GRIS Articulator: A Social Business Archetype for Management in Responsibility and Social Intelligence from the Perspective of Social, Environmental, and Corporate Governance

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ABSTRACT

This paper is the culmination of research undertaken during my postdoctoral research, aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of pragmatism and the common good, particularly in the context of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria within businesses, governmental bodies, and territories. The paper introduces the foundational principles of this study, along with a detailed examination of the GRIS framework. This framework, rooted in ESG principles, hinges on the dual concepts of responsibility and social intelligence, providing a platform for the collaborative development of strategies to address pressing and evolving challenges in climate, environment, and social sectors through private social investments. The paper delves into various archetypes of articulators, with a special focus on the GRIS Articulator and its unique servitization model. The research concludes with key observations and analyses drawn from extensive engagement in the ESG sector.

Keywords: ESG; GRIS framework; social responsibility; social intelligence; private social investment; articulator; servitization

INTRODUÇÃO

> "Ninguém pode entrar duas vezes no mesmo rio, pois quando nele se entra novamente, não se encontra as mesmas águas, e o próprio ser já se modificou. Assim, tudo é regido pela dialética, a tensão e o revezamento dos opostos. Portanto, o real é sempre fruto da mudança, ou seja, do combate entre os contrários." (Heráclito *apud* Burnet, 2007, p. 154)[1].

Since pre-Socratic times, the concept of dynamism and change has been acknowledged, though not consistently scrutinized. Heraclitus's philosophical notion of "becoming" encapsulates this idea, emphasizing the continuous flow of change and transformation (Salvadori, 2019). This concept asserts that if all is in motion and nothing remains static, then everything is perpetually changing. We exist in a state of becoming, evolving constantly, as everything is in the process of transforming into something else. It's a relentless and ongoing journey of change and metamorphosis

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[1] Translation: "No one can step into the same river twice, for when they enter it again, they do not find the same waters, and they themselves have changed. Thus, everything is governed by dialectics, the tension and alternation of opposites. Therefore, reality is always the result of change, that is, the struggle between opposites." (Heráclito *apud* Burnet, 2007, p. 154, editorial translation).

In the corporate world, becoming takes various forms, with its demands integrated into processes and models designed to adapt and redefine the role of businesses in creating greater value. Reflecting the positive shifts in the modern world, societal aspirations increasingly find a voice within the corporate sector. Movements like conscious capitalism and social business are gaining unprecedented momentum in recent times, marking a significant evolution since the Industrial Revolution (Breen, 2010; Council..., c2023; Hollender; Polman; Winston, 2021; Porter; Kramer, 2011).

Companies are now expected to demonstrate more responsibility, with a more attentive and conscious approach to social, environmental, cultural, ethical, labor, educational, artistic, and scientific issues of public interest. Companies are also expected to demonstrate more intelligence, considering the consequences of the impacts generated by their businesses.

Socially responsible and intelligent companies require a management model that allows them to fully exercise their role in the current world while continuing to focus on their core business. The recognition of the need for the development of contemporary organizational strategies is a competitive differentiator for companies seeking recognition of their excellence and value among their stakeholders.

Within this evolving environment, new organizational forms and structures based on practices and strategies focused on the principles of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and supported by social responsibility and intelligence, can be a pathway to help reduce inequality in Brazil.

Whit that in mind, the main goals of this study are:

- introduce the GRIS framework, developed under the ESG perspective and based on the binomial of responsibility and social intelligence, to collaborate with companies, public authorities, and territories in the co-creation of strategies and actions to address urgent climate, environmental, and social emergencies using private social investment;

- outline possible archetypes of articulators and analyze how the GRIS Articulator, based on the XaaS (Everything as a Service) methodology, can contribute to improving the management of responsibility and social intelligence in companies;

- foster reflections on how pragmatism and the common good are of crucial relevance, both in methodological approaches and operational actions, to accelerate changes and transformations.

- This paper, resulting from studies and research undertaken during a postdoctoral fellowship, is organized as follows: Initially, it explores the fundamental and structural principles of the study. It then presents an overview of the framework developed through the lenses of business and ESG.

This is followed by a discussion of various facilitator archetypes, specifically focusing on the GRIS Facilitator, including a graphical and visual representation of its activation and operational methods. Finally, the paper concludes with insights drawn from a year-long deep dive into the ESG realm.

STRUCTURING PRINCIPLES

For those who aspire to change the world, having the courage to start with oneself is an important step. Peter Senge (1990), renowned as a leading expert in organizational learning and recognized for developing the concept of "Learning Organizations," often says that organizations learn because people learn. Paraphrasing Senge, one could say that organizations are sustainable because people are sustainable (Senge, 1990). In other words, this happens because individuals understand and believe that sustainable development must be environmentally sound, socially fair, and economically viable. Developing the awareness of so-called 'leadership' – and of their 'followers' – is one of the foundational principles for effective collaboration among businesses, government, and civil society for the common good. In this context, the IDG Initiative (*Inner Development Goals*[2]) has been doing an excellent job of connecting people who want to be agents of change for a more sustainable world. The initiative works on skills and qualities to facilitate and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are part of the United Nations' 2030 agenda.

Building on this recognition of the necessity for the engagement of conscious and committed individuals in sustainable development, this study is centered around the following key concepts:

i. ESG (Environmental Social Governance): a set of standards and best practices aimed at determining whether a company's operation is socially conscious, sustainable, and correctly managed with the purpose of enabling a systemic and responsible vision towards the environment and society, through increasingly integrated governance that ultimately ensures the longevity of businesses in a fairer environment (ESG, 2022; Esteves, 2021).

ii. Social Responsibility: a series of policies and practices related to an organization's relationships with its key social actors, encompassing values, compliance with legal requirements, and respect for people, communities, and the environment (The World Bank, 2016).

iii. Social Intelligence: the ability to understand and appropriately react to one's social environment and develop healthy, productive relationships based on social perception (including empathy, compatibility, emotional and social cognition) and social faculties (including synchronicity, self-presentation, influence, and attention to others) (Goleman, 2006).

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[2] Site: https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/.

Therefore, the GRIS Framework was developed using the ESG lens and anchored in Social Responsibility (to assist organizations/individuals to act systematically, so that their legacy is sustainable, inclusive, and conscious, impacting the territory and generating common good) and the concept of Social Intelligence (to qualify the social and environmental performance of organizations/individuals, through activities that are aligned with the business/purpose and that contribute to sustainable development, generating shared value for society).

GRIS FRAMEWORK

According to the Grupo de Institutos Fundações e Empresas (GIFE in the Portuguese acronym)[3], private social investment (ISP, in the Portuguese acronym) is the voluntary transfer of private resources in a planned, monitored, and systematic way to social, environmental, cultural, scientific, [educational, artistic, and other] public interest projects (GIFE, 2021). Among the fundamental elements that differentiate this practice from charitable actions, GIFE highlights:

- concern with the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of projects;

- a strategy aimed at sustainable results with social impact and transformation; and

- community involvement in the development of the action (GIFE, 2021).

The hypothesis, therefore, posits that there seems to be a significant availability of financial resources from private companies. These resources could be more effectively utilized to not only help these companies become more socially responsible and intelligent, but also to invigorate civil society. This can be achieved through initiatives focused on the common good and the country's development.
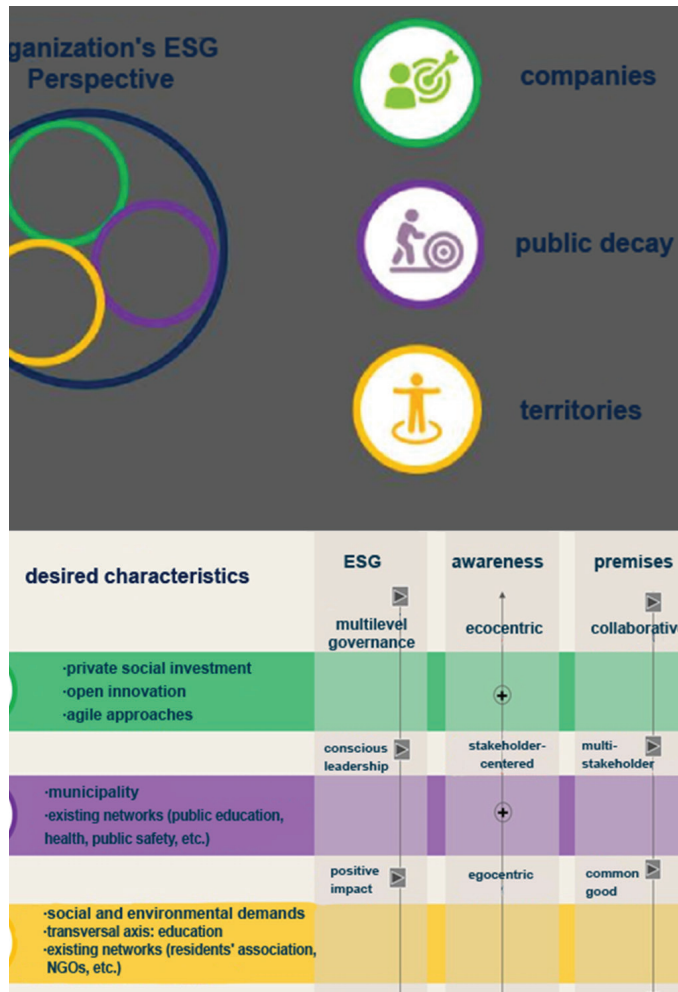
Figure 1 – GRIS Framework
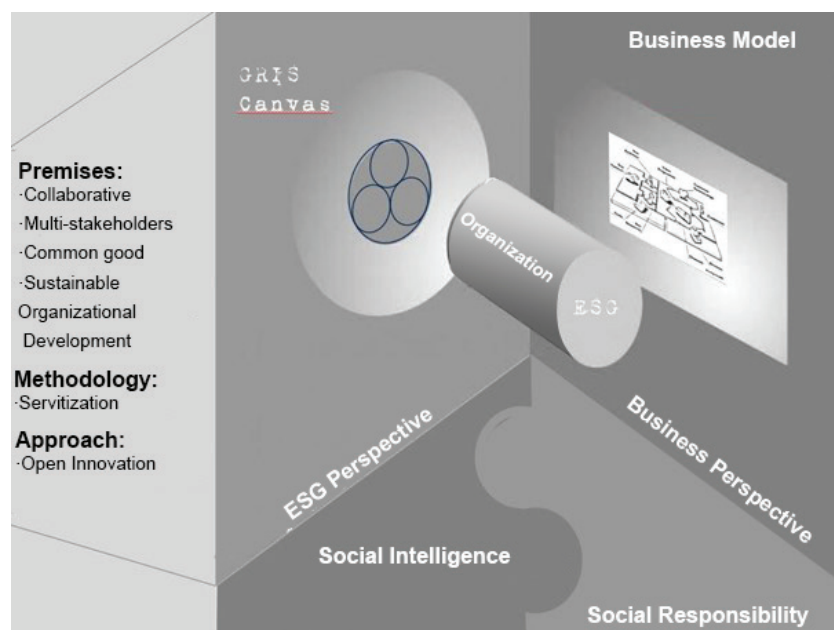
Source: created by the author (2022).

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[3] Website: https://gife.org.br/.

Figure 2 – Map (upper part) and matrix (lower part) of the generative circles

Source: created by the author (2022).

The special article published by Rede GIFE in 2021, titled 'Os diálogos e as possibilidades entre o investimento social e a agenda ESG[4], highlights several key contributions. One notable point addresses a major driving force behind the current research: the role that organizations (lacking their own Institutes or Foundations) and civil society can start to play in interacting with businesses. To address such corcearns, the GRIS Framework (Figure 1) was developed. It is designed as a tool aligned with ESG principles and practices, founded on responsibility and social intelligence. This framework aims to facilitate collaboration between companies (without their own Institutes or Foundations), government authorities, and regions. Its goal is to co-create strategies and initiatives that tackle climate, environmental, and social challenges through private social investment (GIFE, 2021). The framework operates on principles that emphasize a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach and a continuous commitment to sustainable organizational development, all directed towards actions benefiting the common good (GIFE, 2021).

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4 Available at: https://gife.org.br/os-dialogos-e-as-possibilidades-entre-o-investimento-social-e-a-agenda-esg/.

The operationalization is based on open innovation and agile approaches; the implementation methodology is servitization (presented in the next section). The GRIS Canvas, that is, the organization's ESG perspective, is graphically represented by 'generative circles', whose map and matrix are shown in Figure 2.

ARCHETYPES OF ARTICULATORS

An archetype, a concept introduced by Carl Jung (2002), a Swiss psychiatrist and the founder of analytical psychology, represents typical patterns of behavior associated with a character or social role. According to Jung, these behaviors exist in the collective unconscious and are therefore universally perceived in a similar manner (Jung, 2002).

To visually depict the 'Articulators' – the agents that facilitate interaction among companies, government authorities, and regions – the concept of a fractal was selected. Fractals are intricate geometric shapes characterized by repeated patterns at various scales (Mandelbrot, 1975). The 'Apollonian gasket' or 'Apollonian network' was chosen to represent the Articulators. This fractal is formed from a set of three circles (the generative circles), each touching the other two. It progressively incorporates additional circles, with each new circle touching three others, illustrating the interconnected nature of the Articulators.

Figure 3 graphically shows some possibilities of articulators from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Sectors (government, private companies, and non-profit associations, respectively) and places the GRIS Articulator in Sector 2.5 where the so-called social businesses are located (Giraldi, 2020; Gonçalves, 2021; Oliveira, 2016; Santana; Souza, 2015).

Figure 3 – Possible archetypes of articulators
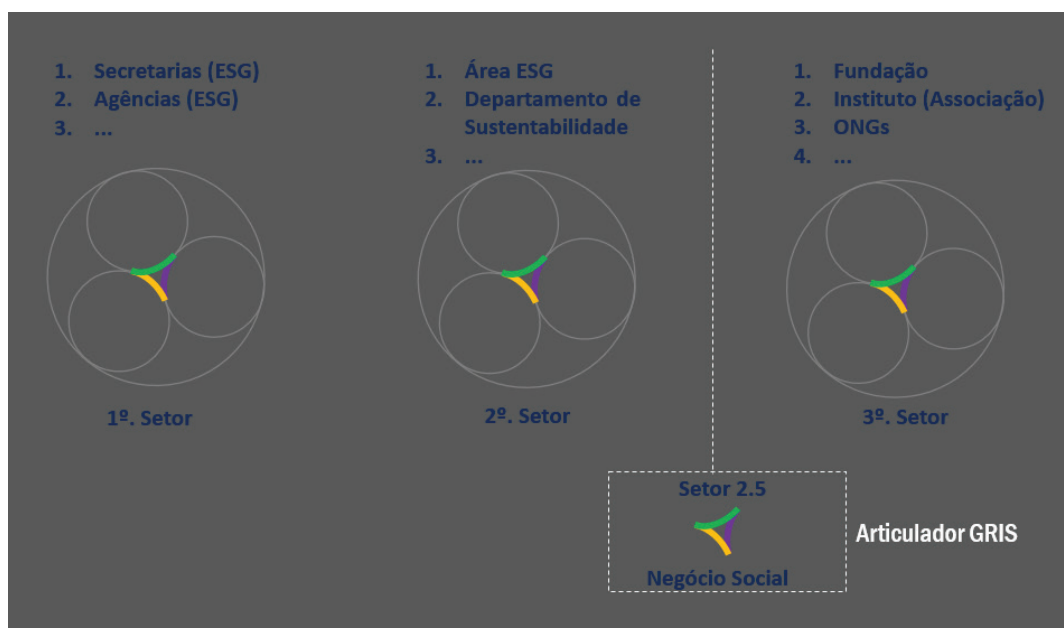
Source: created by the author (2022).

The GRIS Articulator, grounded in responsibility and social intelligence, plays a pivotal role in weaving together multisectoral collaborations to tackle social and environmental issues on a broader scale, including integrated actions, co-investments, and systemic approaches. Its management model is based on the Middle-up-down approach (Carvalho, 2012) and conscious leadership. In terms of its business model, it adopts servitization (GRIS as a service). Additionally, its guiding principles are aligned with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Guiding Principles of the GRIS Articulator

Source: created by the author (2022).

The GRIS Articulator can be activated by different drivers (Figure 5): company, public power, or territory. Its direction of activation can also vary (graphically represented in Figure 5 by the clockwise and counterclockwise directions). The service platform offered by the GRIS Articulator includes:

- Identification of the opportunity

- Contact with the agents of the generative circles

- Multisectoral articulations

- Establishment of partnerships

- Definition of systemic and integrated actions (diagnosis, 'in loco' management, environmental/social impact analysis, business-society alignment, communication, curation, partnerships, backoffice, etc.)

- Negotiation for co-investments

- Various possibilities for activating the Generative Circles

- Construction of ESG narratives that generate positive impact

The GRIS Framework's key strength lies in its ability to co-structure and shape the ESG narrative to align with the business and purpose of the generative circles. It aids in strategic, tactical, and operational management, particularly focusing on the analysis of social and environmental impacts. This approach ensures that each narrative crafted is not only unique but also empowers the development of social and environmental technologies.

Figure 5 – GRIS Articulator – Activation of the Generative Circles
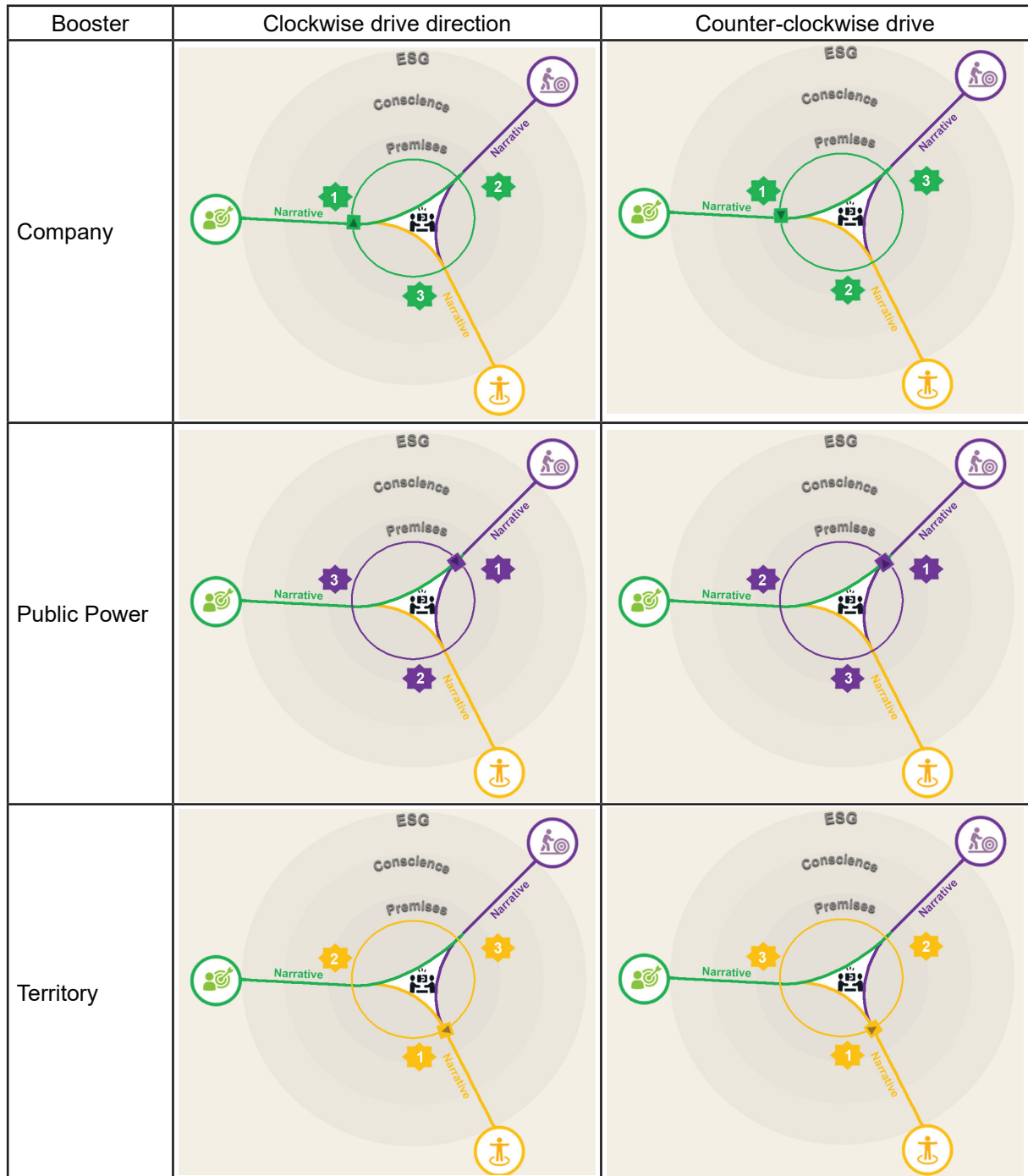
Source: created by the author (2022).

CONCLUSION

This study is dedicated to advancing a collaborative society anchored in ESG principles. To this end, it is essential to heed the global call for urgent actions. With time being of the essence, proactive and responsive approaches to socio-environmental and governance challenges are vital. Decision-making should be influenced not only by economic factors but also by social and environmental considerations. Empathy for the countless individuals facing hardships is essential; without it, societal divisions and disparities will only deepen. Therefore, a committed focus on the common good and pragmatic efforts towards creating a society centered on people – where both individuals and companies practice social responsibility and intelligence – is of paramount importance.

The sustainable future requires conscious and committed individuals who see in the GRIS Framework a means to create value for companies through taking a stance, and adopting actions, and practices that benefit society, enabling private social investment to be mobilized more quickly and effectively for the public good.

Developing a framework that blends the ESG perspective with corporate and socio-environmental objectives entails a comprehensive process of studying, researching, learning, and implementing key concepts. This ranges from managing backoffice services (essential for ensuring independence from the supporting company's infrastructure such as legal, accounting, communication, etc.) to analyzing the social impact generated by the mobilization and application of private social investment. Focusing efforts in this area shows great promise, as the practical implementation of this framework could lead to a significant transformation in current business practices.

Therefore, the GRIS Framework not only presents great potential to propel scientific research but also holds paramount importance in *avant-garde* business management, increasingly grounded in robust governance principles.

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