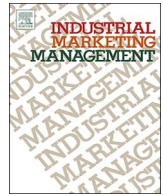




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Industrial Marketing Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/indmarman

Mobilizing a network to develop a field: Enriching the business actor's mobilization analysis toolkit

Wouter Van Bockhaven^{*,1}, Paul Matthysens

Antwerp Management School, Sint-Jacobsmarkt 9, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium
 Universiteit Antwerpen, Prinsstraat 13, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium

A B S T R A C T

This paper tells the story of a thought experiment on deliberate network mobilization to advance radical innovation adoption in health care. The health care industry is said to experience a personalized medicine (PM) revolution, driven by simultaneous thrusts toward cost-effectiveness and new patient-value-centered advances in targeted treatment, digitization and preventive medicine enabling the personalization of care. Even though this revolution is almost unequivocally welcomed, adoption rates seem to disappoint. This paper seeks to explain the behavioral challenges faced by a business actor if it would take up the role of network mobilizer looking to develop the health care field – i.e. to impact the fundamental formal and informal institutions that structure behavior – to accommodate this radical innovation. We enrich the strategic nets perspective on mobilization with stakeholder and social movement concepts into a framework to analytically tackle the behavioral challenges of mobilization. In a thought experiment with leading Belgian health care experts, we identify six voids remaining in this framework. Through a further abductive reflection on the information needs underlying these voids, we propose three new tools for mobilization analysis thereby contributing to a theory of network and field development from a business actor perspective.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we explore how business actors can tackle the behavioral challenges faced when they introduce radical innovations that go against the institutionalized rules, interests and logics of their field. Often, such innovations get stuck on the unwillingness of actors, other than customers or users, to adopt or accommodate the innovation (Adner & Kapoor, 2010). Resistance arises because the innovation infringes on actors' behavioral drivers such as shared meanings, identities, interests and influence structures, and thus unsettles the consensus within an existing field. Because of this dynamic, scholars investigating the genesis of (radical) innovations by intentionally governed networks of business actors – the strategic nets view – have turned to studying the development of business fields (Moller & Svahn, 2006). Unlike markets, such fields acknowledge the role of not just the players directly involved in value creation and exchange from the innovation – the value-creating system (VCS), – but also that of the outsiders influencing it, even before a market is formed (Möller & Svahn, 2009). To get the innovation adopted therefore involves a need to “move” the surrounding field – the aggregation of all the relevant actors

connected to the value creation process, the cultural, normative and regulative principles governing their behavior and the network inter-relating them (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Kenis & Knoke, 2002) – toward a new consensus (Vargo, Wieland & Akaka, 2015). To move a field implies a challenge to *mobilize actors* and to *guide their sensemaking* (Möller & Svahn, 2009; DiMaggio, 1988). All relevant interdependent actors need to be convinced of the innovation's value, and their diverse interests aligned (Mouzas & Naude, 2007; Öberg & Shih, 2014).

In mature fields, these behavioral processes arguably constitute the main challenge for the adoption of radical innovation – warranting a strategic analysis of their own. Innovation originates outside the conformist center of such fields, and thus imports divergent logics that conflict with deeply institutionalized habits, norms and regulations (Rao, Morrill, & Zald, 2000; Van Bockhaven, Matthysens, & Vandembemt, 2013). This is especially true of health care, where innovation success is constrained by the diverse interests of numerous players, highly professional factions with limited accountability for health care outcomes and extensive government-led regulatory and funding influence (Herzlinger, 2006). Still, the strategic nets framework focuses mainly on the information and capability needs to develop the VCS, such as the capabilities

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: Wouter.vanbockhaven@ams.ac.be (W. Van Bockhaven), Paul.matthysens@ams.ac.be (P. Matthysens).

¹ First author.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.08.001>

Received 14 April 2016; Received in revised form 31 July 2017; Accepted 4 August 2017
 0019-8501/ © 2017 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

which need to be mobilized and the coordination mechanisms and structures sustaining mobilization (Partanen & Möller, 2012). It recognizes the need for agenda-setting, bargaining and contracting to enable mobilization (Möller, 2010; Mouzas & Naude, 2007). Yet, it has not yet examined in sufficient analytical detail the dialectical (reciprocally contested) processes of actor mobilization and how they might be steered by the mobilizer. In this paper, we explore to what extent this leaves the business actor unprepared for the behavioral challenges of mobilization and propose analytical tools to fill the gap.

Previous investigations into the dialectics of actor mobilization have borrowed from more socially-focused lenses such as institutional (Brito, 2001; Ritvala & Salmi, 2010), social networks (Araujo & Brito, 1998), stakeholder and social movement theory (Ritvala & Salmi, 2011). Since the latter two are especially cited for the analysis of the micro-foundations of collective agency (Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003), we use them here to enrich the strategic nets analytical frameworks for mobilization. However, even the addition of the analytical tools from these two theories, each tackling distinct behavioral problems inherent to actor mobilization, might leave certain things unexplained – certain voids. Business actors are expected to encounter additional problems when they mobilize to develop a field (Hart, 2004). Hence, this study explores the question:

What voids in analytical frameworks will a business actor face while trying to make sense of the behavioral challenges involved in network mobilization to develop a field?

The paper makes three novel contributions to the strategic nets literature: (1) it paints a comprehensive picture of the specific analytical challenges for a business actor mobilizing a network, (2) it extends the reach of network mobilization models in the strategic nets view to field-level agency and (3) it elaborates the broader, non-cognitive, behavioral aspects of the actor dynamics in mobilization to the same level of detail as strategic nets theory already does for the cognitive and capability aspects. These contributions extend the applicability of deliberate network-oriented agency toward thoroughly institutionalized and complex interdependent fields, of which health care is a prototypical example.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. We begin by breaking down the business actor's network mobilization problem into three challenges. Per challenge, we introduce the most fitting theoretical perspective to analyze it: stakeholder theory to identify the players; social movement theory to align and mobilize collective action and strategic nets with a focus on business actors as mobilizers. Equipped with the initial analytical framework combining the tasks and analysis resources from these theories, we then dive into the introduction of personalized medicine (PM) into the field of health care. Previous case studies show that radical innovation in health care is so complex that it takes deliberate networks to be tackled (Knight & Pye, 2004; Provan, Nakama, Veazie, Teufel-Shone, & Huddleston, 2003). PM offers quite the revelatory case to explore such actor dynamics as it fundamentally unsettles how care is delivered, how budgets are spent and how various actors' roles are construed.

Using a thought experiment – an abstract hypothetical scenario that allows for theorizing based on disciplined imaginative reasoning (Folger & Turillo, 1999) – we prospectively explore how stakeholders might react to a business actors' attempts to influence the development of the field, to assess any remaining voids in the framework. Given that personalized medicine has not been fully implemented yet, a thought experiment fits the need for prospective theorizing and for probing mental models before the actual occurrence can be observed (Weick, 1989). Since the insights generated this way remain 'thin' and prospective abstractions, they were systematically combined (Dubois & Gadde, 2002) by iteratively triangulating interview responses with other responses and with theory.

2. Literature review

2.1. Analytical challenges in mobilization to develop a field

Fields emerge through a two-pronged process by which radical innovations are championed first by small collectives of individuals, and thereafter by the organized collective actors they form, often in competition with other networks (Kaplan, 2008). In that first stage, mobilization is the transcendental process by which the actions of separate individuals coalesce into field-oriented collective action. It involves the attraction of contributors and resources, and moving them toward a shared issue as a somewhat organized collective (Brito, 2001). Hence, one first mobilizes a network which, if successful, serves as the initial nucleus and blueprint for the development of new field structures, norms, mental models and regulations (Lawrence, Hardy, & Phillips, 2002; Mouzas & Naude, 2007).

This study focuses on the early stages of mobilization, where the mobilizer has gained some insight into the new field's institutional and value-creating system (Araujo & Brito, 1998; Möller & Svahn, 2009) and develops a strategic mobilization approach. In this stage, the mobilizer needs to make sense of the new VCS, and of the behavioral dynamics within the field, before she can engage in sensegiving to others (Möller, 2010). Knowledge, in this early stage, is tacit and dispersed, so that actors' positions (who they know) and values (what they strive for) become more important than competencies (knowing what/how) or activities (what they do) in the current VCS (Möller & Svahn, 2006; Ritvala & Salmi, 2010). As such, the issues driving mobilization spill over between existing fields and pose a severe challenge to sensemaking about the behaviors of others due to the differences in interests, logics, vocabularies, and positions (Rao et al., 2000). We argue that the sources of this challenge are threefold: two inherent to the mobilization of others for field development, the third tied to the business actor as mobilizer. Each source is analytically captured by a different theoretical framework.

The first two sources relate to mobilization to develop a field as a simultaneously strategic and contested process (Kaplan, 2008). This means that one can either study the dynamics of conflict and convergence in the power play between actors (dialectics), or the motives, tactics and resources of the actor(s) attempting to enact field-level change (teleology) (van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The former requires the mobilizer to deal with conflicts between different actors' interests that lead them to exercise the power available to them – a challenge addressed in *stakeholder theory*. The latter points to the need for collective action by a critical mass of actors, who act in line with a shared interest to achieve change on a field-level – a challenge addressed in *social movement theory*. The third challenge arises when a business actor mobilizes a network to form a new field structure. The *strategic nets* perspective tackles this challenge with process frameworks and critical capabilities for network mobilization (Möller & Svahn, 2009; Partanen & Möller, 2012), yet it mainly focuses on influencing actors within the VCS and not specifically on mobilizing across sectors.

Below, we open each perspective and examine the analytical foci, resources and tactics it offers in relation to the business actor's mobilization challenges of the identification, attraction, enlistment, alignment, and the eliciting of the activism of a critical mass of actors (Hermes & Mainela, 2014; Mouzas & Naude, 2007; Veal & Mouzas, 2010). Hence, a mobilization analysis framework should provide guidance on the *identification* of which actors to mobilize, approaches for how they can be *attracted and enlisted*, as well as which *capabilities or assets* they bring to the table.

2.2. The gold standard for actor identification: stakeholder analysis tools

Stakeholder theory is a quite influential framework to explain actor dynamics, drawing attention to the diverse and self-interested groups of actors that affect or are affected by a firm's strategy (Freeman, 1984). It

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات