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Customer-to-customer (C2C) co-creation signifies the process by which value emerges in encounters, interactions and relationships with other customers in the same setting (Rihova et al., 2018). Examples of 'socially dense' tourism and leisure contexts in which C2C co-creation is relevant include those where tourists share time, space, and service resources with each other. This could be both physical settings but also online spaces, such as social media, virtual forums, and app-based platforms:

- various types of independent and organised/ guided tours and travel experiences (e.g., tourists-strangers helping each other plan a holiday on an internet forum, or sharing advice on aspects of their holidays once in the destination)
- tourist attractions and amusement parks (e.g., families spending time together learning something new or simply 'having fun')
- hotels, holiday resorts and cruises (e.g., groups of previously unknown tourists meeting and spending their holidays together, or single tourists connecting with each other through dating apps in holiday resorts)
- restaurants and food outlets (e.g., the social presence of others contributing to 'an atmosphere' in the setting)
- organised recreational activities (e.g., communities that emerge around activities such as sailing, dancing, folk music, etc.)
- theatres and performance spaces/ venues, including at festivals and events (e.g., the sense of togetherness experienced by 'a crowd' of revellers who share an experience)

The notion of C2C co-creation has developed from a well-established body of literature on customer-to-customer interactions (also "CCI"). In the 1980s, other customers were viewed as a relatively passive part of the social surroundings of the service environment. For example, crowding was associated with negative service experiences in certain leisure settings. Later, authors began exploring specific actions and (mis-)behaviours of other customers and their influence on service satisfaction and retention (e.g., Grove and Fisk, 1997). From 2000 onwards, researchers showed that tourist interactions can also bring other benefits, not related to service quality or experience. C2C interactions promote social cohesion and develop community wellbeing, as seen at music festivals and community events. This is because customers in such contexts often work together to solve problems, share their experiences, and assist each other in purchase decisions (Schau et al., 2009). C2C interactions therefore represent an important *platform for co-creating a variety of value outcomes*. These can then either be linked back to the service experience itself or to the wider context of customers' lives.

The co-creation focus in C2C literature has its roots in the Service-Dominant (S-D) logic of marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). S-D logic views customers as crucial actors in co-creating value. Tourism has utilised the concept to explore value co-creation primarily between customers and the service provider. But C2C co-creation is also increasingly being considered by studies adopting the more recent Customer-Dominant (C-D) perspective in marketing (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). C-D logic notes that companies find it increasingly challenging to be involved in the social communities created by customers and the value they co-create. This is particularly

important for tourism management and marketing, as many experiences are now taking place outside of the firm's direct scope of influence. Tourism and hospitality online social networks and peer-to-peer platforms such as AirBnB and Uber are examples of such C2C co-creation settings (Camilleri and Neuhofer, 2017).

Figure 1 summarises the three critical aspects of C2C co-creation in tourism that need to be taken into consideration: 1) the co-creating actors and social context, 2) the process, and 3) the various value outcomes. In terms of actors and social contexts, C2C co-creation may take place in physical or virtual settings and comprise direct or indirect interactions between previously known or unknown individual tourists or tourist groups (see examples above). The process of C2C co-creation is best understood through the notion of *social practices*. These contextualise co-creation both in physical settings and in symbolic and often routine contexts that may render such co-creation invisible to tourism organisations. Co-creation practices comprise several subject- and situation-specific practice elements and actions that together guide the way in which practices are performed (Rihova et al., 2018). These elements also represent factors that may to some extent influence the intensity, frequency, and personal engagement of tourists in specific practices (Reichenberger, 2017; Rihova et al., 2018).

Figure 1 - C2C Co-creation in tourism



In various tourism contexts different types of practices will dominate. For example, tight-knit family and friendship groups in family holiday results will likely engage in bonding, sharing, and communicating with each other. On the other hand, their practices in relation to other unknown tourists may include territorial, insulating or even non-conforming practices that help them detach themselves and their social groups from others sharing the same physical space. In relaxed leisure spaces such as neighbourhood events or on organised tours, a sense of camaraderie may develop that is encapsulated in tourists relating to each other, helping, providing advice, conversing, and confiding in each other. In liminal leisure spaces such as music festivals or various cos-play conventions, a sense of togetherness between tourist sharing a common experience can facilitate embracing, fun-making and kinship practices. In contexts where tourists form part of a specific consumer tribe or community guided by some common norms and interests, they may initiate each other into the community, perform practices through which they conform to the common norms and trade resources to facilitate the continuation of the tribe. Social media and e-networks help to facilitate such tribal practices, as is the case in virtual leisure spaces around sports fandom or folk music for example.

The value outcomes of C2C co-creation are again manifold and depend on the actors and process as outlined above. Rihova et al. (2018) note the emergence of four types of value in tourism C2C co-creation: affective, social, functional, and network value. C2C co-creation arouses positive feelings and emotions, such as personal enjoyment, joy, and happiness, but also potentially negative feelings, such as a sense of isolation or diminished sense of self-worth. Social value encompasses a range of outcomes related to social status, affinity, friendship, and relationship building. Functional value relates to cognitive efficiency- or excellence-related outcomes for

individuals that stem from resources increased through supportive practices in C2C contexts. Network value stems from the connectedness of tourists in both physical and virtual socialisation and is linked to social and cultural capital attainment as functions of social networks membership. Other outcomes, such as atmospheric or hedonic/entertainment value, may emerge in different contexts.

Even where they take place during tourism service consumption, C2C interactions and social practices are often outside of direct managerial control. This is more likely to be the case in future, as more tourism services and experiences are becoming virtual. (Note the increasing connectivity of tourist stakeholders through mobile technology and social networks, or new trends, such as the recent proliferation of e-events). It is therefore crucial for tourism marketers and managers to be aware of the different tourist-actors and their value co-creation practices in different physical and online contexts. This knowledge may help to prevent potential issues with respect to service experience outcomes and increase the effectiveness of marketing functions such as segmentation (Rihova et al., 2019). Furthermore, by facilitating specific types of practices, tourism managers can bring about certain value outcomes. These include those relevant to the organisation but also to tourists themselves, their networks, and the wider community. Understanding tourists' C2C co-creation and value outcomes is not only key to competitiveness and brand loyalty, but also highlights the role that tourism plays in the economy and society.

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