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Scenarios are best described as a highly innovative, pragmatic field of practice grappling with theoretical grounding. Complexity science, in contrast, is a theoretically grounded, highly conceptual field searching for more effective and extensive application in practice. This paper explores how these largely separate fields might be better related in enabling groups and organizations cope with uncertainty. It focuses on non-probabilistic scenarios and the so-called Intuitive logics school of scenarios, with its emphasis on plausible, alternative futures because of its increasing dominance. The benefits of incorporating key insights from complexity science into scenario practices seems an obvious 'must have' in engaging complex, messy and puzzling situations and guiding action in the 21st century. Similarly, the persistent and recent significantly increased interest in scenarios offers insights relevant to extending complexity ideas beyond academe and inquiry, into broader spheres of corporate strategy, public policy-making and change management. Plausibility-based scenarios are being deployed to grapple with complexity for a variety of different purposes, including strategic renewal, anticipating systemic risks and enabling the large scale, transitions implied in meeting the challenge of global, sustainable development. This paper suggests that intuitive logics scenarios offer an 'on-ramp' to complexity, encouraging attention to the systemic framing of systems, situations and problems and enabling complexity concepts to penetrate beyond the domains of scholarship. It notes that complexity thinking challenges one-off scenario building practices, especially when the scenarios are developed using the deductive building method. As plausibility-based scenario practices continue to evolve they encounter practical challenges of linking to other processes, relating to other futures methods, broadening beyond the organizational scale, engaging heterogeneous agents and in enabling deeper reframing, exposing deeply held beliefs about progress and assumptions about change management in complex systems. This paper concludes with implications for practice and future scholarship associated with each challenge.

Highlights

- We examine how core concepts in complexity science and scenario practices might be related.
- We focus on the plausibility-based, Intuitive Logics School of scenarios because of its prominence.
- We suggest scenarios are not enough in grappling with complexity.
- We suggest the role of intuitive logics scenarios is in framing rather than forecasting.
- We highlight 5 challenges that are shaping further evolution in intuitive logics scenario practices.

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