Blockchain technology and Service Ecosystem: a focus on Agri-food business

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Purpose - New technologies are predicted to disrupt service ecosystems (Leyer et al., 2018; Mele et al., 2019). Among different technologies, blockchain has entered the mainstream business and academic debates due to its potentiality and promising breakthroughs such as enabling actors to set up more agile networks, faster innovations, and closer relationships (Morkunas, et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2020).
However, how blockchain impacts existing service ecosystems is not addressed yet (Kjellberg et al., 2015). A brief review of the S-D literature on the role of technologies and service ecosystems shows that: S-D logic characterizes the service ecosystem structure as layered and nested including multiple actors connected by shared institutional arrangements to co-create value (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). It acknowledges the role of Technology as an operant resource, capable of acting on other resources to create new value (Akaka & Vargo, 2014). Understanding the service ecosystems and their dynamic is s an ongoing endeavor for S-D logic scholars (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). From the S-D logic perspective, new technologies become a tool to improve resources integration and engage multiple actors for value co-creation in the service ecosystem (Sklyar et al., 2019). To date, there seems to be no study on the role of blockchain in the value co-creation process and ecosystems dynamics.

Method: This work adopts a case theory method (Gummesson, 2017) to understand how blockchain technology affects actors' activities, relations and institutions, and the more extensive service ecosystem. The focus is on the agri-food business, seen as complex ecosystems consisting of different actors relationships and rules of games (Mutonyi et al., 2018). Our study addresses focus on BT features and how they to act as mechanism enabling actor's coordination's to create benefits for the ecosystems

Findings: Our study will show that the applications of blockchain technology allow value co-creation by impacting many of the established activities, relationships, and institutions. The value co-creation is prompted by new interactions based on decentralized decision-making processes, transparency, and immutability. New processes emerge, actors relationships are prompted by trust, safety, information sharing and collaborations and new language and rules are established.

Originality/value – The applications of blockchain technologies have been heavily promoted, but there has been very little research into the integration of Blockchain in the analysis of service ecosystems. This study will be original in its foundation to analyze the role of technology as multilayered resources impacting actors, processes and institutions to enable the value co-creation process in the service ecosystem.

Key words – Blockchain technologies, service ecosystem, actors' integration, value co-creation, resource integrations,

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