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“The Value Co-Creation Concept: Mixing Up Apples and Oranges?”

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Competitive Paper

Abstract

The value co-creation concept has opened a new area of research in BtoC and BtoB interactions. However, value co-creation theoretical frameworks and related terms are far from being defined and stabilized. In a zoom-out attempt to answer this state of play, Vargo and Lusch (2011) recently proposed the introduction of the abstract designation of actor-to-actor (A2A). Through a meta-analysis of recent literature on value co-creation this paper highlights the strong heterogeneity of units and processes taken into account. Thus, it questions the adequate level of abstraction that could be relevant for the development of the value co-creation concept and argues for a zoom-in approach. Overall, the paper contributes to the on-going scientific controversy concerning the value co-creation concept.

Keywords

Actor, Meta-Theory, Process, Unit of analysis, Value Co-Creation.

When in the early 2000s management scholars Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) began to write a series of essays suggesting that the locus of economic value creation was shifting from the firm's research and development department to the interaction between the firm and the customer, they created an area of research that is now, a decade later, commonly referred to as 'value co-creation' or joint value creation. The term denotes that the creation of value that takes place increasingly via the interaction between firm and customer is the outcome of both collaborating in the manufacture of products and services. Moreover, the Service Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) introduced the concept of 'service' which stresses why 'we' have interaction in society - service-for-service exchange - and defined value co-creation as its corollary.

Some researchers (Payne, Storbacka and Frow, 2008) argue that value co-creation demands a change in the dominant logic for marketing from "making, selling and servicing" to "listening, customizing and co-creating". Following in their path, IMP researchers have integrated the value co-creation approach and vocabulary (from Seppänen, Hirvonen & Sallinen, 2000, to Kuokkala, Mäenpää & Uusitalo, 2010).

However, value co-creation theoretical frameworks and concepts are far from being defined and stabilized despite a massive usage in today's BtoB marketing research (Ford, 2011) and BtoC research (Cova, Dalli & Zwick, 2011). There has therefore been a controversy for several years around value co-creation, which is quite common and normal in any scientific activity.

The overall contribution of the paper is to restate in specific terms the units/entities involved and the processes brought into play in value co-creation. To achieve this, it develops a meta-analysis of recent literature on value co-creation which highlights the strong heterogeneity of units and processes taken into account. This leads to questioning what the adequate level of abstraction could be for theory development.

STATE OF THE ART

The units (xto~~x~~) involved in value co-creation processes

One of the consequences of this controversy is a somewhat 'zoom-out' attempt on value co-creation completed recently by Vargo and Lusch (2011) with their 'linguistic telescope': this allows them to propose the introduction of the abstract designation of actor-to-actor (A2A) orientation. They reframe "what we know in terms of generic actors — that is, continuing to search for the commonalities, rather than the differences in what we know" (Vargo & Lusch, 2011, p. 186). For them, "the CEO of a firm, the head of a household, a carpooling parent, an individual grocery shopper, a politician, etc. are not fundamentally different kinds of **entities**" (Vargo & Lusch, 2011, p. 186).

The adoption of the generic term 'actor' in their writings is argued to be consistent with the convention of most Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group scholars ('network actor'). It enables them to move "toward a more macro, systemic view of generic actors in order to see more clearly how a single, specific actor (e.g. a firm) can participate more effectively" (Vargo & Lusch, 2011, p. 182). Their claim is that it is an appropriate level of abstraction because every actor is fundamentally doing the same thing, co-creating value through resource integration and service provision.

This extreme level of abstraction is also a level of neutralization that erases all the differences that are inherent in every actor: each one becomes a sort of Mr X, in other words a black box. We therefore come back to a stylization just like economists with the concept of agent. This abstraction enables, in particular, for there to be symmetry between the two entities in the process of value co-creation (**xtox**).

The process (**xtox**) of value co-creation

Some of the major questions concerning the value co-creation process are the following. “What kind of activities and process elements constitute the value co-creation process? What kinds of resources do the seller and the buyer contribute to value co-creation?” (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2010). Gronroos (2011, p. 282) states that “we know very little about the process of value creation when it starts, what it includes and when it ends”. Indeed, “it is unclear how actors other than firms participate in value co-creation processes” (Akaka & Chandler, p. 250).

Even the idea of a value co-creation process between two entities is in itself an abstraction that groups together very different realities. Before it became the main expression, there were a myriad of expressions that were all very contextualized to define the ‘to’ of the **xtox**: exchange, consumer experience, service encounter, business interaction, integration of resources, co-production, consumer practices, etc.

The new expression of value co-creation has not resulted in the disappearance of these previous conceptualizations. Nobody has claimed to have tried, as in the case of the units, to re-embed the previous concepts. The approach has been more that of ‘SDL compliant’, in other words that the SDL absorbed the previous concepts without any other form of process as being part of its ‘pedigree’ (Vargo, 2008).

Questioning the value co-creation framework

According to Cova, Dalli and Zwick (2011), the co-creation framework and its cousin in marketing the service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), lead to a number of questions being asked: “What is at stake conceptually when the roles of consumers and producers become blurred?”. Indeed, “the recent view in Vargo and Lusch (2011) that all actors (firms, customers) are busily service-providing and value co-creating could be seen as unrealistic” (Lindgreen, Hingley, Grant & Morgan, 2012, p. 209).

We reject and controvert the validity of the premature zoom-out attempt, which stipulates that “actors are fundamentally doing the same thing, co-creating value through resource integration and service provision” (Vargo & Lusch, 2011) and that tends to neutralize the identity of units involved in value co-creation processes: they are similar actors and they do the same thing. We also reject the reintegration of all the processes that are part of the same concept incorporating the value co-creation process.

We would counter this generic view with a zoom-in aimed at listing the analysis units and processes at stake in research articles dealing with value co-creation and at giving back their identities to stakeholders involved in the process. The basis for this work is the surprising

variety of analysis units in research papers (customer, supplier, firm, brand, community, audience, consumer, stakeholder, etc.) as the heterogeneity of processes at stake.

RESEARCH METHOD

The initial aim of this on-going research was to conduct a meta-analysis of marketing research published during the last decade and which deals explicitly with value co-creation in title or keywords. We started with a preliminary selection which included papers from the recent special issue of *Marketing Theory* (2011) on value co-creation. We continued with a second wave dedicated specifically to contributing to this IMP conference which focused on papers published in major BtoB marketing journals and especially the papers from the recent issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* (2011) on value co-creation. Thus, the close connection between the topic of value co-creation and the service dominant logic (SDL) led us, in a third wave, to select papers pertaining to the 2008 special issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* dedicated to SDL. We completed this selection with the inclusion of three rather canonical texts.

In total, 30 papers were analyzed end of 2011/beginning of 2012. These articles ranged from 2004 to 2011. Fourteen papers were published in BtoB marketing journals and sixteen in mainstream marketing journals. Twenty articles among the thirty analyzed are of a theoretical nature, ten are of an empirical nature. As this is a piece of on-going research, we plan to further extend the set of articles taken into account in our meta-analysis. Indeed, there are more than 30 papers which have dealt with value co-creation during the last seven years. Some recent examples include various papers in the 2012 IMM special issue on value, which we haven't included in our analysis due to late publication. As our process of selection of literature for inclusion in the analysis has evolved over time – from value co-creation to value co-creation and SDL – we plan to rationalize it for the next waves in order to make it more compliant with meta-analytic or literature review research standards.

On this first and preliminary selection of 30 articles, we conducted an interpretive meta-analysis study (Schreiber, 2008). We used a thematic analysis technique inspired from Spiggle (1994) and Miles and Huberman (2003) that consisted of a first round of readings without a priori concepts to test. Once we had gathered enough evidence from this first round, we elaborated very simple criteria in order to systematize the second round of readings. We present hereafter the elaborated criteria in detail.

To categorize the analysis units identified in the sample of articles, we used several criteria. These criteria are formalized as the following questions: Who is involved in the process under study? How is it labeled in the research? What observation level is used to consider it?

Who is involved in the process under study? This question refers to the identification of any actor mentioned in the research. For empirical research, the identification of the analyzed actors was straightforward, since the authors made clear reference to their unit of analysis. For theoretical papers, the task was harder. In fact, provided that the example of an actor could serve the demonstration, the authors considered many different actors in the analysis. In this case, we tried to answer a second question: How are the actors labeled in the research? In other words, what are they called? To answer this question, we listed every designation used by the authors within the article. We then separated the actors used as examples from the actors used as analysis units (viz. those who served the main demonstration). In order to

identify the process being studied, a fourth criteria was used and formulated as followed: Where do the units of analysis considered in the research meet? In other words, what is the nature of the interaction between the offer and the demand?

A final question helped us determine the degree to which there was a zoom-in or a zoom-out effect. It is formulated as followed: What observation scale is used to consider the phenomenon under study? We identified three levels of observation (cf. figure 1).

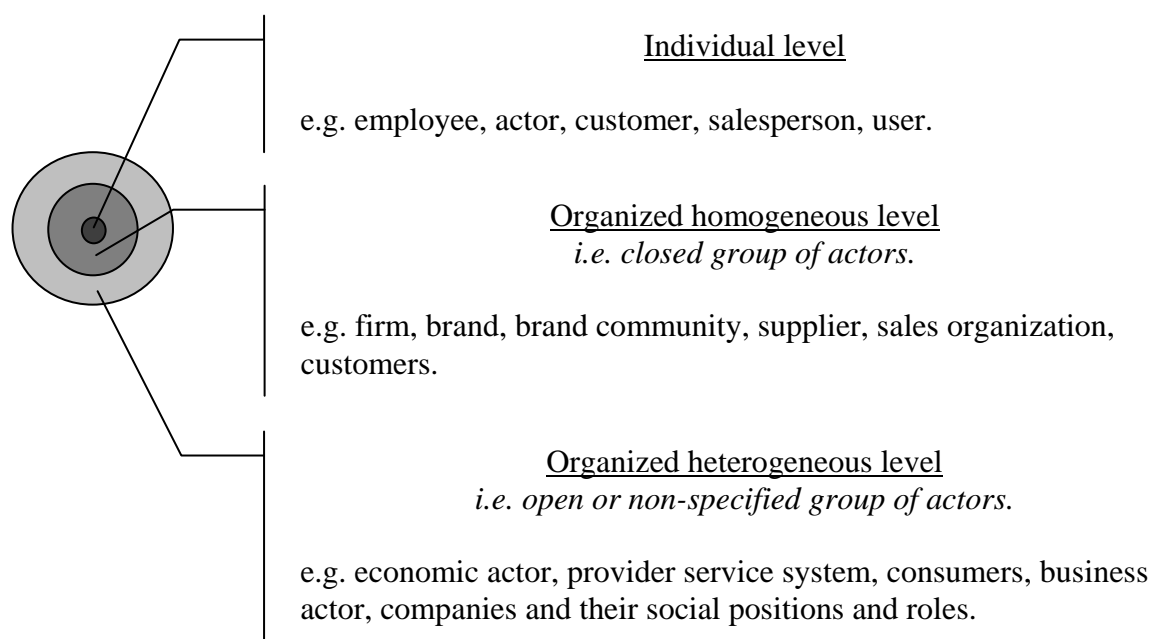


Figure 1. The different levels of observation of the co-creation process

GLOBAL RESULTS

On the supply side, we identify six papers that consider the firm as a whole. Then, we identify four articles focusing on the supplier, and four concentrating on the service supplier (labeled 'service supplier', 'service system', and 'the server'). As we can observe, most of the research does a zoom out on the supply side to consider mainly what is called a 'focus business actor', with eleven articles dealing with a large analysis category. Nevertheless, three papers stemming from BtoC literature deal with the brand, as a specific analysis unit of co-creation on the supply side.

On the demand side, we notice that eleven articles deal with customer(s), two with consumers and two with brand community. Actually, the majority of the papers deal with a demand analysis category as broad as what we observed on the offer category. The brand community analysis unit is the most precise unit that could be identified on the demand side.

The processes are by far the most diversified ones. The main unit considered is service, with eight articles dealing with service, among which, five focus on the service encounter and two on service exchange. Then, papers focus on value-creation (2 papers), experience (2 papers), network (2 papers), and relation (2 papers).

Nevertheless, almost half of the papers reviewed (eleven papers) provide examples, no matter how broad the analysis category is (see Abela & Murphy, 2008; Maglio & Spohrer, 2008; Payne, Storbacka & Frow, 2008; Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008; Akaka & Chandler, 2011; Arvidsson, 2011; Baron & Warnaby, 2011; Evarðsson, Tronvoll & Gruber, 2011; Flint, Blocker & Boutin, 2011; Grönroos, 2011; Storbacka & Nenonen, 2011).

See table 1 in appendix for more details.

DISCUSSION

Discussion about units (xtox)

Table 1 highlights 3 unit categories:

- The first category is very context-specific, in other words the terms used refer to a very specific situation : employees for a financial institution (Chan, Yim & Lam, 2010), sales organization and sales people (Sheth & Sharma, 2008) for global account management, brands (Arvidsson, 2011; Fischer & Smith, 2011; Pongsakornrungrasit & Schroeder, 2011) for brand communities ;
- The second category covers units that are less specific : firm and consumer/customer (Arnould, 2008 ; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2008a; Vargo, 2009 ; Baron & Warnaby, 2011; Akaka & Chandler, 2011 ; Grönroos, 2011), (service) supplier and customer/user (Cova & Salle, 2008; Abela & Murphy, 2008; Payne, Storbacka & Frow, 2008; Echeverri & Skalen, 2011; Flint, Blocker & Boutin, 2011) ;
- The third category links up with the zoom-out perspective with the use of terms denoting the unit such as: focal market actor, economic actor, business net, server, focal initiator, participant, stakeholder, service system, etc.

More than half of the texts therefore use a more precise terminology than that promoted by the supporters of a zoom out and a broad abstraction. The analyzed set enabled us to point out the diversity and the lack of convergence of units of analysis in literature.

Discussion about processes (xtox)

Table 1 highlights, even more than for the units, a very wide variety of terms used to describe the value co-creation process. The only term that stands out (used 5 times by 5 different authors) is that of 'service encounter'. This emphasizes the very 'service' roots of the value co-creation concept. It is worth noting that 7 papers seek to do a 'zoom in' so that the component parts of the process are clarified (Maglio & Spohrer, 2008; Shet & Sharma, 2008; Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008; Chan, Yim and Lam, 2010; Ballantyne, Frow, Varey & Payne, 2011; Flint, Blocker & Boutin, 2011; Baron & Warnaby, 2011). Each one comes to a different proposition underlining: i) a different understanding of the same phenomenon; ii) the understanding of different phenomena.

The common umbrella offered by the value co-creation concept does not explicitly take into account the long term dimension included in the notions of relationships and networks as a BtoB process used by some papers listed in Table 1 (eg. Cova & Salle, 2008). It seems more appropriate to explain short term interactions typical of service activities i.e. 'service encounters' and 'consumption experiences', focused on particular episodes. The SDL process of value co-creation through interaction and integration of resources within and among

service systems appears to be totally a-temporal, that is to say that it does not consider the long timeframe of the relationship which is of paramount importance in BtoB contexts. The processes between units in BtoB are not short term processes. As value co-creation is a non-transactional process it is therefore relational (Vargo & Lusch, 2011) but always positioned, *de facto*, in the short term. This difference between the theories originating from service marketing and BtoB marketing is historical and is a good explanation of the lack of understanding between these two worlds. In the SDL context, the use of the interaction concept to define the ‘value co-creation process’ is questionable: likewise for the relational one. The value co-creation process does not at all infer the notion of continuity that is at the heart of the BtoB processes as indicated by most of the work that comes from the IMP community. The famous 10 FP’s of SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2008a) and the revisited one (Gronroos, 2011) never mention the temporal dimension.

Most of the situations evoked to support the concept of the value co-creation process and its interactive and networked nature are situations that can be described as ‘market as a network’ encouraging the connection (spatial) between players aiming at generating resources without taking into account the temporal dimension of the network relations. One feels implicitly that time would be needed to develop the resources required for the value co-creation process but this is never developed explicitly by the SDL context.

General discussion (**xtox**)

Table 1 shows that the majority of the empirical work was published during the last two years. Are we not going too quickly in the zoom out? Indeed, the controversy taking place in the marketing field remains focused on itself as a theory, not as a practice. Indeed, just as Vargo, Maglio & Akaka (2008) said was needed, with more empirical research, there would be tremendous breakthroughs in understanding what value co-creation is and where it is.

The ‘Main Topic’ column in Table 1 highlights a strange phenomenon: the attraction of theories that come from near horizons (CCT, IMP, SDL, Services Marketing, etc.) or more distant ones (Practice theory, Resource based view, Information science, etc.) as an attempt to give content to the concept of value co-creation. The result is very eclectic and makes it impossible to bring out an overall coherence. Once again, this poses the question about the level of abstraction achieved by this concept and its ability to account for numerous realities that are all very different, one from the other.

In that sense, we suggest that future research focusing on the co-creation process use what Desjeux (1996, 2006) calls the scale of observation of human activity. This methodological tool is based on the simple principle that what a researcher can observe on a certain level will disappear on another. This scale of observation is built as follows (cf. figure 2). In order to build relevant concepts that stem from empirical studies on the value co-creation process, researchers have to be aware at which level of the scale of observation they are analyzing and describing the phenomenon. More precisely, dealing with the value co-creation process, a researcher can focus mainly at the meso and micro social levels, as it is already done in socio-anthropology (Desjeux, 1996, 2006). The first one deals with action systems like organizations as whole or power structures. The second one deals with the life of small groups, the micro-decisions they make, and the interactions that take place between members. Nonetheless other levels, like the micro-individual one, may be of use for future research on the value co-creation process.

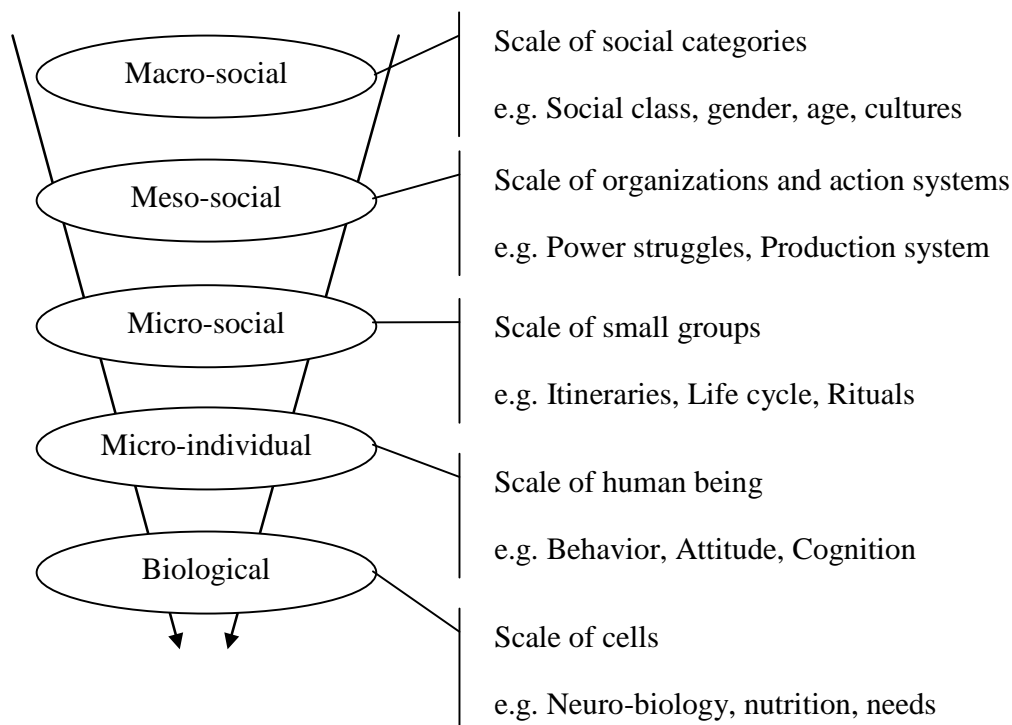


Figure n°2. The Scale of Observation, adapted from Desjeux (1996, 2006)

From this statement, we can derive two consequences for current research on co-creation. The first consequence implies that we must not mix the different levels of observation within the same research as done, for example, in Grönroos's 2011 paper. In his insightful article, Grönroos puts on the same level two levels of observation, a meso-social and a micro social one. Indeed, he parallels the production process of value facilitation and its steps (design, development, production, and back-office) with a consumption process of value creation, which cannot be grasped by the organization. The reason why the organization cannot grasp the consumption process is because the organization is located at a meso-social level, when the consumption process is located at a micro-social level. So, if one wants to study the co-creation process, the observation must be located at the micro-social level in order to account for who really co-creates with whom (e.g. contact personnel-customer, bus/tram driver-traveller, as in Echeverri & Skålen, 2011)

The second consequence for co-creation research of our above statement implies that we cannot continue to zoom-out on the co-creation phenomenon, since as it is presented in the scale of observation, we will make important elements of understanding disappear. As Desjeux (2006) states: "the macro-social level lets the social regularities appear" (p. 49). As a consequence, given the current state of knowledge on the co-creation phenomenon, we, as researchers, cannot focus on wide all inclusive categories, such as the actor category, which does not help with the linking of concepts to empirical observations. We suggest that the

challenge for future research on co-creation would be to remain focused at the meso-social level, on the one hand, and at the micro-social level on the other hand. In the wake of the IMP research tradition, the value co-creation phenomenon requires strong empirical studies that can be clearly located on the scale of observation at the meso and micro levels. It is then, from this kind of research, that we will be able to draw robust concepts.

In addition, empirical research would focus on the context and the context of the context (Askegaard & Trolle-Linnet, 2011), making such works as analyzing co-creation units move towards a more interpretive turn, helping to gather practice and theory under a possible *Praxis* theory (Reckwitz, 2002). Indeed, building on Kjellberg and Helgesson's work (2006) on marketing shaping practices, an approach based on the Actor-Network Theory (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1987, 2005; Law & Hassard, 1999), would make it possible to consider any actor (whether human or non-human, like for example, an interaction website), within a close context of co-creation practices and a broader context of history and place (understanding the geographic context) of relationships between an organization, its stakeholders and any other elements at stake in the co-creation process.

CONCLUSION

The 'value co-creation concept' is a powerful vector in the evolution of marketing thought. It forces researchers to look beyond the dominant 'marketing as exchange' framework and re-think what is at stake between two interacting actors. However, the 'all-inclusive' abstraction attempt of its initiators (Vargo & Lusch, 2011), seems to condemn the concept to the same problems as its predecessor (i.e. the exchange concept): the neutralization of differences lying in any situations (including actors and processes) produces a harmful reality contraction in the understanding of phenomena under study. Moreover, the 'value co-creation concept', with its 'service' roots, is not able to take into account the reality of business-to-business interactions, nor the embeddedness of these interactions into a relational continuum.

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APPENDIX
Table 1. Co-creation units analysis

Authors	Paper type	Main topic	Analysis units		Process
			Offer	Demand	
Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004)	Theoretical	The authors propose the value co-creation concept as the consumer influence on design or conception of products, production processes, marketing messages and distribution channels	Firm	Consumers	Experience
Möller and Rajala (2007)	Theoretical	The authors explore the links between management of business nets and their underlying value creation logic	Business net	Business net	Value creation
Cova and Salle (2008)	Empirical	The authors apply SDL framework to Solution Marketing	Supplier	Customer	Network relations
Vargo and Lusch (2008)	Theoretical	The authors revise and defend several criticized points of SDL	Firm	Consumers	Service exchange
Ballantyne and Varey (2008)	Theoretical	The authors carry out a genealogy of value and then explain how SDL can be an innovating answer to the renewal need of the marketing field. They argue that the network notion has an impact on a linear process from production to consumption thus putting an end to it. They also attach IMP stream of research to LDS by its research tradition considering service relations between networks (of firm and/or customers)	Production	Consumption	Market
Gummesson (2008)	Theoretical	The author introduces the notion of network of activities that involves taking stakeholders into account. Based on the stakeholder concept, he proposes a many-to-many marketing where a balanced centricity gives stakeholders the right to have their needs and desires satisfied.	Stakeholder	Stakeholder	Network / Many-to-many
Maglio and Spohrer (2008)	Theoretical	The authors explain how SDL can be a philosophical basis for a developing Service Science, where the service system is the basic theoretical construct	Service system	Service system	Information, work, risks and goods sharing

Authors	Paper type	Main topic	Analysis units		Process
			Offer	Demand	
Arnould (2008)	Theoretical	The author calls for an examination of the role of resource theories into a SDL perspective	Firm	Customer	Resources
Abela and Murphy (2008)	Theoretical	The authors examine the ethical tensions and conflicts arising from a "classical" marketing perspective, and how the SDL can help overcome this tendency allowing the ethical accountability into decision making to be taken into account	Supplier	Customer	Service encounter
Payne, Storbacka and Frow (2008)	Theoretical	The authors develop a conceptual framework for understanding and managing value co-creation	Supplier	Customer	Service encounter
Sheth and Sharma (2008)	Theoretical	By examining what changes and the reasons for changes in sales organizations, the authors observe a shift of focus from products to customers, sales automation and global account management.	Sales organization and sales people	Customers	Commerce / sales automation / global account management
Vargo and Lusch (2008)	Theoretical	The authors compare along-side evolutions of mainstream marketing, B-toB marketing and other sub-disciplines in marketing and show how the focus shifted from goods to services and from dyads to networks and thus involve considering economic actors in value creation processes rather than any other denomination	Economic actor	Economic actor	Value creation
Vargo, Maglio and Akaka (2008)	Theoretical	The authors explore the concept of value in the light of SDL, thus proposing a framework to understand the process of value creation in service systems	Provider service system	Customer service system	Proposition, acceptance and evaluation of value
Vargo (2009)	Theoretical	The author reviews the concept of relationship as used in relationship marketing in the light of SDL	Firm	Customer	Relationship

Authors	Paper type	Main topic	Analysis units		Process
			Offer	Demand	
Chan, Yim and Lam (2010)	Empirical	The authors examine the effects of customer participation in a value creation process with employees of a financial institution on satisfaction and performance	Employees	Customers	Participation, satisfaction and performance
Akaka and Chandler (2011)	Theoretical	The authors explore the social role concept and position it as a stability and change resource in a value network where there is value co-creation	Firm	Customer	Service encounter
Arvidsson (2011)	Theoretical	The authors explore the concept of ethics in the Aristotle sense to define coproduction value	Brand	Audience / Consumers	Exchange and use
Grönroos (2011)	Theoretical	The author makes a distinction between firm production process as value facilitator and customer value-in-use creation process	Firm	Customer	Service encounter
Pongsakornrungrasit and Schroeder (2011)	Empirical	The authors identify individual roles within a brand community and examine how a process of consumer resources transformation works in a co-consumption context	Brand	Brand community	Co-consumption
Echeverri and Skålén (2011)	Empirical	The authors examine value creation interactive practices during a service encounter	Service supplier	User	Service encounter
Fisher and Smith (2011)	Empirical	The authors try to understand theoretically and empirically the processes and subtleties between coproduction and co-creation from a consumer point of view. They use an interpretive approach built on ethnographic interviews and netnography on Indiana Jones brand communities	Brand	Brand community	Experience

Authors	Paper type	Main topic	Analysis units		Process
			Offer	Demand	
Storbacka and Nenonen (2011)	Empirical	The authors propose considering markets as configurations, where firms can alter the shape of markets using market scripting, aimed at creating shared market view between actors	Focal market actor	Market actor	Market scripting
Ballantyne, Frow, Varey and Payne (2011)	Empirical	The authors examine the concept and functioning of value propositions and how reciprocal value propositions can be fostered with a communicative interactive platform. They also examine how assumptions about market can prevent innovation	Focal Initiator / Participant	Participant / Initiator	Communicative interaction platform
Flint, Blocker and Boutin Jr (2011)	Empirical	The authors led two survey studies to test a model linking a supplier's customer value anticipation capacity to customer satisfaction and loyalty	Supplier	Customer	Value anticipation, satisfaction and loyalty
Baron and Warnaby (2011)	Empirical	The authors examine the appropriateness of a resource-based view model of consumers in an organizational context by analyzing customers' messages posted on an organization support forum and leading a collaborative research process with its managers	Organization	Individual customer	Exchange episodes that produce relationship
Berry (2011)	Theoretical	Based on past in-depth field studies, the author draws four lessons on interaction in the service industry	The server	The served	Service
Purvis and Long (2011)	Theoretical	The authors use distributed multi-agent literature from the information science discipline to explore interactions between market agents as depicted in SDL. They propose considering marketing practices as conversations where the market agent tends to organize like a superior architecture agent	Initiator	Participant	Conversations

Authors	Paper type	Main topic	Analysis units		Process
			Offer	Demand	
Evardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber (2011)	Theoretical	The authors try to expand the understanding of SDL's co-creation of value between customer and provider with key concepts from social construction theories	Companies and their social position and roles	Customers and their social position and roles	Service exchange and value in social context
Ford (2011)	Theoretical	The author compares SDL and IMP views on two conceptual issues that need further developments: the identity of the business actors involved and the nature of value creation and delivery	Business actor	Business actor	Problem coping
Vargo and Lusch (2011)	Theoretical	The authors try to make the marketing discipline take a step back in order to comply with a more macro view of exchange systems, allowing them to introduce the notion of A2A relational value co-creation complex and dynamic system.	Actor	Actor	Relational value co-creation in a complex and dynamic system