

# The meaning-ladenness of value in Service-Dominant Logic

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**Purpose:** Service dominant logic states that “value is meaning laden”. When actors cocreate value they (re-)interpret symbols and interactions depending on the context they are in and thereby cocreate meaning. That is, they cocreate a ‘sense’ of what they are doing. While meaning has been discussed in connection to products and technology in an GDL frame this paper reflects dimensions of meaning in an SDL frame to better understand the meaning ladenness of value.

**Methodology:** The paper builds on second order cybernetics particularly on recursive operations. In a normal operation there is input and output. In a recursive operation the output is taken as input again. If one for example translates a sentence from English (input 1) into Italian (output 1) with an IT-algorithm and then takes the Italian translation (input 2) and translates it back into English (output 2) this is a recursive operation. If output 2 is the same as input 1- which is not necessarily the case - the recursive operation is stable. In real live recursive operations are ongoing processes. Invariants of recursive operations serve as meaning providers.

**Findings:** The paper identifies ‘language’, ‘practices’, ‘sources’ and ‘context’ as four dimensions of a space in which meaning unfolds when value is cocreated. Language: On “Auto Simple” (Auto Simple, 2017) for example, people argue that cars have “distinct human visages” and so cars need names. Descriptions correspond to meaning. Practices: In a community of therapists, for example, the word ‘regression’ is related to the practice of reversion to an earlier mental or behavioral level. In the community of statisticians, the word ‘regression’ is related to the practice of making a functional relationship between two or more correlated variables. Sources: It means something different if the chief physician or a nurse tells you that you probably have cancer. Context is obvious when talking about value in context. When offering value propositions the understanding of these meaning dimensions supports the cocreative process of value cocreation.

**Originality/value:** To my knowledge this is the first paper that unfolds the meaning-ladenness of value in SDL. Thereby it offers a space in which actors can think and discuss value propositions and value cocreation processes.