

# DESCRIPTIVE MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE ACTING FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT

## *MODELO DESCRITIVO DE ATUAÇÃO SUSTENTÁVEL PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DE INOVAÇÕES SOCIAIS*

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The concept of social innovation as open, collaborative and social transformation process opens room to reinforce the need of legitimizing social impact businesses and of expanding partnerships for social change, as well as the urgency of establishing professional and more sustainable social innovation environments. Accordingly, we tried to answer the following research question: How can social business performance boost the development of social innovations?

**Design/methodology/approach:** Therefore, we adopted the inductive approach of qualitative paradigm, based on the Grounded Theory, to investigate 24 social businesses. In addition, we adopted the Atlas.ti software for data organization and recovery.

Aggregate results allowed us to propose a descriptive model of sustainable performance for the development of social innovations in social business, based on the following propositions: sustainable performance in processes and social innovation, the prevalence of a cooperative environment to solve social issues, professional governance as causal factor to social innovation development, the development of actions focused on public interests as influencing conditions for social innovation development, technical and scientific evaluation of social impacts as strategy to measure the outcomes of developed innovations and the expansion of social impacts as the consequence of the self-negotiation of social affairs.

**Originality/value:** A descriptive model of sustainable acting was proposed for the development of social innovations in social businesses.

**Keywords:** Social Innovation. Social Business. Descriptive Model. Grounded Theory.



## RESUMO

**Finalidade:** A concepção da inovação social como um processo aberto, colaborativo e gerador de transformação da sociedade reforça a necessidade da ampliação de parcerias e da legitimação dos negócios que promovem impacto e mudança social. Considerando esse contexto, buscou-se responder à seguinte questão de pesquisa: Como a atuação dos negócios sociais pode potencializar o desenvolvimento de inovações sociais?

**Desenho / metodologia / abordagem:** Para tanto, foram adotados: a abordagem indutiva, fundamentada em dados empíricos (*Grounded Theory*), a partir do paradigma qualitativo, em uma investigação de 24 negócios sociais; e o software Atlas.ti, para a organização e a recuperação dos dados.

**Constatações:** A agregação dos resultados possibilitou a elaboração de um modelo descritivo, de atuação sustentável, para o desenvolvimento de inovações em negócios sociais, a partir das seguintes proposições: (a) atuação sustentável tanto nos processos quanto na inovação social propriamente dita; (b) prevalência de um contexto cooperativo para resolver questões sociais; (c) governança profissionalizada, como condicionante causal à geração de inovações sociais; (d) desenvolvimento de ações de interesse público como condicionante interveniente à geração de inovações sociais; (e) avaliação técnica e científica do impacto social, como estratégia de mensuração dos resultados das inovações geradas; e (f) expansão do impacto social, como consequência da atuação autoescalável dos negócios sociais.

**Originalidade / valor:** Foi proposto um modelo descritivo de atuação sustentável para o desenvolvimento de inovações sociais em negócios sociais.

**Palavras-chave:** Inovação Social. Negócios Sociais. Modelo Descritivo. *Grounded Theory*.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Post-modern society demands the essential reflection about new forms of thinking and about the creation of structures, patterns and connections capable of adding value to all, based on a remarkable social transformation (Juliani, Juliani, Souza, & Harger, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary facing the challenge of building social relationship systems and regrouping resources accounting for their replication. It is possible talking about the latent need of social innovation since changes and innovations must alter processes, social relationships and pre-existing power structures (Sousa, Mendonça, Sousa, & Santos, 2014; Mulgan, Tucker, Ali, & Sanders, 2007).

The concept of innovation emerges in the social field as the factor boosting the construction of a new model to understand the demands of society; it must aim at promoting equal opportunities by respecting either diversity or human uniqueness. Social innovation can be defined as a set of processes, products and methodologies focused on improving quality of life and on diminishing inequalities, so far, in place (Farfus & Rocha, 2007).

The articulated concept of social innovation as an open and collaborative process, whose outcomes lead to social transformations, reinforces the need of legitimizing social negotiations and broadening partnerships, as well as highlights the urgency in establishing more sustainable and professional environments.

Accordingly, we aimed at answering the following research question: How can the performance of social negotiations potentiate social innovation development? Based on such problematic, we mainly aim at: (a) describing the general and relational performance of social negotiations; (b) explaining the sustainable dimensions of social negotiation performance; and (c) proposing a sustainable performance model to develop social innovation in social negotiations.

The investigation of 24 social negotiations seen as references in innovation development focused on society is a relevant aspect of the current study, since these references were nominated from 2010 to 2015 to the Social Entrepreneur Award, which is promoted by the newspaper "Folha de São Paulo" and by Schwab Foundation. The importance of social innovation as public policy topic



is added to the aforementioned aspect. This theme is part of the agenda guiding discussions set among different social strata, given the suggestion of improving individuals' quality of life and contributions to the generation of sustainable development.

The current research presented the methodological and theoretical relevance based on the academic context by applying the inductive approach, which is substantiated by empirical data (*Grounded Theory*). This approach derives from the qualitative paradigm and from the adoption of Atlas.ti software to organize and recover the collected data.

The present article was structured into 5 sections, as follows: Section 1, Introduction; Section 2, introduction of reflections about social innovations and sustainable performance; Section 3, indication of the adopted methodological aspects, including detailed method, data sources and technical analysis; Section 4, Results; and Section 5, synthesis of the main results, study limitations and the possibilities of further research.

## 2 THEORETICAL REFERENCES

Recently, a significant academic effort headed towards studies on innovation, as well as to studies on entrepreneurship and social business categories (Phillips, Lee, Ghobadian, O'Regan, & James, 2015; Shaw & De Bruin, 2013; Bignetti, 2011; Chell, Nicolopoulou, & Karataş-Özkan, 2010; Nicholls, 2010; Chell, 2007; Dees & Anderson, 2006). It is relevant taking into consideration that the social economy also gained room nowadays, given the inefficiency of many structures and policies focused on coping with social inequalities, climatic changes and global pandemics (Murray, Caulier-Grice, & Mulgan, 2010). Social innovation emerges as a feasible alternative to the future of human society due to the development of mechanisms to solve these, and many other, neglected issues (Santos, 2012; Bignetti, 2011; Mulgan et al, 2007; Moulaert, Martinelli, Swyngedouw, & Gonzalez, 2005; Dees, Anderson, & Wei-Skillem, 2004; Cloutier, 2003).

According to Bignetti (2011), social innovation takes place through participation and the cooperation of actors involved in knowledge application due to social needs. Such a participation leads to new and long-lasting solutions for social groups, communities or favors society as a whole. Moulaert et al. (2007), in his turn, stated that social innovation is an alternative instrument of social development, since it focuses on the satisfaction of human needs through transformations in community governance relationships. Accordingly, Mulgan et al. (2007) added to the discussion by advocating that social innovations are innovative activities and services mainly developed and outspread by organizations whose primary aim presents a social character.

According to Phills, Deiglmeier and Millert (2008), the aim of social innovation is to effectively, efficiently, sustainably and fairly solve society issues by creating social values that favor all, rather than just few individuals. Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010) complete this concept by pointing out that such an innovation covers the application of new ideas (products, services and models) that, in their turn, fulfil the needs of society and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, besides its positive outcomes, social innovation must potentiate the capacity of actions taken by the ones who are involved in it.

Dees, Anderson and Wei-Skillem (2004) highlight that social innovation embodies the features of an organization model (program and principles), when there are efficient structure of people and resources mobilization substantiated by common goals. Thus, social innovation can be replicated many times, since its outspread can also take place from an integrated set of projects and actions based on previously defined and articulated propositions that are incorporated to local, national and international reach programs. Thus, social innovations are also consolidated by principles and values whose aim is to solve social issues, so far, neglected. Figure 1 synthesizes the main features of social innovation.



Figure 1 – Synthesis of the main features of social innovation

Items	Features
<b>Value</b>	Social.
<b>Interest</b>	About social groups and community.
<b>Aim</b>	Looking forward to solve social issues neglected by public policies and by society through the arrangement of social roles and changes in social structures.
<b>Locus</b>	Established social relationships, mainly, collective learning developed based on the potential of individuals and groups that search for the skills necessary for social transformation.
<b>Form</b>	Intangible, it is mostly associated with the concept of “service”.
<b>Actors</b>	Diversity of influencers, it demands process consolidation and adjustment, including social entrepreneurship, governmental agents, businessmen, companies, non-governmental organizations, social workers, civil society representatives, social movements, communities and beneficiaries.
<b>Results</b>	New combinations or the hybridization of existing social solutions that advance over organization, sector and disciplinary boundaries by developing new social relationships among individuals and previously separated groups.

Source: Santos (2012), Bignetti (2011), Goldsmith (2010), Heiscalá (2007), Rodrigues (2006), Cloutier (2003), Cloutier (2003), Bouchard (1997) and Chambon, David and Devevey (1982).

Social innovations, based on the approach by Cloutier (2003), are centered on the individual, i.e., on actions that lead to long-lasting changes in its life by giving it the necessary power to guide such transformations. Thus, social innovations are the outcome of personal initiatives of entrepreneurs who are encouraged by a social mission (Bessant & Tidd, 2009). Based on a second line of study conducted by Cloutier (2003), social innovations are also guided by social negotiations, since institutions are created or changed in order to improve the quality of life of communities and groups of individuals.

It is relevant pointing out that, in the next decades, non-governmental organizations will face a hard time maintaining their activities and projects exclusively through donations and subventions. Such a context has demanded managerial and strategic practices focused on professionalization and financial self-sustainability in order to give birth to social businesses that intentionally provide measurable solutions to social issues (Emerson & Twersky, 1996).

It is important highlighting that the strategies, structures, rules and values of social business performance are seen as innovation. The same happens in non-profitable organizations in a more voluntarist pro-social way, since they traditionally depend on donations and subventions (Dart, 2004). Therefore, the following general features of social business performance are outstanding: (a) it is structured based on needs and features of low-income populations; (b) it has the explicit mission of having social impact; (c) it is managed by social entrepreneurs; (d) it can broaden the reach of social innovations generated from the expansion of business itself through its replication in other regions by other actors and the outspread of elements inherent to innovation, as well as by other entrepreneurs, organizations and public policies; (e) it searches for financial self-sustainability (f) and providing high-impact social products or services is its main activity; and (g) it can distribute profits to stakeholders (Artemisia, 2016).

According to Dacin, Dacin and Matear (2010); Dacin, Dacin and Tracey (2011); Muñoz and Kibler (2016) and Phillips et al. (2015), social business must seek balance between social and economic values. Such an action is necessary because economic value is essential for the sustainability of social ventures and also for the innovative creation of social value. Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern (2006) highlighted the following differentiation dimensions concerning companies exclusively focused on profit and social negotiations: (a) market flaw, which takes place when the private sector is not able to fulfil a certain need or when outcomes of economic agents are insufficient, configures opportunity for social business; (b) social business mission, which is substantiated by



participatory management, social motivation and employees' empowerment, a fact that does not apply to exclusively commercial companies; (c) resource mobilization, which means the generation of different outcomes because the reward system adopted by social businesses is different from that chosen by an exclusively commercial company - the non-pecuniary counterpart tends to overcome the financial one in case of social ventures -; (d) performance measurement, which is expressed as element differentiation, since the main aim of social business is the stakeholders, i.e., all those who influence or are influenced by the business.

The social business has established formal cooperative arrangements according to which individual purposes are aligned to collective ones based on differences observed in exclusively commercial companies. Therefore, new organization models are developed as attempts to boost new social relationships capable of potentiating processes focused on creating social knowledge and technologies (Barnard, 1968).

Social businesses take actions based on open innovation processes within collaborative environments that present slight and fluid limits among partners in order to share ideas, subjects and technologies (Leadbeater, 2009). These collaborative environments were substantially broadened by internet proliferation and by the establishment of virtual and open knowledge platforms aimed at generating the global trend of creative collaboration and of unprecedented co-creation. Accordingly, social business often uses collaborative co-creation, learning and planning (Healey, 1997; Hulgård & Ferrarini, 2010).

Mulgan (2007), Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010) point out the participatory aspects of open innovation and of their dependence on the collaborative learning dimension based on more integrated social innovations, given the social character of their ends or means - which results from the combination of process and outcome (Young, 2006).

Accordingly, it is possible noticing that legitimacy, development and professionalization are the essential conditions to social-business sustainability. However, despite the consensus about this need for reinforcements, there is no substantial agreement about how this move is designed.

Armani (2003) approached two scopes to fill this gap: (a) the managerial scope, which concerns business professionalization, including planning, monitoring system, evaluation (based on indicators, resource capture, marketing, administrative and financial management) and the technical qualification of human resources; as well as (b) the systemic scope, which assures integration between the managerial and socio-political dimensions of social businesses that involve the social basis and ability to provide high-impact social products and services.

Based on the managerial and systemic scopes, Armani (2003) established two vectors capable of promoting the sustainable development of social businesses: (1) the institutional development vector, and (b) the collective institutional development vector, whose details are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 – Boosting vectors of sustainable development in social businesses

VeCtORs	DimensIONS	DescriptIOn
<b>INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Social basis, legitimacy and mission relevance	They involve the broadening of business social basis and of its alliances by taking into account the social relevance, mission consistency and values determining institutional actions taken as property by its members
	Autonomy and reliability	They approach business public accountability ways, i.e., transparency, transparency to society, autonomy and public reference for specific issues.
	Sustainability	It concerns that compatibility between income level and business needs; income types; investors and their conditioning factors; resource property level; the relationship between institutional financing and Project financing; the degree of national financing; and potential tensions between mission and sustainability.
	Labor organization, democratic management and efficiency	They regard the adequacy and efficiency of labor organization forms; decision-making process and its participatory and democratic aspects; degree of accountability; and the efficiency of administrative and financial management instruments.
	Chart of appropriate human resources	They approach adequacy, profile (ethical, political, gender, among others) and technical quantification of human resources in business; qualification opportunities, income level, labor conditions; and alternatives to gather employees (volunteers, trainees, collaborators, among others).
	Planning, monitoring and evaluation system (participatory and efficiency)	It concerns the degree of development and the consolidation of planning, monitoring, evaluation and labor adequacy systems; flexible and innovative tool use; encouragement for continuous learning; use of indicators; and participatory level recorded for beneficiaries and other partners in the process.
	Capacity to produce and systematize information and knowledge	It approaches the capacity of researching and producing socially relevant data and information; the capacity of synthesizing and socializing experiences; the degree of contribution to the construction of arguments for the public and academic debate about social and development matters.
	Power to influence social processes and public policies	It concerns the capacity of planning, promoting and influencing mobilization, organization and social articulation processes, mainly, the capacity to interfere in the process to build actors and their movements, as well as in public policies.
	Capacity to establish partnerships and joint actions	It regards the initiatives and consolidation of partnership in civil society; participation in interchange networks; joint performance with actors based on consortium; the capacity of setting interlocution with the public power and research bureaus. Medium and private sector.
<b>COLLECTIVE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IONIA</b>	Sectorial articulation degree	It is the articulation level in the performance sector (network), be it about end-activities, sector agenda about a certain context and historical period; approaching information, communication, action and joint representativeness mechanisms.
	Building the collective identity	It regards the consolidation of a collective identity in the sector, which reveals views, interests and common agendas due to business composing, by embodying the relationship between different identities within the network, their expression forms and resulting tensions
	Sector visibility and reliability	It refers to sector visibility in face of society (in general) and of public and private sectors, by absorbing the ability to attract qualified staff and to gain support.
	Capacity of influencing contextualized factors and sector sustainability	It is the degree of interlocution with the public power, the private sector, the media, churches, universities and international cooperation agencies, when it comes to juridical, political, financial and operational conditions to exist and to business-performance sector functioning.

Source: Adapted from Armani (2003).



Finally, it is important highlighting that either the economic accumulation or the State and society functioning point towards the challenge of conceiving development as a social change process whose outcomes must be socially applied. Thus, social business must develop innovations to fulfil neglected needs in order to generate social value. Thus, it is relevant understanding the development of social innovations in social business based on the performance in prioritizing professionalization and sustainability.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

We opted for using the inductive approach - which is substantiated by empirical data (*Grounded Theory*) - based on the qualitative paradigm that, according to Richardson (2004), offers a detailed understanding of meanings and situational features presented by objects of investigation. Strauss and Corbin (2008) highlight that the *Grounded Theory* regards a methodology focused on creating substantive theories whose inductive analysis of empirical data is appropriated to assess issues not yet consolidated in the literature that demand contextual treatment (Frezatti, Nascimento, Junqueira, & Relvas, 2011).

Thus, it is possible noticing that the qualitative paradigm and the *Grounded Theory* are adherent to each other and present a naturalist perspective due to the analyzed subjective reality, since both result in interaction between participating actors (Furlanetti & Barros, 2013; Frezatti et al., 2011; Ahrens & Chapman, 2007; Berry & Otley, 2004; Baxter & Chua, 2003).

Straus and Corbin (2008) and Charmaz (2009) emphasize that the *Grounded Theory* requires critical thinking about the theorization process; thus, the researcher must put in place its ability to walk backwards to assess the scenario based on critical and reflexive actions, as well as to be sensitive to the words and actions of the investigated subjects. Accordingly, it is necessary using the open, axial and selective coding, because the *Grounded Theory* process concerns conceptualizing and reducing data; elaborating categories, in terms of their properties and dimensions; and relating them to each other based on propositions (Straus & Corbin, 2008).

According to Strauss and Corbin (2008), the open coding, also called substantive coding, demands examining gross data in details through micro-analysis applied to words, sentences or paragraphs, in order to identify previous codes (substantive codes) that compose its property and dimension (sub-categories) categories. Axial coding categories are related to their sub-categories; they are axial because they are found by an axis. They are used to formulate explications about phenomena through the integration of property (overall or specific category features that define and give meaning) and dimension (property location) categories.

Categories are compared, related and interconnected after they are built; they concern phenomenon, context, condition, action and interaction strategies, and consequences (Furlanetti & Barros, 2013; Dantas, Leite, Lima, & Stipp, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The selective coding limits the central category based on the other categories and on their systematic relationships. Thus, we adopted a higher degree of data abstraction in order to integrate categories whose outcomes embodied the substantive-theory shape, as well as the descriptive model and the theoretical matrix.

The approach by Strauss and Corbin (2008) was adopted as research model, since both research question and theoretical reference were developed prior to study operationalization. Data were reduced by using commands of the Atlas.ti software, which, according to Lee and Esterhuizen (2000), allow organizing and recovering information related to ideas or concepts subjacent to the investigated phenomenon that are essential to the empirical structure and validate codes in the qualitative-data return process.



The study was operationalized in stages. The first stage addressed the life stories of entrepreneurs accountable for the investigated social businesses. All these stories were treated through the structuring of autobiographical narratives produced by social entrepreneurs themselves, in the scope of the “Social Entrepreneur” award. They reported their professional performance and life experience; therefore, these narratives can be considered precious autobiographical materials, since they reveal important tacit knowledge and reflect the non-separation between thought and action (Galvão, 2005).

Alberti (2004) states that the analysis of life stories help researchers to extract information and knowledge acquired by individuals; to reconstruct facts that are not recorded in other types of source; to identify elements of how people perform and elaborate their experiences; to relate learning situations to decision-making in order to understand how people and groups experience the past and interpret their daily actions; and to design the trajectory of life based on the object of study.

The second study operationalization stage was based on sustainable performance reports, social balances and on reports of the “Social Entrepreneur” award that are validated by social entrepreneurs and by actors who were favored by the performance of investigated businesses. Thus, data evaluation and validation procedures stand out in this stage, since these procedures are based on data concept and triangulation, which, subsequently, generate a selective coding, in other words, the construction of propositions and the articulation of a descriptive model.

Based on the “Social Entrepreneur” award from 2010 to 2015, which was organized by the newspaper “Folha de São Paulo” and by Schwab Foundation”, the investigated social businesses are references in the development of social innovations. Six businesses were selected at the first stage to operationalize the study and compose the substantive coding, namely: Cies, Cren, Educar, Geekie, Imaflora and Noos. The substantive coding of these six businesses was the basis for the axial coding that was developed for 24 social businesses in the second stage in order to broaden the focus of the study analysis, as described below (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Investigated social businesses and their entrepreneurs

	Organization	Entrepreneurs' name
1	Abrale, Abrasta and Alianza Latina	Merula Anargyrou Steagall
2	Agenda Pública	Sérgio Andrade
3	Associação dos Amigos e Pais de Pessoas Especiais (Aappe)	Iraê Cardoso
4	Associação Ebenézer e Centro de Integração Educação e Saúde (Cies)*	Roberto Kunimassa Kikawa
5	Associação Educacional e Assistencial Casa do Zezinho	Dagmar Rivieri Garroux
6	Associação Vaga Lume	Sylvia Guimarães
7	Banco de Alimentos	Luciana Chinaglia Quintão
8	Casa da Arte de Educar (Educar)*	Sueli de Lima Moreira
9	Centro de Educação Popular e Formação Social (Cepfs)	José Dias Campos
10	Centro de Recuperação e Educação Nutricional (Cren)*	Gisela Maria Bernardes Solymos
11	Geekie Desenvolvimento de Software (Geekie)*	Cláudio Sassaki/Eduardo Bontempo
12	Grupo Cultural AfroReggae	José Pereira de Oliveira Junior
13	Grupo de Apoio ao Adolescente e à Criança com Cancêr (Graacc)	Antonio Sergio Petrilli
14	Instituto Brasil Solidário (IBS)	Luis Salvatore
15	Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (Ipam)	Paulo Moutinho
16	Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal Agrícola (Imaflora)*	Luís Fernando Guedes Pinto
17	Instituto de Pesquisas Sistêmicas e Desenvolvimento de Redes Sociais Noos (Noos)*	Carlos Eduardo Zuma
18	Instituto Fazendo História	Claudia de Freitas Vidigal

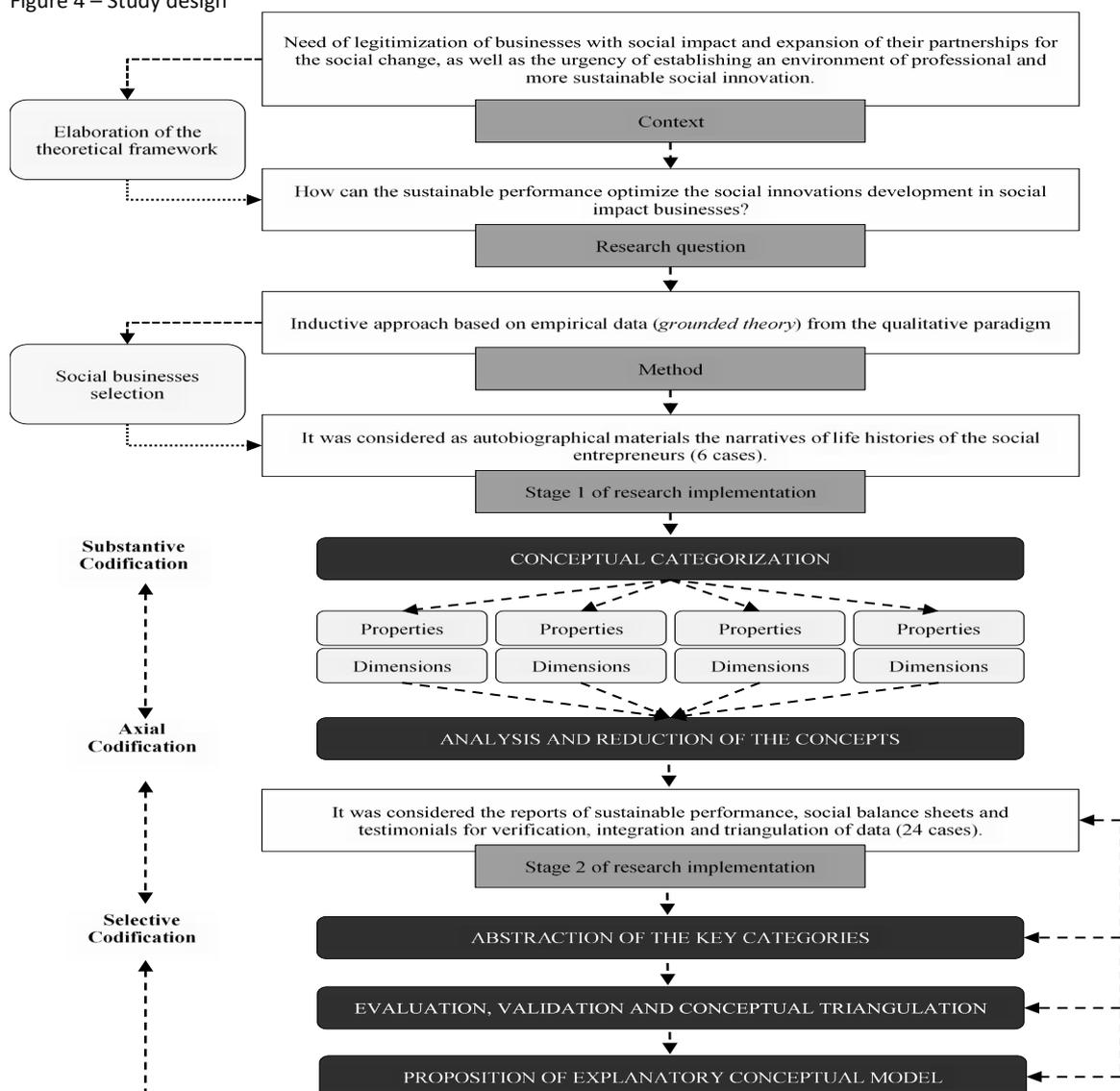
19	Instituto Homem Pantaneiro e Escola de Artes Moinho Cultural	Márcia Raquel Rolon
20	Instituto Rumo Náutico e Projeto Grael	Axel Schmidt Grael
21	Kanindé Associação de Defesa Etnoambiental e Associação Metareilá	Ivaneide Cardozo / Almir N. Suruí
22	Projeto Chapada e Instituto Chapada de Educação	Cybele Oliveira
23	Rede Asta	Alice Freitas
24	Redes da Maré	Eliana Sousa Silva

Legends: \*Businesses taken into account at the first and second operationalization stages of the study; the other businesses were included from the second stage on.

Source: Research data (2020).

The sequence of methodological procedures that can be adopted as parameter for study performance replication, or for its new application, is presented below (Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Study design



Source: adapted from Frezatti et al. (2011).

## 4 RESULTS

Gross data of 6 social businesses were initially organized for result analysis purposes; next, they were subjected to substantive coding (Section 4.1 – Substantive Coding). Subsequently, the adopted axial coding and substantive codes gave birth to the property and dimension categories. Therefore, the conceptual triangulation was carried out and data of 24 social businesses were treated (Section 4.2 – Axial coding). Finally, the selective coding took place in order to limit the central category of the study; it allowed the construction of propositions and supported the articulation of the sustainable-performance descriptive model applied to the development of social innovations in social businesses (Section 4.3 – selective coding).

### 4.1 Substantive Coding

Initially, gross data (narratives of social entrepreneurs' life stories) were organized in charts, based on the 6 investigated social businesses. Next, they were subjected to substantive coding. The charts depict the results that describe the substantive codes represented by Codes and Memos, which were adapted through the tool in the Atlas.ti software to generate Network.

Actually, social businesses Cies and Cren stood out in healthcare service performance. Cies was the pioneer in the country to provide specialized, humanized and high technology preventive healthcare to poor communities through the implementation of the mobile medical outpatient center, which reinforced the concepts by Farfus and Rocha (2007). Social innovation involves a set of processes, products and methodologies that improve individuals' quality of life. The shared and self-sustainable finance management of Cies stood out for services provided by the public power; institutional public and private partners; the critical analysis of public performance to identify idleness and inoperative cores; the adoption of safety and quality processes established by inspection and accreditation organs; and, finally, the research and development of new social technologies to increase flexibility, impact and operational efficiency. Thus, it is noteworthy that this organizational performance corroborates the assumptions by Moulaert et al. (2007) about social development generated by innovation in governance relationships and by community partnership (Figure 5).

Cren, in its turn, was pioneer in the country in effectively recovering methodologies and practices and in the nutritional education of children and adolescents through evaluation and screening in poor communities, outpatient assistance, semi-hospitalization and nutrition workshops. These actions are in line with the reasoning by Mulgan et al. (2007) about the ability of social innovation to boost the development of viable solutions for neglected issues. The following factors stood out in Cren's performance: elaboration of projects to capture resources, knowledge compilation and technical procedures by adopting scientific method rigor and scientific substantiation to measure and assess the qualitative and quantitative impacts of developed social innovations (Bignetti, 2011). This outcome points towards social innovation promoted by the participation and cooperation of actors involved in knowledge application due to social needs (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Substantive coding and gross data about the performance of Cies and Cren

Social Business	Substantive Coding	Gross data
	Codes	Selected memos
Cies	<p>(1) The Project was based on a financial self-sustainability model whose main income source is expressed as service provision to the public power based on SUS Table and on donations from companies due to tax waver. Code costs are minimized by partnerships with local companies, government, civil associations and community. (2) The final concept and the construction of an advanced medical center took place in São Paulo City. It got the spontaneous search from more than 50 cities in order to construct new units. Besides Brazil, there are negotiations with Angola, Colombia, Italy, Niger, Panama and Venezuela. (3) The project recorded more than 24 thousand assisted people, more than 40 thousand exams and surgical procedures, and training was provided to more than 500 agents. (4) The project was conceived based on replication at high scale, mainly in poorer regions that have precarious medical assistance. Research reinforcement was continuous due to the development of containers and vans to generate high flexibility, impact and efficiency. Technical procedures for project replication were systematized in documents, such as assemblage and operation handbooks that detail processes to be put in place based on standards required by inspection and accreditation bureaus. (5) Strong link to healthcare public policies based on partnership with local government. Completing the assistance provided by basic healthcare units, by outpatient centers, by family health programs and by home hospitalization programs. Other premise lies on contributing to reduce queues in hospitals and on the elaboration of a critical analysis applied to the local public healthcare system through the identification of idleness and inoperative investment cores.</p>	<p>"I had a problem for more than two years. I had not yet made any medical examination and Doctor Lorena sent me to a specialist in Taubaté. There, the doctor said that I had to undergo a colonoscopy. I took the bus and came back to Lorena as fast as I could, because my husband had already undergone this same examination in the mobile unit. The doctor evaluated me and said that I had two nodules in the intestine and that he would operate me in the mobile center. I must be grateful; my condition was solved right the way. Just the will to carry out the surgery in the mobile center was enough. At the following day, he prescribed the medication and told me to look for a specialist. I paid for a medical appointment in Guará. I took the biopsy along. Now I am fine, the doctor in Guará only asked me to repeat the exam every five years. The colonoscopy taken through SUS would be appointed six to eight months in advance". (Patient's testimony)</p>
Cren	<p>(1) Resources derive from partnerships with the municipal public power, from donations, incentive projects and from the sale of products in bazars. (2) It resulted from an Unifesp extension project that became the reference in nutrition disturbances prevention and treatment that became reference after the efficiency of its methodology was proven. Nowadays, it counts on nutrition service provision units in São Paulo – Jundiáí field team and one unit in Maceió (AL). In academic terms, the organization worked in cooperation with national and international institutions. (3) Straight benefit to more than 50 thousand people, since its very beginning, based on quantitative and qualitative data, which were properly recorded and substantiated by scientific fundamentals to measure the impact of Unifesp's academic project. Impacts resulting from the intervention led to gains in the health condition of patients and generated structural and social changes in the assisted families. (4) Knowledge compilation, initiatives and results presenting scientific rigor in the planning of political-pedagogical work and in scientific articles, such as the launching of the collection and portal "Vencendo a desnutrição", which was financed by BNDES. It is also important mentioning the partnership with Fundação Avsi, Italy, to develop an e-learning project involving 32 Child Education Centers from 5 Brazilian cities. It is worth pointing out the autonomous replication of innovative methodologies of the Institute in other countries like Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Mozambique and Peru. (5) Conduction of specialization courses for healthcare managers in order to tutor the application of the anthropometric census methodology in vaccination campaigns. It is also noteworthy that the performance of the Institute completes the Family Health Program in São Paulo, with emphasis on the implementation of nutrition education in child education centers based on the workshop methodology.</p>	<p>"I just started to have an idea that there was something wrong after my youngest son was hospitalized. He was terminal. There, I found out about Cren and took two of my children who were malnourished and it was a slow recovery. They taught me what to do and many times I could not fulfil the requirements. It was a hard time; my ex-husband beat me on the mouth. Toothless, he would say, nobody would look at me. I was a scavenger. I afforded the house with R\$800,00. Once, the coordinator called me in. But Cren did not only provide care to my children. I was also assisted. When I decided to get divorced, they all helped me. I attended a gastronomy course and started seeign myself as somebody else. Nowadays, I work as cleaner in an institute, one of the children was discharged from semi-hospitalization two years later and the other one does not "live" in the hospital anymore, but he is not fully recovered yet..." (Testimony of a cleaner and patients' mother)</p>

Source: Research data (2020).



Educar, Geekie and Noos stood out among the investigated social businesses for their action in the Education sector. It is worth mentioning that Educar was pioneer in the country in developing and outspreading the pedagogical methodology that has systematized integration between community local and cultural knowledge, and scholars and researchers. Educar stands out for the performance of its successor decision-making decentralization mechanisms, which is based on the articulation of a management council and on the conduction of training and regional debate about the generated social innovations. This method corroborated the reflections by Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern (2006), according to whom, the generation of social innovations is supported by participatory management supported by social motivation and employees' empowerment (Figure 6).

Geekie stood out for its national pioneering action in developing a platform of adaptive education capable of personalizing and providing autonomy to students and schools' learning experience. It adopted digital management tools, hired experts, set a formal structure for human resources coordination and the autonomous large-scale replication management of social innovations in national locations. The performance of this organization is an example of the discussion by Phills, Deiglmeier and Millert (2008), who stated that the aim of social innovation lies on effectively, efficiently, sustainably and fairly solving social issues to create social value to society as a whole, rather than to individuals, in separate (Figure 6).

Noos was pioneer in the country in systematizing research methodologies and in preventing intra-family and gender violence. The establishment of partnerships with Brazilian and foreign social organizations, the social capture of public managers, and the outspread of technical and scientific knowledge publications stood out among some of the actions that have corroborated the findings by Leadbeater (2009), according to whom, social businesses conceive their actions based on open innovation processes within collaborative contexts. These contexts present thin and fluid limits between partners in order to share ideas, subjects and technologies (Figure 6).

Imaflora was in the mainstream of investigated social businesses acting in the environmental performance, because it has shown its pioneering action in the country about the elaboration and application of socio-environmental certification methodologies, about local participatory development and the creation of social funds to certify small farmers. The implementation of advisory, direction and fiscal councils; scientific fundamentals to measure and assess the qualitative and quantitative impacts of the generated social innovations are some its main methods. It also stood out for the elaboration of social balance, the direct performance in elaborating and implementing laws, and governmental programs that have socio-environmental impact. This balance reveals adherence to percepts by Barnard (1968), who advocated that social businesses establish formal cooperative arrangements and systematize new organization models in order to feed individuals and purposes (Figure 7).



Figure 6 – Substantive coding and gross data about Educar, Geekie and Noos performance

Social Businesses	Substantive coding Codes	Gross data Selected Memos
Educar	<p>(1) Besides governmental provision, some partnerships are set between the private sector and association to potentiate future sources. Continuous management professionalization, and succession decision-making decentralization mechanisms are implemented, with emphasis on the recent establishment of an administration council. (2) The straight performance of communities in Rio de Janeiro, in 2008. The methodology “Mandala dos Saberes” embodied national reach and was implemented in a network composed of 10.042 schools linked to the Federal Program known as “Mais Educação”. At recent years, the methodology “Pontos de Cultura” was applied to 5 Brazilian cities (Belém, Brasília, Porto Alegre, Recife and Rio de Janeiro). (3) The initiative favors approximately 360 children and adolescents per year. The project also indirectly reaches approximately 2.000 individuals. Throughout the years, 23 projects were put in place with 16 partner companies, 5 governmental supporter organs, which reach 5,200 children and other 19 thousand youngsters. (4) Social methodologies are developed and tested in central units of Mangueira and Macacos, next, they are converted into publications that help replication. Seminars for professor formation and organized virtual forums were also developed so that each school can build customized pedagogical projects. (5) Governmental partnerships and the outspread of national policies about the public teaching network. The social entrepreneur also takes part in the debates, they engage in teaching and professor management networks, and publish books that report their experiences.</p>	<p>"There is an invisible line that separates school knowledge from the knowledge of the boy in the periphery if we start creating this connectivity, an advanced education. It is not because I grew up in a slum that I wanted to change things. Here is my house, where I can contribute to my community. I know all children and all their stories. It is necessary providing tenderness so we can be strong again, we can feel like learning again. Children have their own stories changed here. Due to Mandala, we can have mobility. I can touch their heads, something they have never felt before, and still educate them. People sometimes think of teaching. People sometimes think that teaching means seating at the classroom and say: ‘Take your notebooks, everybody’ and fulfill the black board with information. It is not like that. Here, the child participates with the teacher, it has its own voice”. (Testimony of a former student and current project educator).</p>
Geekie	<p>(1) Public and private investment. Hiring experts, team qualification, adoption of a management system and of a formal area of human management. (2) Geekie Games was used by students from all States, 80% of 2 million of registered students came from public schools. (3) The platform of Enem preparation is used by approximately 40% of the students who take this exam. Contracts signed with approximately 500 schools, based on the premise “one pay, one free” (each paid student opens the possibility for other student in a public school). Establishment of partnerships with teaching secretariats to integrally reach more than 100 thousand students, by also providing schools with diagnostic evaluation resources and learning management. (4) Platform for the free preparation for Enem is highly replicable and promotes learning personalization in the education context of partner schools. (5) The organization was certified by Inep as reliable Enem simulation technology. In 2014, Geekie Games reached 19 of the 26 States and had impact on more than 17 thousand schools.</p>	<p>"I studied my entire life in a public and precarious school in Ceará State hinterlands. Nowadays, I’m a scholar and I dream in attending a Master Degree and PhD course. I own it all to Geekie, which helped and still helps millions of students who were born to change the lives of people everywhere countrywide”. (Testimony of a student).</p> <p>“Geekie is a turning point in the Brazilian education. It is important for school managers, be the school private or public, for professors and mainly for students” (Testimonies of the principal of the education institution).</p>
Noos	<p>(1) Sponsorships and resource generation deriving from monthly fees, the sale of publications, payment for speeches and the subleases of classrooms for psychological clinics. It is also highlighted that the organization has been paying part of its fixed structure through the management of project fees; the generation of its own income reaches 67% of the budget. (2) The experience was born in Rio de Janeiro, it nowadays provides direct assistance to approximately 400 people per month and assists other 15 ‘carioca’ counties, it also carries out qualification and speeches in 12 Brazilian counties and in two counties in Portugal. (3) Estimates show that 2,845 people were benefited. (4) The systematization of experiences outspread in publications. (5) The methodology created from gender reflection groups influenced “Maria da Penha Bill”. It is the reference of qualification in community therapy in Rio de Janeiro State. Performance in discussions that turned the community therapy into national public policy and into the approval of the so-called “Spanking Bill”, which addresses the right of children and adolescents to be educated without spanking and pinches.</p>	<p>“I assist children and adolescents who were victims of assault. At the end of a session I asked to one of them if she would like to attend therapy, if she had attended it before, and that it could help her. Then she ended up revealing that one of the things that have helped allot her recovery was a phone number she used to call to and was answered by a person who advised her and who talked to her. Then, she mentioned the assistance by Noos “123Alô”. I think that it also reinforces the community of this project as the way to help and support children and adolescents who were victims of assault”. (Testimony of a Psychologist)</p>

Source: Research data (2020).



Figure 7 – Substantive coding and gross data of Imaflora performance

S o c i a l Business	Substantive Coding Codes	Gross Data Selected Memos
Imaflora	(1) Partnership with companies, public bureaus, teaching institutions and organization of the third sector. Diversification and good management allow good solidity/loyalty level in the partnership. Performance of the Direction Council and Stakeholders General Assembly, with deliberative responsibilities. There is an Advisory Council and a Fiscal Council that, together, provide subsidies to the Direction Council, the General Assembly and the Executive Secretariat so that they can make strategic decision. (2) It conducts certifications at national level, in 25 States. It developed community projects and management in Amapá, Pará, Bahia and São Paulo states, and international cooperation to Gana and Camaroon. (3) It is reference in the country for socio-environmental certification at national scale, the performance area is of 15.2 million hectares. It conducted certifications in approximately 140 entrepreneurs, by favoring 120,000 forest workers and farmers, and 410 families in the project. (4) The constructed methodologies applied to socio-environmental certification and to participatory local development are replicated based on a systematized learning process by receptor organizations. The methodologies are outspread in different publications by prioritizing populations that have less access to information. (5) Establishment of partnerships with environmental organs at Federal level, and of collaborative projects together with city halls and universities focused on forest conservation. Representation in Advisory Council of Forest Development of the National Fund. Participation in public discussions in the Congress and in the Senate in order to formulate propositions about the Forest Code. Coordination of a national process to define socio-environmental safeguards to projects of Reduction Emissions Caused by Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), which was, subsequently, embodied by the Federal Government, since the method was systematized and has been replicated in African countries. The social entrepreneur participated in the elaboration and implementation of Public Forest Management National Bill, that has influenced the creation of a set of state forests in Pará and the municipal legislation.	"The certification process started in 2017. Nowadays, all workers are trained in order not to have accidents. All houses were renewed, sanitation systems based on septic tanks were implemented. It is a high investment, but it all adds value to the final product. And also employees who, due to the certification, start getting higher value" (Testimony by a technician who acts in a certified property). "I was born and grew in the rubber plantation. I was even arrested for defending the land, because we do not own what was produced. Thus, forest management and certification was decisive to all of us. Today, we have another identity" (Testimony of a rubber tapper who acts in the settlement project).

Source: Research data.

## 4.2 Axial Coding

We adopted the axial coding, in which the substantiated phases and codes gave birth to categories and to their properties and dimensions, based on the substantive coding (open) addressed in the previous section. Thus, we conducted a conceptual and data triangulation processed through crossed analysis commends in Atlas.ti: *"code cooccurrence table"* and *"cluster quotations before calculating co-occurrence"*, by using the 24 social businesses as reference. This procedure allowed visualizing (gray areas) the descriptive categories of the performance of the investigated social businesses, as well as their properties, which have influenced the adoption of social innovations based on incidence dimensions (high, moderate and low). The descriptive categories were, ways of reach, resource source diversification, governance, public interest actions, social impact evaluation and the expansion of social impact (Figure 8).

Figure 8 – Categories and prosperities to social innovation generation in social businesses

Categories	Properties
Ways of Reach	Straight performance in Brazilian counties
	Collaborative performance in foreign countries
	Straight performance in all the Brazilian states
Resource source diversification	Partnerships and contracts with companies
	Government Granting
	Partnerships and contracts with the public power
	Partnerships with social associations and organizations
	Donations by individuals and companies
	Own income sources
Governance	Projects to capture state and federal resources
	Partnerships with teaching institutions
	Team qualification
	Hiring experts
	Formal structure of human resources' management
	Adoption of digital management tools
	Systematized elaboration of accounting reports
	Financial self-sustainability
	Creation of decision-making decentralization mechanisms
	Creation of successor mechanisms
Implementation of advisory, direction and fiscal councils	
Social balance elaboration	
Public interest actions	Internal development of activities that complete programs of public interest
	Performance of advisory councils and associations focused on public interest
	Engagement to local, regional and Federal discussions
	Performance of advisory councils and associations focused on public interest
	Straight performance in the elaboration and implementation of laws that have social impact
	Straight performance in the elaboration and implementation of governmental programs that have social impact
Social impact evaluations	Critical analysis about the public performance in order to identify idleness and inoperative investment cores.
	Empirical fundamentals of evaluation criteria applied to social innovations
	Measurement of the quantitative impact of social innovations
	Measurement of the qualitative impact of social innovations
	Scientific fundamentals of evaluation criteria applied to social innovations
	Development of digital tools and the integration of quantitative and qualitative impacts of social innovations.
Social impact expansion	Systematization and outspread of technical and scientific knowledge based on publications
	Replication of social innovations embodied due to distance follow-up
	Replication of social innovations embodied due to face-to-face follow-up
	Replication of social innovations embodied due to systematized learning
	Regional training and discussions about the generated social innovations
	Outspread of social innovations based on partnerships with the public power
	Research and development of new social technologies to increase flexibility, impact and operational efficiency
	Adoption of safety and quality processes established by inspection and accreditation bureaus
	Replication of social innovations standardized in an autonomous and open way

Legend: High-incidence dimensions (dark-blue areas), moderate incidence (mild-grey areas) and low incidence (light-grey areas), although emergent.

Source: research data (2020).

Therefore, based on the Axial coding, it was possible representing (Figure 8) the categories and their respective descriptive properties of social innovation generation. In order to do so, the high and moderate incidence dimensions were taken into account. These descriptive properties essentially point out the focus of managerial institutional development described by Armani (2003) about resource capture based on partnerships and contracts with the public power, companies and associations; economic granting, donations, personal management; management digitalization, elaboration of accountability reports; internal development of activities that complete public-interest programs; social qualification of public managers; engagement to public discussions and councils; empirical substantiation for the definition of evaluation criteria and for the measurement of quantitative and qualitative impacts of the generated social innovations; systematization and outspread of technical and scientific knowledge based on publications; activity linked to social innovation replication personalized through systematized learning, face-to-face or distance follow-up; and regional training and discussions about the generated social innovations.

It is important highlighting that properties presenting low incidence dimensions have pointed out the emergence, although low, of professionalization and managerial, and socio-political integration of businesses in order to allow feeding the managerial and collective institutional vectors proposed by Armani (2003). It is also important emphasizing that, despite the low incidence of these properties in the 24 investigated businesses, they present great development potential; therefore, they are defined as low incidence properties, although emergent (Figure 8).

### 4.3 Selective coding

We conducted a selective coding (higher data abstraction degree to integrate the categories) based on the categories and on their systematic relationships presented in the previous section. It was done in order to articulate a descriptive model of sustainable performance for the development of social innovations in social businesses (Figure 9), which is supported by six propositions (P) and will be reported below.

(P<sub>1</sub>) The main category of the present study is based on the **sustainable performance either in processes and in social innovation itself as the way to potentiate social innovation generation** in social businesses. We assume that this is an integration and sustainability phenomenon, in other words, a phenomenon of innovative and managerial development through sustainability and unicity. The product of innovation cannot be analyzed in separate; it must be understood based on how it was processed and managed.

(P<sub>2</sub>) **Prevalence of a cooperative context to solve social issues**, with emphasis on the permanent bond and on intense cooperation among actors, in order to achieve long-lasting and impacting changes based on the diversification of resource sources, which include either usual (governmental granting, donations, partnerships and contracts with companies, public power, associations and social organizations) or emergent (own income source, resource capture projects and partnership with teaching institutions) practices.

(P<sub>3</sub>) **Professionalized governance as conditional cause of social-innovation generation** in social businesses, including either the usual practices (hiring experts, team qualification, formal structuring of human resources departments, adoption of digital management tools and the systematized elaboration of accountability reports) or as emergent (financial self-sustainability, creation of successor mechanisms and of decision-making decentralization, implementation of advisory, direction and fiscal councils, and the elaboration of social balance) factors. Thus, assumingly, business professionalization is a causal condition of sustainability in social institutions, including monitoring system, resource capture, administrative and financial management, and technical qualification of human resources.

(P<sub>4</sub>) **The development of public-interest actions as influencing cause of social innovation generation** in social businesses, including either usual (internal development of activities that complete public-interest programs; social qualification performance of public managers; engagement to local, regional and Federal public discussions; performance in advisory councils and associations that



aim at public interests) or the emergent (performance in the elaboration and in the implementation of laws and environmental programs that have social impact and critical analysis of public performance in order to identify idleness and inoperative investment cores) practices. Thus, assumingly, a systemic socio-political integration based on business legitimacy, transference and autonomy, as well as on its partnership network and ability to provide high social-impact products and services.

(P<sub>5</sub>) **Technical and scientific evaluation of social impact as the strategy to measure the outcomes of generated innovations**, including either usual (empirical fundamentals of assessment criteria and the subsequent measurement of quantitative and qualitative impacts of social innovations) or emergent (scientific fundamentals of assessment criteria for social innovations and the development of digital development tools and of the integration of quantitative and qualitative impacts of social innovations) practices. Thus, assumingly, social innovation outcomes are essentially intangible and associated with the concept of “service”; which makes it essential establishing criteria, either quantitative or qualitative, in measurement processes applied to the generated social impacts.

(P<sub>6</sub>) **Social impact expansion as the consequence of self-scaling performance of social businesses** (managerial growth, autonomy and oneness), which exceeds the municipal, state and federal sphere based on usual (systematization and outspread of scientific and technical knowledge through publications; regional training and discussions about the generated social innovations; replication of personalized social innovations due to systematized learning and face-to-face and distance follow-up) and also emergent (social innovation outspread, moderate partnership with public power; research and development of new social technologies in order to improve operational flexibility, impact and efficiency; adoption of safety and quality established by inspection and accreditation bureaus; and replication of social innovations standardized through an autonomous and open way) practices. Therefore, assumingly, social businesses must intentionally provide scaling solution for social issues.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Added outcomes made it possible proposing a descriptive model of sustainable performance to develop social innovations in social businesses based on the following propositions: sustainable performance either in processes or in social innovation itself; prevalence of cooperative context to solve social issues; professional governance as causal condition to social innovation generation; development of public-interest actions as influencing condition for the generation of social innovations; evaluation of technical and scientific social impacts as strategy to measure the outcomes of generated innovations; and the expansion of social impact as the consequence of the self-scaling performance of social businesses.

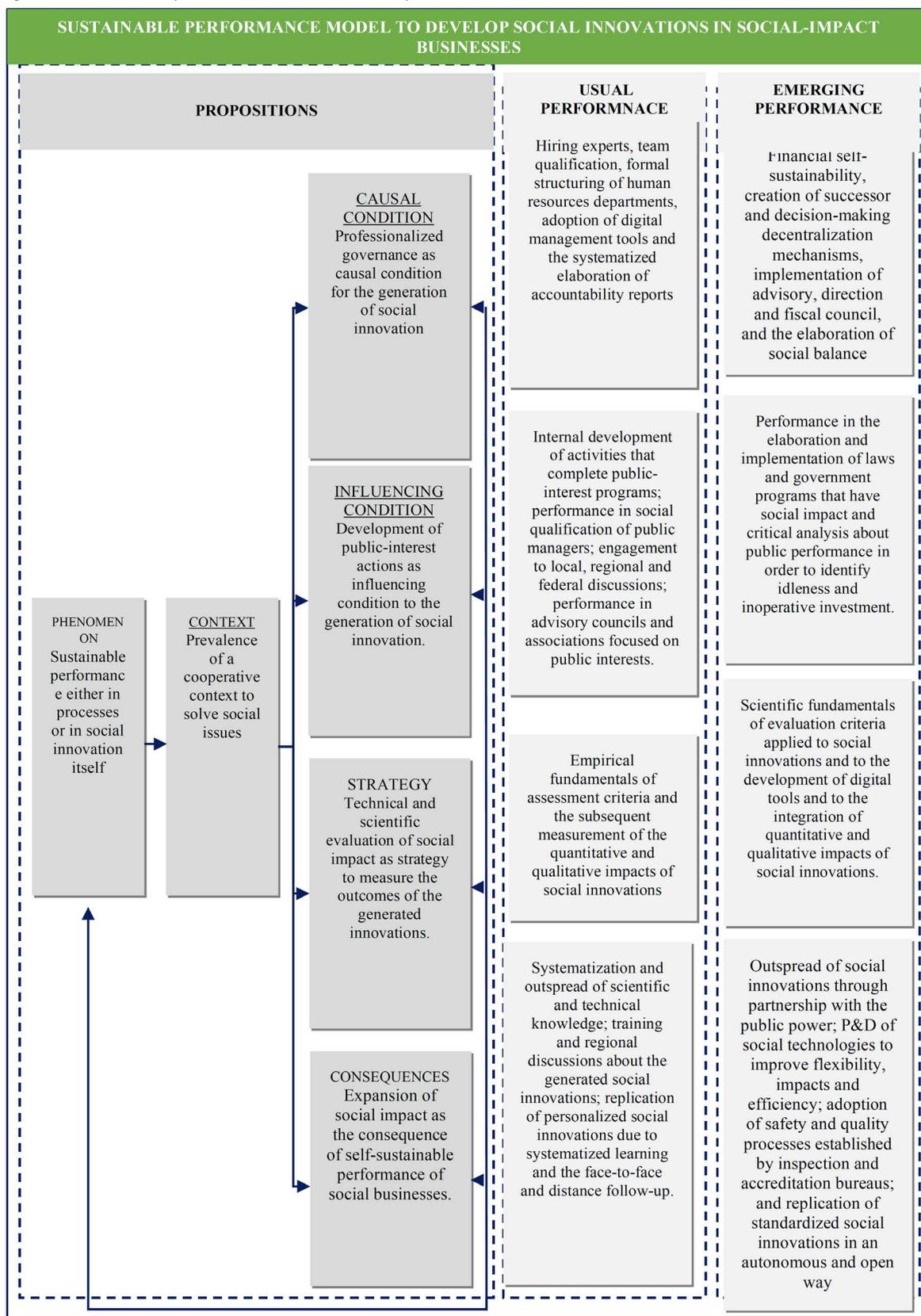
We mainly observed that the performance of the investigated social businesses can be described based on institutional focus, mainly the managerial one, by considering social innovation generation as analysis context and the following categories as descriptive: ways of reach, resource source diversification, governance, public-interest actions, evaluation of social impact and of its expansion. However, we have observed that the incidence of systemic performance, and of managerial and socio-political integration, remains low in regard to social innovation generation in these businesses.

Finally, it is essential highlighting the need of future scientific research and also future institutional and governmental reasoning about the emerging professionalization of social businesses and the consequent need of implementing more integrated, sustainable and scaling practices.

We can highlight the need of carefully looking to the herein addressed situation, so it was not possible making generalizations about results explicitly related to the 24 investigated social businesses.



Figure 9 – Sustainable performance model to develop social innovations



Source: Research data (2020).



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1. Definition of research problem	√		
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√		
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)	√		
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review	√		
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√		
6. Data collection	√		
7. Statistical analysis	√		
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√		
9. Critical revision of the manuscript	√	√	√
10. Manuscript writing	√	√	√
11. Other (please specify)	√		

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