

RICH BUSINESS FRAMING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is first, to clarify rich business framing (RBF) based on experience and reflections on Soft System Methodology (SSM) inspired workshop practices particularly focused on rich picturing (RP), as well as literature. Secondly to abductively propose a model RBF as a process approach to creative business inquiry. Research is exploratory, where the experiential basis of RBF need further work both conceptually as well as practice development and validation.

INTRODUCTION

A practical problem which is a background to our research is servitization in industrial, product centric companies and the central importance for business model innovation in these processes. It implies the need for modified and new ways of understanding and doing business. A well-known example is Rolls Royce shift in business focus from selling aircraft engines to selling running time of engines, “power by the hour” having effects on many aspects of their business organization. Business model innovation is not only an analytical exercise, e.g. of designing a new business model canvas, but also relational and organizational transformation of mindsets and habits often having profound effects on business thinking and organization (Nygren & Lindhult, 2013). One important insight which was a background to the initial use of the concept of business model was the recognition that new technologies often need new business models to be successfully commercialized (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002). Many large companies have stumbled in the shift to new technologies, like Kodak in the shift to digital technology in the photographic industry. Today’s digital transformation in industry is a huge challenge in this respect. Our research leading to RBF was motivated by

the search for processes and tools for actors to work on this problematique, initially done in a research collaboration with two large industrial companies. RBF aims to support business inquiry in the early phases in looking for unrealized value potentials (incl. risks) in the business landscape to be developed into viable value propositions enabled through business modelling in processes of interaction and mutual learning of parties involved.

Firstly, in developing RBF we take a point of departure in Systems Thinking (Jackson, 2003), particularly SSM as a practical approach to systemic, action oriented and participatory inquiry and innovation. RBF is an approach and enabling process for innovating holistically and systemically among and between business actors. RBF is both building on SSM, and is adding aspects undeveloped or less specified areas of SSM. Secondly, RBF is building on perspectives and theory of business particularly developed by Normann & Ramirez (1993) and Normann (2001) and further developed in research on Service Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Lusch & Vargo, 2014). SDL is predominantly a perspective and paradigmatic framing of business, value and markets, where practical process approaches and models to be enacted in practices of creative business inquiry is less developed. RBF aims to fill this gap.

RBF also contributes to joint value discovery processes as basis for value proposition and business model innovation. This is an area where research is still undeveloped. There are design frameworks as tools for depicting business models, e.g. the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) but the preceding fuzzy front end innovation processes are much less researched. In these early phases of inquiry and interaction, systemic problem structuring methods (Mingers & Rosenhead, 2004) is useful as a basis for RBF. The aim is to specify a process model which can be enacted in workshops. We see inquiry and innovation as complex interaction processes. Models is not to be understood mechanistically as a set of rules for moving from problem to a solution. Models can at best provide guidelines, heuristics and cues for enabling creative and constructive interaction among participants in a

situation with a focus on purposefully dealing with it in a reasonable way.

The purpose of this article is first, to clarify rich business framing (RBF) based on experience and reflections on Soft System Methodology (SSM) inspired workshop practices particularly focused on rich picturing (RP), as well as literature. Secondly to abductively propose a model RBF as a process approach to creative business inquiry. Research is exploratory, where the experiential basis of RBF need further work both conceptually as well as practice development and validation.

THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

RBF builds on Systems Thinking and its practical use in Soft Systems Methodology, and Service Dominant Logic and Interactive Business logic as a metatheory or perspective on value and service. It is also integrating theory and insights on the process of framing and reframing in creative processes of innovation and design. The aim is to construct a process model guiding workshop design with companies and stakeholders for enabling creative business framing and reframing. The model has partly been preliminary tested generating learning which is one basis of this paper, partly is abductively generated as a working hypothesis for further research.

RBF as creative business inquiry is firstly based on an understanding and theory of business focused on value creation. Business is normally understood as activities of producing, buying and selling goods and services, often related to commercial activity with the goal of generating profit for a company. Business is in this common, firm centric view related to what a certain commercial company do in producing and selling goods and services. But theory of business is not the same as theory of firms or organizations. A business is more than a particular company in the sense of including also the benefits provided to customers and other parties in order for the focal company to be paid for their provisions as a basis for potential profits and other advantages. Furthermore, other parties also have to contribute and do something in order for the business to operate successfully in its value creation. This accords with a recent effort by Donaldson & Walsh (2015) of conceptualizing and theorizing business as; “a form of cooperation involving the Production, Exchange and Distribution of goods and services for the purpose of achieving Collective Value” (Donaldson & Walsh, 2015: 188). Thus in the focus on value creation, business has a broader connotation where also the value generated for different parties, the ecology of actors involved, and how these parties cooperatively contribute to the business is focused on. Without it no business would be viable other than what is fully in control of one actor.

Business as operated and enabled by a focal company is not only defined by what it actually do but best

characterized by its business idea or what Drucker calls its “theory of the business” (Drucker, 1994). A business idea, or the way a company “makes money”, are assumptions and practices on how to meet needs and create value for relevant parties in its business environment in an effective and efficient way so that these parties are able and willing to contribute in the collaboration and generate value streams also profiting the focal company. Normann (2001) emphasizes *consonance and fit* between the business ecosystem as environment to the company and its needs and valuation, how the company provide input to and serve the value creating system through its offerings and other interactive activities, and both internal and collaborative activities which co-produce value. The business idea is specified in business model(s), where the three dimensions is to be fitted together; value proposition and offerings to customers and other parties, the generation and co-creation of value, and the capturing of value streams for profiting the company itself e.g through price system. Business models need to be realized and operationalized in systems of value creating activity systems which can effectively and efficiently realize envisioned value enhancing potentials (Zott & Amit, 2010).

Interactive business logic (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; Normann, 2001) and Service Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008) is fundamentally perspectives on value creation and service which accords with moving from a company centric towards this broader view on business. Often value creation is assumed to be done in production processes embedding value in products and services to be exchanged in market transactions. This is a goods dominant and production focused value logic inherited from the industrial tradition, assuming that companies as producing valuable items and customers are consuming up embedded value. SDL is instead arguing that value is more fruitfully seen as emerging in contextual use processes, where customer are recognized as active in its valuation and value creation. It is the purposes and experiences of users that determines e.g. the value of a product like a dishwasher, and the value is emerging when the user is using it resulting in satisfactory clean dish. From this perspective value is co-created by beneficiaries and enablers, in the case of a dishwasher providers of dishwashers, detergents, repair, and all actors need to occupy both roles in order for co-creation as a system of business to be viable and produce mutual and high total value. RBF, building on an interactive and service dominant business logic focuses on value as mutually and jointly created in value co-creating systems which businesses are serving. Moving from a goods dominant to a service dominant value logic is a core aspect of servitization which implies a widening of the view on how value can be created, opening up for a range of opportunities for enhancing value through business development. The theory of the business of a particular company need to specify how the company is serving

and supporting a focal business as a value co-creating system or ecosystem.

It is evident that there are important systemic dimensions in this type of theory and understanding of business, implying that business development has a character of systemic innovation. Systemic Innovation involves processes that enables innovators and their stakeholders (defined through that same process) in using systems concepts and practices to change their thinking, relationships, interactions and actions to cocreate new, emergent value (Midgley & Lindhult, 2017). RBF is engaging Systems Thinking and methodologies as valuable for creative and holistically inquiry into business situations and innovation of actual as well as modified and new ways of understanding and doing business. There is a rich variety of systemic methodologies (Jackson, 2003). We will here focus on SSM as this is the type of methodology that has been used in practice by the authors. It is also one of the most used systemic methodology for more complex, or “soft”, problem situations, thus having a robustness and validity based on broad experience of systems practitioners and systematic evaluative research.

SSM includes holistically mapping of problematical situations through rich picturing, modelling of relevant purposeful activity systems (PAS), structured discussions to compare models with the initial mapping, and developing action planning to improve situation (Checkland, 1981; Checkland & Poulter, 2006). Construction of Purposeful Activity Systems is a forceful business modelling strategy (Hindle, 2011). Our empirical research has particularly focused on the RP process helping people problematize in group and frame a business situation. The RP process was developed to support the first phases of a situation where a group of people want to frame and understand a situation in the real world. It gives people a possibility to work together in small groups with the “picturing” tool to gather together around and use those notions to be seeds to talk about and discuss around and to be aides for the memory of what the discussion was about. The important part of RP is that during the process the different views of people is communicated and all the diversity of world views come into place. Especially these different worldviews that will eventually spark discussion and creativity is one important result of a RP session. When that session is undertaken there is an end result, “a rich picture”, representing not only the end result but more the process that took place to build up the picture. A lot of effort is built in, in this end result, but the main part of the result lies in the shared experience that the group of people that did the RP has from now and onwards.

An important dimension is the ability to creatively frame and reframe the situation or object of engagement of participants. According to Schön (1994) frames are ‘underlying structures of belief, perception and appreciation’. It contains, often implicitly, assumptions about what issues are relevant, important values and

goals, and criteria for success. Framing is an intricate combination of how people think about a certain situation or object as well as experience and information of the actual character of it. The quality of richness in framing problematical situation is important in different respects. Reality and situations are dynamic, can be interpreted and constructed in many ways, and different actors do it with their personal frames, concerns and interests. Richness provides diversity, allows different views and framings to be expressed, visualized and negotiated, supports process of social learning and knowledge creation, and widens the ideational resources for identifying actions to improve. Framing and reframing is enabled and enhanced in different ways (Checkland & Poulter, 2006; Patton & Dorst, 2011; Dorst, 2015; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Morgan, 1986):

- Real dialogues between stakeholders
- Invitation of participants with varied experience and views, ideally covering important stakeholder categories
- Openness in dialogue and expressions in picturing, including neutralization of power differences
- Support for all to contribute
- Support of diversity and exploring tensions, no norm of consensus
- Offering metaphors and framing that can inspire
- Visualization is preferable to prose

An important activity in RBF is discovery of value potentials. RBF is aiming at enabling and focusing framing and reframing so that value sources and potentials in the business landscape is focused on and can be identified and discovered as a basis for creation of value propositions, business models for focal actors, and enhancing collective value of the value co-creating system comprising the business in consideration. As knowledge and information on needs and valuation as well as opportunities and technologies to enable satisfaction of needs and enhancing value normally are distributed among many actors (Kirzner, 1997), value discovery need to be interactive or joint processes of learning over time. It can be in the form of requests from those with needs or value proposals from enabling actors, as well as exchange or collaboration processes where mutual learning as basis for innovation is furthered. Discovery does not only mean identifying something not recognized before “out there” in the business landscape. It also involves assumptions and hypotheses on what is there to recognize, using or creating thinking and sensing tools to recognize it, as well as appreciation of the value of the discovery motivating the search. Thus it also is preconditioned on framing and reframing of situation and objects. E.g. in the famous expedition of David Livingstone for discovering the sources of the Nile River, first-hand experience, cartography and use of local knowledge was important tools. He was proved wrong in his assumptions, but contributed significant geographic value through discovering numerous other landmarks,

like Victoria Falls. But his obsession for discovering the source of the Nile River was rather to realize a quite different value; to end the slave business in Eastern Africa as generating significant negative value. "The Nile sources are valuable only as a means of opening my mouth with power among men. It is this power which I hope to remedy an immense evil." (Jeal, 2013: 289).

Value discovery is not generally focused on in SSM, although SSM is focusing on creativity and improvements. RBF aims to add the joint value discovery aspect in the process, as well as co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and business ecosystem inquiry in line with a broader definition of business. Den Ouden's (2012) value flow model for business ecosystem design from initial value proposition, to engaging stakeholders and leadership of in value network development is here an interesting example of a process model. The way issues and stakeholders are included or excluded in the systemic thinking and processes affects how sources and potentials of both positive and negative value is taken into account in the inquiry. Boundary setting is conditioned by the purposes and values of participants or is assumed or chosen in the systemic inquiry process, calling for boundary awareness and critique (Midgley, 2000). RBF also want to focus on sources and potentials of often synergistic value in the situation or open, interactive business landscape, where boundary setting is one systemic variable to consider. SSM tends to have more of production view in PAS modelling and organizational rather than a business boundary setting, but we believe SSM is so flexible that it can be molded in an RBF way.

SSM and systemic methodologies in general tend to focus on enabling systems thinking and supporting systemic modelling of any group of people wanting to engage in creative and holistic inquiry through effective collaboration. SSM practitioners certainly recognize the importance of group constellation for achieving good quality of the systemic inquiry and change process. But engaging participants is not as far as we know integrated as a core dimension in SSM methodology description. Other types of methodologies, like search and dialogue conference methods, is focusing more on who are participating and to what extent they are representative of different interests, perspectives, expertise or roles in the situation, problematique or organized entity considered (e.g. a department, organization, business or region). The engagement of participants is also considered with a view to who have authority and capacity to initiate and enable organizational innovation processes based on the interactive learning and collaborative inquiry made. In incorporating "Action to improve" as an important activity in SSM, engagement is included but is less worked out compared to the more analytical modelling aspects which is a core strength of SSM. But who and how stakeholders are engaged are often equally

important for achieving a truly systemic character of inquiry, interaction and innovation as all views in a situation are partial and developed from a value perspective and position. Engaging stakeholders thus helps to attain a richer and more comprehensive view of the situation at hand. Furthermore, the systemic, and not partial, character of the social processes, is significantly influenced by the character of engagement of interested parties and expertise. If actors in authoritative and power position is not engaged, the inquiry risks becoming a utopian exercise. If actors affected negatively is not considered and engaged, the risk is marginalization of important value dimensions with further risk of resistance and detrimental effects when these value aspects are discovered. There may be important differences in interests and valuation of these different stakeholders, posing a challenge in engagement activity. From this point of view, Livingstone's expedition can be seen as efforts to increase his marginal status in the slave trade by attaining cultural, moral and political authority in the British society. The issue and activity of how to engage multiple stakeholders and affected has been more focused in complementary systemic methodologies, like Critical Systems Heuristics (Midgley, 2000) which is a source of inspiration for RBF. Common among problem structuring methodologies is to support creativity by bringing together varied experiences, knowledges and perspectives, and to enable collaborative action towards value enhanced future. All also emphasize dialogue, supporting all participants to have a voice, opportunities to develop relationship and shared understanding, as well as enabling accommodation and practical agreement on what is appropriate to do to improve situation (Minger & Rosenhead, 2004).

RESEARCH METHOD AND EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

The initiation of the work on RBF was a longitudinal (three year) research project involving two large industrial companies shifting towards servitization to improve their service offerings and service innovation conditions. The goal of the project was to increase the understanding on servitization and to identify ways of working with it. In total, data was collected through six project meetings and workshops, 23 interviews, and two RP sessions. Research in this paper is particularly based on data material from the RP sessions and 3 additional sessions based on the RP method (3h each) and 3 follow up interviews with 3 companies (in total 5 persons, 1h each) within 6 months of the RP sessions. The sessions were both internal within the large global industrial companies and external between different companies within the global industrial sector and the industrial IT consultant sector. The documentation where in all 5 sessions the final RP that were photographed and/or kept in physical form, see example in figure 2.

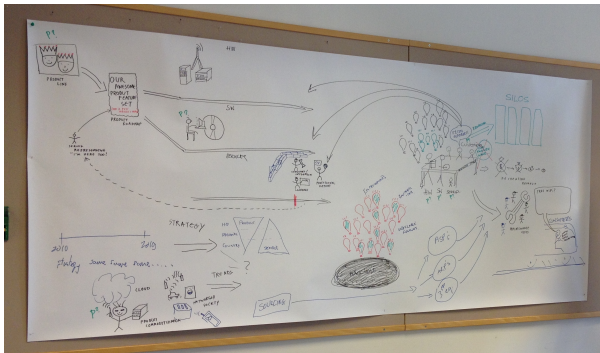


Figure 2: Example of the visual result of a Rich Picture session. However, the *process* using visual methods is of central importance in RP, not only the end results.

One of the internal sessions was video recorded, notes on the process of exchange between participants (e.g. the role of discussion, the exchange of information, mutual creativity) was conducted in 3 of the sessions. The last three of the session was complemented with introductory input on service logic and newer types of business models in servitized and digitalized industries as a source of inspiration and preframing. The data material is here used partly as a methodology test and development, partly as a source for abductive development, of RBF as a creative business inquiry methodology.

The research approach was interactive and interpretative, with a focus on mutual learning and co-production of knowledge pooling expertise from academia and industry (Gustavsen, 1992; Svensson et al., 2007). A constructive–pragmatic view on science (Bradbury, 2015) was a point of departure, where construction and reconstruction of practices and conceptual understanding interact with experiential learning and reflection. The first-hand experience of the authors as facilitators of the sessions is an important resource for reflection. The construction of RBF is abductive (Pierce, 1955) in taking a creative leap to a working hypothesis/framing and iterating between the hypothetical framing and the funding of experience and data in successive RP sessions. This process also was inspired by the hermeneutical circulation between the whole and its parts and between preunderstanding and new, emerging understanding (Gadamer, 1975; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009).

The RP sessions that have been observed can be divided into two different types of companies and three different settings based on the size and the role of the companies in the value network they exist within. First there are three large global industrial companies with 100 000+ employees with a history and base in Sweden. Second there are approx. 10 small and medium sized (SME) companies in the supplier sector mainly within software, electronic development and general industrial IT consultancy activities. See table 1 for an overview of Rich Picture sessions.

Size of company	Large 1	Large 2	Large 3	SME
Large 1	X1	X2		
Large 2				
Large 3				X3
SME				X4, X5

Table 1: Composition of Rich Picture sessions, large companies and SMEs. X represents one Rich Picture session of approx. 3 h.

The two sizes of companies, large and SMEs, have then occurred in three different settings of the RP sessions. First there is one RP session (X1) with one of the large companies with only internal employees. Second there is one RP session with the two large companies at the same time (X2). Third there is one session where one large company and a number of the SMEs participated in the same RP session, looking at the challenges of the network customer-suppliers (X3). Fourth and finally there is two RP sessions where only SME companies with generally the same challenges participated (X4, X5).

REFLECTION ON EXPERIENCE FROM THE SESSIONS

The workshop practices created a fund of experience as basis for the generation of reflection on the character and processes of rich business framing, from experience on how it worked in actual practices and reflection on potential practice improvement. An important dimension was clearly, in line with SSM theory, the relational and mutual learning in the workshops driven by the discussion energy and co-creation of the exchange and picture by the people involved.

The facilitation process was carried out by one or two persons (authors of this paper) and can be summarized with an introduction, start of the RP session, facilitation during RP session and finalizing incl. taken care of results from the RP session. The RP sessions have been carried out in three different locations where the space is typically a wall with a paper or a whiteboard of 5-7 m of width and 1,5 m of height. The mounting on a wall leads to the need of standing during the RP session. The necessity of standing to be able to draw has two functions. One is to be able to handle a large picture with a lot of details and connections and the other is that standing gives more flexibility to were to draw but also easier access to be able to start drawing and interacting with other participants.

The sessions start with an empty wall with a paper and after some introduction of a facilitator someone or many starts drawing and writing on the paper. The sessions enables an emerging way of working that is many times sought after in this kind of work. An observation is that is the function of a seed that eventually grows to a bigger and bigger picture when other people add on to

the drawing and the discussion continuous. This seed could be said to be defined by the introduction and framing of the challenge that the RP session will handle. The seed can be one or many depending on the start of the RP session. Sometimes the start occurs only at one place of the wall and the whole team continues to work around the emerging picture from that seed. Other times the start occurs simultaneously in more than one place and pictures emerges from different locations and might also grow together if connections occur. One observation is the connection between the initial framing of the topic, problem or challenge and the following seeds that start the RP drawing and writing. The framing together with the participant's agendas sets what the seeds will be about.

After the intro, the participants have gathered in front of the RP wall and the start can be divided into two different situations. One is when only one or two persons start talking and drawing on the RP wall while other are listening and waiting for them to finish. The other way is when many small subgroups are formed in front of the RP wall and discussion and drawing takes place simultaneously, e.g. in 3-5 places. The first situation, when only one or two persons start drawing while other observing, is generally occurring when no facilitating takes place. In all three settings, there were a possibility to sit down not far away from the RP wall but the ease of sitting down and ease of participating in the discussion differed. When the possibility as good of sitting down in an easy way and still be able to listen and seeing the RP, the activity level generally dropped. The activity was then carried out from single seeds and with one or a few persons at the same time. The situation when many small subgroups start simultaneously is occurring when facilitators have organised the start in that way, i.e. divided the participants in smaller groups and instructed them to start at different places of the RP wall.

Sometimes long discussions occur without any drawing or writing on the RP wall and the facilitator need to step in and encourage the persons to capture that discussion in a drawing and text, sometimes helping to put discussion into the emerging picture. Since the build-up of a RP is based on small incremental steps building up something greater it is important to continuously draw and write while discussing. One other important role of the facilitator is to encourage people who of some reason is a little bit passive to take a pen and draw. Adding onto something existing or starting new picture, a seed that can grow and form another perspective.

Rich picturing is not only depiction of existing situation, in existing situation also alternatives and potentials are in operation. Opportunities and good examples are part of the existing views and experience of people (e.g. Google platforms as source of inspiration also in manufacturing companies on a digitalization journey) or as ideas to explore. E.g. in the second AR workshop, this was structured through depiction of existing

problematic, of future situation and of processes for moving from existing state to future state.

The discussion was at several occasions taking up the issue of engagement of additional actors, particularly involvement of customers/beneficiaries. It was made visible at both X1 and X4, X5 session as a lack. In last session engaging actors with a customer role was explicitly planned for enriching the session significantly. Engagement and participation of suitable actors is a core challenge. This is often not recognized as a core methodological step and need further attention in further development of RBF.

There are examples of actors discovering new business ideas through the sessions developed further afterwards, e.g. by being able to have access to more information from potential customer context. A core challenge for providers/enablers of value creation is the access to information, interaction and real dialogue with customers and its context. Not only for accurate picturing of business landscape but even more for enabling framing and reframing in a way that value creation lacks and potentials can be made visible and reconstructed for both parties. A business landscape cannot be made fully visible without knowledge from both enabling and beneficiary parties. And in service logic, with a focus on co-creation, all parties have both of these roles. There are thus reason to incorporate additional support for discovering activity in a fuller RBF model. Complementary research on the interview material on servitization has pointed to four enabling value logics for enhancing value in innovation (Lindhult et al, 2018), which can be included as a resource in further RBF experimentation.

One person can significantly influence the development of a picture, by fixating some thought figure in adding elements to the emerging picture. Rich picturing is akin to brainstorming sessions with a visualization focus. It supports social learning but can also be group think. The process helps to accommodate views and depictions of others and add different contribution in progressive integration (Follett, 1930) and co-creation.

During the sessions, the start has always been an intro to the RP method and sometimes also a theoretical perspective on something to think about during the RP sessions. It has been short speeches (approx. 45 min) on working with business models or working with service logic. How is the preframing affecting the exercise? Framing in line with product and service logic is detectable in the process as well as the resulting pictures. It is difficult to distinguish the effects of, even more so to measure, the effects of idea inputs in efforts at preframing a RP session. It a matter of open, creative processes where different elements are creatively

combined in the process by initiative and interaction of several actors. Furthermore, in presenting possible new frames, it depends on to what extent and how participants understand them and rather immediately see how they can be applied in the context of the rich picturing session. Possible ways to embed new framing more in session practices might be considered, practice driven learning can be assumed to be helpful in reframing. There are reason to consider co-creation and the innovation and design of system of value co-creation as an additional activity in a fuller development of RBF.

RICH BUSINESS FRAMING – A PROCESS MODEL

Based on earlier experience, both own research as described earlier, the SSM tradition as well as theories and methodologies for framing and reframing particularly related to creative business inquiry and service logic, a process model for RBF can be constructed.

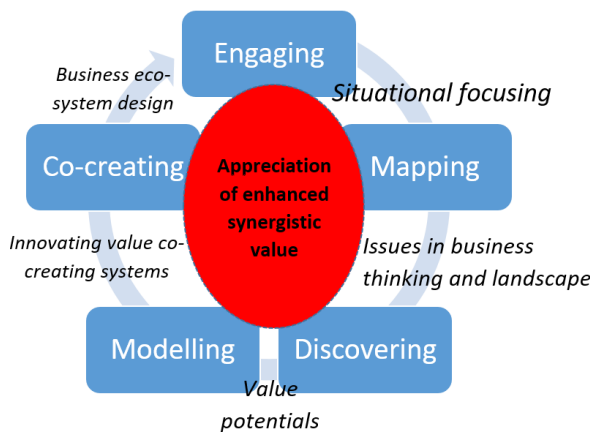


Figure 3. Rich Business Framing – a process model

Figure 3 is an effort at a comprehensive visualization of core activities in RBF. It can be seen as circles of learning that engaged people iteratively and continuously go through in the search, or hunt, for enhanced value for the business and for themselves. It is circles of systemic innovation in inquiring into business situations and landscapes searching for improvement in value co-creating systems actors are engaged in, as well as their varied thinking on these situation and the way it can open up spaces and vistas for enhanced value (co-) creation.

The process model may to some extent be seen as a flow from initial engagement back to broader engagement in leading ecosystem or value network design. It is also a movement in and out of different overlapping activities in the course of idiosyncratic and situated processes. RBF as creative, systemic inquiry is focused, systematic activity, but also enabled

serendipity, helping Lady Luck on the way to spinning business fortune.

A point of departure is the framing and reframing of the business landscape in which participating actors create value (or have ambition to create value if it is a new company or area of business), and where they are able to create value also for themselves. The exchange between parties are not only transactional but also co-creative. This landscape is seen as a network of actors forming value co-creating systems (Normann & Ramirez, 1993; Normann, 2001; Lusch & Vargo, 2014; den Ouden, 2012).

RBF is particularly focusing on the identification of value potentials and creation of value propositions from an understanding of the existing and future business situation and how these are developed into viable business models. There is a need for some understanding of value potential in initiating creative business inquiry, but we believe it also need to be pursued before value propositions has been identified, where the point of departure is the business landscape and situation actors find themselves in, including their actual and potential relations.

ENGAGING

The business inquiry group can be composed in different ways, having effect on how to focus the inquiry as well as its process and outcome quality and success. Many attempts at creative business inquiry supporting reframing fail or is significantly hampered by not being able to include those who can be, or need to be, carrier of the reframing or having crucial expertise. One crucial issue is who is inviting, context and purpose for meeting and how it is done. Boundary reflection on inclusion and inclusion of actors and issues might here be useful (Midgley, 2000). It is a matter of power, authority and decision making, but also of recognizing the value and significance of the session. Often both the pre-understanding and recognition of value is quite different for different actors. Creativity is conditioned on situation (Amabile, 1983) as well as persons and their individual characteristics and capacities. Building collaborative power, power-with (Follett, 2008), which can enable business development is important.

The point of departure for engaging participant can be existing business landscapes of a customer (beneficiary) or enabling actor (e.g. a company), or a potential modified or new landscape where opportunities and challenges for value creation is to be explored (e.g. a new digitalized business landscape). Often the process and significant results of RBF is conditioned on who are engaged and who are actually participating. This

methodology step is not fully considered in the SSM process, but is from our research experience important.

It is useful and recommended to have actors representing customers/beneficiaries as part of the group in order for this core source of knowledge to be included in the session. If this is not possible someone with a degree of understanding of customers and their context can role-play and personalize customers. Also a broader group of significant stakeholders in the business landscape can be included in the exercise. Creative business inquiry which can reframe and find new value creation potentials need to be collaborate based on real dialogue among stakeholders.

MAPPING

The focus in this activity is to depict the business landscape where the participants are engaged in or intend to create more value. This is a phase akin to rich picturing where free expression and visualization as well as richness of picturing in terms of points of view and experience of participants are aimed at. As business landscapes are fluid, dynamic, enacted and influenced by complexity which limits comprehension, it is important with open, creative mobilization and combination of knowledges, ideas and perspectives of different actors involved in it. As mutual and joint learning and relationship building is key for success it is also important to see the mapping as a way to explore, communicate and relate different ways of interpreting and thinking about the situation in the group. The process is equally important as the result, and each contribution is a seed for further development.

In the depiction it is recommended to use opening up and guiding questions in order to increase the richness, focus the exercise and uncover significant information content and perspectives in the picturing;

- What is (of) value and where does it emerge?
- Who and where are the beneficiaries and enablers of value creation?
- How is the landscape creating value for you?
- What are the key activities through which value is created?

The last question is helpful to get an overall depiction of the purposive activity system through which value creation is realized, which also are basis for business models in operation. Also unclarities, uncertainties, dissensus and conflicting issues and actors may be noted down in relation to the emerging visualization. If this is significant, e.g. if there are significant differences in experience and views of participants, this can be focused.

A check of initial completeness is recommended as an end point of this step. If there are uncertainties

concerning completeness, what to include as significant, and what to discard, this can be noted as information which later can be gone back to.

DISCOVERING

When the initial mapping has reached a stage of sufficient richness and maturity, or when the participants available (easily reachable) knowledges and ideas has been covered, the exercise turn to the next step, focused on unrealized value potentials.

A core question in this phase is:

- What value potentials can you recognize?

There are triggers and guiding questions for identifying value potentials for innovation if needed (Lindhult et al, 2018):

- Purposes and experiences – what is different actors trying to achieve? Stated or implicit purposes and ambitions points to value in the sense of sought for value and value creation activities which can be done more of, or new purposeful and thus value creating activities.
- Felt “pains” and “sufferings” of actors? Pains represent lack or need, as well as pointing to areas for innovation. E.g. what does customer complaints or requests indicate?
- “Opportunity pain”, where e.g. new technologies or resources can enhance value, that actor might not be aware of, or are recognizing as potentials
- Capacity lacks, incapacities, affordances that can be developed and accessed. E.g. products and equipment, e.g. having a access to a car at suitable time for transportation. How can capacities be developed and accessed when needed?
- Reorganization of interaction and collaboration which can enhance coordination, progressing integration and synergy of value creating ambitions and capacities of actors? E.g. changing roles, relations or activity structures and responsibilities, or how value emerge for different actors.
- Enhanced intelligence through information processing capacities of ICT. Information resources, as well as for interpretation.
- Value creation capacities in other business settings. Are there examples from other settings and landscapes where value creation achievements are realized which points to potential in own landscape?

The identification of value potentials can imply a redrawing and reframing of the landscape in different ways. In some situations it is fruitful to make an additional drawing of the landscape where the identified value potential is more in view. Also making such

descriptions is part of reframing the business landscape and its opportunities.

Can sources of potential unrealized value be identified and agreed on for further inquiry beyond and in common between different perspectives expressed in the group and its rich picturing? What is the perceived value potential, and is it worthwhile to inquire into a particular alternative further? There may be quite different views on positive value potentials perceived by involved actors. Prioritization if there are different judgements made. Choose overall value enhancing potential is deemed as worthwhile to investigate further.

BUSINESS MODELLING

In this activity the most significant value potentials are chosen in order to develop business models to analyse them systemically. Business modelling are imaginative constructions that can clarify value potential and its capacity for value creation for different actors, as well as their contribution in its realization. It includes actors and roles, mutual value creation/co-creation, key activities in value creation (purposeful activity system), and identification of uncertainties, tensions and risks to be dealt with. Choose value potential which is deemed most significant representing core value potential, e.g. amount of value enhancement potential, as well as its possible distribution among stakeholders, and assumed beneficiary experience and situation.

SSM is useful as basis for different ways of systemic modelling of value creating systems for exploring business opportunity for innovating enhanced and new value creation activity systems. In SSM the step of identifying significant points of departure for imagining and constructing models of systems which can help to improve and positively transform existing situation is rather loosely specified as one of pinpointing and specifying so called "Root Definitions". Worldviews define values as basis for assessment of alternatives. Instead of the idea of "root" as a single worldview defining one core way of describing the system, one way of looking at the situation as a piece of complex reality that is deemed relevant for inquiry, the point of departure is value potentials. RBF is more specific in requesting unrealized value potentials to be targeted judged to be significant enough by involved actors to be deeper inquired into. Actors need to imagine transformed situations where they are better off in terms of purposes and experiences or solution to problems. RBF might be said to rely on a stronger element of (interactive) realism rather than the perspectivism of starting in worldviews. Both take a point of departure in a constructivist orientation in assuming imaginative and action capacity of actors to conceptually, interactively and physically frame reality. Develop each value potential into a core value proposition (Osterwalder et al, 2014). Usually this is offerings from provider to customers, but a sustainable value proposition need to

suggest and offer something of value for all contributing actors. An initial statement of each business model (the business idea) is developed by complementing the core value proposition specifying *what* is to be aimed at, with *how* it is to be done, and *why* it is done (how focal actor(s) profit and benefit from inputs to and servicing of the system of business). Modelling can be structured through a form of BM canvas type of model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010), and through specification of value creating activity system with the help of SSM modelling. It is important to ground business model innovation in the description and analyses made in earlier steps. Co-creating

In co-creation activity, one (or sometimes a few) business models is chosen for specification of innovation process of co-creating system and ecosystem design. It is important to focus on analysis and specification of actors and their roles in the system as contributors and beneficiaries, and on who are doing what in order to achieve a viable and high total value co-creating system of business collaboration. Engaging important stakeholder representatives in the analysis, innovation and design is also crucial in testing and developing viability, build trust and relationships and value enhancing capacity (den Ouden, 2012). Different scenarios for actors and their interaction in terms of value entities, financial, information and intangible value can be made to envision design alternatives. It is important that also intangible value flows are depicted, not only financial flows, and the co-creative and synergistic value creation dynamics which often is crucial for its success.

Based on the business ecosystem design, mutual value offering as well cost sources is depicted, and operational purposive activity system where value flows are balanced so that that a win-win and win more – win more system of interaction is achieved (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), and in this sense viable and sustainable. Different business models for different actors need to be integrated in a value constellation (Normann, 2001) for the co-creative system, framing a sustainable value model (den Ouden, 2012) for the whole ecosystem defined by the core value proposition.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article has been first, to clarify rich business framing based on experience and reflections on SSM inspired workshop practices particularly focused on rich picturing, interviews as well as literature. Secondly to abductively propose a model of RBF as an process approach to creative business inquiry. Research is exploratory, where the experiential basis of RBF need further work both conceptually as well as practice development and validation.

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