

Temporal Nature of Value Cocreation: Institutional Work and Resource Reconfiguration

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Purpose – Actors’ engagement in resource-integrating processes and interaction mechanisms, whether intentional, unintentional, conscious or unconscious, are influenced by the outcomes (i.e., resources, institutions, and experiences) created in the past and may impact, and thus be influenced by, the outcomes created in an imaginary future. These interdependencies are referred to as temporal nature of value cocreation (Chandler & Lusch, 2015; Storbacka et al., 2016). Our study aims to explore how these interdependencies between/among past, present and future are managed. Specifically, we suggest that value cocreation involves multiplex processes and mechanisms that intentionally (e.g., Razmdoost et al., 2019) or unintentionally (e.g., Akaka et al. 2015) generate resources and institutions to manage this temporality.

Approach – This research follows an autoethnography approach (Holbrook, 2005). Two settings of “driving” and “cooking”, from the beneficiary point of view, were chosen as the boundary of two service ecosystems investigated. Data was collected after the actor engagement events over four months. Grounded theory was applied in the data analysis (Glaser, 1978).

Findings – Findings showed that temporal nature of value cocreation is managed by actors’ engagement in institutional work (e.g., development of new recipes) and resource reconfiguration (e.g., development of driving skills) that are reciprocally interrelated, driven by actors’ creativity (i.e., including imagination, improvisation and try and error), resource deficiencies (e.g., lack of ingredients), and conflicts (e.g., road traffic) and facilitated by interaction mechanisms (e.g., communication). These engagements occur intentionally or unintentionally and lead to the emergence of temporal resources (e.g., knowledge of past driving experiences) and institutions (e.g., shared expectation of food taste) that carry properties of different time contexts. In several cases, resources showed both temporal and non-temporal properties. For instance, a measuring cup is used (a) to allocate previously established amount of ingredients (i.e., temporal property) and (b) to add the ingredients gradually to the cooking pot (i.e., non-temporal property).

Research implications – Our findings are consistent with the notion of historical dependency of service ecosystems (Meynhardt et al., 2016) and interdependency of emerged resources (Peters, 2016). We further explain how these interdependencies work by identifying temporal aspects of resources and institutions, and processes generating them.

Originality/value – Our study, in general, contributes to the existing literature highlighting the temporal nature of value cocreation (e.g., Chandler & Lusch, 2015; Storbacka et al., 2016; Vargo & Lusch, 2016) by explaining how the interdependencies of value cocreation in the past, present, and future are created, evaluated and managed.

Key words – Temporality, Value Cocreation, Service Ecosystem, Institutional Work, Resource Integration

Paper type – Research paper

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