

Research Article
Management

Towards a Social-Resource-Based View (SRBV)

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to insert the social dimension into the Resourced-Based View (RBV) in order to construct a Social-Resouce-Based View (SRBV.) The method used follows a qualitative exploratory emphasis, which unit of analysis refers to the management action for the development of social innovations in Brazilians Living Labs. Data collection is based on semi-structured interviews with officers in Living Labs. The relationship between Living Labs with social innovation is studied building on RBV extension named Natural-Resouce-Based View (NRBV.) According to the reference cited in this article, there are many articles that explore the notion of social resources and their management. In this way, they overcome three theoretical limitations; first limitation is the resource management to become a source of sustainable competitive advantage, in this case it is derived from relationships and joint integration of complementary resources. The second limitation is the connection formed between the social innovation with RBV. The last limitation is the notion of resource orchestration. The RBV reassembles facing the inclusion of the social dimension by proposing a conceptual framework of a SRBV which is composed of three interconnected strategies: social and ethical performance, social innovation and sustainable development.

It also suggests the creation of knowledge of RBV that extends beyond the manipulated motives related to the social innovation.

Keywords: Resourced-based view, living labs, social innovation.

1. Introduction

Society is longing for solutions to the complex and growing social challenges that afflict it; of particular note: unemployment, extreme poverty, social exclusion, child and youth maltreatment, isolation of the elderly, vulnerability of territories, institutional voids, sphere, national security, climate change, and sea cluster or the management of cities.

As a response to these challenges, often is considered insoluble because of the failure of conventional responses and the paradigms that permeate institutional settings, social innovation has gained prominence among both theoretical and practical (Nicholls; Murdock, 2012).

Social innovation, for the purposes of this study, deals with any innovation that "implies a new idea that has the potential to improve both quality and quantity of life" (Pol; Ville, 2009). In this study, the term is associated with the creation of social value and the induction of positive social changes (Choi and Majumdar, 2015) with an emphasis on the usefulness of networks in the development of social innovations (Sonne, 2015).

Examples of networks with this purpose include the built around Living Labs (Dekkers, 2011). The relationship between Living Labs and social innovation is not unprecedented (Edwards-Schachter et al, 2012; Battisti, 2014).

Living Labs in this context raises a number of theoretical challenges. One of these challenges, of a general nature, tends to value research situations that are associated with the theoretical base recognized as a resource-based view (RBV) as a basis for the competitive advantage of a firm lies primarily in the application of a bundle of valuable tangible or intangible resources at the firm's disposal (Wernerfelt, 1984, p172; Rumelt, 1984, p557-558). The RBV is pointed out as suitable for the discussion about Living Labs; since supplementary resources are necessary in networks to leverage a competitive advantage (Dekkers, 2011). In this context, collaboration needs to be managed, as some supplementary resources could only be accessed through the adoption of collective strategies (Dekkers, 2011).

The purpose of this work is to insert the social dimension into the resourced-based view (RBV) in order to construct a Social-Resouce-Based View (SRBV). In this case, social resources refer to the resources that belong to an organization's internal environment that requires access supplementary resources for the development of social innovations.

The main argument that supports this proposition is that overcoming social challenges faced by individuals and communities, not only environmental issues, can be a source of competitive advantage through the identification and/or creation of market opportunities resulting from changes in social values or to meet various social needs.

This reflection inspires the dialogue and transcends interdisciplinary frontiers within human and social science; the moment it defies non-examined practices within the theory, that sustains the resourced-based view, brings to light a neglected characteristic; until then it refers to the social dimension.

To contextualize the proposal of a social-resourced-based view, it has been chosen as an object of empirical study of the Brazilians living labs. Promoted mainly among European countries, living labs are one of the movements of Open Innovation (Chesbrough et al., 2014). The living labs are platforms for the promotion of open innovation and user-centered, which occurs through the constitution of a heterogeneous network of agents that form public-private-personal-partnerships (4Ps).

In Brazil the living labs began in 2009 and several groups have already turned in proposals to the European Network of Living Labs ENoLL (a community of living labs created in 2006 whose objective is to promote the globalization and the open international cooperation aiming to boost the innovation in a systematic way) by supporting research, development and co-creative innovation that are centered around the human being and user-oriented. Accordingly, the first section presents the theoretical background of the resourced-based view and its possible connections to a social dimension. In the sequence, it presents the methods of analysis. Following it, there is a discussion concerning the empirical evidences found and the main findings and contributions.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Resourced-Based View

The adoption of RBV as the theoretical basis of this study is guided, even in its assessment conducted by Barney et al. (2011), by works such as McWilliams and Siegel (2010). It addresses firms that derive competitive advantage by creating private and social value through corporate social responsibility strategies which can leverage the creation of knowledge. This study deals with the management innovation networks in Brazilian Living Labs in the development of social innovations that follow this path. In addition, it is emphasized that the adoption of RBV is relevant to this study in the face of the distinction made by Dekkers (2011) that considers a possible perspective on innovation networks in Living Labs. The RBV as a field of study, has distinguished itself and some relevance in the field of strategy, when it constituted the most important contribution to the discipline of strategy, especially around the 90's (Ramos-Rodriguez et al., 2004).

It is unclear if this is not the case with Barney et al. (2011): interlinkages with other perspectives, processes of resource acquisition and development, the micro-foundations of resourced-based view, the relation between resourced-based view and sustainability, and method and measurement issues. However, the RBV is a theoretical lens that has developed itself from economic prospects which reveal the possibility of distinguishing the company as determined by its resources whether physical, human, financial or organizational and capabilities. Thus, discussing social innovation from the perspective of RBV requires to overcome three theoretical limitations. The non-profit organizations, such as the Living Labs, do not compete in the traditional sense, do not have access to obtain funds in order to ensure their self-support. Thus, the applicability of this theoretical basis of the study in the development of social innovations proves to be relevant; considering one of the RBV expansions which deals with the idea of non-profit organizations working in networks in their quest for access and fundraising (Arya; Lin, 2007). However, as the study is based on social innovations, the prospect of social innovation is reestablished as the result previously discussed (Ferrarini; Hulgard, 2010) which fulfills the effective implementation of a particular social purpose and the extent of social impact generated (West; Posner, 2013). Thus, the competitive advantage referred to in this work is about the access and fundraising for self-sustainability and the effective implementation of a particular social purpose in addition to the extent of the social impact generated (West, Posner, 2013). The social purpose and its amplitude can be represented by the concept of social innovation proposed by Marée and Mertens (2012) compared to the concept of social innovation and social value proposed by Phillips Jr. et al. (2008). The latter regards the social innovation with RBV; this bond was created with one of the strategies of the Natural-Resource-Based-View (NRBV) (Hart, 1995). The sustainable development has often been considered an implicit goal of any innovative social action (Mehmood, Constanza, 2013). Social innovation is considered as a strategic

capacity in accordance with the structure of NRBV is presented by Hart and Dowell (2010) that includes sustainable development (1996), the development of a new approach to the development of new technologies and the development of new technologies.

Thus, the competitive advantage, referred to in this work, is about the access and fundraising for self-sustainability and the effective implementation of a particular social purpose and the extent of the social impact generated (West, Posner, 2013). The social purpose and its amplitude can be represented by the concept of social innovation proposed by Marée and Mertens (2012) compared to the concept of social innovation and social value proposed by Phills Jr. et al. (2008). The latter, in particular, recognizes the importance of management of resources and defines it as a resource orchestration, a combination of two perspectives identified in the literature on the use of resources, to obtain a competitive advantage: resource management proposed by Sirmon et al. (2007) Sirmon et al. (2011) and the asset orchestration proposed by Helfat et al. (2007). Social innovation deals with the generation and diffusion of ideas around a specific problem which involves various stakeholders and actors at different stages of development of creating systemic change (Murray et al., 2010). In fact, participation is a characteristic of social innovations as it is understood that social needs are better perceived by those who are directly affected by the problems being addressed, and that to come out with effective results, by those who are involved in the design, implementation or adoption of innovations.

1.1. The relation between resourced-based view and sustainability

The RBV has been revitalized through different perspectives, including sustainability. The relation between resourced-based view and sustainability is presented by Hart (1995) through the Natural-Resource-Based-View (NRBV) discussing the relationship between the companies and the natural environment.

Compound of three interconnected strategies: pollution prevention, product stewardship and sustainable development, the natural-resourced-based view brought to light some ideas related to the proposed strategy connections with the acquisition of a sustainable competitive advantage, by opening up a new area of research in the field of strategy.

Fifteen years later, Hart and Dowell (2010) summarized the progress obtained by reviewing areas, such as the ones of clean technology and businesses at the bottom of the pyramid. In fact, sustainable development can be promoted by incorporating the first three proposed strategies. Accordingly, it resulted in forming four other strategies: pollution prevention, product stewardship, clean technology and base of the pyramid.

Analyzing resourced-based view, McWilliams and Siegel (2010) analyze firms that get competitive advantage by creating private and social value through corporate social responsibility strategies.

Both articles by Hart (1995), Hart and Dowell (2010), McWilliams and Siegel (2010) and according to Barney et al. (2011) it can leverage the creation of knowledge about resource-based view that extends beyond pure profit motives.

1.2. Social Innovation

Social innovation has become a prominent issue in studies in the field of organizations and has been established as an open scientific field to the incorporation of innovative research proposals and possibilities of articulation with other scientific paradigms. Research on social innovation has gained momentum in the last decade; according to the perception of Nicholls and Murdock (2012), it is a response to growing social, environmental and demographic challenges, often considered insoluble due to the failure of conventional solutions and

paradigms that underlie the institutional settings in all three conventional sectors of society (public, private and civil society).

To Oosterlynck (2013), the rich variety of perspectives on social innovation and the ability to establish multiple connections with other areas provides a broad and consistent set of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of knowledge which, when properly used, is constituted, as also approached by Moulaert et al. (2013) on a driver in scientific research whose epistemology and methodological approaches are in continuous development.

When it involves the social theme, it is significantly fueled by studies on social innovation. In this case, studies related to new ideas (products, services or models) that at the same time, more effectively than traditional alternatives, recognize social needs and create new relationships or forms of collaboration, being beneficial to society and increasing its ability to act (Mulgan, 2012). The field of research on social innovation presents several theoretical challenges; from the frontiers of social innovation have not yet been completely defined, leaving considerable space for theoretical and practical contributions (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). Its design has been adopted in some areas of social and health science; mainly with the intention to refer to social changes aimed at meeting new social needs or hitherto unmet by current providers, such as the public or the private sector.

A variety of concepts and interpretations of social innovation have been brought up considering several dimensions to this research, as suggested by Choi and Majumdar (2015). Accordingly, social innovations comprise three dimensions: the dimension of (1) formalization, (2) change processes, and (3) social outcomes.

In this sense social innovation has been interpreted in relation to its objectives, means and its manifestation that occurs in a context of innovation distributed. This concept encompasses a variety of contrasting perspectives on the model of vertically integrated innovation to be distributed across multiple stakeholders in a value network, contemplating the open, user-centric innovation and distributed processes, such as the cumulative innovation, communities or social production and co-creation (Lakhani; Panetta, 2007; Bogers; West, 2012).

An example of networks with these characteristics is some Living Labs which are characterized by openness and user involvement (Dekkers, 2011; Leminen; Westerlund, 2012; Leminen, 2013; Nystrom et al., 2014) that emerge in Brazil as a way to promote social innovation (Silva, 2012).

2. Methodology

Considering the inductive and exploratory nature is the focus of this study; it has been decided that performing a study case approach for this would be more appropriate for two reasons: first, the study cases offer flexibility when it comes to the use of multiple methods to collect data in order to enrich the research results (Yin, 2001). Second, the study cases make it possible for researchers to obtain a holistic view of the phenomenon in the study (Walsham, 1995).

The research took place in two different stages; first stage was with the purpose of better spotting the problem. It was intended to understand, by using the secondary data, the main characteristics of the living labs. At this stage, there were gathered data and information, from ENoLL on their electronic address <http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/>, about the living labs available in different medias. During the second stage, the data wer collected through either the telephone or through the skype, the conversation average time was about an hour each. The conversations were based on semi-structured script which questions were grouped according to a Social-Resouce-Based View (SRBV).

The interviewees were persons who are responsible for seven living labs out of a total of thirteen labs that make up the ENoLL in Brazil. Their order according to their availability and responses to their previous contacts made via e-mail, skype or phone, is as following: Espírito Santo Digital Citizenship (Vitoria, Espirito Santo) Living Lab INdT (Manaus, Amazonas), Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Innovation of Amazonas - SECTI / AM (Manaus, Amazonas), Habitat Living Lab (Vitória, Espirito Santo), InventaBrasil Rural LL (Cachoeiro of Itapemirim, Espírito Santo), Corais (Curitiba, Paraná) and Paulo Feitoza Foundation - FPF (Manaus, Amazonas).

Recorded interviews were transcribed and the raised evidence associated with the analyzes of secondary data was qualitatively interpreted according to the references adopted in this article.

The selection took into account the following criteria: First, the focus on the development of social innovations. Second, the regularity of its activities in its trajectory. Third, have been an active member of ENoLL.

It was sought to focus on the topics of the case study in a guided conversation based on the themes to be explored, but it was also considered to give opportunities for the interviewee to present what s/he considers to be the most relevant aspects of a given situation. In this direction, the interviewees had the possibility to express themselves freely on the proposed topics, ensuring that the interview happened spontaneously. Such a condition made it possible to avoid a possible reflexivity; in other words, to avoid that the interviewee gave the interviewer what s/he wanted to hear.

3. Main Findings

3.1. Brazilian Living Labs

There is no way to state precisely when the movement of Living Labs began in Brazil because many of today's Living Labs that joined the ENoLL have acted within their purposes prior to approach.

The Brazilians Living Labs were part of the third and fourth wave ENoLL, with proposals Living Lab approved in the third wave in September 2008 were: Amazon Living Lab - Foundation Paulo Feitoza - FPF (Manaus, Amazonas), Espirito Santo Digital Citizenship / Core Citizenship - Digital - NCD (Vitoria, Espirito Santo) INdT - Well Being and Wealth Care LL / Mobile Work Spaces (Manaus, Amazonas) Inova Unicamp Innovation Agency Living Lab (Campinas, São Paulo). The fourth Wave occurred in July 2010 proposals were approved for: the Living Lab Amazonas (Manaus, Amazonas), BBILL (Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais) EDP / Living Lab Brazil (São Paulo, São Paulo) Inter-Action Group Living Lab (Manaus, Amazonas) Habitat Living Lab (Vitória, Espirito Santo) Living Lab Rio (Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro). In the sixth Wave, proposals were approved for: the Reef Platform (Curitiba, Paraná), the Rural InventaBrasil LL (Itapemirim, Espírito Santo) and the Future of Caring Project (São Luís, Maranhão).

Some of these Living Labs are still working, while others were projects that ceased operations when the project funding ended (as many of those labs were established in Europe in recent years) or discontinued its activities due to changes in the governance of

organizations that held them, the circumvention of people who led or simply by changing focus on acting.

During the study, it was noticed that in Brazil there is a potential for promoting innovation, whether technological or social supported the precepts of the Living Labs. The finding provided is supported by the analysis conducted in Horizon 2020, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (European Commission, 2011), particularly when discusses the connection between Living Labs and social innovation and when connecting with various social problems that are waiting for solutions.

3.2.Living Labbing

In Living Labs, there is a definition and execution of routines aimed at the identification, assimilation and exploitation of shared ideas; as well as, the promotion of forums and channels of formal and informal communication within and outside the network, in order to improve the socialization of ideas. Living Labs play a crucial role in the quest to ensure that the value created in social innovation is distributed equally among the agents and, specifically, the user community. They seek to build a sound trust based on clear and transparent communication to engage the best efforts and to end the employ of various principles of procedural fairness with respect to fairness and consistency in the decision-making process. There is also an intention make the ownership of the resources joint. Ownership of resources allows the engagement of all of the aspects and the creation of a common context for solving problems. All of that is based on the understanding that the network structure is the most promising organizational way to deal with the great contemporary challenge of finding sustainable ways of functioning for society in terms of its environmental, cultural, social and economic aspects. The strengthening of the reputation of Living labs is desired in its context of action, by providing the effect of reliability signalling, making it significant to attract new partners and obtaining new resources. Frequent interactions and high behavioral transparency encourage reciprocal behavior in Living Labs. Additionally, they have sought to build more robust relationships by promoting multiplexing, broadening the scope of existing relationships (in which agents are encouraged to interact with a broader and deeper way with one another,) and reinforcing the network's purposes and the social purpose of social innovation. In general terms, it is possible to observe that the Brazilian Living Labs surveyed are demonstrated to play a central role in the innovation network aimed at the development of social innovations, acting as orchestrators. They ensure the creation and extraction of value from the network which allows the fulfilment of its purpose, the expansion of the social impacts generated from the innovations and the acquisition of resources for its perpetuation. Thus, they exert a discreet influence on the innovative network, mediating the interaction and mutual collaboration between the different players that are part of the innovative network.

3.3. Towards a Social-Resource-Based View (SRBV)

The theory which sustains that the resource-based view reassembled facing the inclusion of the social dimension by proposing a conceptual framework which followed the same direction as Hart (1995) in his natural-resource-based view. He is suggesting three interconnected strategies: ethical and social performance, social innovation, and sustainable development.

The social and ethical performance may stimulate or repress the development of an active social policy that is reflected on the real and perceived performance of an organization, assuring it its social legitimacy.

The social innovation provides answers to the escalating social challenges that are mostly considered insolvable due to the failure of the conventional solutions and the paradigms that permeate society. It was suggested that the development of social innovation makes possible the construction of social value. As a consequence, the social and ethical performance would make possible identification and/or creation of market opportunities that are risen from the transformation of the social values to meet various social needs (Phills Jr. et al., 2008; Mulgan, 2010; Maree; Mertens, 2012)

In addition, we adopt the sustainable development, as defined by the sustainability tripod concept – Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 2004), such as: the connective, social, economical and environmental variables, which formed the basic tripod upon which the idea of sustainable development supports itself.

The sustainable development involves a long term shared vision that translates it into a conscious social strategy and allows the organization to perpetuate in a long run (Hart, 1995; Hart; Dowell, 2010).

The competitive advantage of this model, as well as proposed by Hart (1995) is associated with a perspective that is limited to an internal approach, due to its inadequacy because of external elements of social legitimacy and reputation as being extremely important. In this context, recognition allows the creation of a competitive advantage within a broader scope of social legitimacy.

Thus, in the same direction of Hart (1995), it is argued that the external guidance of foreign direction is guided by the social legitimacy and it does not compromise competitive advantage. Additionally, it should be strengthened that through the company's differentiation through positive effects on its reputation.

At this point, an important aspect should be noticed and referred to in connection to the pillars of sustainable development. According to the Sustainability Tripod, Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 2004) is represented by the traditional RBV. The latter, RBV, combines superior economic performance and obtaining advantage competitive (economic dimension), according to NRBV and Hart (1995), Hart and Dowell (2010) (environmental dimension) and SRBV proposal (social dimension).

In this perspective the intersection between dimensions would compose a so-called sustainable development dimension is represented equally in the NRBV and the RBVS. Also, the intersection between social and economic dimensions is reflected in a so-called corporate social innovation, or as defined by Pol and Ville (2009) it can be referred to as bifocal social innovation. Additionally, there is an intersection between the economic and environmental dimensions in the so-called environmental or green strategy. Finally, there is the intersection between the environmental and social dimensions in the so-called socio-environmental innovation, that can also be represented by the pure social innovations and was also defined by Pol and Ville (2009).

Following the Hart proposition (1995), it is assumed that there are three strategies, associated with the social resources on the basis of interconnected social vision, which under the RBV means state that: first, the acquisition of an asset depends on the development of a previous feature. In other words, featuring a form of imbrication is a difficulty in developing a new feature without the other being previously presented (Hart, 1995; Diericx; Cool, 1989). Second, a certain capacity depends on the simultaneous presence of other acquired resources in a particular sequence of accumulation over a single path (Hart, 1995; Barney, 1991).

Having an empirical study object in the Brazilians living labs, the mechanisms and the models which define them were investigated as well as their adherence to a social-resource-based view.

Since the Brazilians living labs are not specialized in a single form of social innovation, they feed their directing social strength by working with any theme that makes it possible to solve the social problems or to propose challenges of common interest. They cover different areas, such as: housing, digital inclusion, care for the population of seniors, urban mobility, employment, education, ecology, etc.

Moreover, Brazilians living labs allow any individual to participate in the process of innovation in a form of cooperation which includes the interaction between academy, government, business and society. Doing so, they enable the different social actors to gain power; in other words, to get their individual emancipation and also the necessary collective consciousness to overcome social dependency and political dominations.

The necessary actions to make the living labs capable of developing social innovations can be summarized in a key resource which is called orchestration. It describes the activities of an agent (orchestrator) in a central position within the network. The agent also exercises a role of leadership for the integration of resources and capabilities dispersed among members of the network constituted around a particular or purposed project which can be owned by the lab.

The continuous improvement of the ethical and social performances of the living labs is sought to ensure a strong reputation in its operating context. This is essential to provide the signalling effect reliability becoming significant to attract new partners, to get new resources and to legitimize their role in the context. Legitimacy is also sought through the insertion in

the ENoLL and establishment of cooperation agreements at both the national and international levels including public recognition.

Social innovation refers to the “business” of living labs that has sought to build stronger relationships, expanding the scope of the existing relationship, where social actors are encouraged to interact more broadly and deeply with each other, by accessing and combining new knowledge, whether they are tacit and explicit.

In addition, the sustainable development has been many times considered as an implicit objective of any innovating social action. This is seen in the Brazilians living labs, specifically in relation to long time horizons, where frequent interactions and high transparency that mobilize actors around a social strategy aimed at strengthening the own laboratory goals.

4. Contributions

This article contributes to the existing theory in two ways: first, it promotes preliminary reflections on emerging Brazilians living labs and its emphasis focused on the development of social innovations. Second, it proposes a social-resource-based view covering the gap in the resource-based view, to present a conceptual framework composed of three interconnected strategies (social and ethical performance, social innovation and sustainable development) and their connections with the idea of gaining competitive advantage.

The living labs and its emerging in Brazil are discussed as a phenomenon that is reassembled from a European model “from the North” with open innovation and user-centered to its application “in the South”.

New studies will add more understanding of other aspects of the Brazilians living labs, such as its institutionalization, its prospects, existing business models, the methodologies adopted for the development of innovations and the differences and similarities of Brazilians living labs if compared to other labs in different countries, including the results.

The different mechanisms of Brazilian living labs enable different combinations of concepts from the field of innovation, such as those related to networks, open innovation, user-centered, etc. Accordingly, a number of research opportunities is generated to analyze a unit of social-resourced-based-view.

The article also emphasized that the role of a living lab as an agent still articulates shared resources and capabilities is another issue of exciting research.

Regarding the social-resource-based view, each of the strategies that makes up the conceptual framework delineates a specific field of study that opens new horizons for understanding how the social dimension contribute to a strategic competitive advantage.

Finally, there is a possibility of further studies to examine the relationship among the three strategies and the effective compliance of a social purpose and the extent of the social impact generated by an organization.

The design of future research which are necessary to test the ideas presented in the article are welcomed, especially in different contexts, such as organizations whose main objective is economic in their nature.

Briefly, this paper opens up a new area of investigation and suggests the creation of knowledge about resource-based view that extends beyond pure profit motives towards the social innovation.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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