Introduction.

The relationships between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and firms' performances are subject to debates in the literature in strategic management and economics. Results drawn from empirical researches on the role of innovations in these streams (and sub-streams) of researches are not conclusive. One of the issues raised is the difficulty to evaluate these Corporate Social (CSP) and economic/financial (CFP) performances and their relationships. The literature on environmental innovations and their associated benefits abound (cfr Del Rio-Gonzales (2009) for a literature review). Such is not the case, to my knowledge, for innovations aiming at meeting soci(et)al challenges.

Responsible soci(et)al innovations are defined here as the voluntary and proactive integration of social (and environmental) concerns in firm's strategies, behaviors and processes aiming at meeting societal challenges and promoting individual and collective wellbeing (more specifically for un(der)served human beings), thanks to new solutions with improved performance characteristics enabling to deliver new or improved services and benefits to their (individual, collective) beneficiaries.

The remaining of this article is organized as follows. The first section explores quantitative researches on the relationships between Corporate Soci(et)al performances, the role of innovations and their degree of integration within organizations as CSR-related activities. After having presented some definitions of social innovations (section2), the paper focuses on their performance' assessments and measures as they have been identified in meta-analysis of case studies in the strategic management literature (section 3) focusing on innovations and business models dedicated to serving un(der)served persons. Conclusions drawn from sections 2, 3 and 4 led to the investigation of streams of the literature on sustainable, human development and wellbeing to opening the perspective from the micro to macro levels of analysis (communities and societies) (section 5).

1. Corporate social performances (CSP) and corporate financial performances (CFP): exploring the role of innovation as moderator, mediator.

Literature reviews (meta-analysis) on the relationships between CSP and CFP published since the mid 80thies suggest that results drawn from empirical researches are not conclusive (McGuire, Sundgreen, Schneeweis, 1988, Griffin, Mahon, 1997, Salzmann, Ionescu-Somers, Steger, 2005). However, the majority of researches reviewed show either a (modest) positive or a neutral (not negative) relation/link (Margolis, Walsh, 2003, Orlitzky, Schmidt, Rynes, 2003). For example, in their analysis of previous researches, Garcia Castro, Arino and Canela (2010) argue that there is a lack of evidence regarding such a correlation. Even if a positive link has been identified in a greater number of studies, some present ambiguous results and a few indicate a negative correlation.

Three streams of researches have been identified in the literature on CSP-CFP relationships. (Surroca, Tribo, Maddock, 2010). The first suggests that CSR implies good and positive relationships with key stakeholders, which in turn, improve CFP. The second suggests that CFP influences CSP because better CFP provides companies with a surplus of financial resources to invest in CSR initiatives. The third, combining the previous ones, (cfr Waddock, Graves, 1997, Orlitzky, Schmidt, Rines, 2003) places these relationships between CFP and CSP in a dynamic and "virtuous" cycle.

Many authors stress that much research is needed to better understand these relationships and innovation has been viewed as an important variable to this end.

1.1 Innovation: A missing link?

In their literature review Mc Williams and Siegel (2000) argue that these mixed results could be due to the misspecification of the models, because important control variables such as innovation are missing. They argue "This model is misspecified because it does not control for investment in R&D, which has been shown to be an important determinant of firm performance. This misspecification results in upwardly biased estimates of the financial impact of CSR. When the model is properly specified, we find that CSR has a neutral impact on financial performance " (p.603).

Researches have stressed the role of innovation as a "moderator" in these relationships. One example can be found in Hull and Rothenberg (2008) who, summarizing their article titled "Firm performance: the interaction of corporate social performance with innovation and industry differentiation", state that "Our results support both innovation and the level of differentiation in the industry as moderators for a positive relationship between corporate social performance and financial performance: corporate social performance most strongly affects performance in low-innovation firms and in industries with little differentiation." (p.781).