

The role of resource asymmetry in coordinating value processes

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Purpose: Specialized heterogeneous actors participating in value formation processes generally benefit from the division of labor. However, the lack of theorizing on asymmetries among actors such as misaligned institutions imposes theoretical limitations on explaining value formation since the conditions of coordinating value processes remain mainly intransparent. This paper addresses the role of asymmetries in coordinating value processes, developing a conceptual framework on the conditions that affect resource integration as the coordinative embedded process of value formation.

Method: The paper develops a conceptual contribution in the form of a theoretical framework and initial typology by drawing on a carefully selected set of concepts as method theory that can inform the substantive value formation domain from a service marketing perspective. Building on the S-D logic axioms and service ecosystem premises and complementing them with selected external concepts, the paper presents asymmetry categories between actors that affect coordinating value processes and value formation. We present our findings visually in a conceptual framework, as associated narrative illustrations and a tentative typology of relevant asymmetries.

Findings: We find that asymmetries among actors in individual preferences, collective practices, and power relations are all grounded in resource asymmetry affecting actors resource integration processes and thus coordinative action and affecting each other, shaping the requirements for coordination.

Implications: The conceptual framework extends the understanding of the conditions for coordinating value processes and highlights actors' relevance as versatile coordinators. Likewise, it presents a starting point for empirical investigations of how coordinating value processes works and what it requires.

Value: This paper proposes a conceptual framework to explain resource integration conditions in service ecosystems and actors' challenges and opportunities in value formation processes characterized by resource asymmetry. The paper uses three sets of concepts to problematize resource asymmetry: (i) preferences, (ii) power, and (iii) practices. Ultimately, it provides suggestions for future research on service ecosystems and value formation.

Keywords: Service ecosystem, resource asymmetry, resource integration, value formation, actors, preferences, power, practices