

A systems based interpretative framework for approaching exaptation and bricolage in decision making and value co-creation

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Purpose – The increasing variety and variability of social and economic dynamics is pushing both researchers and practitioners in developing approaches, models, and tools for supporting decision makers in observing, interpreting, understanding and managing emergent dynamics. For contributing to the ongoing debate, the paper aims at discussing possible paths for facing the challenges of the increasing complexity through flexible decisional and behavioral approaches.

Methodology/approach – The paper adopts a qualitative approach for systematizing and refreshing the interpretative role of existing literature within managerial and organizational fields. Through the interpretative contributions provided by the systems thinking, a multi-disciplinary literature review is conducted for identifying possible constructs through which addressing the development of flexible managerial and organizational models.

Findings – Managerial and organizational fields are enriched through the concepts of exaptation and bricolage as explicative domains able to provide useful indications to decision makers interested in building more flexible decisional and behavioral approaches. A possible path for managing the increasing social and economic complexity is depicting in the light of systems perspective, and a system based interpretative framework is defined for explaining actors' reciprocal adaptation as a way for supporting value co-creation.

Research implications – The paper provides possible pillars on which acting to build managerial and organizational approaches able to enhance actors' contributions through the definition of shared processes. The concepts of exaptation and bricolage enrich previous managerial and organizational literature promoting research on value co-creation as a driver for ensuring systems' viability in dynamic ecosystems.

Practical implications – The paper calls the attention of decision makers on the need for the systems' flexibility through the enhancement of actors' contributions for facing the challenges of increasing social and economic complexity. Acting on exaptation and bricolage, a possible model is provided for clarifying managerial and organizational paths for increasing the systems' flexibility and for supporting practitioners in defining approaches able to support actors' collaboration as a required condition for value co-creation.

Originality/value – Adopting a multi-disciplinary perspective the paper enriches previous managerial and organizational literature through the definition of concepts, processes, and approaches able to support both researchers and practitioners for better understanding and managing increasing social and economic complexity by acting on exaptation and bricolage. Thanks to the interpretative lens provided by the systems studies, a conceptual model for addressing systems' decisions and behaviors in the light of value co-creation is proposed.

Keywords – Exaptation; Bricolage; Value co-creation; Systems studies; Complexity; Flexibility; Ecosystems

Paper type – Conceptual

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