 urban development in Kenya, they show how indirect contextual factors can also play a crucial
50 role in affecting the success or failure of social innovations. Other important factors to take into
51 account include the size of the community, its rural/urban setting, the availability of financial
52 resources, the communal experience with collective action and their previous histories of
53 mobilization in the past. The *role of contextual factors* in affecting social innovation thus cannot be
54 neglected. These factors need to be well-articulated and addressed in order to promote and
55 sustain social innovations at the grassroots. The next section explains how the impact of these
56 innovations can be assessed by focusing on their success, sustainability and scalability.
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5. Assessing Grassroots Innovations - The 3Ss

Success

The literature on success and success criteria is diverse in the development literature. Some scholars have sought to explore the impact of poverty reduction initiatives (Krishna et. al, 1997; Uphoff et.al, 1998), others sought to examine the organisational characteristics of 'successful' development agencies (Korten, 1980; Paul, 1982) or to link social entrepreneurship to societal transformations (Alvord et.al, 2004; Zahra et al, 2009). In his work on social movements, Andrews (2001, p. 72) argues that "success implies the attainment of specific, widely shared goals, but the goals of most social movements are contested by participants and observers". To address this problem, Mair and Marti (2006, p.41) propose that "instead of focusing on the success or failure of a program or initiative, it would be better to start measuring degrees of success or failure, always bearing in mind the intended and unintended consequences of the initiative". It is therefore important to note that there is not a 'single' notion of success or a clear line between success and failure for assessing grassroots innovations. Having identified the importance of success, it is essential to acknowledge that "innovation must [also] involve failure" (Mulgan, 2006, p.156). Who defines success and how it is defined are therefore important questions that need to be addressed.

The success of most development projects is conventionally assessed through outcomes and performance indicators. The 'value for money' rhetoric dominates development practice. However, when assessing grassroots-led processes through this narrow lens it not surprising that 'assessors' might find only minimal changes in the respective communities. This is mainly because change – in this context – is purely measured by outcomes and hence the dynamics of social innovation processes are overlooked. Here "the real problem may not be the measurement per se, but how the measures may be used to 'quantify' the performance and impact ... it [is] very difficult ... to quantify socio-economic, environmental and social effects" (Mair and Marti, 2006, p. 42). The success of social innovations should therefore be assessed based on their ability to empower local communities to have the capacity to act (Moulaert et al., 2005), to add social value beyond measurement and quantification (Mair and Marti, 2006), to be resilient to adverse conditions, and to sustain this change over the long-term (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012; Mendes et al, 2012; Lodemann and Ziegler, 2105). Success of social innovations also depends on their ability to adapt to complex realities and to address the root causes of social problems and so go "beyond the superficial 'symptomatic' level" (Chalmers, 2012, p.22). To define success, it is important to articulate local communal perceptions of success. These localised notions, however, might turn out to be problematic given the multiplicity of communal views. They can also differ from the standard performance indicators, theories of change or log frames used by donors and other development actors to assess success.

Success is *this* model is not defined by outcomes, but rather by processes. The emphasis here is on process freedoms, rather than opportunity freedoms (Sen, 2002b). "Process freedoms are related to persons' ability to exert agency in ways that further their conception of the good" (Alkire, 2005b, p.3). It is the *process* that counts, not only the outcomes or opportunities *per se*. If success is perceived from this *broader process*-based perspective, positive incremental change can be better captured and assessed. Since the model is circular, there is no point in time where one can identify that a particular process is successful or not. This is mainly as the successes of the 3C processes are highly inter-dependent and mutually-reinforcing. The 3C processes and the capabilities they generate are highly inter-connected as they mostly complement and strengthen each other (Ziegler, 2010). Success thus needs to account for the constant interaction between the social innovation processes and the context in which they are embedded and needs to

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3 consider the impact of this interaction on human capabilities – both at the individual and
4 collective levels.
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6 *Sustainability*

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8 Sustainability is considered one of the criteria for success and is essential for assessing the impact
9 of social innovations at the grassroots. Sustainability can be defined in different ways. Exploring
10 the sustainability of grassroots innovations, Seyfang and Smith (2007) differentiate between the
11 direct environmental benefits of these grassroots initiatives and their wider impact on the *quality*
12 *of life* of local communities. This model adopts the latter definition arguing that sustainability of
13 social innovations needs to be assessed based on the effect they have on individual and
14 communal lives. Phills et al. (2008, p.37) adds that "by *sustainable* we mean solutions that are
15 environmentally as well as organizationally sustainable – those that can continue to work over a
16 long period of time". Sustainability is therefore not only linked to the impact of social
17 innovations on quality of life; but also to the *long-term* impact of these innovations. The
18 timeframe which is used to assess sustainability is problematic; especially as different
19 development actors operate within diverse timeframes. Whilst communities seek to achieve
20 positive changes in their lives on a long-term basis, the state and other actors might be more
21 interested in shorter-term immediate outcomes to demonstrate the impact of their development
22 work. The 3C model adopts a *people-centred view of sustainability* as local communities "have
23 experience and knowledge about what works in their localities, and what matters to local people.
24 They can be well placed to present sustainability issues in ways more meaningful, personal and
25 directly relevant" (Seyfang and Smith, 2007, p. 593-594).
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29 Financial sustainability is another important aspect that affects the continuity and durability of
30 social innovations at the grassroots. This is mainly because "funding constraints inhibit
31 experimentation and punish failure by withdrawal of resources" (Seyfang and Smith, 2007, p.
32 597). Deprived communities also face a number of structural constraints and market failures to
33 generate and sustain their own funds for grassroots innovations. Even when these funds are
34 secured or locally generated, they still remain subject to elite capture and corruption in the
35 absence of transparent and effective accountability mechanisms among and between different
36 actors. To ensure that the sustainability of grassroots innovations is enhanced, it is important to
37 account for the long-term nature of social change and to generate sufficient resources that can
38 sustain this change and foster its positive impact on the quality of life of local communities.
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41 *Scaling-up*

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43 One way to sustain grassroots innovations is to scale them up. Grassroots initiatives, however,
44 are mostly viewed as localised solutions that are hard to scale-up (Edwards and Hulme, 1992).
45 Scholars against scaling-up argue that social innovation initiatives are embedded in their context
46 and hence might be difficult to implement across new geographic and communal borders (Mair
47 and Marti, 2006). Others view scaling-up as integral to the process of social innovation for these
48 innovations to have an effective impact on the social problems they seek to address. Borzaga
49 and Bodini (2014), for example, argue that "social innovation should not consist only of an
50 isolated incident but should be replicable and have the potential to scale up in order to have a
51 significant impact ... Consequently, more attention needs to be paid to the scalability of the
52 innovation in addition to its novelty" (Borzaga and Bodini, 2014, p.415). Scalability is thus
53 integral to successful and sustainable grassroots innovations. Scale does matter. From a resilience
54 perspective, different scales can produce different outcomes as change in one level might lead to
55 stability in another (Lodemann and Ziegler, 2015). From a human development perspective,
56 scaling involves capabilities improvements or a 'climbing up of the ladder' (Ziegler et al, 2013).
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Scaling-up, however, is not straightforward as "only a small minority of social entrepreneurs create new models that can then be scaled up, and that process of scaling up often involves governments and larger businesses" (Mulgan et al, 2007, p. 45). Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) differentiate between various ways in which innovative ideas and initiatives can be diffused, such as through replication, scaling up and translation. Replication refers to the application of the social innovation in a new context (mostly a new geographic area) (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012). Ziegler et al (2013) also differentiate between lab and family strategies for scaling-up social innovations; the former is a mere replication and reproduction of the initiative in a new context; while the latter accounts for contextual factors and adapts the initiative to the new environment. They explain that 'to scale' one can increase production, collaborate with new partners or replicate the initiative. Rejecting replication, Ziegler (2013, p.12) argues that "it would be a mistake to think of scaling as the 'replication' of a model in the sense of a copy", which is why he stresses the need to adapt social innovations to their respective contexts. Our model adopts the latter view of scaling-up as an adaptive strategy to account for contextual factors that affect social innovation processes when implementing it in new locations or domains. The question is therefore *how* can grassroots innovations be scaled-up – in light of the proposed 3C-model?

The model embeds a scaling-up potential in its three components. First, many conscientization activities are replicable at different scales. Individuals can act as agents of change by raising the awareness of other community members, e.g. as was the case with the fight against FGM in rural Egypt (Ibrahim, 2014). Second, through conciliation, a communal vision is created that allows neighbouring communities to *see* the benefits of social innovation and draw their own lessons from it to induce positive social change in their respective areas. The success of social innovation in Tafahna Al Ashraf village in Egypt, for example, set in train a multiplier effect that led to the scaling-out of social innovations to neighbouring villages (Ibrahim, 2013a). Finally, collaboration is important to enhance the scalability of grassroots innovations. This is mainly because "small-scale initiatives can reproduce elsewhere by ensuring groups are well connected regionally and nationally" (Seyfang and Smith, 2007, 596). Referring to micro-credit and fair trade as successful scalable social innovations, Cunha et al (2015) explain how 'micro-experiments' at the communal level can become universal and have real impact on communities in the Global South. To do so, it is important for grassroots innovations to find 'champions' beyond their immediate context and to challenge the power of those who benefit from the status quo (Cunha et al, 2015). To scale-up social innovations, it is also essential to build networks among and between different actors (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012); otherwise "social innovations are stillborn and ... many social entrepreneurs are frustrated" (Mulgan et al., 2007). For these networks to be effective, it is important to engage local institutions, promote co-management, establish decentralised decision-making and allow power sharing; especially at the local level (Jones, 2011). Through effective partnerships and careful scaling-up and scaling-out strategies, grassroots innovations can expand their impact to new contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article presented a new model to explain how social innovations at the grassroots can be initiated, supported and sustained. The model emphasized the centrality of three processes: (1) conscientization at the individual level, (2) conciliation at the collective level, and (3) collaboration at the institutional level. It explored the dynamics of each of these three C-processes stressing the importance of *individual* behavioural changes, *collective* agency and local *institutional* reforms for the success, sustainability and scalability of grassroots innovations. The model focused on the *process of change* itself viewing the 3C processes as means and ends for social change. By focusing on these three C-processes, the model presented a clearer framework for conceptualising, operationalising and understanding the dynamics of social innovation processes

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3 at the grassroots. Adopting the Capability Approach as an evaluative framework for the model,
4 the paper stressed the role of grassroots innovations in supporting collective agency, generating
5 new collective capabilities and challenging unequal power relations within local communities and
6 among development actors. The model sought to explore the interactive relationship between
7 agency and structure and to show how grassroots innovations can promote 'real' empowerment
8 and participation by supporting *power from within* (through conscientization); *power with* (through
9 conciliation) and *power to and power over* (through collaboration). The paper explained the
10 importance of conscientization for enhancing the capacity to aspire of local communities and for
11 inducing positive changes in social norms to support grassroots innovations. It also explored the
12 dynamics of the conciliation process which is essential to reconcile individuals' self-interests with
13 communal goals. The paper also explained the importance of building effective collaborative
14 partnerships between local communities and other development actors and examined the
15 difficulties they face in building and sustaining these partnerships. The model's limitations were
16 also discussed illustrating how the failure of the 3C-processes can lead to conflict, confrontation,
17 capture and cooptation. Finally, the paper explored three evaluative aspects of grassroots-led
18 development that can be used to assess social innovations at the grassroots, namely through:
19 success, sustainability and scalability. It demonstrated the difficulty of defining each of these
20 criteria and explained their importance for grassroots innovations. The strength of the model lies
21 in its clarity, its focus on processes (rather than outcomes) and its emphasis on the interactive
22 nature of the 3C-processes and the contextual factors affecting them.
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26 As for its policy relevance, the model emphasizes the central role that grassroots innovations can
27 play in initiating and supporting social change and explains how this role can be supported and
28 enhanced by different development actors. It builds on a growing international interest in social
29 innovations emphasizing their role, for example, in reaching the new SDGs (Sustainable
30 Development Goals). Leach et al. (2012, p.11) explain how these "local initiatives often
31 flourished and drew on people's own, vibrant forms of knowledge, technology and
32 experimentation, but ... they remained at the margins". Acknowledging the complexity of
33 grassroots-led processes, the model identifies three *specific* processes (conscientization,
34 conciliation and collaboration) that can help to enhance the impact of grassroots innovations.
35 The model also provides a useful framework for assessing these innovations by focusing on their
36 success, sustainability and scalability. By focusing on 'what works', the model not only presents a
37 useful conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of social innovation processes for
38 academics, it also constitutes a useful guide for practitioners when it comes to designing,
39 planning, implementing and supporting sustainable, successful and scalable social innovations at
40 the grassroots.
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Figure 1 – The 3C-Model for Grassroots-led Development

