Beyond effectuation: Analysing the transformation of business ideas into ventures using actor-network theory" - DTU Orbit (23/04/2019)

Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to show that the entrepreneurial project ongoingly is transformed. Empirically, three defining junctions demonstrate the malleability of the entrepreneurial project in perpetual action, expanding beyond effectuation theory on what constitutes given means, affordable loss, and other key concepts from this theoretical perspective. Drawing upon actor-network theory (ANT), this study demonstrates how different framing and support devices implicate different human and non-human actors in changing interpositions within the entrepreneurial process.

Design/methodology/approach
This study uses a longitudinal case study design. The case provides an overview of a new business’s emergence based on three identified translations, each representing critical junctures in the business’s development. An ethnographic approach is selected, which combines observations with qualitative interviews. This design allows the authors to focus on how the project emerges and is continuously supported by allies but is sometimes not supported by various human and non-human actors.

Findings
This study demonstrates that the entrepreneurial project undertaken by the entrepreneurial network changes as new humans or non-humans become part of it. Including a resource in the network means simultaneously changing the network. This interactionism shows that what sparks interest or attracts resources to a business idea is not simply an influx of additional resources but is simultaneously a dynamic definition of the entrepreneurial endeavour.

Originality/value
This paper examines how ideas are transformed into business ventures by using the ANT to expand understanding from effectuation theory. This shows that means, for instance, are not given but are co-created by the process of translation. In addition, which losses are affordable can be determined by the process within which the entrepreneur frames the project and manages to associate allies within and into the network.

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