CO-CREATION OF VALUE BY OTHER CUSTOMERS

EVIDENCE IN SPORTS

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Abstract

CO-CREATION OF VALUE BY OTHER CUSTOMERS – EVIDENCE IN SPORTS

The goal of this study is to examine the influence of other customers in the process of value co-creation. According to Service-Dominant Logic and its understanding of value-in-context we analyse various theoretical concepts to verify the relevance of the context and the relevance of other customers including their interactions. Thus we apply repertory grid technique, videography and in-depth interviews to describe different customer groups and relevant behaviours which affect customer’s perceived service value of sporting events. Additionally we present the customer’s understanding of the term “value” in a sporting event context. A total of 49 repertory grids and 229 interviews were conducted with spectators of different sporting events. The findings are derived out of a multistage content analysis. The results show that numerous customer groups and behaviours co-create value. Moreover customer’s understanding of value can be described by fulfilled motivations.

Keywords: Service-Dominant logic, Co-Creation of Value, Repertory Grid, Reference Groups, Sporting Events
Introduction

In sport marketing literature sporting events are often described as “products”. E.g. Shank (1999, p. 16) defines a sports product as “a good, a service, or any combination of the two that is designed to provide benefits to a sports spectator, participant, or sponsor.” Moreover this product is divided into the core product (game or event itself) and product extensions (merchandising, hospitality, catering, infrastructure, side-events, etc.) (Bühler & Nufer, 2006). Based on this logic a sports product is further described by an economic perspective. Benner’s (1992) economic model of professional sports for example uses the production factors approach to analyse the co-production processes of a sporting event. Therefore internal factors (employees of the club, players, external services like food & beverages or security, IT-personal, IT-infrastructure, stadium or facility, training material, business equipment, buildings, electricity, money, etc.) and the involved clubs plus the federation pre-combine the production processes to signal their ability to perform. Due to the contribution of the external factor (spectators) the final output of the professional sport is created by all aforementioned actors and ready to be promoted to the customers like media, sponsors, spectators, merchandising companies and to public authorities (Benner, 1992; Schumann, 2005). Hence value of sporting events has traditionally been measured on characteristics like quality of the game, catering, sanitations, information systems, infrastructure etc. (e.g. Greenwell, Fink & Pastore, 2002; Höck, Höck & Ringle, 2007; Höck & Ringle, 2007; Kelley & Turley, 2001). Research therefore focused on characteristic oriented quality measurements to identify drivers of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty as they mainly influence the economic success of the club, company or provider in general according to the established service-profit chain (Heskett et al., 1994). All in all this classic view is assumed to create value which is independent from the context and represents a transaction-oriented approach.

In our point of view this logic has two main vacancies regarding sporting events. First, as the traditional practice at least analyses many actors we need to make clear that the output of a sporting event and its promotion is not a one-way process where you can put in some factors
or actors who co-produce units of output which finally can be delivered to its customers according to Porter’s value chain (Porter, 1985). We consider the sporting event and its co-creation of value as a mutually network process of all actors (including the customers) contributing to the “output”. Before, during and after the game media, sponsors, spectators, merchandising companies and public authorities influence and therefore co-create the sporting event, too. Consequently the classic transaction-oriented approach is not sufficient, because we see sporting events as platforms for value creation by and with others and focus on a relationship- and process-oriented approach where value-in-context is mutually created.

Second, although many authors theoretically highlight the importance of fans in the context of a sporting event (e.g. Büch, Maennig & Schulke, 2006; Wann et al., 2001; Bühler, Chadwick & Nufer, 2009) to the best of our knowledge investigations about the influence of the customers on the co-creation processes of a sporting event are scarce. This is astonishing, because latest research findings state that the behaviour of other customers (spectators in that case) not only influences the value of a sporting event but actually could dominate the value due to social relationships, rituals of fan groups and the phenomenon of distancing from occasional spectators (Woratschek et al., 2007).

Based on Service-Dominant Logic (SD-logic) the value of a sporting event does not exist per se and is not determined by event characteristics. According to SD-logic only value propositions can be offered by the sporting event. As value is fundamentally derived and determined in use, the context influences value which is uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (customers in this case). Therefore co-creation of value is always value-in-context (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008).
Sport services like sporting events are often delivered in settings where many customers are present at the same time. Thus, other customers can have an essential impact on the co-creation of value (Woratschek et al., 2007). Against this background, our research objectives are fourfold:

1. Which customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value at sporting events?
2. Which types of behaviours of the customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value?
3. Do similar behaviours have different effects (positive / negative & strength) on the co-creation of value depending on the acting customer group?
4. How is the value of a sporting event described by spectators?

**Service-Dominant Logic, Relevance of Context and Relevance of Other Customers**

*Service-Dominant Logic*

According to the Goods-Dominant logic (GDlogic) by Vargo and Lusch (2004), the traditional marketing purpose is to make and distribute units of output. In this mindset the value of a good is enriched through the production process. Hence a good of high value is delivered to the consumer. Finally the consumer is seen as the person (bad boy) who destructs this value by consuming the good. As a consequence the good’s value decreases and is for example considered as a form of depreciation. In the light of this, a market-to-philosophy is applied in order to offer products which are demanded by consumers. Thus the supply-side tries to maximise profit through efficient production and distribution processes of standardised goods and sees services as add-ons to goods (after-sales-service, hotlines, complaint management systems etc.).

In contrast to GD-logic Vargo & Lusch (2004) do not differentiate between goods and services in their Service-Dominant logic (SD-logic). They see all proposals as service and define it “as the application of specialized competences through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself” (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p.
2). In their point of view every market/service offer has no value until it is used. The pure fact of ownership of a good for example does not imply value. Goods merely illustrate the materialisation of knowledge and skills and are only seen as distribution mechanisms for service provision. In contrast to GD-logic the customer is not a destructor of value, but always a co-creator of value. This means that value is generated through the use of a service to satisfy consumer’s needs. Hence, this value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (consumer in this case). To illustrate the point of view of Vargo and Lusch (2004), the following example is given.

Value-in-use depends on varying situational influences and is mainly based on experiences of the beneficiary. Therefore, similar situations could be evaluated differently due to slightly changed conditions. SD-logic focuses on the application of operant resources – dynamic resources such as competences (skills and knowledge) that are capable of acting and producing effects in other resources (Lusch et al., 2007). Regarding Foundational Premise 9 of SD-logic „all economic and social actors are resource integrators” and, having in mind that value creation is always interactional, we can extend this logic to a service setting approach (Vargo & Akaka, 2009, p. 35). In this context, other customers also represent resource integrators who contribute dynamic resources which act and behave in different ways and influence customers. Against this background, it is important to analyse literature about service settings, social-servicescape, reference groups and joint consumption to better understand other customers as resource integrators on the concept of co-creation of value in different context. Additionally, we analysed literature in sport spectator consumption behaviour which might have an influence on the unique value experience of a sport event spectator.

According to SD-logic value is co-created through combined resources of providers, customers and other parties involved in a given exchange process (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In the case of sporting events this seems rather obvious, because the event-organizer cannot create the event without other actorsª (Lusch et al., 2007). In sport management many actors
need to be considered besides the event-organizer, e.g. fans, athletes, volunteers, sponsors, media, marketing agencies, federation(s), the public, other competing clubs and the government (Leopkey & Parent, 2009).

One of the main actors are fans who contribute substantially to the characteristic atmosphere at a sports stadium and co-create value by singing battle chants, wearing fan clothes, and performing choreographies (Uhrich & Koenigstorfer, 2009). This customer group has been widely analysed from a research perspective and different types of fans like repertoire fans, fanatics, die-hard fans, hooligans, ultras and so on have been identified (Tapp, 2004).

Reasons for attending a sporting event vary and consequently value of the sporting event is determined by numerous aspects. In this regard empirical studies about motivational factors give some indication of possible components of an “event value”. The Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) (Wann et al., 2001) and the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) (Trail & James, 2001) provide important insights regarding motivational factors. Moreover, motivations of sport TV viewers contribute to an appropriate understanding of the driving forces of sport spectators (Aimiller & Kretzschmar, 1995; Schafmeister, 2007). By comparing the motivations we detected a big intersection between these four studies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stadium</th>
<th>Stadium</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>TV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entertainment</td>
<td>Quality of Physical Skills Entertainment Fascination of Sport (incl. 9.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Attractiveness Opinion forming Visual Experience Emotionality/ Involvement / Live-Experience Participating in Sport’s World of Experiences (incl. 2., 3. and 4.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Eustress</td>
<td>Drama / Excitement Sensation Seeking</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Group Affiliation</td>
<td>Social Interaction Social Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Vicarious Achievement Who wins? / Alignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aesthetics</td>
<td>Aesthetics Show / Aesthetics / Exclusiveness Show / Aesthetics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Escape</td>
<td>Escape Escape (incl. 7.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Economic</td>
<td>Acquisition of Knowledge Acquisition of Knowledge Identification with Players Identification with Players</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

∑ 8 9 12 6

Figure 1. Motivational factors for Stadium and TV.
Summarising these studies we can state that many different dimensions exist, which show a general conformity regarding the content and do not point out a special motivation isolated either for Stadium or TV. Hence, value of a sporting event can at least partly be explained by spectators’ individual motivational factors.

In marketing literature considerable empirical research has been published in the past three decades evaluating effects of the environment on customers in retail and service environments (see e.g. Turley & Milliman, 2000). However, the bulk of this work has focused on effects of the physical attributes like ambient conditions, space, signs and symbols rather than on the social element of the environment (Bitner, 1992; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Service consumptions, such as watching a game in a football stadium, often involve sharing the service environment with other consumers (Grove & Fisk, 1997). Accordingly, considerable evidence suggests that human behaviour and judgment are affected by “the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others” (Allport, 1985).

To enhance theoretical knowledge going beyond first results on individual motivational factors as well as building on SD-logic and the existing findings in the broader field of marketing we conducted a literature review focussing on the influence of other customers on the evaluation of a service experience. Thereby, we detected four relevant research fields.

Relevance of Context I – Service Settings

Firstly, we analysed studies dealing with consumer-to-consumer relationships taking place in different service settings (Thakor, Suri & Saleh, 2008). Other consumers in a specific service setting (e.g., a restaurant vs. a bowling centre) affect the attitudes towards the service satisfaction and patronage intention of those who shared the same environment (e.g., smoking near other consumers or co-consumers shouting loudly) (Day & Stafford, 1997; Grove & Fisk, 1997; Martin, 1996). In general, service settings can be characterised by required personal attributes to be either more physical (e.g. health club & rafting), more personal expressive (e.g. restaurant) or more cognitive (e.g. seminar) (Slotterback & Saarnio, 1996; Thakor, Suri & Saleh, 2008). Physical attributes are related to the physical appearance,
physical states, or physical movement and can be operationalised by adjectives like energetic, athletic, active and strong. A personal expressive service setting is linked to states of mind, attitudes, or social relations and represents adjectives like happy, friendly and kind. Cognitive attributes include intellectual abilities or information processing and can be measured by adjectives like wise, bright, knowledgeable and intelligent (Slotterback & Saarnio, 1996; Thakor, Suri & Saleh, 2008). Thakor, Suri & Saleh (2008) investigated the influences of middle-aged and older consumers on young adults in different service settings regarding perceived service quality, consumer behaviour (patronage intention) and attitudes against other consumers. They revealed that young consumers’ attitude towards the service and their patronage intention is more positive when other consumers are young rather than old in personal expressive and physical service settings. Interestingly, no significant influences could be found by comparing the determined groups (young adults, middle-aged and older adults) within the cognitive service setting. In general, they analysed potential influences on “attitudes towards service”, “attitudes towards other consumers”, “patronage intentions” and “service quality” (Thakor, Suri & Saleh, 2008). Findings show that the mere presence of other consumers in a specific service setting (health club vs. restaurant vs. seminar) affect the attitudes towards the service satisfaction and patronage intention of those who shared the same environment.

Relevance of Context II – Social-Servicescape

Secondly, we studied the conceptual framework of Tombs & McColl-Kennedy’s (2003) conceptual framework of social-servicescape. Profound research in marketing literature about the influence of the environment on customer’s service perceptions and its consequences on satisfaction, product choice, customer retention, price, sales, time spent in the store etc. mainly focused on the effects of the physical elements of the environment (e.g. Babin & Attaway, 2000; Bitner, 1990; Buckley, 1991; Donovan et al. 1994; Grewal & Baker, 1994; Grossbart et al., 1990). One of the most cited servicescape frameworks is the work of Bitner (1992). Bitner (1992) considered the service environment in terms of three physical factors:
ambient conditions (temperature, lighting, music, scent), spatial layout and functionality of
the facility, and signs, symbols and artefacts. In doing so Bitner explicitly excludes other
customers from the categorization of environmental that have an impact on customer’s
perceptions and customer’s behaviour. In her framework social interactions between
customers themselves and between customers and employees are considered as outcomes of
the physical servicescape. However, many services are delivered in service settings where
other customers are present at the same time. Considerable studies indicate the importance of
other customers within the service environment as active (Davies, Baron & Harris, 1999;
Martin, 1996; McGrath & Ottes, 1995; Parker & Ward, 2000) or passive parts (Bateson &
Hui, 1987; Lau & Ng, 2001; Martin & Pranter, 1989). Based on several approach-avoidance
framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and the integration of socially oriented theories of
social facilitation (Zajonc, 1965), behaviour settings (Barker, 1968) and affective events
(Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) Tombs & McColl-Kennedy developed the concept of social-
servicescape. Their conceptual framework comprises three elements of the social-
servicescape: purchase occasion, social density and displayed emotions of others. Therefore
the service perception and its evaluation are influenced by these three factors. Dependent on
whether it is expected to consume privately (private purchase occasion; e.g. romantic dinner)
or in a group (group purchase occasion; large birthday dinner), the level of social density
influences the service experience. Hence, every setting requires an optimal level of customers
to be evaluated positively. Accordingly group purchase occasions tendentially need a high
social density whereas private purchase occasions benefit from a low social density.
Additionally the concept of emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1992) is used
to describe the effects of displayed emotions of others on the individual’s affective state and
subsequent behaviours. Whereas in a group purchase occasion the individual is likely to be
positively or negatively influenced by the corresponding behaviours and emotions of others,
the individual will be more negatively influenced in a private purchase occasion when other
customers display positive or negative emotions. Thus, the purchase occasion determines the
context in which the service will take place and needs to be considered analysing the concept of co-creation of value.²

**Relevance of Other Customers I – Reference Groups**

Thirdly, we reviewed the characteristics and influences of reference groups on consumer behaviour. Besides the mere presence the effects of associating oneself with other customers in consumption settings are widely discussed in reference group literature. Due to individuals’ daily relations to different people at work, school, university and in private life, they permanently act in social groups. Social psychologists have been investigating influences on social identity for several decades (Tajfel, 1974, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Their findings made an important contribution to marketing by detecting influences of reference groups on consumer preferences and on relationship marketing (Arnett, German & Hunt, 2003; White & Dahl, 2006). Hyman (1942) already investigated interpersonal relations in the 1940’s and is regarded as the worldwide mastermind in the field of reference groups (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). He coined the term reference group in a study of social status when he asked respondents with which individuals or groups they compared themselves (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Hyman, 1942). Kelly refined Hyman’s concept of a reference group by adding normative reference groups, which are used as a source of personal norms, attitudes, and values (Childers & Rao, 1992; Kelley, 1947). From this time on, many researchers tried to subsume their explications about the reference group construct. The mostly cited authors are Bearden and Etzel (1982) who investigated the influence of reference groups on product and brand purchase decisions. They define “a reference group is a person or group of people that significantly influences an individual's behaviour” (Bearden & Etzel, 1982).

The concept of reference groups affects simultaneously individuals and social groups. A person creates his/her self-perception and his/her social identity for a lifetime. This process takes place in the mind of the individual and is characterised through operating and comparing himself/herself with other people. Therefore, his/her social environment is crucial for this development (McCallister, 2001). Festinger developed a theory of social comparison
in 1954 (Festinger, 1954; Moschis, 1976). Hence, reference groups help individuals to find a place in society (Guillen-Royo, 2008).

Typically, reference group literature distinguishes between three types of reference groups: membership groups, aspirational groups, and dissociative groups (White & Dahl, 2006). Membership reference groups are groups to which an individual currently belongs (e.g., a family, a peer group, a fan club). This is a type of reference group the individual identifies with, is attracted to, and feels psychologically involved with (Turner, 1991). In aspirational reference groups, individuals feel identified with and feel attracted to without being a member, but aspiring to be one (e.g., celebrities, a desired social group membership) (Englis & Solomon, 1995). Dissociative reference groups are those groups an individual wishes to avoid being associated with and “disidentifies” with (e.g., radical parties, hooligans) (Englis & Solomon, 1995; Turner, 1991).

**Membership Groups**

Membership groups could arise out of cultural and ethnic affiliations. Especially in complex social structures ethnic reference groups are of high relevance (the U.S.A for example is a paramount example for a multinational structure of population whereas many other Western countries are very similar to the U.S.A.). Escalas and Bettman (2003) analysed the influence of ethnical membership groups regarding their purchase behaviour. They compared Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans to White Americans. Their results show that ethnic groups (Hispanic and Asian Americans) are more influenced by their reference (membership) group due to a stronger feeling of belonging together in a foreign country compared to the more independent White Americans (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Moreover, religions could have an influence on consumer behaviour within a membership group (Lindridge, 2005).

Another example of a membership group is characterised by the belonging to a family. Relatives might have an influence on the consumption of goods and services depending on the size of the family. If the family consists of two spouses and a small number of children, the influence is smaller compared to a family consisting of a patriarchal or matriarchal figure and
numerous mature siblings who have spouses and progeny of their own and who all live in one large joint-family arrangement. They argue that based on a large number of family members, a strong family identity exists which has more impact on purchase decisions. Members of a small family socialise more intense with other groups which represent further reference groups for them (Childers & Rao, 1992). Additionally peer groups as a third issue of membership groups were investigated in many studies. Peer groups represent people of the same age, friends, neighbours or colleagues. The stronger the relations between peer group members the more similar is their behaviour regarding purchasing brands, going to restaurants, watching TV-shows and eating of a specific pizza (Reingen et al. 1984). Similar Lee & Murphy (2006) confirm the effects of peer groups on the demand of young adults. They revealed for instance that the use of identical mobile phones within the peer group determines the existence or exclusion from this membership group (Lee & Murphy, 2006).

The latest discussed membership groups are brand communities. Members of such communities share their passion for certain brands or general hobbies and have either face-to-face contact or communicate via the World Wide Web in chat rooms, forums or specific consumer portals. Communities strengthen individuals in their present opinion and support purchase decisions. Identification with the reference group and word-of-mouth behaviour are the main drivers of consumer behaviour in this context (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008; Pentina, Prybutok & Zhang, 2008; Steyer, Garcia-Bardidia & Quester, 2006; Popp, 2010). Recapitulating membership groups, it can be stated that they can emerge in a variety of ways. Some membership groups are set because of being born into a certain family, cultural environment or ethnicity. If the individual highly identifies with this group and considers it as an important part of his self-perception the group becomes his reference (membership) group. In case the identification is low the individual can consciously join either a new group or switch between groups (Hooper, 1982). Concerning peer groups and brand communities, the individual needs to participate in these groups to be a member.
The most important aspect is the mental use of membership groups to create its self-image by reference to others. The identification with these reference groups opens ways for various influences of groups on individual’s life.

Aspirational Groups

Aspirational groups are positive groups individuals identify with, feel attracted to and strive for. Examples can be celebrities and desired membership groups the individual does not yet belong to. However, it is impossible to belong to these groups, because they would immediately become a real membership group. Therefore, aspirational groups do not have the characteristic of affiliation. Aspects of self-perception, self-concept, self-identity and self-presentation become more important. Aspirational groups are used to improve self-image and to get closer to the perfect self (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). The most studies use rich, successful and popular people for representing aspirational groups. However, this is not mandatory. Every social group can be an aspirational group under certain circumstances. The main requirement is a sufficiently high number of people who identify with symbols and values of this group and keep on seeking to belong to that group. As long as such aspirants are not members yet, these groups represent aspirational groups for them.

Dissociative Groups

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) an individual takes his identity and self-perception out of his knowledge about the membership to a social group. The other way round an individual takes the same knowledge by delimiting himself from groups he/she does not belong to and does not identify with. These dissociative groups are negative groups a person tries to avoid and does not want to be associated with (White & Dahl, 2006). Past research has demonstrated that one’s gender group is a major element of the self-concept (Cross & Markus, 1993; Oyserman & Markus, 1993) and that people sometimes have negative attitudes towards activities associated with the opposite sex (Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald, 2002). White and Dahl (2006) for example labelled a small portion of a steak once as “ladies’ cut” and another time as “chef’s cut”. They investigated the different ratings
for the presented steaks of female and male test persons. Males who were offered a steak called “ladies’cut” rated the steak more negative and were less inclined to choose it than when the same steak was called “chef’s cut.” Therefore, the study revealed a negative effect of dissociative groups on male consumer preferences (White & Dahl, 2006). Hence, dissociative groups are the opposite of aspirational groups. They help individuals to come closer to their ideal self-image by realising the dissociative group and using it for comparison. The more obvious the customer differs from the image of the dissociative groups and demands different goods and services the better its self-identity, self-assessment and self-presentation to others.

Relevance of Other Customers II – Joint Consumption

Fourthly, additional insights were gained by the research field about joint consumption from Ramanathan & McGill (2007) who analyzed the behaviour of people when customers can observe the behaviour of other customers. They state that consuming with others feels different and describe a “chameleon effect” which is supported by „emotional contagion“ in which moods transfer between people. Observing another customer’s expressions may provide information about the quality of the service, causing people to adjust their own behaviour. In general their work builds on the stream of research in social psychology examining how people may influence each other’s’ feelings in their joint interactions (Gump & Kulik, 1997; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson 1992; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson 1994, Howard & Gengler 2001). Hence, recent research reveals that people sitting next to each other tend to mimic each other’s nonverbal expressions to mirror the behaviour of a companion, e.g. smiling, slouching, or jiggling one’s foot (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). Moreover observing another person’s pleasure or displeasure with an experience may affect the individual’s feelings and evaluations. E.g. recognizing another person’s laughing while watching a movie may lead the individual to rethink about the movie “perhaps the movie is funnier than I thought” (Ramanathan & McGill, 2007, p. 507). As a consequence the individual begins to smile more, laugh more and finally feels more amused due to the contagion of emotion. The results of the studies of Ramanathan & McGill (2007) reveal that
sharing the experience with another person effects the evaluations of the consumer to become more like that of the other person. Therefore evaluations of an experience may change in a positive and negative way as a consequence of being with other customers. Moreover their findings are robust over a broad time frame and emphasize the importance of shared patterns of judgement.

**Method**

*Repertory Grid*

To reach a better understanding of the research problem and to formulate hypotheses later on, our research design was of exploratory nature. To address our research questions we used a multiplicity of research methods. First, we applied an extensive qualitative repertory grid methodology as it is a technique for identifying personal construct systems (behaviours) to better evaluate the relationship of a person with its environment (other customers) (Baier & Kohler, 2004; Kelly, 1991; Fromm, 1995).

Overall 49 persons were interviewed between January and March, 2011. At this exploratory stage of research we explicitly used convenience sampling to get information from different perspectives from different kinds of sports. [Sample: 69 % male; 31 % female; average age 33 years; referred sporting events: 69 % Football (n=34), 10 % Ice Hockey (n=5), 4 % Handball (n=2), 4 % Gymnastics (n=2), 2 % Basketball (n=1), 2 % Rugby (n=1), 2 % Horse-Riding (n=1), 2 % Tennis (n=1), 2 % American Football (n=1), 2 % Artistic Cycling (n=1)].

The repertory grid was conducted in five stages.

*Repertory Grid: Stage 1*

At the beginning the interviewer explained the term „value“ as positive or negative aspects or utilities of the experience which can be derived from the customer by attending a sporting event, e.g. fun, good/bad feeling, experience, gladness, sorrow, frustration, happiness, enjoyment etc. After that the interviewee should shortly describe himself as a spectator and the interviewer recorded socio-demographic data (age and gender) and the sporting event the test person was referring to.
Repertory Grid: Stage 2

Second, the test person was asked to mention six to twelve relevant customer groups which affect the personal value of the event experience. All mentioned customer groups (e.g. friends, own fans, etc.) were noted on a card which were used in step 3 and were additionally noted on a form. This stage of the repertory grid is called “determination of elements” and served to answer research question one “which customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value at sporting events?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs / Behaviour</th>
<th>Elements / Customer Groups</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Own Fans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating '5' (Contrast Pole): I don't like this behaviour at all</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Repertory Grid (Stage 2): Determination of elements.

Repertory Grid: Stage 3

In the third stage, the interviewer elicited relevant behaviours (construct systems) from the test person by taking triads of elements randomly (customer groups mentioned in stage one). Thereby the test person should create a pair of elements which is different to the third customer group with regard to the behaviour of the customer groups. To detect similar and different behaviours the interviewee was asked: “Please compare your created pair of elements with the third customer group: Which similar behaviours contain the pair of elements? And which behaviours are different between the pair of elements compared to the third customer group?” We explicitly tried to detect several behaviours per pair of elements respectively the third customer group. This elicitation of triads was repeated until no different
behaviours could be found. When no clear answers appeared we applied laddering-technique to clarify the described behaviours (Reynolds & Gutman, 1984). All mentioned behaviours were also noted in the matrix. Additionally we added the corresponding triad and the laddering-technique if necessary. This part of the repertory grid is called “determination of constructs” and served to answer research question two “which types of behaviours of the customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value?”

To answer research question three the test person was asked in stage four to rate all the elements according to all constructs (full grid) on a modified 1-5 scale (1 = I like this behaviour very much to 5 = I don’t like this behaviour at all; X = cannot rate the behaviour of this element). We did not use the established contrasting poles for rating the full grid for two reasons. On the one hand we wanted to simplify the challenging task of rating the full grid and on the other hand we wanted to avoid the ambivalence-indifference problem which is widely known in measuring attitudes of customers (Kaplan, 1972).

**Figure 3.** Repertory Grid (Stage 3): Determination of constructs.

**Repertory Grid: Stage 4**

To answer research question three the test person was asked in stage four to rate all the elements according to all constructs (full grid) on a modified 1-5 scale (1 = I like this behaviour very much to 5 = I don’t like this behaviour at all; X = cannot rate the behaviour of this element). We did not use the established contrasting poles for rating the full grid for two reasons. On the one hand we wanted to simplify the challenging task of rating the full grid and on the other hand we wanted to avoid the ambivalence-indifference problem which is widely known in measuring attitudes of customers (Kaplan, 1972).

**Figure 4.** Repertory Grid (Stage 4): Evaluation of the elements in the “Full Grid”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements / Customer Groups</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating '5' (Contrast Pole): I don’t like this behaviour at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct resulting out of a triad of elements (1 &amp; 2 vs. 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laddering-Technique (How, Why, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage five: Multistage Content Analysis

Finally a multistage content analysis was applied by two independent researchers to bundle customer groups and behaviours of the customer groups. At the beginning the two researchers independently formulated main categories for the customer groups and the described behaviours. Afterwards both researchers discussed their proposed categories and agreed on a first category system. In a next step the researchers assigned autonomously the first 30% of the raw material to their proposed main categories. Subsequently a test for reliability was conducted and the researchers adapted the category system, again. This step was repeated after 60% of the raw material was assigned. Hence, content analysis could be applied to the entire data set (Mayring, 2007). Figure 5 illustrates this process.

Figure 5. Multistage content analysis.

Videography and semi structured in-depth interviews

To assure validity of our qualitative analysis we applied a method triangulation and supported our findings by carrying out qualitative studies using videography and semi structured in-depth interviews (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Field work took place from March till April, 2011. Within this period 229 interviews (173 by applying videography and 56 by applying in-depth interviews) were conducted with sport spectators around the stadiums and about 10 hours of video material and about 37:30 hours of
audio material were recorded. The interviews were of varying duration: videotaped interviews ranged from 3 to 7 minutes and audiotaped interviews ranged from 10 to 107 minutes. Male informants constituted nearly 73 % of the sample (19 % were female and 8 % were interviewed in groups) and participants were aged between 22 and 67 (average of 36 years). Since we were still on an exploratory stage of research we used again convenience sampling to get information from different perspectives from different kinds of sports: referred sporting events: 51 % Football (n=116), 19 % Ice Hockey (n=44), 19 % Basketball (n=43); 11 % Handball (n=26). Videotaped observations and in-depth interviews were coded and analyzed independently by two researchers using content analytic techniques (Krippendorff, 2004 & Mayring, 2007).

Videography and in-depth interviews had the same purpose following our first three proposed research questions. Hence both methods were based on an interview manual. As operating with SD-logic revealed communication problems concerning the term “value” in our first qualitative study (repertory grid) we added an unaided open-ended question at the beginning of the interviews “What are your personal values at a sporting event?” in order to find out what the spectators mean by the term “value” and to answer research question four “How is the value of a sporting event described by spectators?” To ensure that we can use the recorded video and audio material for research purposes we asked the respondents at the beginning of the interview for permission. Figure 6 illustrates the interview procedure.
Address the spectator(s) and briefly describe research project. **Next raise question 1:** “What are your personal values at a sporting event?”

**Question 2:** Which customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value at sporting events?

**Question 3:** Which types of behaviours of the customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value?

**Question 4:** Do similar behaviours have different effects (positive / negative & strength) on the co-creation of value depending on the acting customer group?

**Collection of socio-demographic data.** Saying good bye and thank you to the participants.

*Figure 6.* Interview procedure for videography and in-depth interviews.

As our qualitative interviews were semi-structured we adapted the interview process to the respondent’s answers individually. Hence, according to repertory grid (stage 3: determination of constructs) we repeated questions two, three and four until the participant could not mention new aspects to gain as much information as possible (indicated by the double arrows in Figure 6).
Results

Repertory Grid

Out of the 49 repertory grids 443 customer groups and 700 behaviours were extracted. Via the multistage content analysis 27 customer groups (reliability after 30% of the data material $R_{30\%} = 0.86; R_{60\%} = 0.91; R_{100\%} = 0.90$) and 38 behaviours ($R_{30\%} = 0.90; R_{60\%} = 0.76; R_{100\%} = 0.82$) co-creating value in sporting events were identified. Figures 7 and 8 provide an overview of the most frequently mentioned customer groups and behaviours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Groups</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Behaviours</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Friends</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Ensure the Safety</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Staff</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>Provoke</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing Fans</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Support the Tam</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Fans</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Contribute to a Good Atmosphere in the Stadium</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fans in General</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Show Emotions</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining Fans (Capo)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Seeking for Conflicts and Violence</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIP's</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Joint Action and Enforce Community Belonging</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooligans</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Singing/Clapping/Cheering</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultras</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Using Event for Recreational Activities</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectators in Close Proximity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Perform Choreographies</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Fans</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fair Behaviour</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Most frequently mentioned customer groups.

Figure 8. Most frequently mentioned behaviours.

Regarding research question 1 it can be stated that a huge variety of different customer groups have an effect on the co-creation of value at sporting events. The most important ones are mentioned in Figure 7. However in contrast to traditional marketing theory our research shows that the presence of other customers during consumption (here sporting event) should be much more focused in the future. Furthermore we indicate that different types of behaviours of the customer groups affect the value of the customers (research question 2). The most mentioned types of behaviours are shown in Figure 8.

In order to analyse whether there is any difference in influence direction respectively influence strength of similar behaviours depending on the acting customer group (research question 3), we analysed all given statements in detail. Several similar behaviours were rated differently by the test persons depending on which customer group acts. E.g. the described behaviour “customer group shows emotions” was rated positively for the “Own Fans (1)” and “Ultras” (1) whereas it was negatively evaluated for “Casual Fans (4)” and “Hooligans” (4).
Similar contrasts can be found analysing the behaviours “customer group performs choreographies” as the extracts of a repertory grid sheet shows in Figure 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs / Behaviour</th>
<th>Elements / Customer Groups</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</td>
<td>Ultras</td>
<td>Hooligans</td>
<td>Own Fans</td>
<td>Casual Fans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 The customer group shows emotions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 The customer group performs choreographies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9.** Extract of repertory grid regarding different ratings of similar behaviours within a repertory grid.

Next to different ratings within a repertory grid similar behaviours were rated differently for varying customer groups across repertory grids as well. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the diversity regarding the behaviour “customer group tries to provoke”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs / Behaviour</th>
<th>Elements / Customer Groups</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</td>
<td>Security Staff</td>
<td>VIP's</td>
<td>Opposing Fans</td>
<td>Ultras</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The customer group tries to provoke</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10.** Extract of repertory grid regarding different ratings of similar behaviours for varying customer groups across repertory grids I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs / Behaviour</th>
<th>Elements / Customer Groups</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</td>
<td>Family &amp; Friends</td>
<td>Own Fans</td>
<td>Opposing Fans</td>
<td>Spectators in close proximity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 The customer group tries to provoke</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11.** Extract of repertory grid regarding different ratings of similar behaviours for varying customer groups across repertory grids II.
Additionally, similar behaviours of similar customer groups across varying repertory grids were rated differently depending on the perspective of the test person. E.g. the customer group “Family & Friends” was evaluated differently for “customer group contributes to a good atmosphere in the stadium” by different customer groups shown by Figure 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective of the participant</th>
<th>Elements / Customer Groups</th>
<th>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member of Ultra fan club</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The customer group contributes to a good atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Fan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The customer group contributes to a good atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan in General</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The customer group contributes to a good atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12. Similar behaviours of similar customer groups across varying repertory grids.

For an “Ultra” the corresponding behaviour of the customer group “Family & Friends” was rated very negatively (5), whereas a “Casual Fan” liked it very much to see families creating atmosphere in the stadium (1) similar to a “Fan in General” (2).

Likewise the mentioned behaviour “customer group is singing/clapping/cheering” reveals the importance of the perspective of the participant concerning the evaluation of similar actions of similar groups of persons.
Table 1: Saliency of similar customer group behaviors across varying repertory grids. The table shows the saliency scores for similar customer group behaviors across varying repertory grids.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective of the participant</th>
<th>Construct / Behaviour</th>
<th>Rating '1' (Construct Pole): I like this behaviour very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casual Fan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>The customer group is singing/clapping/cheering. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The customer group is singing/clapping/cheering. (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan in General</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>The customer group is singing/clapping/cheering. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Fan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>The customer group is singing/clapping/cheering. (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. Similar behaviours of similar customer groups across varying repertory grids.

As Figure 13 illustrates the obvious positive behaviour of “singing/clapping/cheering” was evaluated diversely for the “Opposing Fans”. Whereas a “VIP” (1) and a “Fan in General” (2) enjoyed the actions of the opposing fans, a “Casual Fan” (5) and an “Own Fan” (5) did not like it at all. It is important to remark that the evaluation of the different behaviours of other customers depends on the customer itself. For example, most respondents do not like provocation, whereas some ultras appreciate provocative behaviours of their group (see Figure 10).

According to SD-Logic our findings regarding research question 3 indicate that the application of specialized competences through deeds, processes, and performances do not always benefit the other entity. Hence, beside co-creation of value our results make a clear indication for a new concept in SD-logic: co-destruction of value. We show that value can be co-destroyed through certain interactions between different customer groups resulting in a reduced value-in-use for at least one involved party. Against this background we refine the concept of value co-destruction, which was first mentioned by Plé & Cáceres (2010), because we do not only focus on the misuse of resources during the interactions between the service actors. With their understanding of value co-destruction we would only have identified
behaviours of customer groups which inherently have negative impacts like violent actions from hooligans. It is obvious that the existence of hooligans in a stadium can negatively influence the whole atmosphere and the value-in-use for every other individual through the misuse of their resources. However, one might argue that for a hooligan violent actions might have positive impacts on the event value. As we did not interview hooligans our data did not support this point. Nevertheless this information highlights the theoretical relationships to the concept of reference groups, because for every participant, reference groups can only be defined individually by the participant or customer and needs to be seen as a relative term that depends on the context and the environment. Thus the aforementioned examples assert the concept of co-creation of value by other customers and reveal that an extended comprehension should also include facilitators and barriers in the value co-creation processes.

Videography and semi structured in-depth interviews

Our conducted videography and in-depth interviews also addressed the first three research questions, but did not reveal any additional information. Moreover our complementary qualitative studies focused on the understanding of the personal “value” at a sporting event (research question 4).

The content analysis revealed interesting results. The interviewees mainly reported dimensions which have been detected by the above mentioned empirical studies about motivational factors of sport spectators (see Figure 1). Hence, the value of a sporting event was described by six value dimensions: (1) Identification, (2) Socialization, (3) Atmosphere, (4) Fun & Entertainment, (5) Physical Skills & Aesthetics and (6) Eustress & Excitement. To underline our findings we present some quotes from participants.

(1) Identification

P99: “Regardless of whether they play good or bad, I am just a Nuremberg fan and therefore you stick together and support the team.”

P31: “First of all it is fun, the sport itself, I like to watch Basketball, simply to support the team – to enjoy the team spirit, when everybody supports the team, that’s it.”
(2) Socialization

P82: “I think I watch the game not only because of the sport itself – although I like to see that kind of sport – but it’s somehow also the opportunity to meet friends and to exchange experiences.”

P105: “You meet new people again and again. That’s simply an experience. You socialize and make new friendships through football.”

(3) Atmosphere

P62: “To enjoy the atmosphere, the chants of the fans in small as well as in big arenas are impressive. Here in our arena you know the people, but the vibes take you along and it’s great to be in.”

P03: “There should be a good atmosphere, the people should cheer, support the home team and for sure the home team should win at the end.”

(4) Fun & Entertainment

P52: “We want to have fun, to be entertained and finally we want to leave back home with a good conscience.”

P33: “For me it’s just entertainment, excitement, relaxing, to experience the atmosphere, that’s what it’s all about today.”

(5) Physical Skills & Aesthetics

P13: “To watch a good game, that’s the most important point.”

P61: “The value of a sporting event is to see something beautiful and athletically interesting!”

(6) Eustress & Excitement

P98: “The club can send you to hell, if the team relegates. But you also enjoy the coolest things together with the club – you have moments you will never forget in live!”

P112: “I’m not interested in the result of the game; the main point is an exciting game. The excitement of the game is what attracts me.”
The citations reveal that the values were reported as fulfilled motivations. Thus our results can be used to measure value, because in the literature almost no measurement scale for “value” exists yet. As research about motivational factors in sports context has been widely applied, appropriate items can be easily found to operationalize “value” for a sporting event.

**Discussion**

Based on existing theoretical knowledge, particularly SD-logic, our study gained new insights on the influence of other customers on the event value. By applying a qualitative approach the present study examined the influences of other customers in a sporting event context. Beside the description of potential customer groups which might affect the personal value of a spectator, we also investigated behaviours of other present customers which contribute to the process of value co-creation. This strengthens SD-Logic in sport management.

Moreover we gained information about similar behaviours conducted by similar customer groups resulting in different evaluations depending on the context. Hence, we got clear indications for adapting current measurement approaches (e.g. characteristic oriented approaches for measuring service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty; see e.g. Woratschek, 2000), which are transaction oriented regardless of the context and the co-creation processes.

Our complementary studies shed light on the customer’s comprehension of the term “value” and worked out worthwhile results in the field of sport management. As we presented value seems to represent fulfilled driving forces like motivational dimensions. Thus, our findings can be used for further analyses which concentrate on the measurement of value in a sporting context as value seems to be quite similar to motivational dimensions.

The use of a method triangulation appeared to be very helpful. The adapted repertory grid technique was very fruitful with regard to research questions 1, 2 and 3. Although repertory grid and its content analysis are very sophisticated, the information gained out of it was unique compared to videography and in-depth interviews. Nevertheless by adding videography and in-depth interviews we obtained clear findings about the “value” of a
sporting event derived out of the specific context, as we interviewed the spectators on site locally in front of the stadiums.

Our study reported the variety of possible influencing forces based on consumer-to-consumer relationships and therefore underlines the necessity to further investigate the effects of the social environment on the personal value. Without consideration of these influences an important aspect of the context would be missing not only in the concept of co-creating value but also in sport marketing.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Our study underlines the necessity to further examine the influence of other present customers during consumption, especially in the context of sporting events. Further investigations are needed to confirm this first attempt of classifying potential influencing dimensions at a sporting event. Based on our findings hypotheses could be derived to set up a model which investigates the influence of the social environment compared to the physical environment on the personal “value”. Hence, it would be of interest to find out which dimension affects the personal “value” more. Consequently appropriate customer segmentation can lead to managerial implications for the examined context (in our case a sporting event) by describing homogeneous groups who mainly gain their value out of the game itself or mainly out of social interactions with other customers.

For further research we support the ideas of Edvardsson et al. (2011) to expand the understanding of value co-creation. Next to our mentioned theoretical background a social construction approach would endorse future research. By taking the principles of social construction theories they theoretically discuss why different customers may evaluate the same service differently or the same customer has different evaluations for the same service depending on different social contexts. Thus for Edvardsson et al. (2011) value should be understood as value-in-social-context and seems to generate additional insights in the influence of other customers on value co-creation.
Additionally we are supported by Macdonald et al. (2011, p. 672) who also argue that “current service quality measures are insufficient for understanding customer value.” Within SD-logic the process of value co-creation is crucial and needs to be considered for developing new and innovative measurement approaches. These developments should also contain the customer’s understanding of value-in-use, which changes from time to time, because of social interactions and on-going experiences within the context. Hence, future research should also think about effective combinations of existing qualitative methods where data is captured by customers and co-creation of value takes place (Edvardsson et al., 2011).

**Implications for Managers of Sports Services**

The present marketing approaches focus too much on the contribution of product and services through the value of customers. Mostly they neglect the importance of social interactions with other customers for co-creation of value. Nevertheless by the means of these findings further analyses are needed to verify the results and to further integrate the behaviour of other customers in the sport event experience. The findings in the context of sporting events will be applicable for many service settings where customers share the service environment with other consumers (e.g. conferences, concerts, restaurants, airplane, tourism etc.).

Managers of Sports Services should bring to mind that they offer value propositions for all actors which contribute to the value creation processes. As we focus on the influence of other customers, it is important to think about platforms where different customer groups interact. First attempts to detect compatible customer segments including managerial implications can be found in literature (Martin & Pranter, 1989; Pranter & Martin, 1991). In our point of view these approaches are not sufficient enough, because they only focus on the management at the event location. Managers need to identify all possible platforms, where co-creation processes occur (e.g. in public transportation system, in front of and inside of the arena, in pubs, in social media, etc.). Once the relevant co-creation platforms have been identified the club can start managing the platforms by offering more value propositions for the participating actors. Thereby the managers should not only focus on one customer group or certain behaviours as
we now know the multifariousness of influencing forces by other customers on the perception of a service provision.

Notes

1. According to SD-Logic we consistently use the term “actor” instead of “stakeholder”.

2. Tombs & McColl-Kennedy (2003, p. 461) state that “it is surprising that there is a lack of research on the impact that emotional contagion has on inter-customer affect within service environments. Holt (1995) provides an exception to this lack of research by showing that in socially oriented settings the displayed emotions of the individuals (baseball spectators) tended to become communal emotions and play a major part in the consumption experience.” Beside Holt (1995) the article of Ramanathan & McGill (2007) investigates this research field. The content is described in the chapter Relevance of Other Customers II – Joint Consumption in this article. As the article of Tombs & McColl-Kennedy was published in 2003 and the study of Ramanathan & McGill was published 2007, we see a lack of research to further investigate these effects in the context of the social-servicescape.

3. To differentiate the fans it was necessary to distinguish between “Own Fans” and “Opposing Fans”. The classification of an individual depends on whether he attends a home or an away game. Based on this division home and away fans can be segmented to own and opposing fans. A classification between home and away fans would not distinguish the two groups, because the individual could attend a home or an away game. Therefore away fans are opposing fans when they are attending a home game whereas away fans are own fans when they are attending an away game.

4. Similar answers of football fans which support our findings can be found in the study of Woratschek et al. (2007).

5. We explicitly use the term motivations instead of motives, because motivations are activating reasons of human actions to reach desired conditions whereas motives
represent the willingness of an individual to certain behaviours and finally stand for a latent human disposition. Therefore motivations result out of latent motives through the activation of situational influences. Thus motivations represent updated reasons of human actions (Popp, 2010).

6. Macdonald et al. (2011) investigated value-in-use for an engine manufacturer applying a qualitative study at two points of time. Similar to our study they concentrated on customers’ goals to derive explanations for the term “value-in-use”. Other forms of perceived value can also not replace the process of value co-creation, because they do not integrate the customers’ resources like studies about the term “perceived value”. Zeithaml (1988, p. 14) for example describes “personal value” as “the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given.” Thus the context is totally missed and represents a transaction oriented measurement approach.
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Munich.


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