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SMR JOURNAL OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Call for Papers The Role of Context in Resource Integration and Value Cocreation

Special Issue Journal of Service Management Research

Guest Editors:

Michael Kleinaltenkamp, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Ingo O. Karpen, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Stephen L. Vargo, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, U.S.A.

Deadline: December 1st, 2019

Research on resource integration underlines the importance of context for value cocreation (Chandler and Vargo 2011; Vargo and Lusch 2011). Context generally refers to an "environment, domain, setting, background, or milieu that includes some entity, subject, or topic of interest" (Sowa 1997, p. 41). From a service ecosystem perspective, context can be defined as "a set of unique actors with unique reciprocal links among them" (Chandler and Vargo 2011, p. 40) or as the "aspects of a situation, which are relevant for the resource-integrating activities" (Löbler and Hahn 2013, p. 259). While context has been suggested to have an important influence on the courses as well as the outcomes of resource integration processes and value cocreation, existing concepts do not lend themselves to an adequate understanding of the underlying mechanisms of how physical and/or social surroundings influence actors' behaviours.

In service literature, context has often been discussed under the notion of "servicescape". Introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981, p. 38), servicescape has been defined as "the environment in which the service is assembled and in which the seller and customer interact, combined with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service". Characterized as aspects of a firm's environment, servicescapes are conceptualized as organizationally-controllable physical stimuli that enable firms to influence customer perceptions and satisfaction with the provided service. Servicescapes are seen as consisting of three environmental dimensions, namely (1) ambient conditions (e.g., temperature, air quality, noise, music, odour), (2) spatial layout and functionality (e.g., layout, equipment, furnishing), and (3) signs, symbols and artefacts (e.g., signage, personal artefacts, style of décor) (Bitner 1992). Building on this, Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) introduced the term "social-servicescape" to highlight the impact of the physical environment on social interactions. The concept outlines the influence of the less firm-controllable service context (i.e., purchase occasion) and social stimuli (i.e., social density and the expressed

emotions of other customers) on a customer's response during service provision.

However, ultimately every form of resource integration and value cocreation is shaped by the institutional environment in which it takes place. Such institutions are defined as "the humanly devised rules, norms, and beliefs that enable and constrain action and make social life predictable and meaningful" (Vargo and Lusch 2016, p. 11). Embedded in "carriers", symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artefacts that form the context of value cocreation, they comprise "regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that [...] provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott 2014, p. 56). Hence, neither the concept of servicescapes nor the concept of *social* servicescapes captures the full picture of institutional elements that coordinate value cocreation in a certain context.

Increasingly however, there exists also an understanding that institutions themselves, at the micro-level, are shaped and maintained by multiple practices such as resource integration (e.g., Smets et al. 2017; Ansari et al. 2010; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Similar to the literature on servicescapes and carrier artefacts, these practice accounts (Pickering 1995; Schatzki et al. 2001) stress not only the social but also the material and temporal dimensions of value cocreation. However, where the former might consider social, material and temporal dimensions to simply influence one another, practice scholars have increasingly questioned the *a priori* separateness of human and material actors based on ontologies of relationality and process (e.g., Orlikowski and Scott 2008; Feldman and Orlikowski 2011; Carlile et al. 2013; Vargo 2018).

Against this diverse theoretical backdrop, the proposed Special Issue invites contributions that clarify what role context, materiality and temporality play in processes of resource integration and value cocreation. Both, conceptual/theoretical as well as empirical manuscripts are welcome.

Topics of primary interest are centered around the institutional context of value cocreation, including but not being limited to:

- The impact of contextual elements in value attribution
- The impact of actor-to-actor interactions on resource integration and value cocreation
- The interplay of human and non-human actors on resource integration and value cocreation
- The impact of contextual elements on individual and social well-being
- Designing context in order to improve resource integration and value cocreation
- The effects of misaligned institutional settings as context
- The role of boundary objects translating incompatible contextual conditions
- The emergence of practices as contextual elements on resource integration and value cocreation
- The interplay of context and institutional change
- Case studies investigating the role of context in different industries

Submission

All manuscripts submitted must not have been published, accepted for publication, or be currently under consideration elsewhere. Manuscripts should be submitted in accordance with the author guidelines available on the journal homepage <https://rsw.beck.de/zeitschriften/smr/> for authors.

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